

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**SCHOOL COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING**  
**MINUTES: Thursday, October 1, 2020**  
Greenfield MA

*Note: This meeting was held fully remotely in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts' March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, §20.*

**Present:** Katie Caron (KC); Susan Eckstrom (SE); Jordana Harper (JH); Susan Hollins (SH) (arrived 6:05); Glenn Johnson-Mussad (GJ); Amy Proietti (AP); Jean Wall (JW); Roxann Wedegartner (RW)

**Absent:** None

Also present: Andy Paquette, TMS; other school staff; and members of the public

### **I. Call to Order**

With a quorum present (SE, GJ, AP, JW, RW), Chair Proietti called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

### **II. Approval of Minutes**

GJ moved to approve draft minutes of Sept. 14, 2020. SE 2nd. Roll call vote: Yes – SE, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Proietti announced plan to enter Executive Session at 7:30 and to move any remaining items to Oct. 14 agenda.

GJ made a motion to move V. E & G to occur first in New Business. JW 2nd. Roll call vote: Yes – SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously.

### **III. Public Comment**

Sophia Pastore, Greenfield, parent, praised online Kindergarten program; asked that School Resource Officer (SRO) funding be moved to support racial equity program at GHS and that School Committee form ad hoc committee to address racial equity in schools.

Greenfield residents also speaking in favor of using SRO funds for racial justice program and formation of committee to address racial justice: Jill Fitzsimmons; Susan Worgaftik; Rachel Gordon; Katherine Golub

Louise Amyot shared her perspective as grandparent of children of color who have experienced discrimination in their schools; work toward racial equity needed in all schools.

Katherine Golub asked that these two issues be added to next meeting's agenda.

### **IV. Committee Reports**

#### **A. Chairperson (AP)**

- School Committee has committed to meeting every two weeks to re-evaluate Remote+ plan; this is not a guarantee we can expand to in-person schooling.
- Supports discussion of anti-racism. Don't assume nothing is happening; curriculum and professional development actively addressing anti-racism. Be mindful of different purviews of School Committee and Superintendent.
- School Committee's ad hoc committee on redistricting, chaired by Jean Wall, is directly related to "addressing -isms" in schools.

Discussion:

- School Committee voted to create ad hoc committee to create anti-racism statement. Consensus to add this and SRO funding to Oct. 14 agenda.
- After potential vote to switch to Remote+ to include some in-person schooling, will need substantial time to prepare. Decision to move to in-person schooling will be evidence-based: infection rates, long-range trends.
- Hard challenges. We're listening, we're trying.

## **B. Superintendent**

- Praised public participation in School Committee meeting; strong response to staff/parent survey; and overall kindness, patience.
- HVAC assessments: Not doing whole-building assessments; focusing on rooms to be used in next phase of re-opening; DPW and Central Maintenance have started making adjustments.
- Baystate Franklin donated \$775 in gift cards, being used for student attendance awards, project materials, school supplies.
- Food Service team has served 200,000 meals; recognized at Mass. Food Caucus.
- Extracurricular activities starting – band, clubs, youth soccer clinic

Discussion:

Appreciation for Superintendent's hard work. Noted *Recorder* editorials praising Superintendent's leadership.

## **C. Subcommittees**

### **1. Budget**

SE reported on recent meetings:

- Enrollment and staffing levels
- Issues with school vans
- 2020 budget review

Request to include on Oct. 14 reports from committees which include School Committee representatives: Planning & Construction, Library

## **V. New Business**

### **E. District Leadership Staffing Discussion**

Superintendent has announced intention not to seek extension of her contract at end of school year. **SE moved that the GPS School Committee begin the process of hiring a search firm to manage the Superintendent succession process. JW 2nd.**

Discussion:

Using search firm will help identify priorities, expand geographic reach  
Will include community committee

**Roll call vote: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously.**

### **G. Public vote on Exec Session item from 9/12**

SE explained that public link to attend Sept. 12 meeting was wrong.  
Committee self-reported the link-problem as open meeting law violation.  
Remedy is vote to affirm in public session votes taken in executive session on Sept. 12.

**SH moved that the School Committee appoint one or more attendance officers for a period not to exceed October 10, with the purpose to assist the Superintendent with registration and attendance as school opens. SE 2nd.**

SH provided background: Some Committee members were contacted by parents concerned about problems registering their children. Appropriate use of emergency meeting because school was starting in 3 days; goal to support Superintendent to have resources to register students.

**Roll call vote: Yes – KC, SE, SH, AP, JW, RW. Abstain: GJ. Motion passed 6-0-1.**

**SH moved to affirm vote [on Sept. 12] to set the compensation for temporary attendance officer appointments at an amount not to exceed \$10,000, at the Superintendent’s discretion. SE 2nd.**

SH provided background: Payment for temporary work by non-union staff.  
JH noted that former registrar (retired) has returned to work while registrar search continues. All students are registered, including 77 choice-in students. Working to develop an attendance policy: what counts as attendance in remote environment?

**Roll call vote: Yes – KC, SE, SH, AP, JW, RW. Abstain: GJ. Motion passed 6-0-1.**

**GJ moved that the School Committee, through the Chair, seek a written determination from counsel about any Open Meeting Law violations related to the Sept. 12, 2020 meeting and recommendations to address them, and include all member and Superintendent communications about the meeting in their review. KC 2nd. Roll call vote: Yes – KC, SE, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Abstain: SH. Motion passed 6-0-1.**

JH noted that deadline for action on repossessed van is Oct. 5.

**SE moved to adopt a revised agenda to put this item [Items Referred from Budget Subcommittee] next. GJ 2nd. Roll call vote: Yes – KC, SE, GJ, AP, JW, RW. No – SH. Motion passed 6-1.**

**SE moved to purchase the recently repossessed van for the school district, as a purchase outright for \$29,282.20. KC 2nd.**

Andy Paquette summarized: We have paid \$9K so far on \$32K van under leasing arrangement (with Ally Financial). Steve Nembirkow, former business manager, had submitted payment that Ally applied to the wrong account. Ally assessed late fees, got “pushy.” GPS referred to legal counsel, Atty. Smith. Ally refused to communicate re: misapplied payment but knows payments were applied incorrectly – their mistake. GPS has two vans under lease-loan with Ally.

Discussion:

We need van; would use it daily for student transportation and meal/supply deliveries.  
7.99% lease-loan rate; why didn’t we purchase the two vans outright?

**Roll call vote: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW. Abstain – RW. Motion passed 6-0-1.**

**SH moved that the \$29,282.20 be paid from transportation revolving fund. SE 2nd.**

There is adequate \$ in this fund. We are purchasing van #7378.  
Vans to be on agenda for next meeting; more to discuss.

**Roll call vote: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously.**

**SE moved to table until Oct. 14 the remaining agenda items. JW 2nd. Roll call vote: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously.**

Discussion of Remote+ Implementation occurred during the Superintendent's Report.

- Tabled:
- A. Appoint GPS rep for CES Board of Directors' Committee
  - B. Appoint SC rep for Food Service & Custodian bargaining
  - C. Items referred from Budget Subcommittee (remaining items)
    - Enrollment Review by School
    - AEL Staffing
    - Hiring Grid/List Review
  - D. 1/12th Budget Adoption

VI. Executive Session - MGL c 30A, §21, (2) & (3) & (7): (2) To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; (3) To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares; (7) To comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements.

GJ moved to enter Executive Session. RW 2nd. Roll call: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously.

GJ moved to adjourn public session. SE 2nd. Roll call: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously.

Entered Executive Session at 7:58 p.m.

(Meeting adjourned from Executive Session at 9:23 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Farber  
Recording Secretary

### **Meeting Documents**

1. Agenda October 1, 2020
2. Draft Minutes: Sept. 14, 2020
3. Superintendent's Report
  - a. Baystate Franklin Medical Center donation
  - b. Outdoor Tent & Wi-Fi Project
  - c. GPS Family & Teacher Survey
  - d. GPS Food Service Meals Update
  - e. GPS Youth Soccer Clinic
  - f. School Newsletters
  - g. *Recorder* articles: "Greenfield schools have served 202,868 meals..."; Addressing hunger in our community"
4. Documents re: Van and Ally Financial: "Re: Van buyout," emails from Peter Smith, Kristin Sadlowski (GPS Accounting Assistant), Jordana Harper, Sept. 30 & Oct, 1, 2020; Letter from

Elizabeth Van Leur, Ally Financial, May 23, 2020; “Notice of our Plan to Sell Property,” from Ally Financial, Sept. 15, 2020; “Ally Timeline” email from Andy Paquette to Jordana Harper, Sept. 17, 2020; “Re: Van Repossessed,” from Amy Proietti, Andy Paquette, Jordana Harper, Susan Hollins, Peter Smith, Sept. 15-17, 2020; Letters to Alec Baskfield, Ally Financial from Atty. Peter Smith, Aug. 14, and June 3, 2020

5. GPS Mask Protocol, Sept. 16, 2020
6. GPS Outdoor Evaluation Safety Protocols, K-12 Evaluations, Sept. 14, 2020
7. GPS Outdoor Safety Protocols, Kindergarten Screening, Sept. 14, 2020
8. GPS Outdoor Evaluation Safety Protocols, Preschool Evaluations, Sept. 14, 2020
9. Budget Reports, Andy Paquette TMS, Sept. 29, 2020