

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES: Monday, October 14, 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); Glenn Johnson-Mussad; (GJ); Amy Proietti (AP); Jean Wall (JW); Roxann Wedegartner (RW)

Absent: None

Also present: Janet Dickinson, Director of Pupil Services; Andy Paquette, TMS; Mike Kuchieski, Athletic Director; Ed Voudren, Transportation Coordinator; Jake Waldsmith, Transportation Specialist; other school staff, and members of the public.

I. Call to Order

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

II. Approval of Minutes

SH moved to approve minutes of October 1, 2020. GJ 2nd. Motion passed.

III. Public Comment

Lucy Kahn, Greenfield, spoke in support of racial justice programs and to urge creation of an Advisory Committee to listen to and address concerns.

Also speaking in support:

Jena Duncan
Daniel Pena-Chadee
Chelsie Field
Helen Perham

Doug Selwyn, Greenfield, encouraged hiring criteria of superintendent & curriculum coordinator to include strong, demonstrated commitment to racial & economic justice; and that redistricting committee fully involve the community.

IV. Reports

A. Chairperson – AP

No formal report in consideration of full agenda.

Has started process with counsel re: open meeting violation.

B. Superintendent – JH

- GPS Food Service began home delivery service Sept. 16; provided 43,698 meals in September. USDA waiver allows meals to continue the rest of the school year.
- Field hockey team won again on Friday. Athletes need our support more than ever.
- Gov. Baker refiled a new budget this afternoon that includes significantly more spending. Consistent with Chapter 70 numbers GPS received over the summer.

C. City Planning & Construction – SH and JW

SH reported on school-related topics:

- Green River School, temporarily closed, received emergency waiver on timeline. Heating system to be installed by Feb. 2021. Roof, asbestos, ceiling work is complete.
- City suggests opening limited number of school buildings, not all, to serve next phase of students, to reduce utilities costs.
- Request for JW to share minutes and 2019 Annual Report.

D. Redrawing of the District Map (Ad Hoc Committee) – JW

JW reported that at first meeting, group set initial goals to review history of elementary schools districting: criteria for past and current assignment of students. Next meeting: Oct. 26 at 4 p.m., public input welcome.

Request to add to upcoming agenda discussion of potential school district cooperation with Leyden.

V. Unfinished Business

A. GPS rep for CES Board of Directors

Chair Proietti appointed Susan Hollins.

B. Appoint SC rep for Food Service & Custodian bargaining

Chair Proietti appointed Katie Caron. Noted that every bargaining unit is active right now.

C. Items referred from Budget Subcommittee

1. AEL Enrollment & Staffing

SE explained that enrollment and staffing are consistent with prior years except for Academy of Early Learning: enrollment reduced by half. Is AEL staffed appropriately, given student needs and enrollment?

Discussion:

- Request for specific information: number of classrooms, staff at AEL
- Consider AEL for pilot to begin in-person schooling, subject to union bargaining.
- Planning discussion to include AEL principal, Director of Pupil Services, transportation staff.
- Overall support for early childhood learning; long-term benefits.
- Consensus to continue AEL staffing levels at this time to provide flexibility for future.

Add AEL pilot to agenda for next School Committee meeting.

2. Personnel grid

Request for data on positions that are not filled.

Revised state budget may have impact.

AP reassured public that GPS applies for grants whenever possible, but that grant \$ can be used for very specific purposes, not general budget support.

D. FY21 Budget Recommendations

Andy Paquette, TMS, provided overview. Budget report's personnel lines are adjusted for current staffing; changes will continue, especially with instructional aides.

RW moved to approve the revised budget as presented as the current FY21 budget. JW 2nd.

Discussion:

- Expect that out-of-district special education costs fluctuate. Noted change from \$1.2million to \$893K.

- Technology equipment budget is \$14K. Some purchases for equipment & software covered by COVID-related federal funding. Additional technology expenses for special education accommodations to remote-learning.
- Request for more information on \$198K for software licenses.
- AP recommends vote tonight and re-vote later to reaffirm.
- Budget & Finance Subcommittee to meet to discuss revised draft budget in detail and effect of Governor's newly revised budget.
- SH, JW, SE requested print copies of budget; other members may request by emailing AP.

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

RW made a motion to move Items VII. B and C to VII. A and B on agenda. SE 2nd. Change in consideration of GPS staff in attendance. Roll call vote: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. New Business

A. Transportation Report

Ed Voudren outlined work of the transportation department since March, including: delivering Chromebooks, meals; new COVID regulations for drivers; transported students in summer programs; deep cleaned all equipment; delivered PE gear, mailings; received 7 new vans (“desperately needed”); more training for staff; transporting out-of-district (OOD) students. Will continue to deliver meals 3xs/week; other deliveries as needed. Athletics transportation schedule is set. All busses inspected, licenses renewed for drivers. Acknowledged excellent cooperation & help from many GPS staff.

Jake Waldsmith described scheduling challenges. OOD schools have varying schedules, not running on regular 5-day week. Vans limited to 2 students or 1 student & monitor. Currently 24 OOD students. All equipment in full use every day.

Voudren explained GPS can no longer use 70-passenger former-FRTA bus due to requirements for school busses over 10K pounds (painted yellow, CDL driver). Recommends moving to blue-plate status, use for after-school athletics and food service transportation. Replace with two 10-passenger vans, hire 2 more drivers. Voudren will work with city procurement office. Rough estimate = \$30K each.

Noted that when schools move out of fully remote, will need more vehicles.

B. Athletics Update

Coach Kuchieski reported that field hockey, golf, and x-country doing well in competition; strong involvement in soccer, including junior program, coop football with 30+ participants.

Requested change to zero-fan rule to allow families to see their students play. COVID-coaches would sign in spectators to provide contact tracing, if needed. Would not exceed 50 people, all socially distanced. Also working with GCTV to provide live broadcast.

RW moved to allow 2 spectators per home athlete at home games. KC 2nd.

School Committee previously approved Fall 1 category with no spectators allowed. Franklin County has put together its own conference. JH has conferred with Board of Health; she endorses change.

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

C. Remote Plus Update/Discussion

JH provided summary & update.

- Recently adopted protocols & procedures to enhance remote learning, including new attendance protocol.
- HVAC assessments completed; repair/upgrades on-going. Rooms for next phase ready very soon for students, staff.
- Remote learning creates extra work for teachers, families; not ideal for many students.
- Experiencing very few technical issues.
- Wednesday half-day schedule is working.
- In Phase 1 (of 4) of Remote+ plan. Encourages move to next phase; short window for outdoor weather.

Discussion:

- It's School Committee's decision to move to next phase toward in-person. Public should direct comments to SchoolCom@gpsk12.org. GREAT has stepped back from formal meetings.
- SE expressed frustration with union negotiations. Meetings 8-10 hours/week without progress.
- Support to move out of Phase 1 (fully remote), especially for special needs students and PreK/Kindergarten. Would it help move negotiations to set a date for next phase?
- Do not yet know full count of staff members with medical reasons not to work in-person. Provide options.

GJ moved that the Superintendent present a report on current readiness for Phase 2 at our next meeting. SE 2nd. Intent is for Superintendent to include any modifications of the original GREAT plan that are needed now. **Roll call vote: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously.**

D. Anti-Racism and SRO Funding

GJ gave overview of two topics: School Resource Officer and School Committee's anti-racism statement. Provided MASC presentation to clarify what is School Committee's role (set goals, policy, student achievement) and what is not (specific programming).

GJ moved that the committee established to draft an anti-racism statement be structured as an advisory committee and that this advisory committee, in dialogue with the community, also draft a recommended scope of anti-racism work for consideration by the School Committee. SE 2nd.

Discussion:

- Advisory committee status allows involvement by community members. Refer to policy on advisory committees.
- Range of outcomes: statement, policy, goal, scope of work; move beyond programming to address racism inherent in system. Look at models from other school districts (e.g., Portland on systemic change).
- \$1.8million cut to meet mayor's budget: \$30K for SRO isn't in GPS budget anymore. SRO, truancy officer still mandated by state.

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

AP appointed GJ as School Committee member on Anti-Racism Advisory Committee. Others interested in serving to email AP. Consider different name.

GJ moved that \$15,000 be allocated to the high school for racial justice programs. SH 2nd.

Discussion:

- Request for Supt. to report racial justice work happening already in schools
- Need at all schools, not only high school
- Wait for advisory committee's guidance

Roll call vote: Yes – GJ, KC; No – SE, SH, AP, JW, RW. Motion failed 2-5.

SH moved that the Budget Subcommittee in bringing back recommendations on FY21 budget include adjustments for racial and social justice. GJ 2nd.

RW: Supports goal, but wait for advisory committee's recommendations.

Roll call vote: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW; No – RW. Motion passed 6-1.

VIII. Executive Session - MGL c 30A, §21, (2) & (3): (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.

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

GJ motion to adjourn public session of the meeting. 2nd. Roll call vote: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously.

Public meeting adjourned and moved into executive session at 9:02 p.m.
(Executive Session adjourned at 9:58 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary

Meeting Documents

1. Agenda, October 14, 2020
2. Draft Minutes: October 1, 2020
3. "GPS FY21 Revised Budget," Andy Paquette, Sept. 29, 2020
4. Memo re: tickets from Michael Kuchieski, Athletic Director, Oct. 9, 2020
5. School newsletters
6. Transportation Report
7. GPS Media Release: "USDA has Extended Waivers Allowing School Food Service Operations to Continue...." Oct. 13, 2020.
8. "Charting the Course: An Orientation for School Leaders," MASC