

GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES: Thursday, October 27, 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) (arrived at 6:02); Roxann Wedegartner (RW)

Absent: None

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

I. Call to Order

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

II. Approval of Minutes

KC moved to approve draft minutes of Oct. 14, 2020. SE 2nd. Roll call vote: Yes – KC, SE, SH, AP, JW, RW. Abstain – GJ. Motion passed 6-0-1.

III. Public Comment

Doug Selwyn, Greenfield, urged School Committee to refuse MCAS as not valid during pandemic & to join other districts in this effort; to include experience with anti-racism in criteria for new superintendent search; and for district map advisory committee to be inclusive and aim for equal distribution of high-needs students.

IV. Reports

A. Chairperson (AP)

Expecting legal advisement tomorrow on open meeting law concern.

B. Superintendent (JH)

- Reported on today's call with Commissioner of Education: Covid metrics will now account for clusters that skew data (e.g., nursing home, jail, colleges)
- Hard at work preparing for Phase 2
- Expecting guidance on winter athletics soon
- MCAS to happen this spring; no indication of federal waiver - No Child Left Behind requires annual testing
- Snow days: On most days of inclement weather, remote instruction will continue, unless there's widespread power or internet outages.
- Teachers are working harder than ever, often 10-12 hours a day. Parents and caregivers are working very hard, too. It's an impossible, difficult situation. Thanks to all.

Snow Days discussion:

Assuring families that food service delivery will happen if at all possible. DPW is aware. Food Service Director making plans for deliveries in bad weather.

Policy Subcommittee could change snow day policy during remote instruction.

C. Subcommittees

1. Redrawing District Map (JW)

Next meeting Friday at 1:30.

2. Collaborative for Educational Services

Bill Diehl, Executive Director, retiring Dec. 31. Praise for his excellent work in bringing districts together, finding cost-savings for special education. GPS has received CES support for GPS website, PD, anti-racism training, much more.

V. New Business

JW moved to remove Item C. [Kuzmeskus contract] from tonight's agenda. Full materials not available; intent to discuss at next meeting. GJ 2nd. Roll call vote: Yes – KC, SE, SH, AP, GJ, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously.

A. FY21 Budget Update

Andy Paquette, TMS, reported: Governor has released updated budget, headed to legislature for approval. GPS budget report includes impact of governor's revised budget: \$286,014 reduction. Supt. has not filled some open positions, anticipating budget needs.

Potential actions by School Committee, recognizing Mayor makes final decisions:

- Don't fill open positions
- Freeze supply purchases
- Eliminate positions
- Reduce discretionary funds
- Re-work collective bargaining agreements or individual contracts
- Use reserves
- Take no action; wait until state finalizes FY21 budget

SH moved that Budget Subcommittee take this issue up and carefully discuss what's in the budget and what might be modifications to the current budget. GJ 2nd.

Supt. has not filled some open positions, anticipating budget challenges: GMS, GHS Assistant Principals (will be needed when students return in-person); Pupil Services Assistant Director; Admin Assistant in Superintendent's Office.

High priority needs: Remote Learning Specialist; IT/Google Specialist; Medical Assistants; Curriculum Director. For grant-funded positions, need to encumber funds by December.

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

GJ moved to authorize the Superintendent to hire a 1 FTE Remote Learning Specialist for a Unit A teacher's salary. JW 2nd.

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

B. Reopening Plan Update

Supt. Harper presented GPS Reopening Plan Update & Phase 2 Readiness Report, as requested by Committee. Suggested target date of Nov. 2 for return to in-person school. Described physical preparations, protocols in place.

SE moved that the School Committee authorize moving into Phase 2 beginning on November 9. JW 2nd.

Discussion:

- Will need to be negotiated with unions.
- Is expensive deep-cleaning necessary? Following current health guidelines.
- Weather too cold to pursue Phase 1B, outdoor instruction. Possible to winterize tents?
- Phase 2: High-needs learners return for in-person instruction, district-wide. Others may be included if space is available.

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

C. Kuzmeskus Contract Discussion (tabled)

D. Cooperation with Neighboring School Districts

Common challenge: Reduced enrollment due to Covid will reduce all schools' budgets.

FERCOG coordinating bulk purchases. Expand to supplies like paper? Consider shared services, job recruitment?

Leyden most likely partner.

School Choice has made districts competitors.

SH to ask for discussion at next CES meeting.

VI. 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.

GJ moved to enter Executive Session. SE 2nd. Roll call: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously. No intent to return to public session. JW moved to adjourn public session. SH 2nd. Roll call: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary

Meeting Documents

1. Agenda: Oct. 27, 2020
2. Draft Minutes: Oct. 14, 2020
3. FY2022 Budget Schedule, from Liz Gilman, Director of Municipal Finance
4. Analysis of Costs & Revenue in Governor's Revised Budget as compared to State Aid projections used in the Mayor's Budget
5. Transit-150 T150 Wagon Low Roof Passenger Van (spec sheet)
6. GPS Open Positions as of Oct. 19, 2020
7. Posting: Remote Learning & Digital Literacy Specialist
8. Posting: Google Technician
9. Greenfield City Council Order FY 20-075: Five-Year contract for school transportation with F.M. Kuzmeskus, Inc., with Appendix G