

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, April 14, 2021
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); Susan Hollins (SH); Glenn Johnson-Mussad; (GJM) (joined 5:33); Amy Proietti (AP); Jean Wall (JW)

Absent: Roxann Wedegartner (RW)

Also present: Judy Houle, Interim Superintendent; Russell Dupere, School Attorney; Tracy Novick and Liz Lafond, MASC; school staff, citizens, and the press.

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (KC, SE, SH, AP, JW), Chair Proietti called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

II. Executive Session – MGL c 30A, §21 (a): (1) To discuss complaints brought against public officers.

JW moved to open executive session. SH 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

Entered Executive Session at 5:37 p.m.

Returned to public session at 6:08 p.m.

III. Approval of Minutes

JW moved to approve draft minutes of March 18 [as amended] and March 25, 2021. KC 2nd.

March 18 minutes: correct spelling of Renaud; GJM requested addition that Chair stopped Renaud's comments as topic was not on the agenda, requested that Gilmour's comment of support for Glenn Johnson be amended to identify him as School Committee member and to include his full last name, Johnson-Mussad; and to update his identifying initials throughout from GJ to GJM.

Roll call vote: Yes - KC, SH, GJ, AP, JW. No – SE. Motion passed 5-1.

IV. Public Comment

Doug Selwyn, Greenfield, spoke against MCAS, reminded families how to opt out of testing and noted schools must provide learning experience for opt-out students during testing. Also urged superintendent search to move ahead quickly.

Ann Valentine, Hatfield, Greenfield teacher, GEA president, relayed requests from GEA members to adjust 2021-2022 calendar to include half-day Wednesdays and later start time for high school.

V. Reports

A. Student Reports

DL & ST described GHS events, community service projects, and sports, and invited all to visit WAVETV, online production of students' videos and articles. GHS is preparing for return to in-person learning.

B. Administrative Reports

1. Spring Athletics Proposal – Mike Kuchieski, Athletic Director, presented schedule for spring sports: track, tennis, baseball, softball. Covid protocols and Covid-safe training will continue. Updated visitor policy allows up to 150 attendance at outdoor events.

KC moved to approve the Spring Sports Athletics Schedule as presented. GJM 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Business Manager

(Andy Paquette, TMS, not present.)

SH requested Budget Subcommittee review, clarify TMS bills.

3. Superintendent's Report – Supt. Houle

a. Return to in-person learning

- PreK-4 began April 5. Well organized return.
- Grades 5-12 begin April 28. Parents can choose to remain remote for remainder of this school year.
- “Daily 4” protocols in place.
- Last of air purifiers arrived today, going to GMS, GHS.
- Reminded parents to keep children at home if they're sick.
- Pooled testing going well. Governor announced funding for pooled testing through August, will cover summer programs.

b. MCAS Update

- Grade 11 students: MCAS not graduation requirement; can take test for scholarship eligibility.
- Grade 10 students: MCAS remains graduation requirement.
- Test for grades 3-8 and 10 have adjusted timeline, shorter duration.
- Remote option for grades 3-8; grade 10 students must take in person.
- State and federal legislative advocacy continues to change MCAS requirements.

c. Upcoming dates

- Supt. Houle presented dates pertaining to school budget, end-of-school events.
- Drop-off times: 7:10 at GHS; 7:45 at GMS. “Late” time TBD; will be flexible to start, specific time determined as schedules settle.
- Later start for GHS to benefit students? Implications for families, community. Change would need to be regional due to bus routes, sports, afterschool programs. Needs long-range planning.

d. Legal counsel for Special Education

Supt. Houle explained decision to use hourly fee vs. retainer, may change as we learn how much legal services are needed.

SE moved to approve the agreement between Greenfield Public Schools and Dupere Law Offices as presented. JW 2nd.

Reminder that review of detailed bills from previous attorney, the late Peter Smith, would guide choice of hourly rate vs. retainer.

Agreement presented is month-to-month to allow flexibility.

Motion passed unanimously.

e. 2021-2022 Academic Year Calendar

GEA, administrators have reviewed. Assumes return to full in-person learning.

Half-day Wednesdays aren't possible: can't meet 990 hours of structured learning time required for high school.

GJM moved to approve the 2021-2022 Academic Calendar as presented. SE 2nd.

Recalling years ago, elementary schools had half-days but high school didn't. Not recommended now, as elementary might not reach minimum with half-days plus snow days.

Motion passed unanimously.

C. Committee Reports

1. Superintendent Search Committee – JW

Tracy Novick, Liz Lafond, MASC, presented draft brochure.

Photos are stock photos, not of Greenfield students. Supt. Houle will ask principals for Greenfield student images with permissions to use; Greenfield Recreation has offered photos with permissions.

Corrections/edits:

School Committee section: 4-year terms; Glenn Johnson-Mussad's name.

Too-long paragraph affects readability

Remove requirement of understanding of role of supt, school committees, municipal districts.

Needs understanding of grants.

State: Greenfield is a small city.

Discussion of salary, effect of benefits. MASC discourages vague "competitive salary," urges specific \$ range: \$162-175K, at the top end for our region to attract highest quality candidates.

GJM moved to have salary information read "Competitive salary." SE 2nd. Motion withdrawn.

SE moved to approve salary in the range of \$155-175K, and that length of contract and benefits are negotiable. KC 2nd.

"Sticker shock," but proposed range not unusual in Greenfield. Supt. Harper's last-year salary = \$162K.

Eastern Mass. superintendents = \$300K.

Consider value of benefits to candidates.

Motion passed unanimously.

Application period: Do not have cut-off date to avoid losing late-arriving candidates. Suggest 5 weeks: superintendents are busy with return to in-person and MCAS.

GJM moved to approve the application period beginning approximately April 21, 2021 with application review to begin May 28, 2021. SE 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

GJM moved to have MASC do the initial screening of the applications. SE 2nd.

Screened-out applications will be available for review.

Motion passed unanimously.

2. Subcommittee meetings schedule

Reviewed Supt. Houle's recommendations to begin subcommittee work, ending current subcommittee moratorium due to focus on decisions re: remote/in-person learning.

AP will prepare draft schedule for needed subcommittees, to review at May meeting.

VI. Correspondence

School newsletters: provided for informational purposes only.

VII. Executive Session - MGL c 30A, §21, (a): (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.

GJM moved to open executive session. SE 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

Entered Executive Session at 8:16 p.m.

Returned to public session at 9:21 p.m.

VIII. Approval of Agreements

SH moved to approve the MOU with the GEA with regard to return to full in-person learning. JW 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

GJM moved to approve the UFCW Greenfield Bus Drivers and Monitors contract as presented. JW 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

IX. Adjournment

SE moved to adjourn. GJM 2nd. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary

Meeting Documents

1. Agenda April 14, 2021
2. Minutes: March 18, March 25, 2021
3. "Some thoughts regarding meeting schedules," memo from Judith Houle, Interim Superintendent, to Greenfield School Committee, April 12, 2021
4. "MIAA and DESE Proposal for change athletics to four seasons for 2020-21," Memo from Mike Kuchieski, Athletic Director, to Greenfield School Committee, April 7, 2021
5. Financial Reports, April 7, 2021
6. "MCAS Testing," memo from Judith Houle, Interim Superintendent, to Greenfield School Committee, April 6, 2021
7. Letters to Sen. Edward Markey, Sen. Elizabeth Warren, Hon. James McGovern, from Judith Houle, Interim Superintendent, re: MCAS testing, April 6, 2021
8. Retainer Agreement by and between the Greenfield Public Schools and the Dupere Law Offices
9. Draft 2021-2022 GPS Calendar
10. "Young students, families thrilled to return to in-person learning in Greenfield," *Recorder*, April 7, 2021
11. School newsletters