

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
CHENERY COMMUNITY ROOM
MARCH 10, 2020**

Present: Ms. Susan Burgess-Cox, Chair
Ms. Andrea Prestwich, Secretary
Ms. Amy Checkoway
Mr. Michael Crowley
Ms. Tara Donner
Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Finance, Business and Operations

Absent: Ms. Kate Bowen

1. OPENING BUSINESS

1.1 Call to order

Susan Burgess-Cox called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

Susan Burgess-Cox led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Citizen's Concerns

There were no citizen's concerns.

1.4 Adjustments to the Agenda

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

1.5 Chair's Report

Susan Burgess-Cox announced the Foundation for Belmont Education (FBE) opened their auction for bidding from March 9 – March 22. They will also be taking nominations for the 2019-20 Outstanding Teacher award.

The Belmont High School spring musical "Shrek" will take place on March 19, 20, 21.

Tomorrow, March 11 is early release for elementary students.

1.6 Student Representative Report

There was no Student Representative Report.

1.7 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Phelan congratulated the Boys and Girls hockey teams and Cheerleading team who advanced to the tournament.

There have been six communications shared with families regarding the work on Coronavirus. The schools are open and cleaned each evening. The Facilities Department has purchased hand sanitizer and wipes for classrooms and restrooms. A deep cleaning took place at Chenery and deep cleaning will take place at the rest of the schools.

Superintendent Phelan thanked Town Administrator Patrice Garvin and members of the Facilities Department for their work with the Health Department to ensure guidelines are being followed. At this point, no community member or student has tested positive for the coronavirus. An email will be sent tomorrow explaining how any cancellations will take place. At this time, there are no plans to provide distance learning or home learning for people who choose to stay at home. That may be part of what we consider in the future if the Board of Health determines school needs to be closed.

2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

3. MAJOR BUSINESS

3.1 Vote on School Choice

Each year, school committees consider whether their district should be in the school choice program during the upcoming school year. If they choose not to accept school choice pupils from other districts, they must take a vote prior to June 1 and report the result to DESE. Districts may also choose to accept new pupils but only in certain grades. If the vote did not specify particular grades, assume that all of the district's grades are open for applications.

On a motion offered by Michael Crowley and seconded by Andrea Prestwich, it was **VOTED** 5-0-1 not to take part in School Choice for the 2020-2021 school year.

3.2 Student Opportunity Act Community Engagement – Exhibit A & A1

Assistant Superintendent Janice Darias provided an update on the Student Opportunity Act also known as An Act Relative to Educational Opportunity, which was signed into law by Governor Baker in 2019. It is designed to address opportunity and achievement gaps in student performance among all students as well as the following student subgroups: low income students, English learners, students with disabilities. The act was designed to provide more money to districts with more needy students. Out of 318 districts in Massachusetts, 37 districts will receive 85% of the money. Each district is required to submit a 3-year evidenced-based plan describing how new or existing funds will be allocated to close achievement gaps. Belmont will only receive a 1.45 percent increase in FY21.

MCAS is one way to determine what gaps exist in Belmont. In 2019, the MCAS results indicated disproportionate gaps in the subgroups. The three-year plan for the student achievement gap in

Belmont includes work, which began in 2017, to address the achievement gap between all students and in particular black and brown students. There are also achievement gaps for English learners and students with disabilities. Belmont has created programs for these students as well as ongoing professional educators.

From 2017 to present, Belmont has required professional development for all educators on equity, race, bias and how they negatively impact African and Black students' school experience and learning outcomes. Belmont has also required professional development for all educators on culturally responsive teaching practices.

3.3 District Configuration Education Plan Community Engagement Consult Update

Superintendent Phelan thanked Assistant Superintendent Janice Darias for her work with the Teaching and Learning Committee. An event scheduled for April 7 at Belmont High School will be publicized over the next week or so where community members will be invited to hear the vision for teaching and learning in the Belmont Public Schools and how it is being influenced by the discussions the district is having on Social Emotional Learning, Culturally Responsive Teaching and Project Based Learning. The Teaching and Learning Committee has planned this presentation to the community to share the work they have done so far and get feedback from the community as they move forward.

3.4 CVTE Update

Superintendent Phelan provided an update on the plans for Career Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) in Belmont. Families of grade 8 students who have expressed interest in pursuing CVTE have been contacted directly. A meeting took place on February 27th to discuss the status of Minuteman placements and what programs and partnerships Belmont is working on since the town is no longer a member of the Minuteman district. The Belmont students who are currently enrolled in Minuteman will complete their studies and graduate. Current grade 8 students are the first students to be impacted by Belmont's non-member status.

The February 27th meeting included presentations by the Medford High School Principal. He explained the CVTE program at Medford High School. Parents and students in attendance were excited to learn students are able to take part in Medford High School's extracurricular activities such as music and sports. Cambridge also has a CVTE program that Belmont is considering but there is a possibility it may be full.

Superintendent Phelan stressed importance to having the correct funding in place for CVTE programming and noted there is still work to be done regarding busing and where the money for programming will be held within the Town.

4. SUBCOMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES (as needed)

4.1 Finance Subcommittee

The Finance Subcommittee met last Wednesday and spent the part of the meeting with the Warrant Committee Education Subcommittee discussing the FY20 second quarter budget.

4.2 Policy and Procedure Subcommittee

There was no report from the Policy and Procedure Subcommittee.

4.3 Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

There was no report from the Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee.

4.4 Capital Budget Committee

The Capital Budget Committee will meet on March 13th.

4.5 Warrant Committee

The Warrant Committee met on March 4th and discussed CPA projects. The next meeting will be on March 25th to review the second quarter Town and School Department financials.

4.6 Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee

The Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee will meet tomorrow morning. They will meet again on March 12th with the design team to discuss furniture fixtures and equipment. Once some decisions are made regarding furniture, there will be a furniture fair at Belmont High School for students to look at some furniture samples.

4.7 Community Path Committee

There was no report from the Community Path Committee.

4.8 Financial Task Force II

There was no report from the Financial Task Force II.

4.9 High School Traffic Working Group

There was no report from the High School Traffic Working Group.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 Consent Agenda

Thank you letters – Book Donation

On a motion offered by Tara Donner and seconded by Michael Crowley, it was **VOTED** unanimously to accept the donation of two copies of *India Unveiled*.

5.2 Personnel Items - None

5.3 Business Items – None

5.4 Approval of Minutes

February 25, 2020

On a motion offered by Tara Donner and seconded by Michael Crowley, it was **VOTED** unanimously to approve the minutes of February 25, 2020 as amended.

6. FUTURE BUSINESS

March 18, 2020
Finance Subcommittee Meeting
SAB Conference Room – 8:00 a.m.

March 24, 2020
School Committee Meeting
CMS Community Room – 7:00 p.m.

7. ENCLOSURES

Strategic Plan
School Committee Goals
Important Dates for School Committee

8. ADJOURN

Susan Burgess-Cox explained the School Committee had been in Executive Session prior to the start of the business meeting. Although it was indicated on the agenda the School Committee would be returning to Executive Session at the conclusion of the business meeting, they had completed their work and would be adjourning the meeting.

On a motion offered by Tara Donner and seconded by Andrea Prestwich it was **VOTED** unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by 
Andrea Prestwich, Secretary