

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
CHENERY COMMUNITY ROOM
DECEMBER 10, 2019**

Present: Ms. Susan Burgess-Cox, Chair
Ms. Andrea Prestwich, Secretary
Ms. Kate Bowen
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

1. OPENING BUSINESS

1.1 Call to order

Susan Burgess-Cox called the meeting to order at 7:04 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 noted the following upcoming events.

December 11 – Grade 6 Winter Band Concert

December 12 – BHS Winter Band Concert

December 13 – Performing Arts Company Coffee House at BHS

December 16 – Honors Concert at Chenery

December 17 – Student Speaker Series: Managing Stress and Anxiety

December 18 – Winter Concert at BHS

December 21 – Winter vacation begins

1.6 Student Representative Report

Winter break is coming up and there were some spirit events. Students were able to buy snowflakes for friends which would be delivered to the friend in class. Winter sports have also begun.

1.7 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Phelan noted at the last two School Committee meetings the School Committee heard from parents/guardians, alumni and students who provided opinions on the math acceleration program at Chenery as well as the work being done at the high school site as it relates to athletic facilities. Superintendent Phelan, Assistant Superintendent Darias and Math Director Patty Soliozy will meet next week to review suggestions they received and re-assess how they look at the math situation from an operations lens as well as a philosophical lens. Superintendent Phelan will update the community as soon as possible.

Superintendent Phelan noted he had hoped to have some updates regarding tennis courts at tonight's meeting in anticipation of the vote that will be taken at the January 7th meeting on the RFP for the rink. The hope would be to provide a campus that has all varsity sports represented. The decision that was made a few years ago which did not include tennis courts on the campus has caused people to be concerned. Superintendent Phelan has been meeting with baseball folks in order to understand the impact adding tennis courts would have on their programs. The goal is to provide space for all programs but the reality is there is limited space throughout the town.

2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

3. MAJOR BUSINESS

3.1 Subaru Loves Learning Book Donation – Exhibit A

Assistant Superintendent Darias introduced Nathan Taylor and Meghan White from Cityside Subaru who updated the School Committee on the Subaru Loves Learning Program. This is the third year Cityside Subaru has donated books to Belmont Public Schools through this program. 154 books were donated to Kindergarten, grade 3 and grade 4 classrooms. This program is a national program Cityside Subaru takes part in to support education. They partner with the Association for the Advancement of Science, and each year the organization runs a competition to select award winning science books at different age levels. Schools that are chosen by Cityside to be the recipients of the books are invited to choose the particular books they would like to receive. Nathan and Meghan shared some photos of students reading the books in their classrooms.

3.2 Vision 21 Implementation Committee Update – Exhibit B

Erica Ziebel from Vision 21 updated the School Committee on the formal vision for the Town of Belmont. The Vision 21 Implementation Committee is tasked with helping to make sure the vision for the Town of Belmont becomes a reality. The current master plan for the Town of Belmont expires in 2020. It was decided to undertake a refresh of the plan. The current plan was created in 2010 and many sections of the plan are still relevant today but some need to be updated due to things like increase in population and traffic. Grants that Belmont would apply for as a town require a master plan to be in place. Erica noted she has been visiting many committees throughout the town.

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is an external organization that helps create these master plans for towns. The hope is to have a consultant from MAPC lead this effort with input from town members as well. The Vision 21 Implementation Committee submitted funding grants to MAPC in October. Their funding decisions are made in December. In anticipation of that, the Select Board is forming a Master Plan Steering Committee which will start in January 2020. Over the course of the next year under the guidance of MAPC, a Town of Belmont Master Plan refresh will take place. Erica explained she is seeking members from the various Town Committees to take part in the the Master Plan Steering Committee. She asked the School Committee to consider taking part in this committee which would only need a commitment of attending one to two meetings per month.

3.3 English Language Education Update – Exhibit C

Lindsey Rinder, Director of English Language Learning updated the School Committee on the newly created English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC). One of ELPAC's first events was attended by over 200 people. They came together to help newcomers learn how to integrate themselves into the Belmont community by learning how to register for sports and complete online forms, etc.

There are over 40 languages spoken by students in the English Language Education Program (ELE). There has been an increase in the number of ELE students including students who have very limited English. The ELE teacher ratio in Belmont is among the highest within the EDCO districts. The increasing enrollment poses a challenge. Belmont has added at least one ELE teacher each year for the past eight years.

3.4 2019 Kindergarten Registration Presentation Update – Exhibit D

Superintendent Phelan provided an overview of the Kindergarten Registration Night which will take place on January 23rd. This is the second year Belmont has provided this registration night and it was a great success last year. New families will come to the Chenery Community Room to learn meet the administrators and learn about Kindergarten in Belmont, timelines and requirements for registration, school assignments, health requirements, transportation, and food services and after school care. Kindergarten Central Registration will take place on March 26 and March 27 in the Chenery Community Room from 8:15 pm to 12:30 pm and 12:30 pm to 3:15 pm. Placements will take place on April 13, May 27 and August 10.

3.5 2020-21 School Calendar Presentation – Exhibit E

Assistant Superintendent Darias explained this is the first year in a number of years when school starts before Labor Day. There is nothing different in the calendar from last year except there is no school on the day of the Presidential election in November.

Superintendent Phelan explained each year the calendar is shared with the BEA. During a recent meeting, the BEA asked not to have school on Friday before Labor Day weekend. The Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee has requested that school end as soon as possible in June so taking a day out without adding a day would be problematic. Cancelling school on Friday would require making an exception to the policy and it would also require an explanation to families on why the policy is being changed.

School committee members discussed the change and the general consensus was it seemed to have complexities if it is decided to make an exception to the policy the first year.

4. SUBCOMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES (as needed)

4.1 Finance Subcommittee

The Finance Subcommittee will meet on

4.2 Policy and Procedure Subcommittee

The Policy and Procedure Subcommittee met recently regarding allowing service animals in schools. They discussed what constitutes a service animal and in what situation it would be allowed. They reviewed the policy template of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees as well as policies from other communities and will bring a formal policy to the whole School Committee at a future meeting.

4.3 Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

The Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee will meet on December 19 to preview the Belmont High School Program of Studies for 2020-21.

4.4 Capital Budget Committee

There was no report from the Capital Budget Committee.

4.5 Warrant Committee

The Warrant Committee reviewed the first quarter results for the Town and is interested in reviewing the first quarter results for the School Department. They had a brief discussion on the rink and tennis courts.

4.6 Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee

The Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee will meet tomorrow to rank bid alternatives and discuss the short range phasing construction plan.

4.7 Community Path Committee

There was no report from the Community Path Committee.

4.8 Financial Task Force II

The Financial Task Force II Committee met last Thursday to discuss how to approach the budget gap and the timeline of the budget committee.

4.9 High School Traffic Working Group

The High School Traffic Working Group met last week and learned that the new MBTA buses are not able to fit under the bridge near Belmont Center. They continued discussion about some roads and where some of the recommendations will move to Transportation Advisory Committee.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 Consent Agenda

BHS Global Citizens Model UN 2020 Trip to New York – Exhibit F

Superintendent Phelan explained this trip overview is provided to the School Committee for informational purposes only.

5.2 Personnel Items - None

5.3 Business Items – None

5.4 Approval of Minutes

November 18, 2019

November 26, 2019

On a motion offered by Tara Donner and seconded by Michael Crowley, it was **VOTED** unanimously to approve the minutes of November 18, 2019 as amended.

On a motion offered by Tara Donner and seconded by Michael Crowley, it was **VOTED** unanimously to approve the minutes of November 26, 2019 as amended.

6. FUTURE BUSINESS

7. ENCLOSURES

Strategic Plan

School Committee Goals

December 1, 2019 Enrollment

8. ADJOURN

At 8:39 p.m. on a motion offered by Andrea Prestwich and seconded by Michael Crowley, it was **VOTED** unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted by Andrea Prestwich
Andrea Prestwich, Secretary