

BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
REMOTE MEETING
JUNE 29, 2021

Present: Ms. Amy Checkoway, Chair
Ms. Meghan Moriarty, Secretary
Ms. Andrea Prestwich
Ms. Kate Bowen
Mr. Michael Crowley
Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Finance, Business and Operations

Absent: Mr. Jamal Saeh

1. OPENING BUSINESS

1.1 Call to Order

Committee Chair Checkoway called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

1.2 Citizens' Concerns

Joanna Tzouvelis –The planning committee of the Class of 2020 thanked Superintendent Phelan, Principal Taylor and Assistant Carol Ouelette for their help with the Senior Cruise. Two hundred eight members of the class of 2020 took part on the Spirit of Boston.

Elshad Kasumov – Voiced his support of masking for the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year. The World Health Organization recently updated their guidance to recommend indoor masking with the increase in Delta variant of Coronavirus. Elshad is in favor of masking for those under 12 who are unable to be vaccinated.

1.3 Adjustments to the Agenda

Chair Checkoway proposed moving minutes to the consent agenda to approve as a package.

1.4 Chair's Report

Chair Checkoway indicated this is the last official meeting of the 2020-2021 school year. Her hope is to take time in summer to reflect and plan for the next school year. The School Committee will plan a retreat in late summer and look forward to being in person as a School Committee for next year's meetings. Town officials are looking into remote participation for community members.

1.5 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Phelan shared some good news stories from the district and gave some updates on some summer programs.

- Class of 2020 Senior Cruise on the Spirit of Boston - June 24
- Drone video of Belmont High School graduation
- Recent Belmont Middle High School Tour
- WGBH Quiz Show Bowl Champions
- National History Day Teacher of the Year Award Junior Division - Chenery Middle School teacher Susanne Zmijewski
- METCO Summer Transportation: Funding for summer transportation was delayed at the State level but the district will cover the cost for the time being. The approximately \$11K will be replenished. Availability of transportation ensures METCO students will join the Belmont Summer Enrichment Program for the first time.
- All Belmont Public School summer programs will be using the same mitigation strategies in regards to masks, illness, hygiene, physical distancing
- Summer reading list process overview

2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2.1 No unfinished business

3. MAJOR BUSINESS

3.1 Superintendent's Evaluation

Each year the Superintendent is evaluated against goals set in the fall. This process is similar to one for administrators and educators in the district and the Commonwealth. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the typical goal setting process was not followed in October. Rather, the Superintendent was asked to give a broad summary on the district accomplishments during this unusual year, using the same categories as in the past.

Superintendent Phelan provided an overview of his 2020-2021 Year End Summative Evaluation including the goals listed below with applicable Superintendent Rubric standards.

Goal 1: Effective Strategic Planning

Topic: Short- and long-term planning in for return to learning during the 2020/21 pandemic school year
Superintendent Rubric:

- Standard I Instructional Leadership: (A) Lesson Development Support (B) Instructional Practices
- Standard II Management & Operations: (A) Environment Indicator (B) Human Resources Management & Development Indicator (C) Scheduling & Management Information Systems Indicator (E) Fiscal Systems
- Standard III Family and Community Engagement: (A) Engagement Indicator (C) Communications Indicator (D) Family Concerns Indicator
- Standard IV: (C) Communications Indicator (F) Managing Conflict Indicator

Goal

To lead the district through the strategic planning related to starting the 2020/21 academic year during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Goal 2: Effective Strategic Financial Planning

Topic: Strategic Short-Term and Long-Term Fiscal Planning to support the District's Financial and Educational Needs

Superintendent Rubric:

- Standard II Management and Operations (E) Fiscal Systems
- Standard III Family and Community Engagement (A) Engagement Community and Stakeholders
- Standard IV Professional Culture (C) Communication

Goal

To lead the district through the strategic fiscal planning for the next three years. This work will be conducted by the Superintendent's Cabinet Team and the Principal Team, alongside engagement with the School Committee, Warrant Committee, and Town leaders. The Superintendent will also participate on Belmont's Financial Task Force 2 Committee.

Goal 3: Student Learning Goal

Topic: Support all students so that they could access a variety of learning models during the COVID 19 pandemic with a particular focus on our underserved and special student populations.

Superintendent Rubric:

- Standard I: Instructional Leadership (B): Instructional – Meeting Diverse Needs
- Standard III: Family and Community Engagement (A) Engagement Indicator (B) Shared Responsibility Indicator (D) Family Concerns Indicator

Goal

To prioritize our most vulnerable students and families during the pandemic driven school year.

Goal 4: Professional Practice Goal

Topic: Supporting and Leading our team of administrative professionals during a pandemic in order to develop and exercise the skills of collaboration, listening, leading and negotiating with the Belmont Educators Association through our Joint Labor Management sessions.

Superintendent Rubric:

- Standard I: Instructional Leadership (D): Evaluation – Observation and Feedback
- Standard II: Management and Operations (A) Environment – Plans, Procedures and Routines (B) Human Resources Management and Development – Induction, Professional Development and Career Growth Strategies

Goal

To deepen the collaborative relationships in our administrative team and with our educators as we worked to open and successfully navigate the 2020-2021 school year.

General tasks not included in evaluation goals:

BEA Negotiations

Personnel

Belmont Middle and High school Building committee

COVID-19 health and safety

Lessons Learned:

Communication

Collaboration and Partnerships

Leadership and Decision Making

School Committee members offered comments and appreciation to Superintendent Phelan for his commitment and professionalism during this extraordinary year.

The School Committee was provided an evaluation form to complete and send to School Committee Chair Checkoway. A summary of the evaluation with comments will be created and discussed at the next School Committee meeting.

3.2 Federal Grant Update

Superintendent Phelan offered a presentation on the use of ESSER II and III money. (SC Document: FY22 ESSER Funds for SC Meeting 6.29.21) This version will reflect recommendations from the Finance Subcommittee meeting of June 15, 2021. ESSER II (\$456,001) grant application was submitted on June 25, 2021 and ESSER III (\$1,001,654) must be submitted by Oct 4, 2021. Other federal funding is coming to the Town of Belmont, but the amount is yet to be determined. Town administrators are also awaiting more specific guidance on fund usage.

The School Department would like to create synergy between the ESSER and ARP funds to create a 2-year plan in order to support students and school community during the post-pandemic time period. Town Administrators expressed an openness to explore matching school ESSER funds once ARP funds are made available to the Town. Belmont could receive up to \$6.2M in ARP funding and the School Department would like to receive \$1.4M of that appropriation. Superintendent Phelan anticipates a community discussion with the Town Select Board and School Department in August.

Superintendent Phelan reviewed the three spending options: Option I expends ESSER funds in Year One (\$1.4M); Option II expends \$1.4M of ESSER funds in Year One and \$1.4M of ARP funds in Year Two; Option III expends ESSER funds of \$700,000 in each of Year One and Year Two.

The list of prioritized one-time positions and professional development needs were viewed next, including hiring timelines. Superintendent Phelan asked School Committee members for their preference in presented options and whether they would want to be more aggressive with spending during FY22.

Committee member Crowley expressed his preference for Option II and would like to see the Select Board engage in decision making along with accelerated decision making by the Town Administrator to support the schools. Member Moriarty appreciated the collaborative process between the School Committee and School Department and inquired whether the district will be able to measure short-term

and long-term student gains from using federal funds. Member Bowen requested whether there were any shortages on the list and suggested keeping a cushion in the spending in anticipation of the equity audit and other possible positions. Chair Checkoway asked Mr. Phelan to speak to other items such as academic recovery and nurses that are not covered by ESSER II funds and expressed her support in also moving forward with the hiring positions to be covered by ESSER III funds. Superintendent Phelan noted the district would have some flexibility with the grants to be able to adjust positions and amend the grant in August.

After some discussion on the prioritized positions and needs, School Committee members supported the hiring process for items 1-14 (1, 3-4, 6, 8 using ESSER I funds and 2, 5, 7, 9-14 using ESSER III funds) with a check-in on hiring progress to confirm if changes are needed. An updated funded prioritized list will be distributed to the School Committee members.

3.3 Health Team Formation

Chair Checkoway introduced the next topic of discussion on the agenda as health decisions for next school year. School Committee members were asked if they would like to change from the current decision-making process. Superintendent Phelan acknowledged the work this past year of the health team, which included School Director of Nursing Rumley, Town Health Department Director, Chin, Town Nurse David Neylon, Health Department members Ekman and Sharp, and Superintendent Phelan. The decision making process was influenced by Chan School of Health metrics, CDC guidelines, State and local guidance and based on data. At this point, the Town Health Director does not feel the need to change current procedures.

School Committee members discussed the possibility of having additional team members going forward, by adding a community member with a health background or School Committee member to the group. More thought would be needed, and the SC agreed to revisit the topic in August with specific suggestions.

3.4 High School Pick-Up/Drop-Off Fall 2021

Superintendent Phelan indicated the Belmont Middle and High School construction site has moved from next to Harris Field to the other side of the current school building. The project is in a transition phase, which will change how Concord Avenue will be utilized for receiving students and staff. The Planning Board asked the School Department and School Committee to work with the Select Board to designate 50 parking spaces on the westbound side of Concord Avenue for student use only between 7:00 am and 3:00 pm while school is in session. The Board also requested a drop-off and pick-up plan for Concord Avenue.

Superintendent Phelan shared the Building Committee's plan for Concord Ave traffic patterns (School Committee Documents: [BMHSBC_ConcordAve_slides_6_29_21](#) and [FY22_Federal_ESSER_II_III_Budget_Proposal_3_0_SC_06_29_21](#)). The summary of changes cover no student or parent parking, drop-off, or pick-up on the building site. The circular driveway will be only for buses and staff parking.

Last week, Superintendent Phelan met with Police, Fire, DPW, Highway, Community Development heads to review the Concord Avenue drop-off and pick-up plan is in line with planning board expectations. The

group hopes to have community forum night in August before the start of school for this challenging environment of the building process Phase II.

School Committee members asked questions and made comments on the plan. Families were encouraged to find alternate ways to get to school such as by bus, carpool, walking, bicycle, or using an alternative drop-off spot as there will only be one hundred (100) student parking permits issued and will be on a first come first serve basis. Committee member Bowen inquired as to the location of the bus stop at the pedestrian triggered crosswalk signal and the location of temporary staff parking which was drawn in the incorrect location. Clarification of the correct locations would be sought from the Building Committee before the drawing is publicized to the community.

4. SUBCOMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES (as needed)

4.1 Finance Subcommittee- Met June 15th and reviewed Special Education Out of District spending and suggested putting a working group in place this summer.

4.2 Policy Subcommittee – Kate Bowen will chair the subcommittee. The group looked at policy 8006 and 8007 again and will work on language before bringing it back before the entire Committee; proposed a School Committee guide and the ability to vote one backup person to sign warrants on behalf of SC.

4.3 Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee - none

4.4 Capital Budget Committee meeting - none

4.5 Warrant Committee - Discussed the past year and had a final reading of recommendations of the FTF2 group. The work done with all Town departments was noteworthy and will flow into a new Town Finance Director position. The SC representative to the Warrant Committee will be Jamal Saeh going forward.

4.6 Belmont High School Building Committee - July 8 is the next full meeting. There have been weekly meetings with the design team. Many items have been moved to storage, older furniture repurposed. New furniture and technology deliveries begin the week of July 6.

4.7 Community Path -received funding

4.8 Financial Task Force II – FTF meeting next week to close out recommendations.

4.9 Rink Working Group –The group is looking into funding. A SC representative will be assigned to the group.

4.10 EDCO – EDCO Board meeting is scheduled for September and they are transitioning as an organization. The SC will need to assign a representative again in September.

4.11 Long Term Capital Planning Committee - none

4.12 Equity Subcommittee- Met on June 11th and went over the final job description for position

4.13 Structural Change Impact Committee- Met in subgroups and gave top 5 recommendations. They will meet as larger group next.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 Consent Agenda - Minutes approval was moved to this agenda item. Three of the twelve sets of minutes were approved. Edits will be incorporated into the others and placed on the agenda for Friday, July 2, 2021.

5.2 Personnel Items

5.3 Business Items

5.4 Approval of Minutes

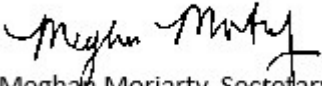
- Finance Subcommittee Minutes of March 30, 2021
- Finance Subcommittee Minutes of May 11, 2021
- Finance Subcommittee Minutes of May 18, 2021

On a motion offered by Amy Checkoway, and seconded by Mike Crowley, it was VOTED on a roll call vote (4-0-1) to approve the Finance Subcommittee Minutes of March 30, May 11, and May 18, 2021.

6. ADJOURN

On a motion offered by Mike Crowley and seconded by Kate Bowen, it was VOTED unanimously on a roll call vote (5-0-0) to adjourn the meeting at 9:29 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:


Meghan Moriarty, Secretary