

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**REMOTE MEETING**  
**May 11, 2021**

Present: Ms. Amy Checkoway, Chair  
Ms. Meghan Moriarty, Secretary  
Ms. Andrea Prestwich  
Ms. Kate Bowen  
Mr. Michael Crowley  
Mr. Jamal Saeh  
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

Committee Chair Amy Checkoway called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

1.2 Citizen's Concerns

*Jennipher Burgess – Offered support of including the equity/inclusion director in position in the budget with the recent rise in racial graffiti and actions and its value with inclusion.*

1.3 Adjustments to the Agenda

MCAS Resolution agenda item will be removed.

1.4 Chair's Report

Last week was Teacher appreciation week. The Chair thanked all educators for their work and the Foundation for Belmont Education (FBE) and Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO) for their efforts to honor teachers. SEPAC is holding a parent information session on May 13 from 6 to 8 pm. The Student Advisory Council will offer their report tonight. Chair Checkoway expressed appreciation for respectful conversation between School Committee, School Administration, Warrant Committee, Select Board and community members with the difficult decisions about the FY22 budget.

1.5 Superintendent's Report

Updated protocols on quarantine and close contacts were communicated via email to all families, falling in line with DESE recommendations and with the support of Nursing Director Rumley. The Superintendent also thanked the FBE for Outstanding Teacher Awards, this year awarded to all educators and staff members with a gift card from local merchants. He also thanked all the parent volunteers, PTOs, Boosters who helped cover lunches and recess this year.

## 1.6 Student Advisory Council Report

Student representative Laura Jansen reported on end of the year items and events. Currently, students are taking AP exams and will begin senior activities such as the senior prom, drive-in movie, senior sunrise and graduation. Student representative Grace Kane reported on the athletic teams that are playing in the current season. Grace highlighted freshman track runner Ellie Shea, who qualified for nationals in the mile and 2 mile and ran the 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest mile in the country for freshmen. In the Arts Department the orchestra partnered with a nonprofit to put on a fundraiser and virtual concert. PAC hosted an impromptu improv show at Clay Pit Pond for the community. She also noted the spring musical is "Some Enchanted Evening".

## 2. MAJOR BUSINESS

### 2.1 FY22 Budget (Vote)

This past week the School Committee and Finance Subcommittee have been discussing the budget in attempts to finalize reductions in the amount \$2.07M. This morning's Finance Subcommittee meeting produced good dialogue between School Committee members with their preferred reductions and restoration of items.

Superintendent Phelan reviewed the Draft Reduction Menu Options-Superintendent's Recommendations with included Committee members requested changes from last week's presentation. (*SC Public Document: FY22 Draft Reduction Options – Superintendent Recommendations 5.11.21*) The recommendations include restoration of two (2) Special Education Elementary Chairs and the District-wide Equity Director. The existing teaching positions that will be reduced are two Kindergarten, one Grade 1 and one Grade 4. Two High School position will be reduced, but the FTEs will be reallocated to help with class sizes.

All Fine and Performing Arts clubs except for three will be restored, as will all middle and high school athletic sports. Athletic reductions come with the equipment manager position, uniforms and scrimmages. Other stipend reductions include Washington DC program coordinator, detention monitors, Science Olympiad, Belmontonian and debate club. The last category of cuts will be one-time reductions to operating and revolving accounts, contract allowances professional development, technology. Regular transportation proposed cuts will eliminate busing in Grades 9-12 and will reduce buses from 10 to 8.

Superintendent Phelan next reviewed a possible answer for transportation cuts, and Director of Finance DiCologero offered a busing reduction analysis. Each year the district is required to use 10% of the IDEA grant to study a specific topic for the district. For a few years, the district has been looking into special education elementary chairs and the Director of Student Services, Ken Kramer, suggests including one such position in this year's IDEA grant, as this year the grant must be use for disproportionality. School Committee members asked clarifying questions and voiced that they were not in favor of reducing transportation. Chair Checkoway indicated consensus for using the IDEA grant for one elementary special education chair position.

School Committee members reviewed overall budget reductions and asked final clarifying questions. Restoring transportation and using the IDEA grant for one elementary special education chair, leaves \$8,500 in cuts, which will come from central office supplies. (*SC Public Document: FY22 Draft Reduction Options – SC Budget Hearing Voted 5.11.21*)

Chair Checkoway took questions and comments from community members.

*Patrick Whittemore – Thanked committee for keeping freshman sports.*

*Jack Weis – Asked a question about the IDEA grant and whether there was a net increase in the grant and if its utilization for the special education chairs will be a “one-time” use.*

*Jeff Liberty – Question why the Chenery upper school positions were not funded. Also asked Superintendent Phelan what parents would see without adding these teachers.*

Final School Committee comments specified the understanding that there is fluidity in the process as they await definitive federal funding amounts. The district may be faced with additional budget reductions for FY23 and should begin the budget process earlier next year. Member Bowen suggests meeting to discuss a plan for prioritizing future funding.

**On a motion offered by Amy Checkoway and seconded by Mike Crowley, it was VOTED unanimously (6-0-0) on a roll call vote to approve the School Department FY22 Budget of \$66,205,558.**

### **3. SUBCOMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES**

Rink Working Group- There is a Joint meeting tomorrow with the Select Board.

Capital Budget Committee - Will provide an update at the May 25 School Committee meeting.

Curriculum and Instruction – Meeting on May 17 to go over accelerated math program.

Financial Task Force 2 - Meeting on May 14 to review American Rescue Plan.

Finance Subcommittee – Meeting on May 18 followed with Executive Session.

### **4. OTHER BUSINESS**

- 4.1 Consent Agenda - None
- 4.2 Personnel Items – None
- 4.3 Business Items – None
- 4.4 Approval of Minutes

- School Committee Minutes of March 30, 2021

**On a motion offer by Michael Crowley, and seconded by Kate Bowen, the School Committee approved the School Committee Minutes of March 30, 2021 (3-0-3)**

Bowen, Crowley, Checkoway – aye; Prestwich, Moriarty, Saeh-abstain

- Finance Subcommittee Minutes of April 8, 2021

**On a motion offer by Michael Crowley, and seconded by Kate Bowen, the School Committee approved the Finance Subcommittee Minutes of April 8, 2021 (5-0-1)**

Bowen, Crowley, Moriarty, Saeh, Checkoway - aye; Prestwich - abstain

- Finance Subcommittee Minutes of April 13, 2021


**On a motion offer by Amy Checkoway, and seconded by Michael Crowley, the School Committee approved the Finance Subcommittee Minutes of April 13, 2021 (5-0-1-)**

Bowen, Crowley, Moriarty, Saeh, Checkoway - aye; Prestwich - abstain

**3. ADJOURNED**

**On a motion offered by Mike Crowley and seconded by Andrea Prestwich, it was VOTED unanimously on a roll call vote to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

  
Meghan Moriarty, Secretary