

BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES

REMOTE MEETING

APRIL 26, 2022

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: June 6, 2022
TIME: 9:11 AM

Present: Ms. Meghan Moriarty, Chair
Ms. Amy Checkoway, Secretary
Ms. Kate Bowen
Mr. Michael Crowley
Mr. Jeffrey Liberty
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

Chair Moriarty called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

1.2 Citizens' Concerns - none

1.3 Adjustments to the Agenda - none

1.4 Chair's Report

Chair Moriarty shared some upcoming community events:

- Belmont Safe Routes to School – Walk, Bike and Roll Day - May 4
- SEPAC meeting on ADHD as a Comorbidity - April 28
- Belmont Wellness Coalition events: April 27 Conversation “How to support LGBTQ+ Youth” and May 3 “Understanding Youth Mental Health”

1.5 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Phelan shared some school news and reminders:

- The FBE will recognize seven educators at the Outstanding Teachers Awards on May 6 at BHS.
- The last day of school is June 22, 2022.
- BHS Graduation will be on Saturday, June 4, 2022; the rain date is Sunday, June 5, 2022.

2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- School Committee Minutes of April 12, 2022
- School Committee Open Session Minutes of April 15, 2022 Executive Session
- School Committee Joint Meeting with SB, WC, LTCPC, CBC Minutes of February 16, 2022 – *approval moved to future meeting*

On a motion offered by Jeff Liberty and seconded by Jamal Saeh, it was voted unanimously (6-0-0) on a roll call vote to approve the of School Committee minutes of April 12, 2022.

On a motion offered by Mike Crowley and seconded by Kate Bowen, it was voted unanimously (6-0-0) on a roll call vote to approve the of School Committee Open Session minutes of April 15, 2022.

4. MAJOR BUSINESS

4.1 FY23 Budget – Public Hearing

Chair Moriarty gave a brief outline of the budget process and timeline noting previous School Committee and Finance Subcommittee meetings and discussions. The School Committee has sought to align school needs with financial responsibility and has asked Superintendent Phelan to reach out to principals to understand their needs and feedback.

Superintendent Phelan presented the FY23 Draft 2 Public Budget Hearing slides (*SD Document: FY23_Draft2_Budget-SC_Public_Budget_Hearing_2022-04-26*). Recent budget work was approached with data in mind for three key areas: academic recovery, mental health recovery, and equity and access. Mr. Phelan acknowledged that the goals of the district are reliant on and restricted by a limited general funds budget and one-time federal funds, and noted that the Town of Belmont is dependent upon one-time funds to balance the FY23 budget. The School Department Draft 1 budget reductions of \$2.3M were made to support the Town's financial constraints, resulting in the Draft 2 budget amount of approximately \$67,072,456. Next, Superintendent reviewed proposed new positions required to address current student needs, which totaled 6.2 FTEs. Superintendent Phelan also indicated that there have been over 30 meetings throughout the budget process that have resulted in two Draft 2 FY23 budget options for consideration. The first option includes funding for 6.2 new FTEs and the second includes funding for 3.2 new FTEs, with the hope that Belmont may receive additional Chapter 70 funds above the Governor's budget proposal and/or can identify other funding to cover the remaining three positions.

Chair Moriarty took questions and comments from the community.

Bill Anderson- clarified the use of the term "reduction" is from the additional increase from the FY22 budget. Mr. Anderson reminded the administration of the last three years' total budget figures (\$71.1M to 73M to 76.2M).

Some School Committee members were comfortable with the 3.5% increase each year for a district of this size, as student needs have likely increased more than that amount. Member Crowley asked about a potential increase in Chapter 70 funds the timing of funding receipt and use.

Chair Moriarty informed everyone that the next Finance Subcommittee meeting will be May 3, 2022.

4.2 Policy Subcommittee Vote

- Dedication of Buildings and Facilities Policy
- Vaccine Mandate for Extra-Curriculars

Chair Moriarty summarized updates to the Dedication of Buildings and Facilities policy (*SC Document: SC_Policy_7003_Dedication_of_Buildings_and_Facilities_DRAFT_SC.pdf*) which intend to make the policy more inclusive of the entire Belmont community and not specific to a donation. The first reading occurred at the March 3 Policy Subcommittee meeting. SC members asked clarifying questions.

On a motion offered by Amy Checkoway and seconded by Kate Bowen, it was voted unanimously (6-0-0) on a roll call vote to approve SC Policy 7003 - Dedication of Buildings and Facilities with minor updates.

Superintendent Phelan next reminded everyone the rationale behind the vaccination mandate for extracurricular activities, which was to both incentivize students to be vaccinated and to keep all students and staff safe. Mr. Phelan explained tracking for the mandate was complicated as students turn 16 throughout the year and currently, approximately 97% of students affected by the mandate are vaccinated. The Administration believes that the high level of vaccinations and spring outdoor activities can allow for a pause on policy 5005-B.

Chair Moriarty took comments from SC members.

Member Saeh inquired if vaccination rates are currently higher than at the last meeting. Member Liberty asked how long the pause is and indicated he is not comfortable saying vaccines are less important. Mr. Liberty also inquired if any students opted out of extra-curricular activities due to the mandate. Members Bowen and Checkoway expressed support for pausing the policy for the remaining 8 weeks of school. Member Saeh questioned the benefit of suspending the mandate. Chair Moriarty asked if the testing program will continue through the end of year.

There were no comments from public, although one email was received in favor of pausing the mandate.

On a motion offered by Amy Checkoway, and seconded by Mike, it was voted unanimously (6-0-0) to suspend the extra-curricular vaccine mandate Policy 5005-B for eight weeks.

4.3 Article 3 Bylaw Amendment to Capital Budget Committee (vote)

Chris Doyle of the LTCPC joined to discuss updates to the Article 3 Bylaw amendment regarding the Capital Budget Committee. She had joined a School Committee meeting earlier in the fall as well. The School Committee has a voting member on the committee. Ms. Doyle recommended voting on the Article 3 Bylaw amendment tonight and not the additional Article 3 amendments, as there may be more iterations by the April 27 deadline. Member Bowen asked if there were any major changes since the last meeting.

On a motion offered by Kate Bowen and seconded by Amy Checkoway, it was voted unanimously to approve the proposed Article 3 Bylaw Amendment of the Capital Budget Committee (6-0-0).

Chris Doyle summarized two potential amendments to the Capital Budget Committee that can be voted at a future date. As a response to a member inquiry, Ms. Doyle indicated the financial analysis models in her view better fit under procedures and not the Bylaw itself.

4.4 Committee Assignments 2021/22 Update

Chair Moriarty proposed a School Committee retreat to discuss/review subcommittee and liaison assignments for next year. For the remainder of the school year, member Liberty will take Mr. Jones' spot on the Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee and will replace member Crowley on the Equity Subcommittee. Moriarty also proposed a review of the process for the Superintendent's Evaluation at this retreat. Member Bowen reminded the group that she resigned from the High School Traffic Group.

Discussion occurred on the dates for the retreat and an additional SC meeting date to discuss the FY23 budget in advance of the joint meeting with the Select Board, Warrant Committee, and Capital Budget Committee. Member Checkoway suggested asking Belmont Media Center to record the extra budget meeting.

4.5 Math Working Group Member Selection

At the March 23 SC meeting, the School Committee expressed support for the formation of a Math Working Group. Chair Moriarty reviewed the charge of the group, approximate timeline, and process for member

selection. Together with co-facilitators, Karla Koza and Jonathan Golden, and external math expert from Harvard University Jon Star, representatives were chosen randomly by Chair Moriarty for the math educator, historically underrepresented/underserved, special education group and math parents groups. Moriarty reported that 29 names were submitted and the following individuals were randomly chosen:

BPS Math educators- *Brenton Lussier, Dan Moresco, Jennifer Bruschi*

Parents of historically underrepresented/underserved group- *Lara Guzman-Hosta, Ryan Williamson*

Parents of students receiving Special Education support – *Sandi Gubin, Anne Pareti*

Parents of math group – *Jeffrey Licht, Rui Zhao*

Space will be provided on the BPS website to share documents.

5. SUBCOMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES

EDCO: Member Checkoway shared that the EDCO Board continues to meet and is currently on track for dissolving the organization by June 30.

Rink Design Group: Chair Moriarty shared that the group canceled their presentation scheduled for the previous SC meeting because they did not have pricing and field configuration information at that time. The architect will present to the rink group tomorrow morning.

BMHSBC: Member Bowen shared that the building committee has an upcoming meeting on Thursday to go over net zero and potential ARPA funding.

Policy Subcommittee: Member Bowen shared that the meeting initially posted for April 25 will be rescheduled.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 Consent Agenda - None

6.2 Personnel Items - None

6.3 Business Items - None

7. ADJOURN

On a motion offered by Kate Bowen and seconded by Amy Checkoway, it was voted unanimously (6-0-0) on a roll call vote to adjourn the meeting at 8:49 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:

