

BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES

REMOTE MEETING

MAY 9, 2022

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

Present: Kate Bowen, Subcommittee Chair
Mike Crowley, Subcommittee Secretary
Meghan Moriarty
Superintendent John Phelan

DATE: September 14, 2022
TIME: 2:13 PM

Subcommittee Chair Bowen called the meeting to order at 12:02pm.

Approval of Minutes

Crowley moved approval of the 2/24/2022 minutes, Moriarty seconded, and the vote to approve was 3-0.

Moriarty moved approval of the minutes of 4/11/2022, Crowley seconded, and the vote to approve was 3-0.

Policy on Public Participation

Bowen shared the current MASC guidance BE and BEDH which generally correspond to School Committee policy 1006 and 1006-P [procedure]. 1006 is very simple, just basically defining what is a meeting. 1006-P provides detailed procedures comparable to guidance policy BEDH, which discusses the nature of participation by the public. The Executive Summary of the recent "equity audit" includes recommendations for public participation in School Committee meetings. It suggests that procedures should be "clear, context-centered, and readily available to community members." Bowen shared and read a draft of a new policy 1006 (bedh) and procedures 1006 P based on the MASC guidance as well as peer districts. She recommends aligning with the MASC guidance policy.

There was discussion of the chair's discretion to allow comments or not at School Committee meetings, as well as an occasional practice on the Finance subcommittee of recognizing Select Board or Warrant Committee members apart from other public comments or questions, which may be problematic. The Superintendent said that a potential workaround could be to always call on other members of the public, too. Moriarty raised a question about allowing comments, but not on items on the agenda. The Superintendent said that past practice generally has been to allow comments and questions at the end of each agenda item. Crowley raised the issue of potential comments from nonresidents at meetings. Bowen indicated that Open Meeting Law does not allow discrimination against nonresidents per an Attorney General opinion. Discussion referenced policy 8012 Public Participation. Moriarty raised a question about complaints made about school personnel and asked whether the policy should address this. Complaint

procedures are now available on the policy site but are limited in detail. The Superintendent suggested that to preserve confidentiality, complaints about personnel only be made by email or in writing. Crowley said that he would also like to take a look at the issue of comments made on issues not within the School Committee's jurisdiction and what the Open Meeting Law implications would be.

Policy on Homework

Bowen briefly discussed potentially revisiting homework policy, 6014, wanting to be responsive to the equity audit for other cultural events or economic hardship, in parallel with the forbearance given excusing homework for reasons of religious observance. The subcommittee discussed language that would reflect the intention and agreed to review that draft at a subsequent meeting.

(Crowley departed the meeting at 1pm.)

Other

Bowen pointed to the tracking spreadsheet and the suggested documents that we will need to check our policies against as we update them. The subcommittee members would review and any suggestions would be taken up at the next meeting.

Bowen adjourned the meeting at 1:02pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:



Amy Checkoway