



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
READING, MA.
2023 JUN 26 AM 7:40

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

School Committee

Date: 2023-05-25

Time: 7:00 PM

Building:

Location:

Address:

Session: Open Session

Purpose: Open Session

Version: Final

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Shawn Brandt, Carla Nazzaro, Erin Gaffen, Charles Robinson

Members - Not Present:

Tom Wise and Sarah McLaughlin

Others Present:

Superintendent Dr. Tom Milaschewski, Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching Dr. Sarah Hardy, Student Jayda Hayes, and METCO Director Kurtis Martin

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Olivia Lejeune on behalf of the chairperson.

Topics of Discussion:

A. Call to Order – Mr. Brandt called the meeting to order at 7:04pm reviewing the agenda and thanking Milly Arbaje-Thomas for hosting the committee at the METCO Headquarters.

B. Public Comment – None

Consent Agenda

1. Minutes (05-08-2023)
2. RMHS Band Parents Organization Donation
3. Friends of Reading Wrestling Donation
4. Coolidge Middle School Natures Classroom Field Trip Request
5. RMHS Varsity Lacrosse Field Trip Request
6. REF Grant Donation: Additional Funding

Ms. Nazzaro motioned to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Mr. Robinson, vote passed 4-0.

Reports

1. Student – Jayda Hayes reported seniors had their last day of classes last week, prom was last night, and graduation is next Friday, June 2nd. Everyone is very excited for the elementary school visits in which seniors get to go back to their elementary school in their cap and gown to see past teachers. Mr. Brandt thanked Jayda for her time serving as the student representative on the School Committee.

2. Assistant Superintendent of Student Services – No report
3. Assistant Superintendent of Learning & Teaching – No report
4. Director of Finance and Operations – No Report
5. Superintendent – Dr. Milaschewski thanked Jayda Hayes for her time as the student representative on the School Committee. She has been a thoughtful and engaged member. Jayda is a model student who carries herself well within the community.

Dr. Milaschewski reported on the following items:

- a. We have hired a new RISE Director Kerry Wilcox. Kerry has been a Special Education teacher for over 20 years and more recently a Pre-K Director at Billerica Public Schools. We look forward to welcoming her at the start of the new school year.
 - b. We just completed the first round of interviews in the search for the Director of Finance & Operations position, but unfortunately, did not move forward with an offer with a candidate. The position has been reposted as a one-year interim position, but also a regular long-term position. We will continue to move this process forward.
6. Liaison/Sub-Committee
- a. Mr. Robinson – The Policy Subcommittee met with students regarding a facilities policy and received good feedback. The subcommittee has approved amendments to policy DIE which is regarding audits and DK which is payment procedures. Mr. Robinson also reported the Symonds Way Exploratory Committee will meet on Tuesday to discuss and consider expanding the scope of work.
 - b. Ms. Gaffen – SEPAC held a viewing of The Anxious Nation last week, which was very hard to watch, but also very powerful. The viewing ended on a hopeful note, and it is suggested to check it out if you have the chance. PAIR will be hosting a Juneteenth event on Saturday, June 24th and we hope to have a good turnout for that.
 - c. Ms. Nazzaro – The Killam Building Committee has met multiple times in the last few weeks and received six Owner’s Project Management Request for Services of which four were brought in for interviews. The committee has created a subcommittee to interview the companies. All of the companies were impressive and after narrowing down the list, Terva was the number one choice. The Town Manager is entering into negotiations with Terva and this will be added to the MSBA Board Meeting for approval.
 - d. Mr. Brandt – On behalf of Mr. Wise, Mr. Brandt noted the Legal Counsel Subcommittee is interviewing finalists to select a firm with the intention of recommending a finalist to the School Committee at the June 22nd meeting.

E. New Business

1. Comments from Milly Arbaje-Thomas, METCO President & CEO

It is so nice to have the district come to the headquarters for this official meeting. Milly Arbaje-Thomas shared a presentation discussing the background of the METCO Program and future plans. Throughout the presentation, members of the school committee, RPS leadership and community members asked thought-provoking questions which led to discussions about commutes and locations for METCO students and the hope to open more opportunities for advanced coursework. Milly Arbaje-Thomas reminded the group to insist that change can happen.

Ms. Nazzaro motioned to move items E3 and E4 out of order, seconded by Mr. Robinson, vote passed 4-0.

2. Friends of Reading METCO (FORMETCO) Introduction

The Friends of Reading METCO introduced themselves and gave some background on their mission as a non-profit. They also discussed the impact this community has had on them as parents and their students. FORMETCO is recruiting Boston parents to be part of the organization. This group is about relationship building and creating a community for those part of the METCO program. Please check out the website for more information and consider joining the board: [Friends of Reading METCO](#).

3. Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) Introduction

SEPAC board members introduced themselves to the group. A board member who is the parent of a student with dyslexia discussed how the Reading Public Schools District helped diagnose her student and the impact that has made on her education. SEPAC provides advocacy for students with disabilities and is a resource for all parents. It was noted by a board member that it can be overwhelming, but it is important to have all voices at the table to ensure your students get the support they need. SEPAC has a new website where you can find further information and learn how to get resources or be more involved: <https://sepac.reading.k12.ma.us/>.

4. Reading METCO Update

METCO Director Kurtis Martin shared a presentation about the program and the growth over the last two years. When first starting in Reading as the METCO Director, Kurtis Martin had three goals: 1. Increase enrollment. 2. Increasing staffing, and 3. Provide late buses for students. He had a drive to be the best district which meant making some changes. Since then, the district has increased enrollment from 47 students to 103 students, adding seven METCO Coordinators, and adding late buses. Growing enrollment puts Reading within the top 10 biggest METCO programs in the state. The group had discussions about METCO Coordinators being stretched thin as they are addressing student needs for the entire school not just the METCO program. The coordinator position is a dual role funded out of the operating and METCO budget. Kurtis Martin discussed some of the cultural events the program has offered over the year specifically mentioning the Black History Month event in which a local Boston restaurant took over the cafeteria to serve lunch at the high school. Mr. Brandt noted this presentation will be shared in the packet and reposted.

5. Final Vote on 2023-2024 Budget and Capital Plan (A)

Ms. Nazzaro motioned to approve the Final FY24 Operating and Capital Budgets for Reading Public Schools, as appropriated by Annual Town Meeting in April, 2023, seconded by Mr. Robinson, vote passed 4-0.

C. Personnel

1. Review Superintendent Review Process/Timeline

Mr. Brandt introduced the process and timeline for the superintendent evaluation. A memo was provided in the packet as a refresher of the goals and focus indicators chosen in September. As a reminder, the only indicators to rate are the nine focus indicators mentioned in the memo. Committee members will submit a draft evaluation no later than June 11th. Preliminary meetings to review the draft evaluations will take place the following week and by Friday, June 16th revisions will be submitted. Mr. Brandt will create a consensus evaluation for the committee to review and vote on at the June 22nd School Committee meeting.

Ms. Nazzaro made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Robinson, vote passed 4-0.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cIVF7uB5iTE>
Meeting Adjourned 9:27pm.