



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

School Committee

Date: 2023-08-24

Time: 6:00 PM

Building: School - Memorial High

Location: School Library

Address: 62 Oakland Road

Session: Open Session

Purpose: Open Session

Version: Final

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Shawn Brandt, Carla Nazzaro, Erin Gaffen, Tom Wise, Charles Robinson and Sarah McLaughlin

Members - Not Present:

Others Present:

Superintendent Dr. Thomas Milaschewski, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services Dr. Jennifer Stys, and Director of Finance and Operations Dr. Derek Pinto

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

Topics of Discussion:

A. **Call to Order** – Mr. Wise called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. to review the agenda.

B. **Public Comment** – None

Consent Agenda

1. Minutes (08-10-2023)
2. Warrant Reports (8-10-2023 and 8-17-2023)

Mrs. Gaffen motioned to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Mr. Brandt, and the vote passed 6-0.

C. Personnel

1. Appointment of Superintendent to MSBA Killam Designer Selection Panel (A)

Mrs. Nazzaro gave a brief overview of the MSBA designer selection process and panel. After receiving clarification, the memo in the packet is updated to reflect membership information. The MSBA would like to see the Superintendent, Town Manager, and someone from the building committee on the panel. After a review of the town charter, the town council suggested each board vote to assign their representative to the panel.

Mrs. Gaffen motioned to appoint Dr. Milaschewski, the Superintendent of Reading Public Schools, to the Massachusetts School Building Authorities designer selection

panel for the Killam School Building Project. The motion was seconded by Mr. Robinson, the vote passed 6-0.

E. New Business

1. Review and Approval of District-Wide Student Handbook (A)

Dr. Stys provided the committee with an update on the District-Wide Student Handbook. Last year, we made some great gains in standardizing the handbook. This year we worked towards making the handbook more user-friendly. Dr. Stys pointed out that the handbook is designed to notify legal requirements, so it tends to feel more technical. We have linked the laws within the handbook and added a table of contents that directly links to each section of the handbook.

Mrs. Gaffen motioned to approve the District-Wide Student Handbook, seconded by Mrs. Nazzaro. The committee discussed the removal of sex education in the handbook and translation requirements for technical language. It was noted some links do not work for those looking at the handbook outside of the district. Dr. Stys ensured the links would be reviewed and updated. After no further discussion, the vote passed 6-0.

2. Outline Community Math Pathways Committee Timeline, Process, & Expectations

Dr. Milaschewski provided the committee with a brief update on the process for the Community Math Pathways Committee. In the packet, there is a memo outlining what to expect. Before the next School Committee meeting on September 7th, we will have the launch of the Math Pathways Committee. This will be a recorded, virtual meeting that can be shared afterward. The plan is to discuss in more detail the plan going forward. Given the urgency of this project, the committee would close out their findings by November 2nd and make a recommendation to the administration on the best path forward therefore, we do anticipate some movement on this item in the next few months. It is important to have community involvement and that has helped us in the past.

Meetings will be held open to the public so even if you are not on the committee, you would be welcome to join and listen in to the conversation happening at the table.

D. Old Business

1. Second Reading – DBDA – Special Education Reserve Fund (A)

Mrs. Gaffen motioned to approve the second reading of policy DBDA – Special Education Reserve Fund, seconded by Mr. Brandt. Mr. Wise opened it up for conversation in which the committee reviewed proposed edits. After no further discussion, the vote passed 6-0.

2. Liaison, Subcommittee, and Charter Review Committee Appointment Notification

Mr. Wise briefly summarized the memo in the packet. Mr. Robinson has been appointed to the Charter Review Committee, Mr. Wise and Mr. Brandt will pick up the Select Board, Mr. Brandt will pick up the Finance Committee and Mrs. Gaffen will pick up the Coalition.

E. New Business

3. Policy Updates – Review and Vote on Amended Policies (A):

Mrs. Gaffen motioned to waive the reading of all policies in section E3 of the agenda, seconded by Mr. Brandt, the vote passed 6-0.

Mr. Wise reviewed the following policies, and the committee discussed each one individually:

Policy ADF: Mrs. Gaffen motioned to adopt policy ADF – School District Wellness Program, seconded by Ms. Nazzaro, and the vote passed 6-0.

Policy DJE: Mrs. Gaffen motioned to adopt policy DJE – Procurement Requirements, seconded by Mr. Brandt, and the vote passed 6-0.

Policy KCD: Mrs. Gaffen motioned to adopt policy KCD – Public Gifts to the Schools as amended, seconded by Ms. Nazzaro, and the vote passed 6-0.

Policy DBJ: Mrs. Gaffen motioned to adopt policy DBJ – Budget Transfer Authority, seconded by Mr. Brant, and the vote passed 6-0.

4. Appointment of School Committee Member to Wellness Committee

Mr. Wise stated this appointment was briefly discussed in the ADF policy conversation. The intent is for this committee to meet quarterly and have a School Committee member appointed. Mrs. Gaffen volunteered to be appointed to the Wellness Committee. Mr. Wise appointed Mrs. Gaffen to the Wellness Committee

B. Reports

1. Assistant Superintendent of Student Services – Dr. Stys thanked SEPAC for speaking at our leadership meetings with principals, assistant principals, and team chairs. This week we kicked off our new staff orientation with 57 new staff attending. It has been an exciting week and we are thrilled to have such enthusiastic and talented new staff. Some of the highlights include the teaching staff receiving an overview of reading and the brain, training on target literacy instruction, Crafting Minds Progress Monitoring training, and Seeing Stars training. Thank you to the committee for the support around literacy in the district.
2. Director of Finance and Operations – Dr. Pinto updated the committee starting with IT. The team distributed freshman laptops last week ahead of schedule. The Food Service Department is finishing up the installation of new equipment. Transportation routes have been finalized and we have met with the transportation company to make slight adjustments. Dr. Pinto and Ms. Lejeune will be riding the bus on the first day of school.

3. Superintendent – Dr. Milaschewski reminded the committee that staff start back on Monday and we welcome students back on Wednesday. We are still hiring for a few positions, so please let us know if you have anyone interested.
4. Liaison/Sub-Committee
 - a. Mr. Robinson – SWEC has met twice and both meetings were held to discuss the RFI and finalization. There has also been a recreation meeting in which pickleball was the highlight of the discussion.
 - b. Mrs. Nazzaro – The Killam School Building Committee meets regularly. At the last meeting, the Request for Services document was discussed, and it is going out soon to be submitted to the MSBA. The committee has been presented with two separate schedules from the MSBA in which the more accelerated schedule was approved.
 - c. Mr. Brandt – No Report
 - d. Ms. McLaughlin – No Report
 - e. Mrs. Gaffen – No Report
 - f. Mr. Wise – The Finance Committee met and free cash, while not fully certified, was reported at \$18.1 million, which is below the approximately \$19 million that was certified last year. The stabilization fund is still where it was. That is quite good considering what was spent out of free cash last year.

Another thing for the committee to note, some things have been pushed back in meetings given other topics so the next meeting will be a bit heavier with one item specifically being the superintendent goal discussion. The committee will also discuss the RMHS student handbook and review a presentation on the MBTA communities.

G. Executive Session

1. Joint Session with the Finance Committee – To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body (Reading Teachers Association, Paraprofessionals, and Secretaries)

Ms. Gaffen motioned to enter into joint Executive Sessions and not return to open session with the Finance Committee to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining Reading Teachers Association, Reading Paraeducators Association, and Reading Administrative Secretaries Association as the chair states an open meeting will have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Reading School Committee, seconded by Ms. Nazzaro.

Roll Call Vote – Roll Call Vote to adjourn to Executive Session, Mr. Robinson – yes, Ms. Nazzaro – yes, Mr. Brandt – yes, Ms. McLaughlin – yes, Ms. Gaffen – yes, and Mr. Wise – yes. The vote passed 6-0.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucg6sw2qzL4>
Meeting Adjourned 6:52pm