

Regular Meeting  
November 7, 2016  
School Committee Meeting  
Council Chambers

The regular meeting of the Medford School Committee was called to order by Mayor Burke in the City Hall Council Chambers at 7:02 p.m. Those present were Ms. Cugno, Ms. Kreatz, Ms. Mustone, Mr. Skerry, Ms. Van der Kloot, Mayor Burke and Superintendent Belson. Ms. DiBenedetto was absent.

On the motion of Mr. Skerry seconded by Ms. Cugno that the minutes of October 17, 2016 be approved:

Vote:

Yes: 6

No: 0

Absent: 1

On the motion of Mr. Skerry seconded by Ms. Van der Kloot that the Bills/Transfer of Funds be approved:

Voted: That the Bills/Transfer of Funds be approved.

Roll Call:

Yea: 6 Cugno, Kreatz, Mustone, Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 DiBenedetto

On the motion of Mr. Skerry seconded by Ms. Van der Kloot that the payrolls be approved

Roll Call:

Yea: 6 Cugno, Kreatz, Mustone, Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 DiBenedetto,

Committee of the Whole Meeting – October 24, 2016

Member Van der Kloot read the minutes of the meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Senior Member Paulette Van der Kloot at 6:45 p.m. in the Superintendent's Conference Room at Medford High School.

Members Present:

Erin DiBenedetto, Kathy Kreatz, Mea Mustone, Robert Skerry Jr. and Paulette Van der Kloot. 5 present, 2 absent.

Also present: Superintendent Roy Belson, Headmaster John Perella, Vocational Principal Director Heidi Riccio, Director of Buildings and Grounds John McLaughlin and parent Cheryl Rodriguez.

All rose to salute the flag.

Chairperson Van der Kloot stated that the purpose of the meeting was to review the high school/vocational school elements of the proposed capital plan and to do a selected tour of the facility. She then called upon Superintendent Belson for an overview of the evening's meeting and mission.

The Superintendent handed out additional copies of the capital plan and a prepared document proposal from the vocational school. The Superintendent stated that it would not be possible to view the entire high school/vocational in one evening but that the Headmaster and Vocational Principal along with Director McLaughlin would identify priority sites for viewing. The topic of overall technology upgrades would be referred to a subsequent session since this was a major topic with system wide implications. Major systems like the roof and HVAC must be part of our overall planning as well. We have done a roof study and will have recommendations in the near future. The Superintendent then explained that “capital planning” must be focused on major projects. General maintenance upgrades for the most part belong in an enhanced operational budget. Also that school system capital needs would be part of a larger citywide initiative. Further, it is important that we view capital plan issues not only as upgrades to facilities but also as part of a long term vision for the development of school system capacity and educational opportunities. As we have recaptured certain out of district payments we must re-invest in our programs in a strategic manner and anticipate the future not just upgrade the present facility. Committee members recognized the capital mission but wanted the administration to plan for greater maintenance investment going forward.

The Committee then began a tour of selected sites lead by the Headmaster, Vocational Principal/Director and Buildings and Grounds Director. Headmaster Perella led a tour of the existing library. He focused on the ways the library has been altered from its original design over the past 45 years. He noted that natural lighting has been lost to the addition of several office spaces. Also that the general condition of the library had deteriorated. It would be his plan to re-design the library into an open space media center reflecting upon the advance of technology. The library would flow into the courtyard and be a multipurpose epicenter for students and faculty exploration and utilization. He explained that the initial design and planning had already begun as a result of the XQ project/Academy of the Possible. The tour of the library ended with an agreement to formalize the design by utilizing the expertise of an architect/engineer. The next tour moved to the vocational school. Principal/Director Riccio explained that her number one priority was the relocation of the culinary arts and hospitality program to an accessible location for the general public. The Director reviewed the draft floor plan and explained how the current programs would be moved.

Medford will pursue a state capital skills grant but it will require matching funds for construction. This would include: gas and water lines, electricity, flooring, lighting, doors and ADA accessibility. This grant is now being released by the Commonwealth with applications due in December. The total revamp of the vocational school beyond the culinary arts/hospitality project will involve the development of an academy model that groups the various offerings into like clusters. Long term development should be pursued in conjunction with MBSA to the extent possible under their priorities and guidelines.

The committee reconvened in the conference room to recap their tour.

The Superintendent indicated that it will be necessary to consider the re-location of certain programs such as early childhood and office space to free up areas for program development. The committee will await follow-up materials to continue its capital planning for the complex.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

On the motion of Ms. Kreatz seconded by Ms. Cugno to suspend the rules to take the papers out of order

Vote:

Yes: 6

No: 0

Absent: 1

Ms. Kreatz updated the committee on the crossing guard situation at the Fellsway/Fulton Street. She said that she attended a recent police neighborhood meeting where the problem was discussed. She also reached out to Senator Jehlen's office. Senator's Jehlen's office confirmed that the DCR will monitor the area of Fellsway/Fulton and Fellsway/Park St. to determine the usage in the area. It was also requested that the timing on the pedestrian walk signals be changed which will help all residents. Ms. Kreatz also spoke to Rep. Donato who said he was in touch with Senator Jehlen.

Ms. DiBenedetto arrived at 7:12 p.m.

Cheryl Rodriguez, 21 Park Street was given permission to speak. Ms. Rodriguez said that she has talked to families and they tend to avoid crossing the Fellsway at all costs. She said that it will also be difficult to evaluate the numbers now that it is getting colder and people are driving. The Mayor said that she has been in contact with Commissioner Roy at the DCR. He assured her that they will continue to monitor the situation.

Member Skerry applauded Ms. Kreatz for her initiative regarding this matter. Ms. Cugno would like the letter amended to evaluate the area not on a week when there are no school days. Superintendent Belson said reports on revenue from the state this week were better and said that perhaps they may be able to hire soon. Ms. DiBenedetto said that she always follows up a phone call with an email so that there is a paper trail.

On the motion of Ms. DiBenedetto to follow up with a letter:

Vote:

Yes: 7

No: 0

Absent: 0

On the motion to revert back to the regular order of business:

Vote:

Yes: 7

No: 0

Absent: 0

#### Report on Italian Scholarship Winners

Director of Foreign Language Rita DiCarlo reported that an Italian organization, Federazione Associazioni Abruzzesi - USA (FAA-USA) recently awarded scholarships of \$1,000 each to two MHS AP Italian students, Joshua Crespo and Leena Ziane for their excellence in the study of Italian. The scholarships were awarded to Joshua and Leena on the evening of October 18<sup>th</sup> at the FAA-USA's annual gala celebration which took place at Filippo's Restaurant in the North End of Boston. The two students were accompanied to the *fiesta* by family members and Italian teachers from Medford High School including myself, Ms. Nicole Chalifoux, and Ms. Bianca Hoffman.

Joshua and Leena were selected to receive the awards based on their grades and an essay they wrote on the impact that studying Italian has had on them. On the evening of the celebration, first Joshua, then Leena addressed about 150 guests at Filippo's by delivering flawless speeches in Italian. The audience responded with enthusiastic applause especially when each student mentioned a particular Italian soccer team by the name of Juventus. The students and their families felt very honored that evening and we at Medford High School are very proud of Leena and Joshua. The scholarships were made possible by the generosity of Joe Pace in memory of his mother. Joe Pace is the owner of Joe Pace & Son of Boston and Saugus. The two students were presented award certificates.

On the motion of Mr. Skerry seconded by Ms. DiBenedetto the report was accepted and placed on file.

Vote:

Yes: 7

No: 0

Absent: 0

#### Financial Report

Director of Finance and Administration Kirsteen Patterson presented the report. Ms. Patterson said that the general fund operating budget for FY17 is \$54,333,000 of which 29.42% has been expended and encumbered to date. Ten-month bi-weekly employees have received five checks since August 29, with a special run scheduled for 11/3/16 to accommodate issuing anticipated number of checks in the calendar year. All 12-month employees have received nine paychecks since July 1. The district currently has three teachers out on maternity leave with two positions anticipated to be out within the next quarter. All major positions and replacements were filled and efforts continue for on-boarding of district-wide floating substitutes. As an overview, there are many sub accounts listed without a budget appropriation mainly for the purpose of DESE reporting and required tracking of expenses by school, function, category and district-wide. Although budgets may be zero, the planned cost projections included the breakout items and therefore remaining balances within each function remains positive. As part of the Finance Directors transition, an ongoing process of reclassifications in budget and/or expenses will be identified to clarify reporting. A notable area is within the encumbrance category that includes orders and amounts based on our best projections that may be liquidated or updated as costs are trued up and payments made. Included in this summary are key program areas of interest.

*Textbooks* – The purchase of Math textbooks at the High School has been completed with year one of three payment installments totaling \$36,000 annually.

*On-line Payments* - The FACTS on-line payment plan has been in place for one year and provides families a convenient option to pay for services such as: Before/After School Program, MEEP, McGlynn Preschool, Make Way for Kids Preschool, and Kids Corner. MPS currently has 473 payment plans active and making on-gong payments with fiscal to date collections of \$470,480 and anticipated annual collection of \$1,449,000 across all programs. The number of plans has increased 59% over FY16 and the total anticipated revenue through this process has increased 150% a clear indicator of the program's success from its introduction one year ago. Efforts will continue toward a cashless

payment and collection system to further improve collection rates and provide account information/tracking for families.

*Summer Fun Program* – The program ran for an additional week in summer 2016 totaling eight service weeks from June 27, 2016 through August 19, 2016. During the eight weeks, the program served 311 campers.

*Technology* – Software conversions were completed for a new student information management system (SIMS) - School Brains and a substitute calling and absence reporting system - AESOP. Training continues for these programs with an anticipated release of the Parent Portal portion scheduled at the middle and high school levels on November 17, 2016.

*Transportation* – MPS has contracted 18 main bus routes with Eastern Bus Company for year one of five. Routes run morning and afternoon, serving St. Joseph Catholic School, St. Raphael Catholic School, St. Clements, Minuteman, and all MPS. Routes continue to be reviewed for overcrowding and time efficiencies with adjustments made where feasible for safety purposes.

*Utilities* – The winter heating has not yet begun but full budget amounts have been entered in anticipation of the upcoming months. As invoices are paid, line items will be reviewed and liquidated and/or updated as required.

In summary, the transition between the outgoing Director of Finance and incoming Director was comprehensive and effective. Communication with City Hall has been open and helpful to assist in greater efficiencies to streamline efforts. Fiscal year 2017 is on track with projections and budget requests with continued efforts of monitoring and identifying savings.

#### Discussion:

Mr. Skerry commented that he attended the recent open house and asked if we can look into taking credit cards at the school store. Ms. Patterson answered that she is an advocate of online and credit sales and are looking into the possibility with city hall. Ms. DiBenedetto questioned the \$1.4in revenue brought in with FACT and asked if that is an increase from last year. Ms. Patterson said that it is about the same amount however it is the ease of payment plan that is much easier for parents to do at their convenience.

On the motion of Ms. DiBenedetto to receive a quarterly budget report.

Vote:

Yes: 7

No: 0

Absent: 0

Superintendent Belson said that this is being worked on and they will have one very soon.

On the motion of Ms. DiBenedetto to accept report and place on file.

Vote:

Yes: 7

No: 0

Absent: 0

#### Report on Professional Development Day

Deputy Superintendent Beverly Nelson presented the report. She also introduced Assistant Principal Rocco Grover-Silvestri who serves as the Chairman of the

Professional Development Committee. Rocco worked closely with central administration in planning all aspects of the day. Ms. Nelson reported that November 8<sup>th</sup> is the first day of mandated professional development for teachers and paraprofessionals. This year's program for teachers represents a collaborative effort between administrators and faculty. The new teachers' contract called for the creation of a professional development committee comprised of six teachers and six administrators. The committee's mission was to advise central administration on the topics for professional development that the group determined from surveys should be priority areas. This year the committee has identified three areas: special education, at-risk students and social emotional learning. Workshops on November 8 will focus on these topics. The goal is that every teacher will attend a workshop on each of the three areas and decide on one of the three to continue with throughout the school year. This year's program is a model of collaboration between faculty and administration. Several teachers, counselors and other specialists with administrative support have stepped forward to take a lead in the planning and facilitation of these workshops. The paraprofessionals will be at the McGlynn School for a program featuring popular author and presenter Polly Bath.

#### Discussion:

Ms. Kretz commented that she thinks the topics are great. Ms. Van der Kloot said they are interesting and exciting topics. She is happy to see a workshop for paraprofessionals. She did mention that she read that "lunch is on your own" and suggests that next year the district provide lunch as a thank you.

On the motion of Ms. Van der Kloot, seconded by Mr. Skerry that the Medford Public Schools provide lunch for staff next year on Professional Development Day.

Vote:

Yes: 7  
No: 0  
Absent: 0

On the motion to accept report and place on file

Vote:

Yes: 7  
No: 0  
Absent: 0

#### Report on College Fair

Superintendent Belson reported that Medford High School held its annual College Fair on October 26, 2016, with 88 state, private and community colleges in attendance. On the following page is a list of all schools in attendance. The over 100-year tradition was held in the MHS Main Lobby and the corridors of the first and second floor. The event was well received by many attendees including students and parents from the Medford High School community and our neighboring schools and towns. The halls were packed, and the event was busy the entire night! We had a wonderful mix of 9-12<sup>th</sup> graders and parents attend, and we received very positive feedback from both families and college representatives. In conjunction with the College Fair, Jan Hollenbeck and Charlotte Heim, of the Medford High School Special Education Department, hosted a parent/student presentation, "Transition to College for Students with IEPs and 504

Accommodation Plans", as one component of the Medford Public Schools Transition Forum series. This was the eighth time this program has been offered in conjunction with the MHS College Fair, and due to its huge success last year, this year it was held in the Caron Theater.

The "Transition to College" program included presentations from: Alice Beth Fitzpatrick of the MHS Guidance Department, with a focus on what all students should be doing to prepare for the college application process and what Special Education students need to do to supplement their application. Andrew Cioffi, Assistant Director of the Office of Disability at Suffolk University presented about the difference between disability support services offered at high schools vs. colleges and how students can access these services. Charlotte Heim also spoke on the importance of transition planning and being able to identify what supports are helpful as a college student. Overall, it was a very successful evening thanks to the wonderful students and community, our fantastic counseling staff, and the informative admissions officers who graciously attended.

Discussion:

Ms. Cugno thanked all involved and said this gets bigger every year. She suggested that next year to have students sign in and state what school they attend and the grade. She believes that students from many neighboring communities are also attending.

On the motion of Ms. Cugno seconded by Mr. Skerry to have students state where they attend school and grade upon arrival at next year's fair.

Vote:

Yes: 7  
No: 0  
Absent: 0

On the motion to accept report and place on file.

Vote:

Yes: 7  
No: 0  
Absent: 0

Report on TB Forum and Testing Session

Supervisor of Health Toni Vento presented the update. On Tuesday, October 4, 2016, administrators at Medford High School were notified by the Medford Board of Health of a student who tested positive for tuberculosis disease. Medford Public School administrators, school nurses and Mayor Burke met with representatives from the Medford Board of Health, Massachusetts Department of Public Health Tuberculosis Program to formalize a plan for identification of close contacts and screening. At this time, 205 individuals were determined to be close contacts and in need of screening (191 students, 8 teachers and 6 sports coaches). Faculty and students were informed by written letter on October 6, 2016 about the exposure and the plan to identify close contacts. An automated call was made to the homes of all Medford High School students and an announcement was posted on the MPS website and MPS blog. A second letter was sent to the 205 individuals who were identified as close contacts. Parents/guardians were given a choice of blood screening by Department of Public Health at the High School or testing done by their Primary Care Physician and asked to return a consent form by Friday,

October 21. An Information Session, presented by Dr. Bernardo, Massachusetts Department of Public Health Tuberculosis Program, was held at Medford High School on Thursday, October 20 and attended by 2 dozen parents and citizens. A blood screening day was scheduled for Wednesday, October 26. Many parents/guardians did not return signed consent forms by the October 21 deadline prompting 2 additional automated calls; one on October 19 to 103 student homes and another on October 24 to 81 student homes. Staff from Massachusetts Department of Public Health also telephoned 59 homes on October 25 as a last reminder to parents. On the day of testing, telephone calls were made by the staff from Massachusetts Department of Public Health to 33 parents to obtain verbal consent for skin testing. A clinic was set up at Medford High School and staffed by Department of Public Health phlebotomists, public health nurses and epidemiologists. Set up consisted of 3 blood drawing stations, work tables and a cot. Beverages and snacks were available. Testing followed Department of Public Health protocols and was conducted without incident. All students and teachers returned to class. Testing Summary: of the 205 identified close contacts, 114 students and 8 teachers had blood screening tests done at Medford High School by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Tuberculosis Program staff; 33 high school students and 5 middle school students had a Tuberculosis Skin Test placed by the Medford Board of Health public health nurse 33 students were tested by their Primary Care Physicians (either blood test or skin test); 3 students were absent and contact could not be made with parents/guardians for 4 students. Follow-up will be made with these 7 students.

On the motion of Mr. Skerry seconded by Ms. Cugno to accept report and place on file:  
Vote:

Yes: 7  
No: 0  
Absent: 0

#### Report on MVTHS Advisory Council Meeting

Director Heidi Riccio presented the report. On October 25, 2016, MTHS hosted their Fall Advisory Board meeting for each of the 20 CTE programs. With over 150 members in attendance, the intention of this meeting was to bring industry and education together in one forum. Held each fall and spring, the advisory boards play a significant role in the curriculum, development, and equipment necessary to train the students for jobs in the current and future labor market. Maura Russell, from MA DESE, was in attendance to approve the Programming and Web Development program. She was impressed by the number of professionals that came, the space provided for the new program and the work that has been done to improve existing programs and increase CTE opportunities for Medford students.

Ms. Riccio asked the school committee's approval to send four students and one administrator to the fall convention in Marlboro from November 20, 21 and 22. On the motion of Mr. Skerry seconded by Ms. Van der Kloot to accept the report and approve the conference in Marlboro November 20-22:

Roll Call:

Yea: 7 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Kreatz, Mustone, Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

On the motion of Ms. Van der Kloot seconded by Mr. Skerry to go to Execution Session at 7:54 p.m. to discuss Negotiations and Legal matters regarding MTA grievances

Roll Call:

Yea: 7 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Kreatz, Mustone, Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

The committee returned to regular session at 8:20 p.m.

On the motion of Mr. Skerry seconded by Ms. Cugno the meeting was adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Roll Call:

Yea: 7 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Kreatz, Mustone, Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

Respectfully submitted:

Robert E. Skerry Jr.  
Secretary

