

OXFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

May 13, 2019 - 6:00 P.M.

School Committee Members Present: William Spitz, Chairman; Daniel Coonan, Vice Chairman; Cassandra Day, Secretary; Palmina Griffin and September Forbes

Others Present: Dr. Elizabeth Zielinski, Superintendent; Helen Coffin, Recording Secretary

Special Note: This Meeting was videotaped by Access Oxford, Inc.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Spitz calls the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the High School Community Room.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

OHS student Rachel Storey reports for the High School regarding recent and/or upcoming events including an update on the sports teams, the Jr/Sr Prom is May 24th, the 8th grade Step-up Dance is May 17th; the Student Council is holding a Movie Night on April 30th; the Class of 2020 fundraiser for clothing, shoes, textiles, and accessories continues through June 5th; NHS/NJHS seeks donations for the "Birthday in a Box" charity - items may be dropped off to Mrs. Nugent; the Student Council is holding a Senior Citizen Dinner on May 15th; Student Council officer elections will be held on May 30th; AP tests continue; and the Athletic Banquet is May 16th.

OMS student Andrew Schultz reports for the Middle School regarding recent and/or upcoming events including that NJHS held a successful dance and fundraiser and will be holding an end-of-year get together; the Student Council MCAS Snack event was a success and they will be discussing class elections with 7th graders; Music Department is preparing for the music festival and trip to Six Flags for 6th, 7th & 8th graders; OMS Chamber Choir performs June 12th at 7:00 p.m.; yearbook sales are winding down; and check the electronic backpack for information.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Raising Student Voices and Participation. High School students Darrell Ramos, Jillian Pare, and Jacob Berkowitz explain that the Student Council and NHS spoke with High School students about what they feel is good/bad about the High School. The negative items: there is lack of consistency in schoolwide discipline and it is a rising problem; students are passing in assignments at the end of the quarter rather than by the due date and teachers are letting kids get away with it; students skipping class is becoming a common problem, it is not being reported, and students aren't being reprimanded; students in detention are allowed to have cell phones and go to the gym; the locks in the bathrooms aren't working; concerns about safety regarding only one entrance in the morning before the bell rings - suggestion to open up another hallway so kids can move around; students can't go through the back door of the building; students would like to go back to sophomore and junior parking at the Carbuncle lot - a rule that was never enforced; the student drop-off area is a concern due to parents dropping off where buses let off and parents passing the buses. The positive items are: teachers are kind, positive, and helpful; bathroom monitors has helped; students like the course electives, AP classes, and the Chromebooks (except some complained that teachers refuse to print information for students who don't have internet access at home).

Chairman Spitz thanks the students for presenting this information and believes that some of the items can be addressed in a timely fashion. Mrs. Day wants to ensure that this information was passed along to the administrators. Mrs. Griffin would like to hear the administration's response to the survey and she especially has concerns regarding the lack of consistency with discipline. Mr. Coonan comments that the School Committee cannot supersede the school administration (per the Education Reform Act) and would like to see this type of information brought to the school leaders and advisors. Mrs. Griffin would like to see student representation on the School Council so that this information can be included in the School Improvement Plan. Going forward, Chairman Spitz would like students to meet with the Building Principal prior to bringing information forward to the School Committee. The members would like students to report back to the School Committee after meeting with the school administration and to provide the name of the student representative on the School Council. ***[ITEM TABLED]***

Kim Davis, President - Oxford Education Association. Mrs. Davis advises that she is speaking on behalf of, and is honored to represent, the District's teaching professionals. She explains that the teaching staff continues to go above and beyond during the year working extra hours. They held two drives for the community: a can drive and a coat drive. More than half of the staff has been working for OXPS over ten years and are dedicated, have experienced many changes, and are frustrated with the leadership's lack of focus and expectations. The staff has great concerns about the future and has the expectation that the District will maintain 2-way dialogue, stating the learning goals, and having conversations about student achievement. On a positive note, the staff reports they are happy with their building administrators who are supportive and effective leaders. As another year comes to a close, they would like to create dialogue within the District with respect to programs which directly affect teachers, professional development, and open discussion with the administration regarding a shared vision.

Mrs. Griffin understands the frustration and is grateful for the sacrifices made with all that has been lost over the past five years - the staff has not waived and continues to deliver the best education for students. She would like to see forums where teachers can express their voices.

Elementary School Improvement Plans, Handbook, Summer Reading Programs. Principals Pelczarski and Quinn present their 2019-2020 SIPS, the 2019-2020 Handbook, 2019 Summer Reading Programs. Chaffee's SIP is more aggressive as they start looking into a PreK - Gr. 4 SIP model. They will be working on the more intricate pieces of the SIPS going forward. The schools use the same assessments and tools, and are focusing more on math. They will continue to use Title I support as a coaching model, with non-evaluative team members working with teachers, dissecting data, and making growth happen. They continue their professional development with the Novak Group on literacy and reading but will move into math, and social-emotional work. They will be working together on a PreK - Gr. 4 continuum model. Mr. Coonan questions the social-emotional culture of the schools, and how much time is spent on discipline issues vs. supporting teaching and instructional practices. Mr. Quinn advises that it varies from day to day but since more preventative maintenance work is being done, they are seeing less behavior issues. Dr. Zielinski adds that she hopes to employ an additional support administrator at Barton who will be a coach on the curriculum pieces and administrative tasks, and help the principal so he can get into the classrooms. Chairman Spitz would like an update on the SIP in January. There are no substantive changes to the Handbook from last year. The summer reading programs are reviewed.

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes of Meetings:	April 22, 2019 - Regular Meeting	
Warrants:	Accounts Payable dated April 30, 2019	- \$ 48,651.34
	Payroll dated May 2, 2019	- \$545,087.41
	Accounts Payable dated May 7, 2019	- \$142,073.73 {HELD}
	School Lunch dated May 7, 2019	- \$ 12,459.58
	Accounts Payable dated May 14, 2019	- \$142,078.32

On a motion made by Coonan with second from Forbes, the Committee votes unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda as read, with the exception of the held item.

Mrs. Griffin explains that she held the May 7th Accounts Payable Warrant due to the \$600 charge from EF Tours so an administrator could take the trip. Her understanding is that international travel is not supposed to be a cost to the community and she doesn't think it's appropriate since it's not benefiting all students in the District. Dr. Zielinski explains that EF Tours provides one free slot for every 6 paid travelers and this cost was necessary because an administrator must be in attendance on every trip. Mrs. Griffin's understanding is that if there isn't an appropriate number of students, the international travel would not happen. Brief discussion follows regarding the consequences of cancelling the trip and/or students dropping out of the trip. Mr. Spitz would like legal clarification on what happens if students drop out of the trip. Dr. Zielinski will provide this information.

Mrs. Griffin expresses concerns about when there are questions on warrant items. She feels that if a member questions an items, it should be pulled and held until the next meeting. Brief discussion follows regarding the warrant process. It is agreed that questionable charges only should be pulled but the rest of the warrant should still be paid on time. Mr. Coonan suggests a policy to this effect.

On a motion made by Day with second from Forbes, the Committee votes unanimously that whenever one of the Committee members questions an item on a warrant, an email should be sent to the Authorized Signer and Superintendent, the item should be held, and the email printed and put in the packets so the item can be discussed publicly at the next meeting.

On a motion made by Forbes with second from Day, the Committee votes unanimously to approve the May 7th Accounts Payable Warrant.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

New Business.

Reorganization of the Negotiations Sub-committee. Mrs. Day will be leaving the Committee and her spot on the Negotiations Sub-committee needs to be filled. Mr. Spitz cannot act in this capacity as he needs to recuse himself from negotiations due to his wife being an employee. Mr. Coonan would like clarification from the Mass. Teachers Associations regarding fellow members sitting on a negotiations sub-committee, as he and Mrs. Griffin are both MTA members. Mr. Spitz would like an opinion from MASC and the Ethics Commission before making a decision - the Committee needs to know the legal ramifications. Mr. Coonan suggests the Committee may need to invoke the Rule of Necessity. ***[ITEM TABLED]***

Superintendent's Evaluation. Mr. Spitz advises that Dr. Zielinski asked for additional time to prepare her comments and rebuttal to her evaluation so he will address it at the next meeting rather than tonight. Mrs. Griffin expresses concern regarding this as Mrs. Day will no longer be a member. Discussion follows. It is decided that Mrs. Day will prepare written comments for the Chairman to read. **[ITEM TABLED]**

INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS

Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Zielinski reviews a photo presentation of the Greece trip. The post-trip debriefing meeting will be held on May 21st.

School Committee Members

Community Service Award Recipient. Chairman Spitz announces the recipient of the Community Service Award is Lee Ryder, a volunteer at Barton.

Educator of the Year Recipient. Chairman Spitz announces the recipient of the 2019 Educator of the Year Award is Tara Bennett, a Physical Education Teacher at the elementary schools.

PUBLIC COMMENT None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

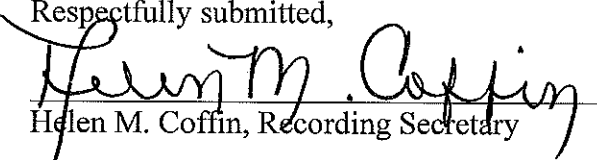
Mr. Spitz indicates that the Committee wishes to enter Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining negotiations since an open meeting could be detrimental.

On a motion made by Day with second from Griffin, the Committee votes unanimously by roll call vote to enter Executive Session under MGL c.30A, s.21(a) ¶3 and return to open session only to adjourn. Spitz, yes; Coonan, yes; Griffin, yes; Forbes, yes; Day, yes

{Spitz recuses himself from the meeting and leaves the building.}

ADJOURN *On a motion made by Forbes with second from Coonan, the Committee votes unanimously to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:20 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,


Helen M. Coffin, Recording Secretary

List of Documents and Materials used during this Meeting which are on file at the Oxford Public Schools Central Office.

Meeting Minutes of April 22, 2019
Chaffee and Barton School Improvement Plans
Chaffee and Barton Summer Reading Programs
Elizabeth Zielinski Performance Evaluation
Greece Trip Photo Presentation