

OXFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

August 24, 2020 - 6:00 P.M.

School Committee Members Present In-Person: Daniel Coonan, Chairman; David Cornacchioli, Vice Chairman; Palmina Griffin, Secretary; September Forbes and Corey Burke, Members

Others Present In-Person: Dr. Kristine Nash, Interim Superintendent; Helen Coffin, Recording Secretary

Special Note: Due to restrictions currently in place regarding attendance capacity, this meeting was held in-part remote and in-person. The meeting was videotaped by Timothy Labonte of the Town of Oxford Cable Access. Google Meet was the remote platform used, and the remote call-in number was: **1-424-290-0130 PIN: 1784 959 413#**

CALL TO ORDER Chairman Coonan calls the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes of Meetings – August 5, 2020 - Regular Meeting.

On a motion by Forbes with second from Griffin, the Committee votes unanimously to approve the Meeting Minutes of August 5, 2020 - Regular Meeting.

RECOMMENDED BUSINESS

Old Business.

Health and Safety Monitors. Dr. Nash explains that the Committee approved the Health and Safety Monitor job description at the last meeting but had asked that we come back with what a day might look like and number to be hired. The funding stream will be the ESSER grant and the funding is available. The number of positions requested is based on the total number of students in each building. Discussion follows regarding the potential cost of unemployment should the positions not be necessary. Dr. Nash states that they would be eligible to apply for unemployment but she cannot speak to the amount. Mrs. Griffin questions whether discussion was had with the teachers' union to pay faculty to take on extra duties - she would like to see the funds go elsewhere. Other districts aren't entertaining this position. Mrs. Forbes questions whether a person taking the 19.5-hour position could also serve as a substitute teacher if the hours would then exceed 19.5. Dr. Nash will look further into these questions and indicates that the former recess aides can apply if they want additional hours. Discussion follows regarding whether lunch in the cafeterias was considered. Dr. Nash advises that students with severe allergies would go to the cafeteria and that there are a number of other things prohibiting students eating in the cafeteria including the number of lunches, round tables, plexiglass, limiting time to service students so it doesn't cut into the academic part of the day. Lunch will be delivered to each classroom. Mrs. Griffin questions why the cafeteria can't be set up with student desks, spaced out with less students in order to reduce the need to have monitors. Dr. Nash explains that we need to meet the minimum hours of academic time and she is not sure what the District would gain out of that - we also need to minimize student traffic because as soon as students start moving and we put kids in with other students, we will need someone to conduct contact tracing. Trying to minimize flow of traffic and keep groups of students together is per the advice of DESE. Discussion follows regarding the additional 19.5- hour custodian positions. Desks will be wiped down between groups and will be a shared responsibility between students and staff. Dr. Nash

would like to hire up to 22 Health and Safety Monitors. Mr. Cornacchioli states for the record that he would like to see the District use the cafeterias for lunch and having food service delivered as normal for students. He understands limiting movements but feels the District should be trying to get students back into the cafeteria for a sense of normalcy. Further, he is not comfortable with hiring 22 monitors. ***On a motion made by Forbes, to hire up to 22 Health and Safety Monitors, there is no second.***

Mr. Burke is also not comfortable with the number and is having a hard time envisioning how they will work - he has reservations.

A motion is made by Cornacchioli, and second by Burke, to hire up to 12 Health and Safety Monitors.

Discussion: Mrs. Forbes is not comfortable cutting the number to nearly 50% of what was requested and feels the Committee needs to trust the administration. They have the students' best interests in mind. Mr. Coonan agrees and feels the buildings would be more organized. He is not in favor of the motion. ***Mr. Cornacchioli amends his motion to "hire up to 16" and Burke seconds the amendment.***

Discussion: Mrs. Forbes is concerned that if we find out that we need more staff, things won't be getting done in accordance with health and safety standards. She supports keeping the number at 22. Mr. Cornacchioli questions if we have reached out to former recess aides to bring them back. Dr. Nash explains that the positions will be posted and they can apply.

On a motion by Cornacchioli, and second by Burke, the Committee votes by majority roll call vote to hire up to 16 Health & Safety Monitors. {Coonan, NO; Cornacchioli, YES; Griffin, YES; Forbes, NO, Burke, YES}

Mrs. Griffin would still like the teachers to be active in arrival and dismissal and hopes that the students know the monitors. Brief discussion regarding how students arriving before school will be handled.

Crossing Guard- Rocky Hill/Main Street. Mr. Coonan explains that the Committee asked that the Rocky Hill/Main Street crossing area be assessed for safety. Information was received from the Safety Officer that a crossing guard in this area would be prudent. Mr. Coonan would also like this matter forwarded to the DPW and Board of Selectmen for the possibility for installing a flashing light. This may also need to be sent to Representative Frost.

On a motion by Forbes, and second by Burke, the Committee votes unanimously by roll call vote to fund and hire a crossing guard position for the Rocky Hill/Main Street area.

INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS

Subcommittees, Study Groups, District/Town Staff

Policy Subcommittee. Mrs. Griffin explains that she brings forth two new policies for the Committee's consideration. The first, ***EBC-S - COVID-RELATED ISSUES***, which was taken directly from MASC as a recommendation to assist Superintendents dealing with any types of issues that may arise from COVID. This provides more flexibility with policies currently on file and provides the ability to address issues as they arise, doing what is in the best interests of all with respect to the policies listed. Mr. Coonan adds that the Superintendent would duly notify the School Committee of any alterations by either working in conjunction with the School Committee or working through the Chairman.

On a motion by Cornacchioli, with second from Forbes, the Committee votes unanimously by roll call vote to adopt the policy as presented, EBC-S - COVID-RELATED ISSUES, and to waive the second reading.

The second policy Mrs. Griffin brings forward is **EBCFA - FACE COVERINGS**. This policy was discussed in great detail by the Policy Subcommittee with input from various stakeholders. It requires that all students in Preschool - Grade 12 wear face coverings per CDC guidelines. Mrs. Lainey Hanlon submitted a letter dated August 23, 2020 to be read for the record regarding masking the youngest students - Mr. Coonan read this letter aloud. It is noted that Kindergarten and Grade 1 are not mandated by DESE to wear face coverings but new medical information indicates that they are less likely to be affected by doing so. Mrs. Forbes questions if the teachers were involved in this decision. Dr. Nash explains that the teachers' union provided correspondence and President Kim Davis reached out to all Kindergarten and Grade 1 teachers and they were unanimously concerned about health and safety. Clear masks have also been purchased. Dr. Nash also advises that recent guidance on 8/13 states that all children older than 2 years should wear face masks. This would also be required for staff and anyone entering the building. Individuals not wearing a mask should not allowed to enter a school building and the Principals will be policing their own buildings. ***On a motion by Cornacchioli, and second from Griffin, the Committee votes unanimously by roll call vote to adopt EBCFA - FACE COVERINGS, as written, and to waive the second reading.***

NOTE: Reminder to remove these policies when COVID is over.

Business Office. Justin Leduc is absent this evening. Dr. Nash reviews the projects that can be funded through revolving accounts and projects that have already been completed. There are five projects that can be funded through revolving accounts – scoreboard, food warmers, OMS bathrooms, OXPS LED sign (which is partially offset by student activity donations), and Chaffee bathroom countertops. Mrs. Griffin questions the status of the Barton bathrooms. Mr. Coonan suggests holding off on the scoreboard until more information is received regarding the dedication for Commander Masley. Brief discussion regarding the OHS sign - what will this say and has it been approved by the Planning Board? Mrs. Griffin questions the status of the electronic door access at the schools. Dr. Nash explains that the funding was reviewed by Justin for projects that could be earmarked from revolving accounts.

A motion is made by Forbes, with second from Cornacchioli, to approve the Capital Requests, as presented.

Discussion: The Committee generally feels that more information is needed and questions should be answered before voting on this, and this item should be held for Justin.

Motion withdrawn by Forbes. Second withdrawn by Cornacchioli.

Superintendent. Dr. Nash provides an update as to where the District stands with respect to planning for the fall reopening of schools. She explains changes based on input received on the Re-entry Request Form – 24% of students are not returning to school. This caused her to look at staffing differently. She indicates that the Virtual Learning Academy with a Remote Learning Supervisor was intended to be a more self-directed model but has morphed into a K-8 teacher who is teaching students. She reviews what that model might look like and a letter and survey will be going out to parents tomorrow letting them know about the change. Parents who selected the hybrid model may reconsider - only parents who chose the hybrid model need to respond by Friday. She returned calls to many parents this week. She is looking to hire 5 Remote Learning Teachers which can be funded due to downsizing the Health and Safety Monitors. She notes that the High School will work differently because it is course driven and Remote Learning Teachers will be assigned for each content area. She will no longer need the Committee to approve the Virtual Learning Supervisor Job Description.

Discussion follows regarding the potential for teachers to bring their own children to school. Dr. Nash will look into this further. Discussion also regarding how the Guidance Department will ensure proper courses and credits are taken by students. Dr. Nash explains that students should see their Guidance Counselor regarding Edgenuity and the Adjustment Counselor for any social-emotional issues. Mr. Coonan wants to ensure that the communication turnaround time is satisfactory from the High School as it has been a major issue in the past. He would like to see the Guidance Office put together a plan so students know who to call for various issues. Dr. Nash will get clarification on that. Mrs. Forbes notes that she is leery about spending the additional money from downsizing the Health and Safety Monitors just in case we find the 16 are not enough.

Assistant Principals and Head Nurse Stipends. Dr. Nash explains that the Assistant Principals are scheduled to work 210 days yet all three have been in the buildings almost the entire summer. Additionally, the Head Nurse stipend does not extend beyond the school year. The Head Nurse has been at every meeting requested and has lead presentations. As a way to recognize the work and additional time they have put in, she recommends a one-time stipend based on their per diem rate equal to 10 days, with the funding mechanism taken out of the general fund from the Teaching Assistant position that is no longer needed. ***On a motion by Burke, and second by Forbes, the Committee votes unanimously by roll cate vote to approve the total of \$16,685.96 to be paid to the Assistant Principals and Head Nurse, as presented.***

School Committee.

Report of Authorized Signer. Mrs. Griffin reads aloud the Warrant Report of Authorized Signer.

Mrs. Forbes: Thanks to parents and staff for their patience. When will the cohort groups be determined? Dr. Nash replies this will be done next week.

Mrs. Griffin: At the next meeting she would like more information from Justin regarding solar credits and the kilowatt usage and delivery charge for electricity - she wonders if we could negotiate a better rate. Also, she still has concerns about lunch time and wants kids to be able to wash their hands.

Mr. Cornacchioli: At the next meeting he would like more information regarding Athletics. ***(Note: Invite Kevin May to the next meeting.)*** He thanks Dr. Nash for her work – this has been a daunting task. He would also like an update from Justin regarding busing, including savings and/or contract issues.

Mr. Burke: He echoes Mr. Cornacchioli's comments.

Mr. Coonan: Because there are several PD Days this year, he would like the Principals to forward their PD Day Agendas to the School Committee members so they all know what the PD Days will look like so the School Committee members can pass along information to the constituency as to what is going on during this time. He wants to see how we are supporting teachers as this is a big difference from other years.

Executive Session.

On a motion by Forbes with second from Griffin, the Committee votes unanimously by roll call vote to enter Executive Session under M.G.L. c.30A section 21(a)(3) to discuss collective bargaining as an open session may have a detrimental effect on the public body, and exit only to adjourn the regular meeting.

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.**

Minutes of August 5, 2020

Rocky Hill Area/Main Street email

Policies: EBC-S and EBCFA

Capital Requests FY22

Virtual Learning Supervisor Job Description

Assistant Principal and Head Nurse Stipends Memo

Warrant Report of Authorized Signer