

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting February 11, 2019 Lincoln

PRESENT: Conyers, Hagenow, Hughes, Maio, Meggers, Scappaticci, Stefanovicz

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Geary, Deputy Superintendent Curriculum & Special Services Radikas, Director of Finance & Management Clancy

ABSENT: Pattacini, Thames

A. OPENING

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order

Acting Chairperson Scappaticci called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Scappaticci explained that Mr. Thames is ill and Mr. Pattacini is traveling this evening. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Scappaticci.

A.3. Secretary's Welcome

Ms. Maio, as Acting Secretary of the Board of Education, welcomed everyone present and to the television viewers. She, along with the Board and the Superintendent, were pleased to be joined in celebrating the achievement, reviewing information, and discussing areas for growth, along with making policy decisions related to the effective operation of the Manchester Public Schools. Ms. Maio explained that this is a regular meeting of the Board and all items that will be discussed or voted on this evening have been posted, as required by state law.

Ms. Maio explained that as the Manchester Board of Education, they are here to set goals, listen to reports of the Superintendent, approve budgets, contracts, and personnel appointments, and to create policy for the district. They are not here to make management decisions or solve the problems of individuals. Members of the public with individual concerns may contact the Superintendent

directly. It was explained that meetings of the Board are open to the public, but are not meetings with individual members of the public. Therefore, comments from the audience will be confined to the time designated for the public to address the Board.

A.4. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of January 22, 2019 as outlined in the agenda. Acting Secretary Maio moved and Ms. Hagenow seconded the motion.

7/0 – Voted in favor.

A.5. Approval of Budget Workshop Minutes

APPROVED - Minutes of Budget Workshop of the Board of Education of January 23, 2019 a outlined in the agenda. Acting Secretary Maio moved and Ms. Hagenow seconded the motion.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mr. Geary presented three items on the Consent Calendar for Board approval.

C.1. Personnel Action

Details had already been provided to the Board members with their agenda.

C.2. Extended Field Trip Request - MHS - Boys & Girls Outdoor Track, Saco, Maine - June 7, 2019 - June 9, 2019 - New England Championships

C.3. Extended Field Trip Request Form - MHS - Wrestling - Trumbull, CT - February 15, 2019 - February 16, 2019 - LL State Wrestling Tournament

The Chairman called for a motion.

Acting Secretary Maio moved and Ms. Hagenow seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as outlined in Item C of tonight's agenda.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

None.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, informed the Board that he attended the State Board of Education meeting last week and he passed some information along to Dr. Radikas regarding concussions in sports and discipline. Mr. Stringfellow noted that tomorrow is the 219th anniversary of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and he suggested an article about him. Mr. Stringfellow also recommended a children's book on President Obama and a book about voter suppression, *One Person - No Vote*. Last Mr. Stringfellow recommended a book *The First Americans*, noting they have served in all world wars and should be remembered.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

F.1. 2019-2020 Board of Education Budget Proposal

Mr. Geary reviewed the list of previously suggested reductions to his proposed budget and pointed out the items that were ultimately not reduced. The final budget represents a 3.84% increase over the current budget.

Ms. Stefanovicz asked about the reduction of a Reading Consultant in the face of the initiative to focus on reading. She wondered if the need has been reduced. Mr. Geary noted that with the Washington students moving to 4 other schools the resources cannot follow the children exactly and they can provide the

same services more efficiently with a reduced number of staff, including the reduced paras and tutors.

Regarding the assistant principal position being financed through the Alliance Grant, Ms. Stefanovicz wondered what else might not be funded. Mr. Geary noted that the Alliance Grant was \$400,000 higher this year than anticipated. This year we used the extra funds to support supplies and materials. Mr. Geary hopes that with the budget being appropriately funded the budget will not get frozen next year.

Mr. Hughes asked for a review of the budget process. Mr. Geary reviewed that the Board of Education submits a recommended budget to the town by this week which outlines what we need to operate a school system efficiently and get students what they need. Next the Governor releases his budget proposal which indicates anticipated revenue to towns. Then, the General Manager will reasonably predict aid to the town and school and propose a budget. There will be several workshops with the Board of Directors attended by all departments, including the Board of Education, to explain their needs at public hearings. The town budget gets decided and then we get our budget number. At that point, in May, we hold about three budget workshops to decide how to allocate our actual budget.

Ms. Stefanovicz expressed appreciation for the change in the process this year, with review of the current services budget in the fall and insight into possible reductions. The items in red this evening, that represent the next possible cuts, are very comprehensive and represent a broad stroke across departments, without one area being targeted.

Mr. Scappaticci thanked the administration for a transparent budget process.

F.2. Update on Legislative Breakfast and Pending Legislation

Mr. Geary reviewed a list developed by the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents which outlines proposed legislation. Many of the items will not make it out of the Committee.

Ms. Maio asked about the vaping addiction treatment services for those under age 18, wondering if there was similar legislation mandating treatment for drug and alcohol addiction. Mr. Geary felt there is probably something along those lines, but the pending legislation follows trends and vaping is trending.

Mr. Scappaticci wondered if the Cold War is taught in our schools, as he recalls being taught about it at MHS. Mr. Geary noted that there are options for students and he wondered if we want to mandate that every kid study this in depth. Mr. Geary also noted that history is continually being made and we cannot possibly teach everything. The issue is, do we want that level of specificity mandated.

Mr. Conyers wondered if there are mandates now on what items in history must be taught. Dr. Radikas noted that juniors are required to take a U.S. History class.

Ms. Stefanovicz felt the list was fascinating, but she was disappointed in the special interest proposals. She doesn't see vision, she sees petty proposals.

Mr. Scappaticci felt it was good to see regionalization being talked about. He also was in favor of the 4.5 threshold being reduced to 3 times, but for all districts, not just the small ones.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

H. NEW BUSINESS

Acting Secretary Maio moved to adopt the Board of Education 2019-2020 Budget in the amount of \$117,765,391.00, which represents an increase of \$4,358,911.00 (3.84%) over the 2018-2019 budget. Ms. Hagenow seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Hughes knows it is early in the process, and he will support the proposal, but it is with a heavy heart to approve these reductions.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

I. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limited to items on tonight's agenda)

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, noted budgets are never easy and he feels Mr. Geary is doing the best he can. He is clear and to the point. He noted other towns are increasing their budgets by about 4%. The goal is a well-rounded education no matter if the student is going to college or to the workforce. He wishes he would see more parents of color getting involved. Mr. Stringfellow has concerns when hearing about leaving climate change and the cold war out of the curriculum. Mr. Stringfellow stated we should never forget slavery, the holocaust, or Native Americans. He is glad we are recognizing Indigenous People's Day. We need to give credit where it is due and hear all voices.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Hagenow spoke with Mr. Thames, who is home ill, and she hopes he feels better.

Ms. Maio, who has an 8th grader who will attend MHS next year, had an opportunity to attend open house at MHS. Each department was represented and it was an interesting experience. She was amazed at the number of college credits that a student can earn in high school. She thinks Board members should attend one of the open houses next time so they can see for themselves all the opportunities our students have.

Mr. Scappaticci reported that the new ESports Team came in 2nd in their first ever competition.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

February 25 - Update on Building Projects

March 11 - District Improvement Plan Update

April 8 - MRA School Improvement Plan

April 22 - Update on Equity Informed School Climate Assessment

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Scappaticci called for a motion to adjourn.

Acting Secretary Maio moved and Ms. Hagenow seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy Maio
Acting Board Secretary