



Lunenburg Public Schools

Loxi Jo Calmes
Superintendent of Schools

MEETING MINUTES
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, October 19, 2016
LMS Collaborative Room #D132, 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

School Committee

Michael Mackin Chair-present
Heather Sroka Vice Chair-present
Dawn-Marie Ayles, Secretary-present
Wendy Bertrand-present
Meredith Weiss-present

Superintendent

Loxi Jo Calmes-present

Recording Secretary

Liz Petersen

Student Representative

Ron Hyatt

Guests

Anna Keegan- LHS Faculty, Brian Spadafino-LHS Principal, John Londa-Director of Facilities

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Mr. Mackin at 7:01 p.m.

Public Comment: Ms. Mary Foyle expressed her opinion of Ballot Question 2, discussing the downfalls it presents for public schools. She quoted Boston mayor Marty Walsh, an avid supporter of charter schools yet he is voting no on ballot question 2. He feels that state reimbursements to cover districts transitional costs have been underfunded by 48 million dollars, a shortfall that is projected to rise to hundreds of millions if the ballot question passes. The ballot question could more than quadruple the rate that charter schools are formed. This reckless growth would greatly increase the likelihood of school failures that hurt students and discredit charter reform. Ms. Foyle urged the School Committee to please consider taking a position in regards to this ballot question.

Chair's Report: none discussed.

Review and Approve Warrants: Warrants were on the table for signature, no line item transfers were presented.

Review and Approve Minutes: Minutes were not presented for approval.

Superintendent's Report:

- Superintendent Calmes welcomed Mr. Spadafino, LHS Principal, to discuss MCAS results and building updates. Mr. Spadafino indicated that overall MCAS results were solid with room for improvement. Rated Level 2 school this year, last year was Level 1 due to targets not met in high needs and special needs. Have achieved 91 percentile for students in the same type of high performing school. Next year results may be different due to reconfiguration, as only 10th grade will be portrayed. 8th grade achieved scores of 86% advanced/proficient in ELA, 62% Math, and 61% Science. Slight drop in scores this year. Tenth grade scores strong- ELA 99% advanced/proficient, Math 90%, and Science 91%. Saw growth in all areas. 68% moderate to high growth levels, median growth percentile 53%. SAT scores varied from class to class. Scores were 533 Critical Reading 525 Math, 505 Science. This was a slight drop in scores. Today students took their PSAT tests in grades 10 and 11, which students paid for the last 2-3 years. 85-90% of students participated. Mr. Mackin asked if there was a drop in participation due to the fee. Mr. Spadafino replied that there are slightly less students taking them now than before because in the past the test was required. Some students had expressed they did not participate due to their decision to not enroll in college. Superintendent Calmes mentioned that Mr. Short offers an SAT prep course at no charge to students as part of his master teacher program. Ms. Bertrand commented

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that students who had decided to not partake in this test was likely due to test anxiety more than anything else.

- Mr. Spadafino provided a building update. New building is wonderful, great to see kids pride in the building, and the way they act in the café and hallways. Have adjusted 8th grade lunch so that it is no longer with high school students. Minimal vandalism has been reported. Chromebooks for Grades 10-12 has been fairly successful so far. Teachers are embracing the technology in their classrooms and are eager to incorporate into daily lessons. Part of professional development day will be designated for technology and teaching what the faculty has learned. Campus layout for parking, tennis courts, basketball courts, etc. is beautiful. Outdoor classroom almost complete. Data and electric capabilities are set. Shine Initiative Executive Director Paul Richard has met with administration, guidance, and the District Attorney roundtable members. Discussed bringing resources and information to our district for awareness in regards to breaking down the stigma of mental health and its effects on students.
- Mr. McCauliff was welcomed by Superintendent Calmes to provide an update on sports waivers, and replacement of turf. Mr. McCauliff explained the turf is in the final stage of completion. Currently gluing edge of field to sub-structure. Infill, sand and rubber pellets will then be installed hopefully before homecoming game. Cannot install sand and rubber when wet weather occurs. Last step is to paint lines. Completion date projected to be early next week. Homecoming option is to move to Doyle Field with a 4pm start. Field Hockey game will take place at Doyle Field on Sunday night instead, will have JV game as well. The rest of Homecoming festivities on hold currently due to weather. Will make a decision within the next 18 hours. Superintendent Calmes commented that homecoming is a long standing tradition, in which so much effort is given by the students for the floats. Want community and students to enjoy, without weather related concerns. Dedication will continue rain or shine, in the case of inclement weather this will be held in the Auditorium. Reception will follow in the cafeteria. Homecoming dance is at 7pm at LMHS. Will inform community of any changes to scheduling as soon as possible. Ms. Sroka asked whether the Tuesday game vs. Oakmont will still take place. Mr. McCauliff explained the game will be a 3pm start for JV with Varsity to follow at Marshall Park.
- Superintendent Calmes thanked the PTO for a successful Myles for Miles event. She acknowledged that this was a massive undertaking with over 500 registrations. Grateful for toolkit given to parents and the PTO from the Shine Initiative. The district has goals regarding social/emotional intelligence that are created to provide resources to students, while also acknowledging that raising children today is challenging for families given trauma and vulnerabilities. Goal is to help families and children. Critical to our success as much as academics. Thanked all administration and teachers for willingness to support this initiative. Will be looking to partner with other departments and agencies in town in order to implement.
- Mr. Londa provided a general update concerning the solar projects. Two different projects to get underway. One is for the solar array to be constructed on the roof of LMHS and on the DPW garage. Second project would be to enter into a net metering agreement to purchase net metering credits that would be applied to electrical accounts of LMHS. Solar array project running out of time, need Board of Selectmen to appoint and sign contract. Met with Board of Selectmen last night, briefed on risks of solar projects, 5 major risks do not outweigh benefits. Projected to be 1.7 million dollars in savings over 20 years. Layout of where panels would be sent to Town Manager, Superintendent, and BOS chairman. Amendment of initial diagram to reflect panels moved from valley. Net metering project for commercial building located in Fitchburg, will get 350,000 kilowatt hours at 21cents/kw hr. 7 cents savings, \$45,000 benefit per year. Less risks for this project as we are not the owners. Will reduce electrical costs up to \$70,000 a year. Superintendent Calmes asked Mr. Londa to review layout as previous motion and approval by the School Committee stated this was contingent upon the final approval of the design. This project is now in Unital's cue, to keep rates we received in RFP, will need to have this constructed no later than January 8th. Need decision on Tuesday from BOS, or cannot proceed. Item on agenda is action by the School Committee to declare this area as surplus, so we can receive permission from the Commissioner of Education to move forward. Superintendent Calmes commended Mr. Londa for his effort on this project and flexibility in working with several

town departments and boards. Board of Selectmen voted to send a letter to the Department of Education which we have prepared for action and signature by the School Committee.

Student Representative's Report: enjoy student life at new school, more pride than previous school. Impressed with speed of parking lot completion, rest of questions has been answered in regards to sports games and homecoming.

School Building Committee Report: Mr. Mackin reported the committee met on October 12th, major item was budget review. Had consultants go through budget. Approved project originally projected to be \$72,545,848 currently at \$68,000,203. Still \$818,587 in GMP contingency funds built into construction contract that has not been expended. Appears that project will come in at 4.3 million dollars less than projected. Project management team, construction management team and planning paying off now. Anticipate no change orders, some items will need to be done. Teachers and staff are creating lists of items that need to be addressed of small details. In any new building takes a little while to work out the kinks. All staff have been responsive and patient. Kudos to faculty for keeping the running tab up to date. Fields almost complete, some work on data for press box, and wireless connection for signs. Greenhouse should be operational the week of November 1st. Parking lot will be finished within 2 weeks. Next meeting of SBC will be November 9th at LMHS. Agenda items include discussing closeout. May schedule additional meetings for January and February. SBC won't be complete until until the spring.

New Business:

Discussion

- a. History/Social Studies Curriculum(Revised) First Reading: Superintendent Calmes introduced Ms. Anna Keegan, master teacher and LHS faculty facilitating the History task force. Excited about curriculum, will go through three readings of School Committee before adoption. Educators have really taken the time and effort to delve into the curriculum. Task force had representatives from every grade level K-11. Produced 200+ pages of a document. Ms. Keegan explained that this focuses on vertical teaming, and the benefit of teachers working together from kindergarten to high school to create a curriculum that is scaffolded. Created a philosophy, reviewed standards, linked all of these to enduring understandings and essential questions and aligned them to where they needed to be. Ms. Keegan commented that Social Studies should not be marginalized, as it is fundamental and vital for every student, every year. Spoke about 4 different strands/disciplines-Civics, History, Economics and Geography (K-12). Mentioned curricula sources. Common core standards in elementary grades different than Grades 6-12. Every grade level will have goals for each of the 4 areas and 3 critical thinking skills-analytical thinking, research and writing. Changes are that the curriculum is organized in cohesive units, organizes grade 4 and 5 to allow for depth of coverage, adjusted to ensure strands are addressed. Significant change is that Civics is added now in Grades 10 and 11 by adjusting the historical timelines. Ms. Keegan is proud of document the task force collaborated on, and excited about developing units that will make this work. Ms. Ayles congratulated task force on such an impressive document, and how this will be cohesive from K-12. Ms. Weiss loved the humor at the beginning of the document (read excerpt), and vertical teaming approach/scaffolding. This will become a policy document. Will be posted at website for public viewing and comment. Will respond to public, and bring back to committee. Encourage everyone to review. Superintendent Calmes commented that she appreciated the energy and enthusiasm of teachers. Thanked Ms. Keegan for her leadership.
- b. Approval of Roof Space Lease-Solect energy: Have letter prepared for signature directed towards the Commissioner of Education. Mr. Mackin motioned that the school committee votes to indicate that the rooftop space is deemed surplus and the leasing of that space for the purpose intended will not interfere with our educational programs. That we send a letter to the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education requesting his/her approval for the leasing of surplus space on the roof of the Lunenburg Middle-High School. Ms. Weiss seconded, vote: unanimous. Lease will extend for 30 years. Will provide certified copy of votes. Have been provided this motion from legal counsel. Ms. Bertrand asked if we are awaiting response back? Return may be Thursday or Friday. Initial contract will be 20 years, can have option of extending. Will overnight signed document to DESE.
- c. Letter of Commitment for Turf Field: received a communication from the town financial director who explained that the town will go out for bond for replacement of track in January most likely. Looking for

various letters of commitment. Town Manager provided an overview of funding sources- LYSA, Bengals, cell tower, etc. Our financial commitment to project would be \$40,000 which is \$25,000 we indicated originally plus LYSA's \$15,000. Need to specify utilization, will be working with Mr. McCauliff on this. Letter of commitment is directed to chair of Board of Selectmen and members. Superintendent read language in letter. Ms. Sroka asked if LYSA has signed their letter of commitment yet? Mr. McCauliff spoke with Aaron Bowser who explained that LYSA has not met recently. Mr. McCauliff is hoping to move back here in spring but cannot guarantee. Ms. Bertrand asked if there was a concern regarding the \$15,000. Reply was that Mr. McCauliff is confident that this is moving forward as planned. Ms. Sroka concerned about the \$40,000 long term commitment from the schools portion. Mr. McCauliff stated that when this facility is done it will be incredibly attractive and will receive the use required to maintain the funding. In order to seek the bond in January, the letters need to be put in place as soon as possible. Consensus of committee was to move forward.

Old Business

Discussion

- a. Ballot Question 2: Ms. Ayles respectfully recused herself from the ballot question 2 discussions. Mr. Mackin apologized for the impassioned debate during the last meeting. Intent tonight is to see if the committee plans to take a position on ballot question 2. He stated that this does not have to do with the merit of lifting the cap on charter schools. Would like the School Committee to proceed with a workshop session to draft language that the committee can work with. Ms. Sroka stated strongly that she does not feel that it is appropriate for the school committee to take a position that may impact voters. Mr. Mackin explained that currently our district is spending \$443,000 in tuition costs for 38 students to attend charter schools. In turn, this does not reduce our district costs or reduce our faculty in any way. In addition, we are serving a student population with a greater level of educational challenges which charter schools are not required to serve. Provided Sizer charter school as an example of attaining a score of Level 1, which Mr. Mackin feels is due in large part to not serving the same population of high needs students that we support. Mr. Mackin indicated that in our local area we have had a wonderful track record of charter schools, however if changes are made to have an unending amount of these type of schools, we may not be able to manage quality. Agree that we need charter school reform. Why are we creating more of a need when there are students that are still on a waitlist currently for these schools? Ms. Sroka asked what the average loss of students to charter schools was from our district? Possibly 5? Ms. Sroka asked for an exit document of why children are leaving our district through school choice and out of district placements. Ms. Bertrand feels that what needs to be drafted would be direct, concise, and include the factual points with potential impact of loss to the Lunenburg Public Schools. The points made would also need to educate the public. Mr. Bittner commented that he had submitted an email as to concerns from what had transpired during the last meeting. Does not feel the committee should take a position for him as a voter. Mr. Mackin stated that 180 School Committees in the Commonwealth have taken a position, and he still feels our School Committee should follow.

Lisa Leblanc, faculty commented that as leaders of the school district, she is asking for the School Committee to please take a public position on this ballot question that has a direct impact on students and teachers, speaking as a representative of the LEA. Ms. Luck commented she felt it was inappropriate for Ms. Leblanc to be speaking for the majority of her union, and that this was a personal opinion. Superintendent Calmes mentioned that one of the opportunities we have is to personalize this information to Lunenburg. We have always had reductions in our school budget, however an amount is given to charter schools through the town every year with no debate at town meeting. This would give an opportunity to educate the community. Saddened to see this as contentious towards local charter schools as we have always had a great partnership. Ms. Weiss attempted to make a motion to see what figures directly impact the Lunenburg community to educate people and craft language as to why this ballot question stands to affect our public schools.

Ms. Foyle indicated this ballot question does impact the budget. As a teacher, she views the School Committee as leaders that need to take a position as people who are informed more than regular townspeople.

Ms. Luck asked about school choice receiving spent by district, \$5,000 to receiving district plus special education increments. Student increment for charter schools is \$11-12,000, 1 year full cost, 25% for following 6 years subject to appropriation. Overall cost in FY16 was \$447,949 divided by 38.22 students which equals \$11,708 per student. Essentially the cost is the same whether they are in charter

schools or within district. From taxpayers perspective they pay for students to attend school in our district or to go to a charter school. State average is 14,000 per pupil. Ms. Bertrand commented that so much misinformation is out there, need to find meaningful statistics for the community. Mr. Bittner asked if the School Committee could inform public without taking a stance.

Ms. Susan Diamantopoulos, faculty member feels elected School Committee board should be considering the funding bottom line, and honoring the teacher's opinion in the district.

Ms. Bertrand made a motion to hold a workshop to craft language and a statement regarding ballot question 2 and the potential impact on the Lunenburg Public Schools while perhaps taking a position. Seconded by Ms. Weiss. Vote: unanimous.

Public Comment: Ms. Luck inquired about street views of solar arrays, as the Board of Selectmen will be requesting these. Superintendent Calmes explained the flat solar arrays that will be installed on the Lunenburg-Middle High School if approved will cover the whole face of the south facing peaked roof and appear as solid rows. Represents a visual sign to the community of our commitment to green energy. School Committee is comfortable with the design, Mr. Londa indicated that he may be able to acquire the street view of the solar arrays show the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Bittner asked is the school is required to increase its insurance due to the new solar arrays. Mr. Londa commented that the responsibility of the arrays would be by Solect. Ms. Luck commented she enjoyed the History presentation and stressed the importance of History in order to become educated adults.

Reports:

- a. Finance Committee: Mr. Mackin reported that the committee met last week. Public Access Cable Committee will have shortfall in their budget. Item will be presented at the special town meeting to fund shortfall through the reserve fund to be paid immediately when funding is realized from the cable company.
- b. School Councils: Ms. Sroka reported THES had discussed MCAS scores. Dip in 3rd and 4th grade scores. Will meet in November. Ms. Weiss reported LMS will reschedule the meeting for November 1st.
- c. PTO: Ms. Weiss reported that they do not have a final tally from the Myles for Miles event yet. Mr. Paul Richard from the Shine Initiative presented them with a mental health toolkit, with resources and information on reducing the stigma of mental health, and starting the conversation with your children of "Are you ok?" Trolls Movie event November 6th. In December will have a fundraiser at Barnes and Noble.
- d. Policy Sub-Committee: have not met.
- e. Capital Planning Committee: Ms. Sroka reported they met yesterday, Chief Marino presented capital plan.
- f. Wellness Advisory Committee: has not met.
- g. PAC/SAL: has not met.
- h. Reuse Committee: Mr. Mackin reported the committee met on Monday. Interim Town Manager Mr. Marciello developed an RFP with the planning manager to send out to developers for interest in properties. Mr. Mackin listed aloud the properties involved.
- i. Start Time Sub-Committee: Superintendent Calmes reported the committee needs to schedule a time to meet to review data points. Perspectives shared at PTO meeting.
- j. Town Manager Selection Committee: Ms. Sroka reported they are moving forward in the process of selecting a Town Manager.

Topics for Future Discussion: Ms. Sroka inquired as to the discussion of funding of Lacrosse and Band. Mr. Mackin mentioned he had thought this discussion would occur when the budget was brought forth. Superintendent Calmes confirmed Mr. Mackin's recollection by stating a directive was given previously to include this within the budget projections that will be reviewed by the committee.

Executive session: Mr. Mackin moved to go into executive session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and litigation, with the intention of not returning to regular session.

Roll Call

Mr. Mackin- yes
Ms. Sroka- yes
Ms. Bertrand- yes
Ms. Ayles- yes
Ms. Weiss- yes

Adjournment: Ms. Ayles motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Weiss. Meeting adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Liz Petersen, Recording Secretary