

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES: Wednesday, February 12, 2020**
John Zon Community Center, 35 Pleasant Street, Greenfield MA

Present: Katie Caron (KC); Susan Eckstrom (SE); Jordana Harper (JH); Susan Hollins (SH); Glenn Johnson (GJ); Amy Proietti (AP); Jean Wall (JW); Roxann Wedegartner (RW) (arrived 6:39)

Absent: None

Also present: Lynn Dole, GMS Principal; Tom King, AEL Principal; Steve Nembirkow, Business Manager; Doug Selwyn; Susan Voss, AEL staff; other school staff, citizens, and the press

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (KC, SE, GJ, SH, AP, JW), Chair Proietti opened the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

II. Approval of Draft Minutes

SE moved to approve minutes of November 18, 2019, December 11, 2019, and December 16, 2019. KC 2nd.

Approval of Nov. 18 minutes was tabled at Dec. 11 meeting, with questions re: van procurement in V.A. Transportation Cost Savings Proposal. Recording Secretary Farber reported on review of GCTV recording of Nov. 18 discussion: there was no discussion of procurement.

Motion passed 4-0-3 (abstain: AP, RW, JW).

SE moved to approve minutes of January 8, 2020, January 13, 2020. KC 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Public Comment

Susan Voss, IA at AEL, spoke about effect of stalled Unit C contract on IAs, concerns that IAs are frustrated and angry, leaving Greenfield for better-paying positions thus affecting students' need for consistency.

Doug Selwyn urged Committee to find the money to pay IAs who work with most vulnerable students; described the budget process as rushed, "scrambling to meet a deadline that's not your fault," and urged revision to budget process; and spoke in favor of hiring a curriculum coordinator, with financial benefit of strong curriculum in keeping students in district.

IV. Committee Reports

A. Chair (AP)

Affirmed School Committee's support for Unit C contract. City Council proposed to fund half, with GPS to fund other half. Looking to find funds in school budget to support this year and next for Unit C. Clarified that there is precedent of Council not fully funding first year of a contract, with GPS required to fund the remainder.

B. Superintendent (JH)

- JH introduced Caissie Putnam, newly appointed Interim Principal at Discovery School at Four Corners.
- Proposed tuition rate increase at AEL to be discussed later on agenda
- Kindergarten registration in March

- Local media coverage, including “grandbuddies” and champion GHS girls basketball team
- School newsletters
- Financial reports: soft hold on non-essential expenditures, typical for this time of year
- Valley Kids media focus on community connections in schools
- Continued progress on audit of Chap. 70 funds in Town-School Committee; working on MOU between City & GPS how to count direct & indirect expenses.
- Thanks to Cub Scout Pack 3 for Valentines
- Celebrated 100th Day of School
- Provided flight details for GHS trip to Spain; School Committee previously approved this trip

C. Subcommittees & SC Representatives

1. Budget & Finance (SE)

Susan Eckstrom, Chair; Members Amy Proietti, Jean Wall
Mayor Wedegartner & Susan Hollins also attending.

Meeting frequently. Building budget to include all requests from schools to show cost of education; not expecting full funding of that total.

2. Policy & Program (KC)

Katie Caron, Chair; Members Glenn Johnson, Roxann Wedegartner

Reviewing Section G Personnel. After budget season, many policies to come before full Committee.

3. Health, Safety & Facilities

Katie Caron, Susan Hollins, Glenn Johnson
Has not yet met. No report.

4. Personnel & Collective Bargaining

Susan Eckstrom, Katie Caron, Amy Proietti
Has not yet met. No report.

5. Collaborative for Educational Services

Katie Caron
Next meeting March 25

6. City Planning & Construction Committee

Jean Wall, Chair; Susan Hollins, member

Legal clarification that JW can serve as Chair of this committee and School Committee member.
JW to remain aware of any potential conflict of interest.

No report. Lacked quorum at January meeting.

7. City Library Building Committee

Jean Wall, voting member. Susan Eckstrom non-voting School Committee rep
Reviewed preliminary design approaches.

Request for minutes to be shared with School Cte.

8. Sick Bank

Katie Caron, Glenn Johnson, School Committee reps
Meets on as-needed basis

GJ moved that KC represent us [School Committee] at the Collaborative for Educational Services. SE 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

V. New Business

B. GPS 2020-2021 Calendar

KC moved to accept 2020-2021 calendar as presented. SE 2nd.

JH summarized process and overview of calendar. Changes:
Meet & Greet, parent-teacher conferences: families felt these were held too close together last year.
Additional days on preschool calendar

Discussion:

- For next year: Cancel February break? Replace February & April breaks with 1 week in March?
Need community input.
- Appreciate that MLK Day and In-service Day not in the same week
- First day of school as half-day eases students into big transition
- Moving GMS from trimester to semester schedule

Motion revised with friendly amendment: **To accept the 2020-2021 calendar as presented, inclusive of change by GMS to semester schedule, and to create an ad hoc [advisory] committee to study [vacation calendar] issue before next year. Motion passed unanimously.**

B. AEL Tuition Rates for 2020-2021

Business Manager Steve Nembirkow and AEL Principal Tom King presented rationale for 10% tuition increase. Low cost compared to other preschools in region. Sliding scale. Families are aware of coming increase. Will provide \$22,000 additional revenue. Supt. Harper described AEL program, need to invest in youngest learners. 20-25% increase would have covered actual increased costs; held to 10% in consideration of families. Next year's AEL calendar adds 9 days. AEL is full, wait list.

SE moved to approve 10% tuition increase for FY 2020-2021 and release additional information as a draft schedule based on current conditions. RW 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Childcare by National Honor Society for School Committee Meetings

KC moved to have the Superintendent, NHS advisor and GHS principal come back to us with a plan for how this [childcare at School Committee meetings] could work out. SE 2nd.

Discussion:

Goal is to increase participation by families.

Is childcare possible at Community Center? Would this affect location of meeting?

Additional ways to increase participation, including student music performances before meetings, listening sessions throughout community.

Many people watch meetings at home via GCTV

Motion passed unanimously.

D. Unit C Contract

Status report provided earlier in Chair's report.

City Council: first reading and vote to fund half of the contract; final vote next Wednesday.

Budget Subcommittee working on identifying funds to use to fund other half of contract; plan to use reserve accounts, but these are not fully replenished or intended for this type of use.

Discussion:

- School Dept., with 10-month employees, lowest-paid, not comparable to other City departments
- Unfair to pay IAs less than minimum wage
- Concerns re: cutting school budget to provide half of contract cost
- Suggestion for short-term loan to settle contract

D. Procedural Updates on GCTV recording of January 27, 2020 meeting

Recording Secretary (absent from Jan. 27 meeting) was to write minutes from GCTV recording, but due to technical problem, no audio available on GCTV's recording.

Received public records request for minutes

Chair awaiting advice from state. Likely will need to re-take votes.

SE will provide meeting notes to Recording Secretary

E. Procedural Updates on Subcommittee Assignments

Covered in Subcommittee reports.

VI. Other Business

A. Admission to Vocational Technical Schools

RW shared discussion among mayors at recent Mass. Municipal Association meeting re: disparity in admissions to regional vocational-technical schools. RW & other mayors signed letter to Education Secretary James Peyser and Commissioner Jeffrey Riley. No known concerns this is happening at Franklin County Technical School.

Request for minutes from FCTS School Committee.

B. New Guidelines for Dept of Ed for addressing needs of LGBTQ.

School Committee members to read guidelines. GJ will send link to access.

C. Release redacted executive session minutes

Not all executive session minutes have been released. Issues still on-going. Release process to continue.

VII. Executive Session - MGL c 30A, §21, (1): To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual.

GJ moved to enter Executive Session. KC 2nd. Yes: KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously.

Jean Wall left the meeting due to illness.

Susan Eckstrom left the meeting, recusing herself from executive session topic.
AP called Executive Session to order at 9:05 p.m.

Returned to public session at 9:26 p.m.

VIII. Adjournment

SH moved to adjourn. KC 2nd. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary

Meeting Documents

- Agenda February 12, 2020
- Draft minutes: November 18, 2019; December 11, 2019; December 16, 2019; January 8, 2020; January 13, 2020
- GPS webpages
- School newsletters
- Financial Reports: MUNIS 02/07/2020; Year-to-Date Budget 1/31/2020; Revenue, Gift and Scholarship Accounts 1/31/2020
- Email re: "Flight Information" for GHS trip to Spain
- Draft 2020-2021 GPS Calendar and Addendum re: semesters/quarters
- Memo from Steve Nembirkow, Business Mgr, to Jordana Harper, re: AEL Tuition, Feb. 5, 2020
- Subcommittee meetings (from GPS website); schedule of Budget & Finance Subcommittee meetings
- Budget & Finance Subcommittee minutes: January 21, January 28, January 30, 2020
- Letter to Secretary James Peyser and Commissioner Jeffrey Riley, re: Reform of Vocational School Admissions, January 2020