

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES: Wednesday, November 13, 2019**
John Zon Community Center, 35 Pleasant Street, Greenfield MA
Approved 11.18.19

Present: Katie Caron (KC); Susan Eckstrom (SE); Jordana Harper, Superintendent (JH); Susan Hollins (SH); Glenn Johnson (GJ) (attending remotely); Adrienne Nunez (AN); William Martin (WM); Cameron Ward (CW) (arrived 6:36).

Absent: None

Also present: Mike Kuchieski, Athletic Director; coaches Tina Riddell, Tom Suchanek, Erin Thayer, and student athletes; Stephen Nembirkow, Business Manager; Atty. Peter Smith; Susan Voss, Academy of Early Learning staff; other school staff, citizens, and the press.

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (KC, SE, SH, GJ, AN, WM), Chair Nunez opened the meeting at 6:32 p.m.

SE moved to change agenda to next consider Public Comment; GHS Field Trip to Spain; GPS Athletics Program & Special Recognition. Yes – SH, AN, KC, SE, GJ. No – WM. Abstain – CW. Motion passed 5-1-1.

III. Public Comment

Susan Voss, Instructional Assistant at Academy of Early Learning, described staff's challenges due to absences, vacancies, lack of substitutes; asked for ratification of Unit C contract.

V. Business

A. GPS Athletics Program & Special Recognition

With remarks led by Mike Kuchieski, Athletic Director, Supt. Harper, and members, the Committee recognized:

- The longtime service of Coach Tom Suchanek (48 years, baseball), Coach Al Dean (50 years, football), and Coach Pete Conway (55 years, track)
- Very successful seasons of field hockey team, represented by coach Erin Thayer and 5 players; and girls' soccer team, represented by coach Tina Riddell
- Invaluable support from parents/families

Discussion:

- Teams run grades 6-12; which grades included in middle school, JV, Varsity teams varies depending in part on student enrollment in each sport
- Other area schools cutting athletic programs; proud that Greenfield's athletic program remains strong, despite limited budget
- Budget challenges:
 - Grateful for funding from Greenfield Education Foundation, Alumni Association
 - MOU with Greenfield fire department provides lower-cost EMT service
 - Transportation costs increasing 30%; Kuchieski working with Ed Voudren to find solutions
 - Cost for referees/officials increasing 10%
 - No games in November, so no ticket sales. Loss of Thanksgiving Day game revenue.
 - Concern that \$211K in this year's budget is less than last year's actual expenses
- Regional hockey program is thriving

- Teamwork develops students who are good people on and off the field; GPS program emphasizes ethics

B. GHS Field Trip to Spain

Trip to be led by GHS teacher Tara Cloutier over April vacation. Dates to be finalized in January. 10 students, 2 chaperones.

CW moved to approve the field trip to Spain over April vacation. KC 2nd.

Yes – WM, SH, CW, AN, KC, GJ, SE. Motion passed unanimously.

II. Approval of Minutes

SH moved to approve minutes of October 21, 2019. KC 2nd.

Corrections: p. 2, Town Planning and Construction Committee: \$600K; p. 3, \$19,301,080; motion “in the school district revolving funds. **Yes – WM, SH, CW, AN, GJ, SE. Abstain – KC. Motion to approve amended minutes passed 6-0-1.**

IV. Reports

A. Chair

- Shared article “20 Subtle Signs of Bullying at Work”
- School Committee Calendar to be included in next meeting’s packet
- Congratulations to newly elected to members; thanks to city officials who managed elections
- Should Committee hold 2 meetings in December?
- Move start time of meeting on Monday, Nov, 18, from 5 to 6 p.m. Location TBD.

AN moved to start the meeting [Nov. 18] at 6 p.m. SH 2nd. Yes – WM, SH, CW, AN, GJ, KC, SE. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Superintendent (JH)

- Thanked newly elected and continuing School Committee members
- \$15K planning grant to establish regional writing center at GHS
- Continuing to work with GCC partnerships
- Veterans Job Fair among efforts to recruit candidates for vacancies
- Local media articles, social media, school newsletters
- Good communication by schools to families and community
- Upcoming Thanksgiving vacation
- Student participation in Veterans Day parade

C. Subcommittees

1. Policy & Program (KC) – No report

2. Personnel & Negotiations (SE) – To be discussed in executive session

3. Health, Safety & Facilities (KC) – No report

Committee Representatives

4. Town Planning and Construction Committee (SH)

- Committee’s Annual Report will be added to Nov. 18 meeting packet.
- Affirmed new library as fiscally responsible choice.
- Proposal to heat Green River School with mini-splits; prior bid estimated \$765K. Building would need upgrade from 200amp electric service. Seeks School Committee’s plan for building.

- Capital Budget Process: Ideally, all city buildings would have engineering studies done in advance.

Discussion:

- School Committee has approved plan for Green River School; budget reductions put implementation on hold. Support to move forward with heating system and plans for Green River School.
- Solar panels to be installed on some city buildings, including GHS, Federal Street School. JH to seek clarification from Carol Collins on GPS obligation for ongoing costs.

5. Collaborative for Educational Services (SE) - No report. CES meeting tonight.

V. Business (continued)

C. Substitute Pay Rates

JH presented problem of low substitute fill rates – at best, half for teachers, 25% for paras; concerns for student safety, quality of instruction; comparison to rates at area schools; and proposal to increase pay rates.

Discussion:

- What is causing increase in number of subs needed? Simply that we have more staff?
- Full solution goes beyond pay, including marketing, hiring, training. Suggestions included:
 - Certification for IAs to move to higher pay level
 - Hire person to call subs, replace automated system
 - Central Office employees serving as subs
 - Loyalty pay for those subbing consistently
- Pay increase would use existing funds: substitute pay line (not fully using because of lack of subs to pay) and lapsed salary line (unfilled positions).
- Proposal is for daily subs, not long-term subs.

SH moved to adjust the substitute rate as proposed in the substitute rates document put forward today by the Superintendent, effective immediately and until the Supt. completes further review of absenteeism and substitute personnel. KC 2nd. Yes – CW, SH, AN, GJ, KC, SE. No – WM. Motion passed 6-1.

D. Superintendent Evaluation Update

To be discussed at Nov. 18 meeting.

E. Green River School Update

Discussed earlier in meeting.

IV. Executive Session

AN announced intent to move into Executive Session in accordance with MGL c 30A, §21, (3) & (10): (3) To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares (Unit A, Unit C, potential litigation); and (10): To discuss trade secrets or confidential, competitively sensitive or other information prepared (Greenfield Middle School Parking).

GJ moved to enter Executive Session. SE 2nd. Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AN, WM, CW. Motion passed unanimously. Entered Executive Session at 8:46 p.m.

Returned to public session at 10:42 p.m.

F. Unit C Contract

GJ moved that we ratify the Unit C contract as negotiated and direct the Mayor to request full funding from City Council, consistent with past practice. AN 2nd. Yes – GJ, SH, AN, SE. NO – WM. Motion passed 4-1.

VI. Adjournment

WM moved to adjourn. SH 2nd. YES – GJ, SH, AN, SE, WM. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 10:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary

Meeting Documents

1. Notice, Agenda, Timed Agenda: November 13, 2019
2. Draft minutes: October 21, 2019
3. "20 Subtle Signs of Bullying at Work," November 5, 2013
4. Public Service Endowment Grants Announced, November 7, 2019
5. GPS at GCC Veterans Job Fair
6. *Greenfield Recorder* articles:
 - a. "WMass Field Hockey: Greenfield reaches 5th straight final," 11/6/19
 - b. "Girls Soccer: Greenfield adds to turnaround season," 10/29/19
 - c. "Greenfield gets to wave banner," 10/25/2019
7. Superintendent's Report:
 - a. School newsletters
 - b. Superintendent's Social Media Posts
8. Memo from Steve Nembirkow to Jordana Harper, "Athletic Accounts," November 7, 2019
9. GPS Field Trips Check List, Tarra Cloutier
10. Memo from Steve Nembirkow to Jordana Harper, "Substitute Rates," November 7, 2019