

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES: Monday, July 13, 2020
Greenfield MA**

Note: This meeting was held fully remotely in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts' March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, §20.

This meeting was rescheduled from the regular meeting date of July 8.

Present: Katie Caron (KC); Susan Eckstrom (SE); Susan Hollins (SH); Glenn Johnson (GJ) (arrived 6:32); Amy Proietti (AP); Jean Wall (JW); Roxann Wedegartner (RW) (arrived 6:19)

Absent: Jordana Harper (JH)

Also present: Andy Paquette, TMS, other school staff and citizens.

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (KC, SE, GJ, AP, JW), Chair Proietti opened the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

II. Public Comment

Jason Burns encouraged district to make plans for opening schools available to public and encouraged Committee to move forward with redrawing district map.

III. Reports

A. Chair

- Superintendent not attending meeting tonight; her written report is available.
- Reminded public that all School Committee meeting materials are available on website (gpsk12.org).

No subcommittee reports.

IV. New Business

A. Contract for TMS

SE provided overview: GPS has 30-day contract with TMS for business management services. Preference for one-year contract, with six months minimum and ability to cancel with 30-days notice.

SE moved to retain TMS for up to 12 months for business management services for Greenfield school district. KC 2nd.

Discussion:

- Unclear if there is difference in TMS fees if contract is longer. TMS is less expensive than employing business manager on staff.
- TMS provides broad view of what other districts do.
- Some support for in-house business manager and for extending search beyond Western Mass via employment service.
- Suggestion for TMS contract to stipulate following GPS policies & prior votes on budget.

Roll call: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously.

Consensus to discuss at later meeting a search for business manager.

III. Reports (continued)

B. Report from Business Manager

Andy Paquette, TMS, introduced budget report, which shows \$73K negative balance. No cause for alarm; deficit is “not real”; report is incomplete; harder for administrators & business staff working remotely to complete close-outs & encumbrances.

Discussion:

- Need for additional staff (part-time?) in GPS payroll office. Could be covered by COVID reimbursement? RW suggests interim help from City finance office. Option to use outside payroll service?
- Van purchase mistakenly charged to local pupil transportation line. TMS will move to revolving account.
- What are guidelines for paying tuition & transportation to specialty schools when services were not provided? If schools & transportation vendors received federal reimbursement (e.g., PPP), charges to GPS must be reduced. Still under review.
- Reminder that School Committee must approve expenditures taken from revolving funds.

B. COVID-19 Resolution

AP introduced the resolution, which has been passed by 140 Massachusetts school districts so far, re: need for additional funding to open schools. If approved, will be signed by School Committee members and sent to Governor, Education Secretary, DESE Commissioner, elected representatives and Mass. Senate/House leadership.

WHEREAS, if schools are to re-open this fall in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is the responsibility of each school district to do so safely and responsibly; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the state to ensure that each school district is able to pay for the enormous additional staffing, transportation and material expenses required to do this; and

WHEREAS, the state cannot expect mandatory COVID-19 safety guidelines to be followed without also ensuring that each school district has the funds required to implement these guidelines; therefore, let it be

RESOLVED: that the state must guarantee every school district full reimbursement for whatever COVID-19 expenses are required to follow state mandates.

We must ensure a statewide school re-opening that is safe, responsible and equitable.

THERE CAN BE NO UNFUNDED MANDATES FOR COVID-19.

KC moved that Greenfield School Committee add its name to the list of school committees asking the state for this resolution. JW 2nd.

Discussion:

- Agreement with overall message, disagreement with some details:
 - Don't need to be in buildings for schools to re-open (remotely).
 - Would prefer adding concerns for safety of both students and staff.
- GPS, as city department dependent on city council budget, is in different situation than towns that can go directly to resident-taxpayers for additional funds.
- Acknowledgment that state is going to be strapped for funds.

Roll call: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Greenfield Re-Opening Educational Advisory Team (GREAT) – Progress update

Katie Caron, who represents School Committee on GREAT, gave summary update:

- 20+ GREAT members working extremely hard; 8 subcommittees focusing on details (equity of access, facilities, technology, special education, etc.).
- Directed by state to prepare 3 separate plans: Fully back in classroom; fully online; hybrid.
- DESE Commissioner asked schools not to release any plan details until August, as situation continues to change.
- Priority to make everyone as safe as possible.
- A lot of responses to parent survey, wide variety of opinions, no clear agreement.
- Children need to have mask, families to provide. Asking parents to check child's temperature before sending to school; need for thermometers for families. Will likely be community support for this.

Discussion:

- Agreement that “fully back in classroom” option not realistic. Recommend GREAT focus on hybrid plan with fully online as backup if COVID resurgence.
- City ordering PPP, anticipating potential spike in winter. Does GPS want to be included in that order?
- Families can call City Hotline for masks, including child-sized masks.
- Concern for students & staff who are immuno-compromised or otherwise at greater risk. Concern for at-risk family members of students, staff. Suggestion to open Green River School for immuno-compromised students & staff – but still no heating system in building.
- Consider virtual-classroom option for teachers who feel unsafe to return & for families unwilling to send children to school buildings.
- Each school building has different challenges re: distancing.
- Contact private schools to learn their re-opening plans.

SH moved that in planning for 2021, the School Committee would support a virtual education option for all parents and guardians who would like this schooling option. GJ 2nd. Roll call: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion (continued)

- Options for bus transportation: no state guidance yet.
- Families' situations can change quickly, including preference for in-building vs. remote program.
- Suggestion to start first 6-8 weeks remote while seeking additional physical space throughout Greenfield.
- Will state let each district decide or make one model mandatory?
- Superintendent is working with districts in region to communicate & potentially coordinate hybrid schedules for consistency in schedules.
- Interest in School Committee hosting listening sessions to support GREAT. Separate times for elementary-middle-high school. AP will bring idea to Superintendent.
- Thanks to Katie Caron and GREAT for their work.

Likely need for School Committee to hold 2nd meeting in July.

D. Redrawing District Map

- AP introduced topic: district map guides which students go to which elementary schools based on geographic location.
- SH provided background on Innovation School law, created in 2009-2010, and GPS innovation schools. District maps can balance student demographics in individual schools, provide equity.

- Math-Science Academy was moved to GMS building to allow Green River School to re-open, which has not happened. Are there children in Green River neighborhood to fill the school?

AP announced creation of District Map Subcommittee, appointed Jean Wall as Chair and Susan Hollins as member. School Committee members to inform AP if interested in serving as additional member. Goal to begin in September, gathering information and public comment, with work and details to evolve from that input.

VI. Executive Session - MGL c 30A, §21, (2) & (3): (2) To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; (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.

RW moved to enter Executive Session. GJ 2nd. Roll call: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously. Moved to executive session at 8:24.

JW moved to leave executive session. SH 2nd. Roll call: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW. RW. Motion passed unanimously. Returned to public session at 9:04 p.m.

VII. Other Business

A. Pay for Summer Meals Staff

JW moved that summer meals staff receive time-and-a-half pay going forward and retroactively for the Summer 2020 Meals Program, with a cap of \$7/hour on the half-time rate. SH 2nd. Roll call: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. Adjournment

RW moved to adjourn. SE 2nd. Roll call: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary

Meeting Documents

1. Agenda June 10, 2020
2. Superintendent's Report (July 6, 2020)
3. Meals served during GPS School Closure
4. DLS Bulletin: "FY2021 Budget Issues and Other Related Matters"
5. Budget Reports (June 30, 2020)
6. "Classroom Diagrams and Parametric Dashboard Overview," DESE (July 2, 2020)