

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, December 9, 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.

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

Absent: None

Also present: Mike Kuchieski, Athletic Director; Jennifer Hoffman, Interim Health Director, City of Greenfield, other school staff, citizens, and the press.

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW), Chair Proietti called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

JW moved to approve draft minutes of November 19, 2020. RW 2nd. Roll call vote: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously.

GJ moved to approve draft minutes of November 24, 2020. SE 2nd. Roll call vote: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Public Comment

Speaking in support of allowing winter sports (ice hockey, basketball), citing importance to students' well-being and safety precautions offered by supervised play:

- JC, Greenfield student
- Sean Lavoine, Greenfield, GHS parent, President of Franklin County Hockey Association
- RC, Greenfield student
- Ron Lenois, Jr., Greenfield
- Kathleen Devon-Kelleher, Greenfield

Doug Selwyn, Greenfield, urged Racial Justice Advisory Committee to consider how MCAS tests exacerbate inequality; asked Greenfield to join with 112 school committees calling for cancellation of MCAS.

IV. Committee Reports

A. Student Representatives

GHS student ST reported on events and community service projects at GHS, including Special Olympics, Turkey Trot, food drive, virtual coffeehouse.

RW moved to rearrange agenda for the evening to next discuss Winter Athletics. GJ 2nd. Roll call vote: Yes –KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously.

V. Business

E. Winter Athletics

Proposed program is for ice hockey; basketball – girls, boys.

Mike Kuchieski, Athletic Director, provided overview of Phase III, Step 1 (skills/drills) and Step 2 (skills/drills and competition). Frequent changes in state EEA guidance. Seeking go-ahead to begin early January: Jan. 4 or 11, with competitions 10 days later. Supervised play enforces safety protocols; concern that without teams, students will play informally with reduced safety.

RW provided report from Jennifer Hoffman, Greenfield Board of Health, recommending only Step 1. Concern re: rapid increase of COVID-19 cases in community.

Discussion:

- Described protocol if athlete tests positive. Includes contact tracing.
- Indoor gatherings restricted to max. 25; Kuchieski clarified that limit is on the floor, on the ice. Teams limited to 10 players. No spectators. Safety precautions at practice, games.
- Greenfield Board of Health can recommend, not enforce.

SH moved that, notwithstanding a state directive to the contrary, to support a safely-designed skills and drills winter sports program, with competitions as can be allowed within safe guidelines, and for the School Committee to continue to be involved in decision-making. KC 2nd.

RW called the question. Yes – KC, SE, SH, AP, JW, RW. No – GJ. Motion to end debate passed 6-1.

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

IV. Reports - continued

B. Chair (AP)

no report

C. Superintendent (JH)

- Moment of silence in memory of Peter Smith, who recently passed and who had served for many years as attorney for GPS.
- Celebrating Phase 2 of in-person learning, which began last week. Thanks to Pam Owen (GPS lead nurse), all school nurses, principals, teachers, IAs, all school departments' staff, parents, negotiating committee. Described safety precautions.
- Rachel Cummings, GPS teacher, hired as remote learning specialist to support teachers.
- Teachers working hard, excelling at providing live instruction. Live instruction important criterion in Commissioner of Education's review of remote learning plans.

D. Subcommittees

1. Redrawing of the District Map Advisory Committee – JW

Meeting tomorrow (Dec. 10)

2. City Planning & Construction – JW

Reviewing 3 active proposals for replacing heating system at Green River School. Completion expected Sept. 2021, a significant change in expected timeline.

V. Business (continued)

A. Appointment of second Racial Justice Advisory Committee Member

AP appointed Katie Caron to Racial Justice Advisory Committee. Glenn Johnson-Mussad previously appointed. Advisory Committee structure will allow public participation.

B. School Committee web page content changes

JW moved to approve the School Committee updated language for the website as included in the packet. GJ 2nd. Roll call vote: Yes –KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Open Meeting Law Response (10/30)

AP summarized cause of complaint: wrong link mistakenly listed on School Committee agenda, causing difficulty in public accessing the online meeting. Responses to complainant and Atty. General included in meeting materials. School Committee agendas now include footer listing several links to access online meetings. Also noted that people can subscribe to GPS email updates, which include announcements of School Committee meetings; subscription info on agenda footer.

D. Open Meeting Law Complaint (11/17)

AP read portions of the complaint re: Oct. 14 meeting at which the Chair allowed only 1 comment on topic of anti-racism. AP read Open Meeting Law.

Discussion:

- 3 prior meetings included many similar public comments on topic.
- Open meeting law was not violated. Chair has this discretionary power over public comment.
- Can comments be restricted only to agenda topics? Noted Committee's precedence of allowing comments on any topic. School Committee policy permits limits on length but not topics.
- Restricting comments to agenda topics enforced in other public meetings. Clarified that at Oct. 14 meeting, anti-racism was on agenda.
- Suggestions:
 - Review, revise policy.
 - Be clear, consistent with public comment guidelines and how Committee responds to comments, including those submitted via email.
 - If comments restricted to avoid repetition, Chair to allow those with different reasons, opinions to speak.

AP to write response to complainant and Attorney General's office, cc: Committee members.

VI. Executive Session - MGL c 30A, §21, (2), (3) & (10): (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; (10) To discuss trade secrets or confidential, competitively-sensitive or other proprietary information provided in the course of activities conducted by a governmental body as an energy supplier under a license granted by the department of public utilities pursuant to section IF of chapter 164, in the course of activities conducted as a municipal aggregator under section 134 of said chapter 164 or in the course of activities conducted by a cooperative consisting of governmental entities organized pursuant to section 136 of said chapter 164, when such governmental body, municipal aggregator or cooperative determines that such disclosure will adversely affect its ability to conduct business in relation to other entities making, selling or distributing electric power and energy. *Note: (10) is related to approval of Executive Session minutes.*

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

No intent to return to public session. GJ moved to adjourn public session. RW 2nd. Roll call: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed. Public meeting adjourned, moved to Executive Session at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary

Meeting Documents

1. Draft minutes – November 19, Nov. 24, 2020
2. School Committee description for website, current & proposed update
3. Open Meeting Law Complaint, Natascia Pica, Nov. 17, 2020
4. Letter to Helen Perham from Chair Proietti re: OML complaint, Nov. 20, 2020
5. Winter Athletics Proposal, Mike Kuchieski, GHS Athletic Director, Dec. 9, 2020
6. Youth & Adult Amateur Sports Activities, Phase III, Sept 2, Nov. 19, 2020 (Mass. Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs)
7. MIAA Statement on Winter Sports & Sport-Specific Modifications
8. Budget reports, Dec. 2, 2020
9. FY2021 Preliminary Cherry Sheet Estimates: Greenfield, MA Dept. of Revenue, Dec. 4, 2020
10. School newsletters