

Chebeague Island School Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm by Chairperson Jeff Putnam. Present: School Committee members Jeff Putnam, Courtney Doughty, Stephen Todd, Jen Belesca and Suzanne Rugh; school staff Superintendent/Principal Mike Pulsifer, Pre-K Teacher Nancy Earnest and Cook/Custodian Polly Wentworth; and guests Town Manager Marjorie Stratton, Chris Loder, Tracy Ames, and Erika Neumann.

Jeff Putnam opened the meeting by saying he is very thankful for all of the hard work, time and energy that was given to the school renovation project by many different groups and individuals. He said being in the school again is a good feeling, and he is very appreciative of everyone's help during this renovation.

Flag Salute

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Courtney Doughty and seconded by Stephen Todd to approve the agenda as written. The motion passed 5-0.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Jen Belesca and seconded by Courtney Doughty to approve the School Committee meeting minutes of April 9, 2019. The motion passed 4-0-1 (Rugh).

Correspondence

Jeff Putnam reported that he had sent a letter to the Chebeague Island Library Director Lynn Priest, saying the School Committee had agreed to increase the funding for library services for the 2019/20 school year. The amount was more than last year, but less than requested from the Library. In addition, Jeff said that the town librarian Deb Bowman sent him a letter and offered to come to a School Committee meeting and discuss library services. Jeff felt that would be a good idea to schedule that discussion, but to do it after our new Superintendent takes over in July.

Mike Pulsifer said he received a letter from Danny Molloy asking for a change in School Department support for students attending a private school in Yarmouth who ride the CTC ferry. It was agreed to discuss this letter under agenda item 8c - *CTC Contract* later in the meeting.

Public Comment

Chris Loder spoke to the School Committee and showed them a picture of a "Ga-Ga Pit" game and said he and his family would be willing to design, build and donate one for the school. Some questions were posed, and it was agreed that Chris would return to the next School Committee meeting and give an overview of the proposal.

Reports

School Committee Chairperson: None.

Superintendent/Principal: Mike Pulsifer reported that he received correspondence from legal counsel Peter Lowe that the MainePERS audit funds reportedly owed should be paid by us, and Peter felt there was little merit to making a defense against the MainePERS claim. Marjorie Stratton announced that the amount owed, without interest, was approximately \$58,000. As we hear more from MainePERS on this audit, it will be shared. A discussion was held on the amount put into the 2019/20 budget to pay off the MainePERS debt and interest, and it was agreed to keep the budgeted amount as it is.

Mike also shared a resignation letter from Caroline Fernandes effective June 20th. Caroline has worked as an Ed Tech at CIS for the past two school years. Mike reported that Caroline was a very positive member of the school staff and she will be missed.

Mike said our 2019/20 Anthem Choice rates have been decided, and the increase over this year's rate is 3%. We safely budgeted above that with an estimated 8% increase, so the School Department is within its budget by a few thousand dollars. After discussion, it was agreed to leave the budgeted amounts in place as the overall budget is very lean.

Finally, Mike gave an update on the newly renovated school and some behavioral issues he and the staff are addressing. The school is beautiful, and everyone is excited to be in it again. It is airy, bright and a great educational setting. Everyone is pleased. On the student side, he and the staff have addressed some individual student issues, and believe they are adequately meeting the needs of all students and staff while helping some individual students better meet the behavioral expectations of our school.

Old Business

School Renovation Update: A review of the current punch list was done, and it has grown since the last School Committee meeting. There are approximately 25+ issues still outstanding, and a walkthrough by David Brunner and Laura Summa targeted a number of needed things. Since the list is so long, Mike Pulsifer will have Ducas Construction back on site on May 15, 16 and 17 to complete the punch list. On those dates the 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students will be away on their Boston field trip, and the Pre-K to 2nd graders can be housed at the CRC and/or go on local field trips as well. Students will not be in the building during the punch list work. A consensus agreement to that plan was given.

An Open House to show off the renovation was discussed, and it was agreed to have an Open House for the community and parents on May 28th from 6:00 to 7:30 pm. Mike Pulsifer will work with school staff to get the building ready for that event on May 28th. Mike also shared that the group heading up the July 4th day events would like to use the school grounds again, and would like to have the school open for tours for summer residents as well. More information will be share on that as we get closed to the event.

The school's use of the Recreation Center and Kids' Place is done, and we are working with Thor Peterson to fix blemishes and put on a new coat of paint. Things should be done by this week, and then the storage pods can be returned to the mainland. Laura is coordinating the pod returns.

An overview sheet of the school department's Capital Reserve Account was shared among the School Committee, and at this time there is \$57,551.95 of available funds in it. Additionally, it

was reported that there is an amount of \$41,583 available in unassigned funds from the 2017/18 budget. After discussing the amounts and upcoming renovation bills, a motion was made by Courtney Doughty and seconded by Stephen Todd to pay \$15,980.74 from the Capital Improvement Fund for the Bond Anticipation Note interest that is due on May 23rd. The motion passed 5-0. A further discussion was held on Beverly Johnson's work to restore telephone and internet access to the new school. It was recommended to pay for her materials, supplies and time from the Capital Improvement Fund account. A motion was made by Jen Belesca and seconded by Stephen Todd to pay \$515.15 from the Capital Improvement Fund for Beverly Johnson's work restoring internet and telephone services to the school. The motion passed 5-0.

Mike Pulsifer said that the School Department received some very generous monetary donations from five donors recently. Jim Van Fleet, Scott Searway, Betts Mayer and Manny Morgan all donated \$2,500 to the renovation project. In addition, Linda White donated \$700 for the project. Each donor gave their donation to support the new hallway cubbies, the new closet shelving, and the new classroom cabinets. Mike said that he called all of the donors individually to thank them, and he also sent a thank you letter to each person. Jeff Putnam noted that the School Committee should also do something for these donors, and how to do that was discussed. Mike also shared a list he had compiled of the different donors who gave either time, effort or materials for the renovation project. That list needs to be expanded and updated, and each person on it will need to be officially contacted and thanked for their help on the renovation. More discussion will be needed on this topic. Mike also shared a list of expenses paid with the donated funds from the five donors. He stated that the school checking account was needed to pay for \$164 of expenses that were above the amount covered by the donations. He asked if the School Department's Capital Improvement Fund would cover that \$164. After discussion, a motion was made by Courtney Doughty and seconded by Jen Belesca to pay for the school's checking account payment of \$164 from the Capital Improvement Fund. The motion passed 5-0.

Mike Pulsifer shared that earlier there was a proposal to do a mural in the front school entrance of the school, but at this time, the person who was going to lead the effort it is too busy, and she will not be able to assist in that mural.

Memorial Discussion: At this time it was agreed to table this item until a later meeting.

CTC Contract: Mike Pulsifer reported that he met with the CTC administration and boat captain about the proposed draft contract, and at this time Mike does not agree with many things newly written into the draft contract by CTC. One concern is that it states that CTC will bill CIS for all signers of the school log, with the School Department responsible to pay for those who incorrectly sign the log, or those who sign it without permission. There is a CTC Board meeting on May 9th, and Carol Sebasteanski will be sharing Mike's concerns with them. More discussion on the contract will be needed after hearing back from the CTC Board. The SC noted that there have continually been residents who sign the school log for activities that are not consistent with the guidelines. A lengthy discussion ensued on this. The SC plans to re-evaluate the guidelines for the purpose of helping the community understand which boat travel expenses will be covered by the CISD"

In addition, Chebeague resident Danny Molloy wrote a letter to the Superintendent and School Committee Chair asking for the School Committee to approve paying ferry costs for Chebeague Island students to attend the Learning With Fun school in Yarmouth, as the Committee does for Chebeague students attending public and private schools on the mainland. A lengthy discussion

was held, and it was agreed that for now until the end of this school year on June 19th, the School Department would pay CTC fares for students to attend the Learning With Fun school. A review of all ferry use and fare coverage by the School Department would be done before the start of the 2019/20 school year.

New Business

3-5 Boston Field Trip: Mrs. Klein's class is planning on going to Boston for this year's three-day class trip on May 15-17. A review of the field trip proposal and itinerary was done by the School Committee. After discussion, a motion was made by Suzanne Rugh and seconded by Courtney Doughty to approve the trip to Boston. The motion passed 5-0.

Landscaping and Gardens: Tracy Ames and Erika Neumann were in attendance, and shared a landscape design packet they proposed for the school's front areas. They came to the meeting seeking support from the School Committee to put this design in place at the school, and to also get the SC's support for a Recompense Grant application to fund the landscape design plan. A lengthy discussion was held, and many questions were raised about the location, upkeep, paving, needs of the school and student needs. At the conclusion of the discussion, the School Committee agreed to support the grant request of Tracy and Erika to Recompense, and both would return with more information for the School Committee. In addition, Mike Pulsifer will share the discussion points with school staff at the next staff meeting to get their input.

School Budget Warrant for Town Meeting: Mike Pulsifer supplied a sheet that outlines how each of the articles on the town warrant were tabulated, and a review of the warrant articles was done. Article 21 listed expected revenue, and after discussion it was the consensus of the School Committee that they wanted to move some undesignated funds left over from the 2017/18 budget to offset taxation for the community.

Undesignated Funds from 2017/18: At this time, the School Department has \$41,583 in undesignated funds. After discussion, a motion was made by Suzanne Rugh and seconded by Jen Belesca to designate \$40,000 of the undesignated 2017/18 funds to increase revenue for warrant article 21 to lower taxation. The motion passed 5-0.

Art Teacher Resignation: Mike Pulsifer shared a resignation letter from Louisa Wickard. She has been our art teacher since before we became our own community. She wants to pursue her personal artwork full time. A motion was made by Suzanne Rugh and seconded by Stephen Todd to accept the resignation letter of Louisa Wickard with regret. The motion passed 5-0. Mike said he would send her a thank you letter for her years of service to the students of Chebeague Island.

Other Business

Warrant # 21 was reviewed by the School Committee and approval was authorized for it.

Adjournment

Jen Belesca motioned and Stephen Todd seconded to adjourn the School Committee meeting at 8:37 pm. The motion passed 5-0.