

Chebeague Island School Committee Meeting Minutes Tuesday, March 19, 2019

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm by Chairperson Jeff Putnam. Present: School Committee members Jeff Putnam, Suzanne Rugh, Courtney Doughty and Jen Belesca (Stephen Todd excused absent); school staff Superintendent/Principal Mike Pulsifer and Pre-K Teacher Nancy Earnest; guests Marjorie Stratton, Polly Wentworth, Jon Thaxter and Jon Rich, and Board of Selectmen members Herb Maine, Mark Dyer, Bo Beaupre, David Hill and Jay Corson.

Flag Salute

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Suzanne Rugh and seconded by Jen Belesca to approve the agenda with one word changed on the date. The motion passed 4-0.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Courtney Doughty and seconded by Suzanne Rugh to approve the School Committee meeting minutes of March 12, 2019. The motion passed 4-0.

Correspondence

Jeff Putnam reported that the School Committee received a letter from Jon Rich. In it Jon asked that the SC consider the many years of service and special efforts that Laura Summa gave to the school during her tenure at CIS. Jeff called and spoke to Jon about his letter and assured him that the SC appreciates and understands his feelings about Laura, and consider her in the same way.

Public Comment

Jon Rich came into the School Committee meeting late, but was given an opportunity to elaborate on his correspondence. Jon said his letter was from the heart and he understands that it is Laura Summa's decision not to seek the cook/custodian position, but he wanted everyone to know that he feels she was very valuable to the school and particularly to his family. Mark Dyer asked if the position had been posted yet, and he was notified that it had been posted.

Reports

School Committee Chair: Jeff Putnam reported that there is an effort being organized to get regional School Committee Chairs together to meet with local State Senator Cathy Breen to urge her not to support draft bills LD 900 (an act that would allow public employees, like teachers, to strike) and LD 240 (an act that would make education policy negotiable in Maine, including involuntary transfers, teacher preparation time and a third, very broad and expensive category called teacher workload). He will report back on the progress on the meeting and of those two bills as more information is available.

Superintendent/Principal: Mike Pulsifer reported that he and Town Manager Marjorie Stratton visited the Maine Municipal Association on Friday, March 15th to discuss with them our insurance claim on the MainePERS audit issue. Mike reported that he was not inspired by the visit, and while the MMA staff have not made a decision on the case, they were not positive in their discussion that they would pay on an insurance claim. Mike also informed the School Committee that he had spoken to legal counsel after that meeting in Augusta, to get a legal perspective of the case and our claim. Herb Maine asked if we had officially received anything from MainePERS in writing, and Marjorie Stratton replied that we have not at this time, but she would contact them and request a statement in writing.

Old Business

2019/20 School Department Budget: The School Committee had a draft budget prepared for the meeting that detailed a \$1,211,151 amount, which would result in a \$17,870 increase over the previous year. Questions were posed by Board of Selectmen and guests, and some of the budget items reviewed were as follows:

- MainePERS allocations
- Health Insurance costs
- Workers Compensation allocation
- Guidance costs and trio changes for services
- Special Education costs
- Chebeague Transportation Company costs
- Salaries for teachers and administration
- Substitute costs
- Capital Improvement, Tuition and Special Education reserves
- Printing costs
- Student numbers for next year
- Library services

Mike Pulsifer shared that it was a very lean budget, and one that held little room for extras or unexpected expenses. He said the original draft budget that he had presented to the School Committee was an increase of about \$43,000 over 2018/19 and this one is a very reduced version of that budget, one that the SC worked diligently to pare down. Marjorie Stratton said she had a concern about our current Guidance position, as it not a regular school employee position. It is currently a subcontracted position, and she feels very strongly that is incorrect as per IRS standards and regulations. After discussion, the School Committee directed Mike Pulsifer to review this position so it is included as a regular employee of the district, and to not have it as a subcontracted position. At this time no vote was taken on the budget, but the SC agreed that the suggestions and discussions offered tonight would be reviewed again at the next SC meeting.

School Renovation Update: An email from David Brunner was shared with the School Committee. In it David outlined some end-of-the-project items that needed attention. A review of those was done. In addition, John Thaxter reviewed the punch list that was developed of things needing completion to finish the renovation project. He said he is working with Ducas Construction to get those items completed. Mike Pulsifer shared an overview of the current Capital Improvement funds, and what has been spent to date. Also, Mike shared a student hallway cubby that could be purchased. The reception for the cubby was weak at best, as the SC felt it was not big enough.

Mike was asked to contact a local craftsman to see if he could offer something better at a good rate. Mike said he would report back at the next meeting on this issue. And finally, Jeff Putnam did an overview of the potential move in plan for April 12th and 13th. It was agreed that the School Committee would review this again at its next meeting. The goal is to move in during the April school break.

Superintendent Search: Jeff Putnam reported that a finalist has been decided upon, and right now the candidate and the School Committee are discussing a potential contract. Jeff said he is hopeful that the candidate can be officially hired at the next School Committee meeting.

New Business

None

Other Business

Warrant # 17 was reviewed by the School Committee, and approval was authorized for it. There was a discussion about a MainePERS payment that was included in the warrant, and it was agreed to hold that check until our legal counsel had discussed the situation with us.

Adjournment

Jen Belesca motioned and Suzanne Rugh seconded to adjourn the School Committee meeting at 7:45 pm. The motion passed 4-0.