

**Pelham School Committee Meeting**  
**Wednesday, June 7, 2017**  
**Community Room, Pelham Library**

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Ron Mannino, Vice-Chair	Mike Morris, Interim Superintendent
Emily Marriott	Lisa Desjarlais, Principal
Jesse Jean-Louis	Doreen Cunningham, Assistant Superintendent of Diversity, Equity & Human Resources
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Debbie Westmoreland, Recorder
Cara Castenson	

**1. Call to Order and Approve Minutes** **6:32 p.m.**

Mr. Mannino called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. Ms. Marriott moved to approve the minutes of May 16, 2017. Ms. Jean-Louis seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

**2. Announcements and Public Comment** **6:34 p.m.**

There were no announcements or public comments.

**3. Principal's and Interim Superintendent's Update** **6:34 p.m.**

**DOCUMENT: Interim Superintendent's Update to the Pelham School Committee dated June 7, 2017**

Dr. Morris introduced Doreen Cunningham, the districts' new Assistant Superintendent of Diversity, Equity and Human Resources. Ms. Cunningham briefly shared some of the work she plans to do for the district, particularly around issues of equity. Dr. Morris then highlighted several items from his update including the Furthering Diversity Conference he attended; upcoming district events including ARHS graduation, STARS in Special Education, the Employee Recognition Event, and the Pelham Moving Up ceremony; and the immigration rights and support meeting scheduled for next Wednesday, June 14 at the ARMS library. Ms. Desjarlais recognized Pelham teachers Kate Thurston, Tom Fanning and Sara Mattison-Buhl for attaining professional status in the Pelham district. Teachers who are retiring include Meg Gallagher and Virginia Servos, and Nettie Harrington is moving to Virginia. William Lawrie has been hired to teach kindergarten, Carol Schotte will be teaching preschool, Sarah LaPlante will be teaching third grade, and Catherine Havens will be the new speech and language pathologist. Ms. Marriott welcomed Ms. Cunningham, noting that she is excited to have her in this new position in the district.

**4. New and Continuing Business** **6:45 p.m.**

**A. Defining Membership and Process for the Exploratory Working Group on Innovative Small School Models**

Dr. Morris reminded the committee that they discussed moving forward with exploring innovative small school models at their last meeting. He noted that he worked with Ms. Castenson to develop draft language for recruiting membership in the working group as follows:

On May 16, 2017, the Pelham School Committee voted unanimously to form an exploratory working group to investigate innovative small school models. The working group will be comprised of parents/guardians, **including choice families**; staff members; and School Committee members who will explore sustainable models in which small elementary schools remain attractive and viable in similar rural communities. The working group will study different models, take site visits to innovative schools, and share their findings and feedback with the Pelham School Committee and Pelham school community. The working group is expected to begin in the fall and conclude by next spring; please contact Debbie Westmoreland at westmorelandd@arps.org or 413-362-1810 if you are interested in participating on this important group that may influence the future of our beloved Pelham Elementary School.

Ms. Jean-Louis suggested that choice parents should be included in the group if they wish to participate and that change was made to the text (in bold). Discussion followed regarding ways to disseminate the request for membership.

Suggestions include:

- the district all-call system
- the Town of Pelham website
- the *Pelham Slate*

Discussion followed regarding the make-up of the committee. Ms. Marriott suggested inviting the PGO to send a representative and Ms. Desjarlais noted that having two faculty members would be sufficient.

## **B. School Options Committee Update/Recommendations**

### ***DOCUMENT: School Options Committee Meeting Minutes of May 22, 2017***

Dr. Morris read the vote taken by the School Options Committee, which was to recommend to the School Committee to pursue a potential K-6 regionalization with Amherst as the best possible options for the sustainable financial future of Pelham School with the understanding that the top priority for Pelham in any such discussions will be to ensure that Pelham School continues to serve students for as long as possible. He noted that Ms. Castenson's hope is that this item can be discussed and potentially voted on at the June 27 meeting. Dr. Morris briefly reviewed the process that is required for regionalization, which includes votes at each Town Meeting. He noted that there would be fewer challenges to an Amherst/Pelham Regionalization than there would have been to the K-12 regionalization that was last studied. Dr. Morris expressed appreciation that the School Options Committee reached a unanimous decision for a recommendation to the School Committee.

## **C. Policy: Protection of Undocumented Students**

### ***DOCUMENT: Students: Protection of Undocumented Students***

Ms. Marriott moved to approve Policy JII: Protection of Undocumented Students. Ms. Jean-Louis seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

## **D. Timeline for Superintendent Evaluation**

Ms. Marriott noted that members have received the link to the evaluation instrument, and the deadline for completion is June 13.

## **E. Meeting Schedule (late June and Next Year)**

A meeting is scheduled for June 27 for the purpose of the public evaluation of the Superintendent. It was agreed that the Pelham School Committee will meet separately and discussion followed about the time. The discussion was for a 10:00 a.m. meeting on the 27th in the Pelham Community Room if it is agreeable to Ms. Castenson. There was also discussion about making Pelham meetings on the first Tuesday of each month next school year and there was consensus agreement to do so.

## **F. Appropriate Technology Use**

Ms. Marriott noted that she is interested in having a better understanding of the school's approach to technology and media, including how decisions are made regarding appropriate use. Mr. Mannino asked how Chromebooks are used. Dr. Morris noted that the main ways technology is used in our districts are for adaptive technology use for students with special needs, for teaching technology as a life-skill, and in places where technology can replace more traditional methods to make learning more engaging and for efficiency. He noted that technology is not used just for technology's sake. Dr. Morris explained that Chromebooks gives students access to incredible resources outside of school and teachers can provide active feedback as students are working. Ms. Marriott noted that it seems that it can be tricky to find the balance between that type of interaction between students and teachers and direct interaction. Dr. Morris said that promoting more physical teacher movement around the room and away from the screen can be helpful. Ms. Desjarlais said she sees the white boards used in grades K-6 and the Chromebooks used more in grades three through six. She said she likes what she sees the Pelham teachers doing with technology, noting that they are using it in a way that makes the learning engaging but they are not overusing it. Ms. Marriott asked if the districts have any formal way of assessing the effectiveness of technology use. Dr. Morris noted that it has been more informal through staff surveys. Effectiveness for students with special needs is monitored through IEP goals. In the other uses of technology, the effectiveness is judged in a much more anecdotal nature. Ms. Marriott asked if there is a policy that guides use of technology as a reward or treat. Ms. Desjarlais said there is not an articulated policy, noting that she does not think it has been an issue requiring such a policy. Dr. Morris noted that technology as an incentive is sometimes used as part of a behavioral plan for a student. Ms. Desjarlais offered to have Mr. Fanning come to a future meeting to share information about how technology is used in Pelham School and the committee expressed their desire to have him come to present.

## **G. SC Representative to the Collaborative**

Dr. Morris described the role of the representative to the Collaborative for Educational Services. None of the members present are able to commit to serving in the role at this time.

## **H. Approve the UFCW Recognition Agreement**

***DOCUMENT: Recognition Agreement (with United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Local 1459, Public Employee Division***

Dr. Morris reviewed the agreement that is being proposed with UFCW since the Regional School Committee voted to move to an in-house food service program. The food service workers who currently work for Whitsons will become employees of the district, and this agreement will allow those employees to unionize. Dr. Morris noted that food for Pelham students is cooked at Fort River and delivered to Pelham. Ms. Marriott moved to accept the enclosed recognition agreement between the Pelham School Committee and the United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Local 1459. Mr. Jean Louis seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

**G. Accept Gifts**

***DOCUMENT: Memo to Pelham School Committee from Jill Berry, Region Treasurer, dated May 31, 2017***

Ms. Marriott moved to accept \$50 from anonymous for the Pelham music program for use at the teacher's discretion. Ms. Jean Louis seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

**6. Adjourn**

**8:08 p.m.**

Ms. Jean-Louis moved to adjourn at 8:08 p.m. Ms. Marriott seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Debbie Westmoreland