

**Pelham School Committee Meeting
Monday, November 7, 2016
Gym, Pelham School**

IN ATTENDANCE

Cara Castenson, Chair
Tara Luce
Emily Marriott
Trevor Baptiste
Ron Mannino

Mike Morris, Acting Superintendent
Sean Mangano, Finance Director
Lisa Desjarlais, Principal
Debbie Westmoreland, Recorder
Public

1. Call to Order and Approve Minutes 6:35 p.m.

Ms. Castenson called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. Ms. Marriott moved to accept the minutes of October 13, 2016 as presented. Mr. Mannino and Mr. Baptiste asked clarifying questions about the minutes, and Ms. Luce requested a change in the minutes to better reflect the language used in the legal representation discussion. The October 13 minutes were then approved unanimously as modified by Ms. Luce.

2. Announcements and Public Comment 6:44 p.m.

Mr. Trickey asked when the presentation regarding elementary regionalization put together by Ms. Marriott and Mr. Modestow will be presented to the town. Ms. Marriott noted that the presentation did not have a final polishing after Mr. Modestow left the committee. She asked when Mr. Trickey would recommend having it presented. Mr. Trickey noted he believes the sooner the information is shared, the better. Ms. Luce noted that she talked with Ms. Appy from the Amherst School Committee about timing, and it was agreed that it would be best to wait until after the November 8 election when the decision will be made about the Amherst Elementary Building Project. It was agreed that the presentation will be on the next agenda for further discussion.

3. Acting Superintendent's and Principal's Update 6:50 p.m.

Dr. Morris updated the committee on several topics:

- Paul Wiley has been named Executive Director of Leadership for the remainder of the school year;
- Mr. Morris and Mr. Mangano attended the EdSpaces Conference in Cincinnati, Ohio last week;
- The repairs on the Pelham water fixtures that tested high for lead are complete and we are awaiting retesting results. Mr. Morris answered clarifying questions for the committee.;
- November 8 is curriculum day for all students, which allows for the presidential election without students in the schools where polls are located;
- SEPAC is hosting a free workshop on November 14 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. regarding Supporting Teens with Executive Functioning Challenges; and
- The current Pelham fourth grade class tested highest in the state for the average scaled score on last year's third grade ELA test.

Mr. Desjarlais reported on topics including:

- The Trunk and Treat event, which was highly successful and built a nice sense of comradery for participants;
- The morning of Curriculum Day at Pelham will include inquiry groups working on the code of conduct, multicultural library, and school climate with concrete suggestions to improve practices. The afternoon will include a professional presentation on trauma and how to support students; and
- The first official bullying prevention day is being planned for the end of the month.

4. New and Continuing Business

6:55 p.m.

A. FY18 Budget Guidance Discussion

DOCUMENT: Memo to Pelham Select Board from Cara Castenson, Pelham School Committee Chair regarding FY2018 Capital Requests

Dr. Morris provided an overview of where things stand in the budget planning process. He noted that there will be some positive financial impact with retirements in FY18. Dr. Morris noted that his recommendation will be to maintain current programming since this is an interim year for him as Superintendent and for the district, so FY18 may not be the best year to try to do the final reduction in use of Choice funds as previously planned. He encouraged the committee to consider setting up a joint committee with the Finance Committee and Select Board to look into the potential for elementary regionalization. Mr. Mangano noted that it is harder to predict increases when it is a negotiations year as this is. The budget planning process is two-pronged—how to plan for FY18 and how to move forward beyond FY18. Mr. Mangano noted that the Regional assessment is likely to go down for FY18 and until the larger classes in the primary grades move to the Region. Discussion followed with Mr. Morris and Mr. Mangano answering clarifying questions. Mr. Trickey noted that the planned \$40,000 in Choice needs to come off the books while it can still be offset by reductions in the Regional Assessment. He reviewed the figures for all of the town departments, noting it is going to be a very tough fiscal year. Dr. Morris distributed the current enrollment including choice students, which helps illustrate when the Regional assessments will begin to increase. Mr. Baptiste spoke about the importance of finding a way to wean the Pelham budget off of school choice, noting the importance of thinking outside the box for solutions. Mr. Baptiste suggested that Ms. Luce, as the School Committee's representative to The Collaborative, consult with Ms. Desjarlais to see what services The Collaborative might be able to provide for Pelham. Mr. Mangano noted that the Chinese Immersion Charter School is requesting to increase their enrollment from 400+ students to more than 1,000. He suggested that it would be beneficial to advocate with the Commissioner to deny the increase. Discussion continued regarding variables that will impact the FY18 budget and beyond.

Mr. Mangano then distributed and reviewed the FY18 capital requests for Pelham School. The requests include \$15,050 for computers and computer equipment as well as \$10,000 for interior improvements including paint and furniture. The computer request includes 10 desktop computers, 20 monitors and 21 Chromebooks and a cart. The focus of painting in the interior improvements will be the gymnasium and the cafeteria. The total request for capital improvements is \$25,050. Mr. Trickey asked why we would purchase laptops instead of just purchasing more Chromebooks since that is the ultimate goal. Mr. Morris noted that he will talk with the IT Director about this possibility; however, he believes that Chromebooks are not always the best option for younger students due to durability and size. Ms. Marriott asked if Pelham is on the same replacement schedule as Amherst and whether consideration should be given to pushing back purchases due to the funding picture. Mr. Mangano noted that none of the capital requests are so urgent that they cannot be put off. He noted that the purchases are part of a multi-year plan; however, so delaying purchases will impact that plan. Ms. Luce asked for a survey of what technology is in the building at this time. Ms. Desjarlais noted that she would like to talk with the IT Director to prioritize the technology needs that will best benefit the teachers. At Mr. Trickey's request, Mr. Mangano will forward the 10-year capital plan to the School Committee and the Select Board.

Mr. Mannino noted that two questions he has regard the Superintendent's contract and the Superintendent evaluation process. Ms. Castenson, Mr. Baptiste and Mr. Morris reviewed the process that has been followed regarding the evaluation.

B. Legal Counsel Discussion

Ms. Marriott noted that this topic has been added to the Regional agenda topics list. She is not sure when it will be on the agenda. Mr. Baptiste stated that he does not feel Pelham School Committee has to wait for the Regional School Committee to have the conversation. He stated that the Pelham School Committee can push the Region by having the discussion first. Discussion followed. Ms. Luce noted that her understanding after the discussion of this topic at the last Pelham meeting was that the agreement was to move forward with the Regional having the discussion first. Ms. Castenson asked Mr. Morris to talk about the financial considerations of having a separate attorney for Pelham. Mr. Morris noted that Pelham would pay 4% of the Regional attorney and would take on 100% of the attorney costs for the separate Pelham attorney. He noted that most issues that arise are not Pelham specific, but involve all three districts. Mr. Baptiste noted that he does not necessarily believe Pelham should have a separate attorney, rather he believes Pelham should start the process by preparing an RFP that outlines what Pelham wants in an attorney. Ms. Luce stated that the committee has not decided as a whole that a new attorney is needed. She stated that she believes there are more time-sensitive priorities at this time. Mr. Mangano noted that a draft RFP is already prepared and could be distributed so members could begin to get a sense of what an attorney RFP looks like. Mr. Morris suggested that it be sent to Pelham, but not to the Region without input from the Regional Chair. It was agreed that Mr. Mangano will send the RFP to the Pelham Chair for distribution to the Pelham committee.

5. School Committee Planning

8:19 p.m.

The December meeting will include the SIP/DiP, evaluation process, budget, elementary regionalization presentation, and legal RFP.

6. Adjourn

8:20 p.m.

Mr. Baptiste moved to adjourn at 8:20 p.m. Ms. Marriott seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie Westmoreland