

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES**

**September 9, 2024 School Administration Bldg 7 PM**

**Committee Members Present:** Michelle Badger, Chair; Luis Pizano, Vice Chair; Katherine Sorenson, Quinn Hales and Lillian Morse; Student Representatives.

**School Administration Present:** Christopher Campbell, Superintendent; Stacey Rodgers, Assistant Superintendent; Erik Cioffi, Human Resources Director; Adam Bissel, Business Manager.

### **Moment of Silence**

Stuart Allan MacLeod, past School Committee member was recognized by dedicating a moment of silence.

### **Student Representatives Reports**

Quinn Hales of Plymouth North and Lillian Morse of Plymouth South High Schools each presented a timeline of scheduled events in the upcoming months.

### **Food Services Program Update**

Patrick Van Cott, Director of Food Services and his team presented an update for the committee. Currently, 7,932 students are receiving Free breakfasts and lunch. Over the summer, five sites provided Summer Food Service. Goals for this year include: increased fruits and vegetables at secondary high schools, emphasis on Allergy Awareness and Carb Counting, and expansion of Sustainability efforts. Examples include indoor gardening and composting, conversion to environmentally friendly trays and utensils. A review of expenses showed that the major categories are: Food, Labor, and Health Insurance. The budget will also support the modernization of Schools Equipment and Supplies and experimentation with ethnic foods this year. Of note: the Food Services budget is independent of the School Committee budget and is scheduled to receive a greater State Match this year. Chair Badger expressed appreciation for the great work undertaken and suggested Sustainability efforts receive greater social media coverage.

### **Proposed Public Schools Land Acknowledgement**

On behalf of the Plymouth Public Schools Diversity Committee, led by Tamao Buffalo-Ellis, along the Phoebe Flynn, Chair of the local LWV Diversity Subcommittee and Jon Plate of the No Place for Hate presented the proposed Land Acknowledgement to the Committee. Members expressed support for the work and thought put into the language. Member Sorenson requested clarification on the word “accountability” in the statement. Phoebe explained that it is derived in the spirit of a strong community.

**VOTE:** The committee unanimously voted to accept the proposed Public Schools Land Acknowledgement. The committee will read it at every meeting.

### **Proposed Charter Review Committee Recommendations**

Chair Badger offered to move the presentation by the Charter Review Committee (CRC) to the next meeting on 9/23 since no CRC representative was present.

Noting that the recommendations will be voted on Article by Article at the upcoming Town Meeting, Superintendent Campbell reviewed the sections impacting the School Committee as follows:

Page 10 – two sections struck by CRC. The School Committee shall have all powers which are conferred on School Committees by law, this Charter, bylaw, or otherwise and are not consistent with the grant of powers conferred by the General Laws. Also struck from the School Committee Power and Duties, (d) To have general charge and superintendence of all school buildings and grounds and furnish all school buildings with proper fixtures, furniture and equipment.

Page 28 – Struck from Section 8: Establishment and Scope of the Department of Finance, 3-8-1. There shall be a Department of Finance responsible for the fiscal and financial affairs of the town and for the coordination and overall supervision of all fiscal and financial activities of all town government agencies except the School Department. The Department of Finance shall include the functions of Accountant, Treasurer, Collector, Assessors and Director of Data Processing.

Page 35 – Replacement language for Section 5 Building Committee. 3-16-1: There shall be a Building Committee which shall consist of nine (9) members. The Select Board shall appoint six (6) members for three (3) year overlapping terms. The School Committee shall designate two (2) of its members for terms of one (1) year. The Planning Board shall designate one (1) of its members for one (1) year. The Select Board shall, in making appointments, seek to appoint. STRUCK: two (2) members of the School Committee, and three (3) other residents. Members of the committee shall be appointed for three (3) overlapping terms.

Page 36 – Revised Language (Section 7 Charter Review Committee). The members of the Charter Review Committee shall be appointed by a special committee consisting of the Moderator, who will serve as Chairperson, one (1) member of the Select Board, one (1) member of the Committee of Precinct Chairs, one (1) member of the Planning Board and one (1) member of the School Committee.

There was significant discussion and concerns raised by the membership, including:

- The unnecessary burden on Town

- Compliance with MGL and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education laws. Superintendent Campbell indicated he would have a legal review conducted.
- The need for clarification of roles
- The need for an Impact Analysis on both the Town and Schools operations
- The rationale and intentionality for these suggested modifications
- Distinctions between Commission and Committee roles

### **Superintendent Presentation of Draft Goals for the Year**

Superintendent Campbell presented the committee with his core values to fulfill commitments for this school year as follows:

- Reduce chronic absenteeism by 5%
- Budget transparency
- Lower costs of Transportation Services
- Embed Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) practices.

For each one, he shared specific benchmarks and multi-faceted approaches to reach the goals.

**VOTE:** The Committee unanimously voted to accept the Superintendent’s goals.

### **MASS ASSOCIATION of SCHOOL COMMITTEES (MASC)**

Assistant Superintendent Stacey Rogers sought confirmation for turning off allowance of commenting on social media sites. Confirmation from the committee was received. Member Ashley Shaw requested that direction for providing comments to appropriate designates be offered. Superintendent Campbell committed to ensuring that the removal of the functionality happen.

### **School Committee Matters**

Erik Cioffi, Human Resources Director, detailed four Custodian positions that currently assume lunchroom responsibilities. He requested that the Committee approve that those responsibilities be charged to the Food Services budget for three (3) elementary schools as a pilot.

**VOTE:** The Committee unanimously approved the request.

Superintendent Campbell advised the Committee that the opening of schools is going smoothly. He also advised that Massachusetts School Boards Association (MSBA) is scheduled to visit the Hedge and Cold Spring elementary schools this week to assess the physical attributes of the schools and the impact on Student Learning.

Chair Badger informed the committee that conversations with Selectman Canty continue in their discussions regarding budget matters.

**Consent Agenda VOTE:**

The Committee unanimously approved the minor changes.

**Adjournment:** Chair Badger announced the adjournment of the meeting at 8:49 pm.

**Next Meeting: September 23, 2024**

**Respectfully Submitted by Kate Brown**