

DENNIS-YARMOUTH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Minutes of a School Committee Meeting

Monday, April 8, 2024

A Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School Committee meeting was held on Monday, April 8, 2024, at the Dennis-Yarmouth Intermediate/Middle School in South Yarmouth, Massachusetts.

Members Present: Jeni Landers, Chair; Jennifer Rose, Vice Chair; Marilyn Bemis, Secretary; Tomas Tolentino, Treasurer; Joseph Tierney; Phillip Morris; Student Representative Rose-Anna Joachim; Student Representative Isabella Power.

Members not Present: Joe Glynn.

Others Present: Dr. Marc Smith, Superintendent of Schools; David Flynn, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Maria Lopes, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services and Instruction; Eileen Whalen, Recording Secretary to the School Committee; Betsy Pontius, Director of STEM; Michael Bovino, Principal, Dennis-Yarmouth Middle School; Timothy Blake, Principal, Dennis-Yarmouth Intermediate School; Carol Mahedy, Principal, Marguerite E. Small Elementary School; Mark Haley, Haley and Aldrich; Chad Crittenden, Mitch Miller, PMA; Curt Sears.

At 6:00 p.m., Chair Jeni Landers called the meeting to order.

On a motion by Tomas Tolentino, seconded by Phillip Morris, and carried by roll call vote 5-0, it was:

VOTED: That the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School Committee will enter into Executive Session, to return to Public Session, to meet or confer with a mediator, as defined in section 23C of chapter 233, with respect to any litigation or decision on any public business within its jurisdiction involving another party, group or entity, provided that: (i) any decision to participate in mediation shall be made in an open session and the parties, issues involved and purpose of the mediation shall be disclosed; and (ii) no action shall be taken by any public body with respect to those issues which are the subject of the mediation without deliberation and approval for such action at an open session.

Phillip Morris	yes
Tomas Tolentino	yes
Joseph Tierney	not present for vote
Marilyn Bemis	yes
Jennifer Rose	yes
Jeni Landers	yes

At 7:25 p.m., Chair Landers reopened the public session.

Reports and Discussions

- i. Student Representatives Report – Rose-Anna Joachim and Isabella Power

Rose-Anna reported on happenings at Dennis-Yarmouth High School including the New Horizons Band combined concert; MCAS testing; the AP fair; spring sports; and the Dolphin Dash taking place on May 11th. Isabella reported on the many field trips taking place including Japan.

Chair Landers acknowledged Rose-Anna's selection as the Superintendent's Academic Excellence winner. A dinner was held at Cape Cod Tech for all of the Cape winners. Ms. Landers also said that Rose-Anna has been accepted to both Yale and Harvard.

ii. DYIMS Turf Presentation - Mark Haley, Haley & Aldrich

Superintendent Smith introduced Mark Haley from Haley & Aldrich, the third party vendor who was hired to evaluate the turf fields at the new school.

Mr. Haley gave a brief introduction on his company and area of expertise. He followed with a presentation outlining his investigation and findings. He reviewed the technical documents regarding the field drainage below the turf along with the specifications. There is strict criteria regarding the base stone specifications. It was decided that geotextile was not necessary. Previous testing was done on January 22nd, October 22nd, and July 23rd. On January 24th Haley & Aldrich was contacted to determine why the turf fields are not performing as intended. They did post-construction field testing including grain size test results and found that the mixture is 45-60% sand in the upper field and 60% sand in the lower field. Chair Landers thanked Mr. Haley for his presentation and questions from the Committee followed. Mr. Tierney asked about the double ring test done by Sports Lab. Mr. Haley said the turf has holes for drainage and that the shock pad is permeable. Dr. Smith said that this is an important step toward resolution of the drainage problem.

iii. Report of Entry Findings – Superintendent Marc J. Smith

The superintendent distributed a Superintendent's Entry Plan – Report of Entry Findings to the Committee. Dr. Smith referenced the summary which was included in the packet including the Summary of the Process wherein data was collected and analyzed to search for common themes. Next is the District Profile which found that there has been an increase in enrollment especially in the younger grades. Emerging Themes-Strengths, one of which is pride in being a Dolphin right from the start of school; school and district based traditions that build pride; the many opportunities for all students including music, band, athletics, and diverse programming. All have access points for all students. Areas for Growth include consistency, inconsistent expectations from one classroom to another; disproportionate disciplinary data; a cell phone policy that is not universally practiced. He then followed up with implications for Strategy; there are many strengths upon which to build. Dr. Smith noted that student achievement was not mentioned at all during any of his focus group meetings and that we need to prioritize student achievement. The focus groups revealed possible reasons for the high number of families choosing to school choice out including negative beliefs about the student body; negative press and social media; and letting our story be told by others. We need to tell our own story. The superintendent told the Committee that additional details are included in the full report.

Chair Landers thanked the superintendent for his report and asked for follow-up

questions from the Committee. Mr. Tierney said the D-Y staff is very engaged in the district and that student achievement is the most important thing. Chair Landers said the report was very interesting. She reminded the Committee that they are able to continue completing the superintendent evaluation documents and that they will be due at the May 6th meeting.

iv. 2024-2025 School Choice Participation

On a motion by Phil Morris, seconded by Joseph Tierney, and carried unanimously 6-0, it was

VOTED: That the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District participate in the 2024-2025 School Choice Program.

v. Student Opportunity Act

Dr. Smith reviewed portions of the Student Opportunity Act submission, a copy of which was included in the packet. Particular points were that full implementation of the mathematics program will continue and the extension of the school day. It is an investment in student achievement.

On a motion by Tomas Tolentino, seconded by Jennifer Rose, and carried unanimously 6-0, it was

VOTED: To approve the 2024 Student Opportunity Act Plan Submission as presented in the packet.

Ms. Bemis asked if there is any follow-up from DESE; Dr. Smith said it is self-monitored.

vi. MSBA Application – M.E. Small Elementary School

Superintendent Smith told the Committee that he and Dave Flynn met recently along with State Representative Chris Flanagan and Senator Julian Cyr and representatives of the Massachusetts School Building Authority to help strengthen the district's application for the M.E. Small School. Carol Mahedy had also put together a group for their input. The most important change to the application was to show how the building is not helping the education process for students. M.E. Small has had a spike in enrollment and because Station Avenue Elementary does not have the space, all sub separate programs are run at M.E. Small. Seeking equity for all students across the district is a major reason for the application.

On a motion by Tomas Tolentino, seconded by Jennifer Rose and carried unanimously 6-0, it was

VOTED:

Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on April 8, 2024, prior to the SOI submission closing date, the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School Committee, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the

Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated no later than April 12, 2024 for the Marguerite E. Small Elementary School located at 440 Higgins Crowell Road, West Yarmouth, MA 02673 which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future.

Category 4: Prevention of severe overcrowding expected to result from increased enrollment. While the Cape and the Islands have been experiencing declining enrollment for close to two decades, Dennis-Yarmouth has seen a significant increase in enrollment in the last 3 years. Since the 2020-2021 School year, the student enrollment in the district has risen 12.8% (from 2,739 students to 3,091). The change from the 2022-2023 to 2023-2024 school year was an 8.2% increase in student enrollment. This is the largest school enrollment that the district has experienced since 2013. Most of this enrollment increase has occurred at the elementary levels. MES in particular has seen a 17% enrollment increase since 2020-2021.

Category 5: Replacement, renovation or modernization of school facility systems, such as roofs, windows, boilers, heating and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility. The Marguerite E. Small Elementary School needs significant renovation work in all major systems. The building's exterior components including roofs, doors, windows, and masonry have all been cited as high-priority issues. The 2014 facilities audit and the updated study in February 2020 by Bureau Veritas identified the same issues along with possible structural settlement of the loading dock, interior air quality issues, leaking sanitary and heat piping, and the presence of asbestos containing materials. Additionally, the building lacks fire suppression and has multiple ADA requirement issues.

Category 7: Replacement of or addition to obsolete buildings in order to provide for a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirements. Current capacity is reasonable, however classroom layouts and floor plans with a size of about 840 square feet limit the kinds of educational activities that would reflect best practices for the grades and specialized services that must be provided within this school; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

vii. April 22, 2024 Scheduled School Committee Meeting Date Conflicts with Religious Holiday Observance

After a brief discussion, the Committee unanimously agreed to reschedule the April 22, 2024 School Committee meeting to April 29, 2024.

Chair Landers then polled the Committee on their prior unanimous vote in favor of participating in School Choice for School Year 2024-2025.

Phillip Morris yes

Tomas Tolentino	yes
Joseph Tierney	yes
Marilyn Bemis	yes
Jennifer Rose	yes
Jeni Landers	yes

Subcommittee, Representatives, Liaison Report

School Building Committee Report – Joseph Tierney

No report.

School Committee Liaisons to the Boards of Selectmen

No reports.

Superintendent's Report

Recognition of Donations and Acknowledgments

Superintendent Smith acknowledged Cape Hook Designs' generous donation of tee-shirts to the Dennis-Yarmouth Middle School for their recent YPD vs. DYM basketball game.

Dr. Smith announced the 20th Annual *Through Young Eyes* art exhibit currently on display at the Cape Cod Museum of Art through May 7th. Several Dennis-Yarmouth students have their art work on display in the exhibit.

The superintendent told the Committee that he recently attended an academic signing for Dennis-Yarmouth senior Molly Gedutis who will attend the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth on a full scholarship; one of only two of these scholarships given by the school.

FY25 Budget Override

Dr. Smith gave a brief update to the Committee. The Town of Dennis will not need an override. The Town of Yarmouth will be asking voters for an override of \$880,000 and this will need to pass both at town meeting and at the annual town election. The override would cost the average Yarmouth taxpayer \$55.20 per year.

Transportation Update

Dr. Smith told the Committee that he has asked Dave Flynn and Maria Lopes to look into the 2-tier bus system and they have determined that it can work. Mr. Flynn and Mrs. Lopes will follow up with the bus company.

The superintendent's report was followed up with some questions from the committee.

Chair Landers asked what will happen if the budget override does not pass; is there a Plan B? Mr. Flynn said that if the override did not pass in Yarmouth that the Dennis assessment will need to be reduced proportionately. Dr. Smith said that there would have to be deeper cuts and probably would affect between 20-30 positions.

Ms. Rose asked if a bus pass policy might be feasible.

School Committee Business**Consent Agenda**

On a motion by Phillip Morris, seconded by Joseph Tierney, and carried unanimously 6-0 it was

VOTED: To approve the following items as presented in the Consent Agenda:

Minutes:

March 6, 2024

March 13, 2024

Bills, Requisitions and Payroll

The warrants were signed by the Committee.

Calendars

The upcoming calendars were reviewed.

Items Distributed at Meeting

Superintendent's Entry Plan – Report of Entry Findings

Billerica School Committee Policy for Student Transportation

Barnstable School Committee Bus Policy

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

At 9:18 p.m., on a motion by Joseph Tierney, seconded by Phillip Morris, and carried unanimously 6-0; it was

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting.

Minutes recorded and prepared by,



Eileen M. Whalen, Assistant Secretary