

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

**Madison Public Schools
Board of Education Regular Meeting
November 10, 2020
7:30 PM
Remote**

MEETING MINUTES

Full documentation of these proceedings can be found through on demand video located in the Meetings/Minutes section of the district website

1. Call to Order / Attendance

The public meeting of the Madison Board of Education was called to order by Chair Katie Stein at 7:32 p.m. Mrs. Stein led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Galen Cawley, Greg DeSantis, Diane Infantine-Vyce, Happy Marino, Violet McNerney, Catherine Miller, Tom Pellegrino, Emily Rosenthal, Katie Stein

Also present: JeanAnn C. Paddyfote, Ph.D., Interim Superintendent; Gail Dahling-Hench, Assistant Superintendent; Liz Battaglia, Director of Special Education, Heather Dobson, Human Resource Director, Trent Joseph, Town of Madison Health Director, Stephanie Lesnik, School Nurse Coordinator, Scott Murphy, Madison Board of Selectmen, Zoe Roos, Communications Specialist.

Various members of the public via Zoom.

2. School / Community Session - 7:30 p.m.

2.1. Public Participation

No public participation

3. Board of Education Student Representative Report

Isabelle Vagell and Eric Dillner

Eric Dillner reported the sr. picnic was held last week, by cohort, and enjoyed by all. The wake-up call occurred earlier in the day, with the band playing outside on the main drive between the 2 buildings. Administrators are working on a new system for exams.

Isabelle Vagell reported the band performed at the Surf Club last Thursday night. Parents attended and the event was recorded and live-streamed. Wellness Wednesday begins tomorrow with small group meetings. one class at a time, from 9:30 – 10:00 a.m. Grade 9 will meet tomorrow with school counselors while grades 10-12 and remote students will have time to relax and socialize. There is talk of an Investors & Stock Market Club and the robotics lab is open to students.

4. Interim Superintendent's Report

JeanAnn C. Paddyfote, Ph.D.

4.1. School/Community Health Metrics

Dr. Paddyfote introduced Trent Joseph, Madison Public Health Director, Stephanie Lesnik, School Nurse and Dr. Liz Battaglia, Sped Director who discussed contact tracing and clarification procedures. Mr. Joseph discussed how he works with the school district to conduct contact tracing & community transmission, as well as the present number of cases, how the virus is being transmitted and community to school-based ID procedures.

Mrs. Lesnik discussed the role of the school nurse and the work conducted since March establishing procedures how to re-enter the school safely. Mrs. Lesnik also spoke to educating parents, students & staff and how cases are communicated up to the administration.

Dr. Battaglia discussed contact tracing, how the district identifies close contact and what it means to quarantine as a close contact, as well as what happens if a person suddenly becomes positive while on quarantine and not in the school for 48 hours.

A discussion ensued and Happy Marino suggested that a FAQ document be created highlighting key points discussed this evening and posted to the website.

4.2. Weather-Related School Cancellations

Commissioner of Education Cardona recently provided guidance regarding remote learning days approved due to weather-related issues and Dr. Paddyfote reported each weather-related situation will be reviewed on a day by day basis. Staff and parents will be notified.

5. Board Members' Comments

- Dr. DeSantis requested clarification regarding last week's closure of Ryerson, asking if it was due to the condition of the facility. Dr. Paddyfote explained that a tree had fallen and taken down a power line to Ryerson and due to the fact it was a cold day, it become necessary to close the school. Dr. DeSantis also inquired about Veterans Day activities; Dr. Paddyfote let the Board know the individual schools will be sending out the details.
- Dr. Infantine-Vyce inquired about the fan on the roof at the high school; Dr. Paddyfote confirmed it has been fixed. Dr. Infantine-Vyce also asked for an update regarding students being able to perform multiple tasks on their Chromebooks. Mr. Sickle spoke to the capacity of the Chromebook vs. a laptop as well as the many reasons why (e.g. bandwidth) that ability may be hindered. Isabelle Vagell, student representative, stated the issue was particularly with Google Meet and GoFormative running at the same time and teachers and students have been able to work around that. Dr. DeSantis suggested this issue be looked into further, (particularly at the high school level) as there will no doubt be more resource intensive tasks in the future.
- Chair Stein reported that she attended the high school PTO meeting earlier today along with 85 participants, as well as a Board of Selectmen meeting where the solar carport panels were discussed and a vendor chosen. CABE will be conducting a virtual webinar series on December 2 and 7 which is in place of the yearly in-person conference. Chair Stein announced that she will be stepping down as chairman effective December 2, 2020 and has submitted her letter of resignation. Mr. Cawley and Mrs. Rosenthal thanked her for her commitment to the community.

6. Board Committees / Liaison Updates (Ref. Bylaw #9450)

6.1. Curriculum and Student Development

Members: Galen Cawley, Chair; Greg DeSantis, Catherine Miller

No report, the Committee has not met. Next meeting is November 17.

6.2. Communications Committee

Members: Emily Rosenthal Chair; Greg DeSantis

6.3. Facilities Committee

Members: Tom Pellegrino, Chair; Galen Cawley

No report; the Facilities Committee has not met. Next meeting is November 17.

6.4. Finance Committee

Members: Happy Marino, Chair; Galen Cawley, Tom Pellegrino

Mrs. Marino reported the Finance Committee earlier and discussed the following:

- Legal fees for the past 5 years, as well as special education settlements
- Budget calendar: voted to put forward tonight for adoption with one change: November 27 now correctly labeled at Friday
- Budget assumptions: updated the salary increase obligation to a 1.48% increase
- Added proposed salary & program figures and discussed proposed IT position – contractual vs. permanent.
- Other additional positions, noting summer math program not feasible to be part of the ESY program and \$25K would cover approximately 15% of elementary cohort at risk for Math and ELA
- Food services and potential shortfall.

MOTION: by Marino to adopt the 2021-2022 Budget Calendar.

AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, Infantine-Vyce, McNerney, Marino, Miller, Pellegrino, Rosenthal, Stein

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

6.5. Personnel Committee

Members: Violet McNerney, Chair, Diane Infantine-Vyce, Catherine Miller

No report.

6.6. Policy Committee

Members: Greg DeSantis Chair; Violet McNerney, Emily Rosenthal

The committee met earlier this evening and Dr. DeSantis reported on the following discussions:

- A first reading of 4 amended policies, discussed previously: #1150, #1160, #1170 and #4118.1.4
- A first reading of 4 policies suggested to be rescinded by Shipman & Goodwin: #1000, #1312, #1316, and #1350
- Further recommended amendments from the October 20, 2020 Policy Committee meeting to policies #9400, #9410 and #9420, color coded to reflect originally proposed, as well as further amendments as a result of review by Shipman & Goodwin. The committee also discussed how to approach further discussions of these policies, suggesting a workshop with Dr. Cooke and Dr. Paddyfote.

A discussion and questions ensued which will be addressed at the workshop. Dr. DeSantis provided background information for members of the public in attendance.

Chair Stein provided the following comments:

As we know- revisions of Board by-laws are necessarily complex and should only be entertained with great care. Given that there are 5 distinct phases of by-law revisions to be considered (Development, Revision, Discussion, Adoption and Review)

Based on this, I believe this change in our bylaw deserves more time in the development/revision stage.

When I initially saw this proposal, it seemed reasonable. The chair is a daunting job in the best of circumstances requiring many hours--working at central office, responding to community stakeholders, commenting to the press, communicating with other elected officials etc. The idea of sharing the responsibility in a more efficient and bipartisan way has great appeal.

However, there are real and potentially unimagined consequences that may occur with this change. We need to carefully weigh benefits and risks of codifying this proposal. If we take short cuts during the process we do so at significant peril. Some key points I would ask us to consider during our deliberations.

1. Is one year enough to be effective? As chair I can say, despite significant hours and complete dedication to the task, it took at least 6-9 months before I was better acquainted with the roles and responsibilities I had taken on. Other more experienced resources echo this concern. Nicholas D. Caruso Senior Staff Associate at CAFE cautioned that a one-year term “...*doesn't allow for building relationships, plus the learning curve to become an effective chair could easily encompass the better part of a year. One thing that a chair needs is credibility with the community and that takes time to build.*”
2. Will we lose important continuity as a governing board? Continuity is crucial to the district. This year will be more important than ever as we are facing a difficult budget season, a pending facilities referendum and ongoing COVID-19 considerations. This all with a new superintendent. Vin Mustaro, CAFE Senior Staff Associate for policy services concurred, offering us this advice. “As a former superintendent, I would prefer a term longer than one year for the chairperson based on building relationship and trust”

This trust building goes beyond the office of the superintendent but is also important with the Police Department, Madison Youth and Family Services, the First Selectman’s office and the Board of Finance.

The current bylaw states: “Board officers will serve for a term of two years and until a successor is elected”. Additionally, there is nothing in the existing by-laws that say a Chair can’t resign sooner if necessary (or preferred).

For these reasons, I do not support the proposal as it is written. It seems like a solution in search of a problem. I believe this lengthy and intensive undertaking will take away from the important transition our district is about to undergo with the start of our new superintendent. I further believe the bylaw as it exists now, includes allowances that already address the concerns of this proposal.

In accordance with policy 9520, I would like to request a special meeting of the Board to further discuss this by-law change before our next board meeting.

A discussion ensued amongst Board members regarding the pros and cons of the suggested changes.

6.7. LEARN Liaison

Diane Infantine-Vyce

No report

6.8. Board of Selectmen Liaison

Scott Murphy

Mr. Murphy reported the Board of Selectmen met earlier this week:

- The Town Charter review has been approved and review will begin with input from the Charter Guidelines Committee. Volunteers are needed and will be interviewed over the next few weeks.
- Solar carports have been approved and Green Skies, a single-source provider, has been selected. This will now move to the Board of Finance.
- Mr. Murphy noted there are many vacancies on town boards/committees.
- A Veterans Day ceremony will take place tomorrow on the town green beginning at 11 a.m.
- Mr. Murphy expressed his appreciation to Katie Stein for her hard work, dedication and most importantly her heart, and service to the community.

7. Audience Response to Information Presented (Ref. Bylaw #9540.10)

Jean Fitzgerald thanked Katie Stein for her time and service to the town: “you have taken the Board through difficult waters”. It is not an easy job and you wore it well.

8. Consent Agenda (Ref. Bylaw #9540.2 and #9540.8)

8.1. Line Item Transfers as of October 31, 2020

8.2. Budget Expenditure as of November 4, 2020

MOTION: by DeSantis, seconded by Cawley to approve the Consent Agenda.

AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, Infantine-Vyce, McNerney, Marino, Miller, Pellegrino, Rosenthal, Stein

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

9. Action Item: Motion to approve \$1,326.20 donation from Hand Music Boosters to the DHHS school music program to purchase long sleeve shirts for the band

MOTION: by Infantine-Vyce, seconded by Rosenthal to approve the \$1,326.20 donation from Hand Music Boosters to the DHHS school music program to purchase long sleeve shirts for the band

AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, Infantine-Vyce, McNerney, Marino, Miller, Pellegrino, Rosenthal, Stein

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

10. Action Item: Motion to approve \$1,500.00 donation from the Jeffrey PTO to Jeffrey Elementary School for virtual field trips.

MOTION: by Infantine-Vyce, seconded by DeSantis to approve the \$1,500.00 donation from the Jeffrey PTO to Jeffrey Elementary School for virtual field trips.

AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, Infantine-Vyce, McNerney, Marino, Miller, Pellegrino, Rosenthal, Stein

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

11. Action Item: Motion to approve the minutes of the October 20, 2020 Board of Education Meeting (Ref. Bylaw #9540.9)

MOTION: by DeSantis, seconded by McNerney to approve the minutes of the October 20, 2020 Board of Education Meeting (as amended to include a second community session).

AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, Infantine-Vyce, McNerney, Marino, Miller, Pellegrino, Rosenthal, Stein

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Stein

MOTION CARRIED: 8-0

12. Old Business

13. Future Agenda Items

14. Meetings/Dates of Importance

15. Adjourn

MOTION: by Infantine-Vyce, seconded by McNerney to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, Infantine-Vyce, McNerney, Marino, Miller, Pellegrino, Rosenthal, Stein

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

“The Town of Madison does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and the meeting facilities are ADA accessible. Individuals who need assistance are invited to make their needs known by contacting the Town’s ADA/Human Resources Director Debra Milardo at 203-245-5603 or by email to milardod@madisonct.org at least five (5) business days prior to the meeting.”