

Richmond Consolidated School - School Committee
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday March 24, 2020 at 6:00 PM

Approved

Present: Adeline Ellis, Dewey Wyatt, Superintendent Peter Dillon, Principal Jill Pompei, Janevra Stock, Sharon Harrison.

Others: Rachel Kanz, Crintine Lendfesst, Neal Pilson, Bob Gnidiak, Bob Yodelmen, Andy Lecco, Beth Smith, Sharon Renfrew

1. Call to order: 6:05pm

Dewey explained the meeting was posted and is being conducted according to the Executive Order from the Governor with adjusted OML requirements.

Meeting held by conference call / web due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

An Executive Order from the Governor of Massachusetts relieves public bodies from the requirement in the Open Meeting Law that meetings be conducted in a public place that is open and physically accessible to the public, provided that the public body makes provision to ensure public access to the deliberations through telephone, internet, or satellite enabled audio or video conferencing or any other technology that enables the public to clearly follow the proceedings of the public body in real time.

In addition, all members of a public body may participate in a meeting remotely; the Open Meeting Law's requirement that a quorum of the body and the chair be physically present at the meeting location is suspended.

All other provisions of the Open Meeting Law, such as the requirements regarding posting notice of meetings and creating and maintaining accurate meeting minutes, as well as the limited, enumerated purposes for holding an executive session, remain in effect.

Phone: (872) 240-3212

Access Code: 869-019-757

Computer, tablet or smartphone: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/869019757>

2. Public Comments: none

3. Review/approve FY21 Calendar: Discussion about having extra days over mid year holidays and starting year earlier, or at the end of year. REA enjoyed the extra days off last years which is a results of where the holidays fall every 6 years. The Berkshire County Superintendents need to look to compare and coordinate calendars. Concerns about families that may have kids at two different districts (younger and older) which may have different schedules. Tabled until more understanding of various options can be gathered.
4. PreK update, attendance days, fees: Do we change the fee for Richmond families, and even off pre-school for free to residents? While this would be a loss in revenue (~\$30K per Sharon), it is viewed as a value for young families who are in, or are looking to move in to Richmond (another factor making Richmond attractive). SPED Pre-school residents are not charged anyway. Per Sharon Harrison, Pre-K revenue is down. Tabled until we understand more about the budget challenge for next year.

Schedule adjusted 5x1/2 or 3full days minimum to help with programming. Concern raised about some families ability to pay with extra required days. There are mechanisms to help financial hardship any family has. Motion to stipulate 5x1/2 or 3full days minimum by Dewey, 2nd Adeline to set, all in favor.

5. Budget discussion, revisions and setting the public hearing date: Dr Dillion explained current status – At meeting previous week presented “all in budget 13.5%. We know this was too high as was worked down to 7.45%, but at significant cost. How low do we go to be respectful to neighbors and taxpayers vs impact on the kids of school we don't want to have. Will the very low budget be untenable and unfair to the kids, and be a shell of the school we want. Given the current issue with COVID-19, when will the Public Hearing be. Tomorrow night (3/25/2020) there is a Budget Advisory Meeting (BAC) where there will be a second review of the school budget draft.

Sharon H explained a few adjustments to so expenses to line items from this year (the Spanish teacher is new in teacher salaries but was paid this year for substitute line. So no added FTE, just placed differently).

SPED costs are going up significantly, including transportation (but we still don't hit the minimum threshold for State reimbursement). We will not ask for a separate warrant item for something that is our obligation, but we will explain costs and impacts on budget.

now reductions. Adding time for school psychologists (currently 2 days/mo, was initially set for 4 days, but now set to 2 days/mo. No more room to adjust lower on this). Sharon and Janevra note the concern for the School Committee would be if we don't meet all needs of our students (beyond legal obligations), it may cost more in the long run.

If we need a budget of somewhere around 7% or lower, there will need to be layoffs.

Neal made a comment as a member of the public: The Town cannot spend any more than current year without a Town Meeting vote to adopt a new budget.

Some question about budget lines related to the Superintendency services in this next years while we work to understand what the future looks like.

Bob G appreciated the review and has a good understanding of where the school understands a lot more, and is looking forward to more review the next night.

We need to look for other areas to possibly save to not be able to have to cut positions?

The School Committee tentatively agreed to go with 8.82% and not having to cut any positions. This will be reviewed tomorrow night the BAC.

The Town 2.5% override amount is roughly \$250,000. This is the amount that the total town budget needs to be under.

6. Contracting additional resource for responding to Public Records Requests

Proposal to allocate up to \$2000 for up to five days for a resource to work with Atty Dupere to review records and emails to respond to collection of Public Records requests. Dr Dillon reports expenditures look OK so there will be money in this year for a line item transfer.

Some question about needing to response in this unprecedented time of a pandemic. It is the recommendation of Atty Dupere to continue to get this done and the extra resource is needed anyway.

Motion by Dewey to approve allocating \$2000 for up 5 days of work for timely and accurate responses. Seconded Adeline, All in favor.

7. Other unforeseen items

Peter highlighted Tammy and those working with her to meeting needs of kids. Teachers are working hard to keep contract with their students. This difficult time is highlighting nice aspects out of community.

Motion to adjourn at 7:55pm, Adeline 2nd, all in favor.

Submitted SB