



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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Board – Committee – Commission – Council:

School Committee

Date: 2022-09-15

Time: 7:00 PM

Building: Reading Memorial High School

Location: Library

Address: 62 Oakland Road, Reading, MA

Members Present: - Shawn Brandt, Erin Gaffen, Carla Nazzaro, Sarah McLaughlin, Charles Robinson

Others Present: Superintendent Dr. Tom Milaschewski, Susan Botta, Dr. Jennifer Stys, Dr. Sarah Hardy

Minutes Respectfully submitted by: Susan E Brown on behalf of the chairperson

A. Call to order – Mr. Brandt opened the session at 7:00 pm and reviewed the agenda.

B. Consent Agenda

Public Comment – Ms. Maria Morgan, Lee Street, presenting on behalf of her son Ryan Ryan Has *Williams Syndrome*, and attends Wood End, she wanted the town to know that the teacher hadn't even met her son yet but formed a team and raised money and to participate in a walk at Franklin Park Zoo to raise awareness for *Williams Syndrome*. The school is also having a special day this year to celebrate Ryan.

Chris Haley – Tennyson Road, Mr. Haley thanked the RPS Volunteers who worked at the street faire on the dunk tank. The tank raised \$1,704.

Ms. Nazzaro made a motion to approve consent agenda, edits were made to the minutes.

Dr. Milaschewski explained the donation from Pegasus Foundation, there is a pilot program for Coolidge Middle school challenge day, Dr. Stys led a committee with school counselors and psychologists met to discuss the necessary support for Challenge Days, it was decided to have all our support staff attend that day to help students with the social emotional issues that could arise during that program. We will reassess after and decide if we move forward with similar program at Parker or reassess and change directions.

Motion to approve as amended passed 5-0.

Reports

1. Student - none
2. Dr. Stys – On September 20, 5pm – SEPAC will be meeting, it will cover the terms you hear in education tier level, sst, etc., there is a link to the website on the RPS website, the meetings will be held 3rd Tuesday of each month.

There is continuing partnership with community organizations to ensure that the community has full access to support our learners who learn differently, including but not limited to those who speak

another language other than English. RPL will hold a new community member open house and will have interpreters available. Lynn Lyons has been working very closely training staff and will come Monday to work as a team with helping RPS support students with anxiety.

Working on program reviews, over the summer did a lot of planning and reviewing, we will be meeting with program staff and will present to the community in October.

3. Dr. Hardy – reported that the first few weeks of school have gone well, we have many initiatives that are rolling out, high quality researched based programs, both to students and teachers. ARC Core adding to grades, 3, 4, 5. Coaches will be available to assist with this program.

Launching K, 1, 2, grades illustrative math, we started 3-5 this is a continuation of that program. Teachers received additional training in this program.

Common Assessment in the middle school for math and will be sharing the training with other teachers.

High School has launched instructional leadership team led by Jessica Callanan, they have started classroom visits and observations to calibrate across the classrooms in RMHS.

4. Ms. Bottan - gave an operational update, the new Food Service Director, Day 8 is today, she has brought incredible impact and positivity to RPS, training the staff on obstacles and new POS program, she has brought fresh watermelon and apples from the local farms to the schools, they are working with Mary Giuliani to work on creating nutritional menus.

She's introducing a vegetarian option and smoothies as well.

Mike Scouten traffic safety and Ryan Percival working to improve morning drop off safety at RISE, new signage at parking lot, relined the street and parking areas, it's an incredible effort that is appreciated.

Mr. Robinson inquired as to why are we using a new POS system, when lunches are free to all students this year. Ms. Bottan explained it's used for 2nd, 3rd, lunch, and other items.

5. Superintendent - Dr. Milaschewski – weekly check in on the RMHS Track renovation, next Friday will be a home FB game, Cape and Island is at the painting phase at this point, it will be finished Sunday, and anticipating using the field next week, the padding is not ready so we will use the old, and the score board is old, and the lines on the track will be done later this fall. Thanks to Joe Huggins, and Kevin Capuzzi, they did an incredible job working with the vendor and keeping it on budget.

We are in a good position regarding teacher positions be filled but we still need paraprofessional, substitutes, and tutors. Parents are willing to step in on a temporary basis. If anyone has any input, please advise.

Student school committee rep will be available in 2 weeks.

RMHS Homecoming is next week, kick-off party, spirit week, prizes, and football game and then dance on Saturday, 15 seniors planned the events over the summer.

6. Liaison/Sub-Committee –

Ms. Nazzaro, inquired about 2 representatives for the school committee in the past, would it make sense to have 2 (jr & sr) this year.

Ms. Gaffen – SEPAC meeting will be virtual hoping for a large turn out and if we hold hybrid meetings hopefully many can attend. PARE is not meeting.

Mr. Robinson – The Reading Recc Committee met Monday night, met with new director, and discussed various topics.

Ms. Nazzaro mentioned there will be a Permanent Building Committee meeting on Monday, as well as Killam Building Meeting

Mr. Brandt – ARPA select Board approved all 5 recommendations 1.5 to BM phase 1, there will be another meeting on Oct 12th.

Select Board, legislative team, SEN Lewis there are schools getting MSBA funding are not receiving the full amount of the monies promised, etc. MSBA is struggling to fund the projects in the current environment of the state of the commonwealth of Massachusetts, the actual reimbursement rate is lower than what is promised.

Committee went into recess at 7:39 PM due to technical difficulties and returned at 8:02 PM

C. Personnel

Chris Nelson and Mackenzie Irwin – presented on extended day program with RPS, the presentation in its entirety is available in the packet.

Mr. Robinson questioned the comparison to other communities, and there are private entities that offer childcare and aftercare services, did we seek their information. It's not publicly available, is the labor shortage due to compensation alone?

Mr. Nelson – responded that we used para's and teachers as fill ins for those after care position and pay with a stipend, it's difficult to find staff to work in the morning, and then again in the afternoon, we also hire college and high school staff as well.

In terms of the revolving fund will that sustain this type of program with new wages.

Ms. Bottan, the school would fall just under the revolving fund, this is a sustainable program. The subscription rate shows how important this program is to RPS.

Mr. Nazzaro – Would the new program cover the additional 14 openings and pay at the higher rates and take on the additional enrollment.

Ms. Gaffen questioned when is the increase happening?

Ms. Bottan would like to make it retroactive to beginning of the school year and hiring and filling those positions and fulfilling the wait list to support the families in the community.

Ms. Gaffen – inquired if after school enrichment being reinstated, since we are out of Covid times.

Mr. Nelson mentioned we now have 2 people in the office doing the work of 4, once the program for after care is stable, bring enrichment back in January.

Mr. Brandt questioned the rate vs fees charged to families, what are the enrichment rates will that be able to be supported as well, will that need further staffing. We are \$5.50 per child for extended day, we are one of the lesser amounts in the area.

Those already enrolled in extended day can join in the enrichment program, at a discounted rate, the goal is to bring back to public in January. Extended Day is paid out of a revolving fund, and we are on track to have a surplus so this will not impact the general budget for RPS.

Dr. Milaschewski, thanked Chris Nelson and Makenzie Irwin for their leadership and support of the students in RPS.

D. Old Business

Ms. Nazzaro made a motion to approve the Killam warrant article introduction, seconded by Ms. McLaughlin. item to approve Killam warrant – seconded by Ms. McLaughlin. Vote carried 5-0.

Ms. Nazzaro motions to reopen Killam Warrant intro Discussion seconded by Mr. Robinson. Vote carried 5-0.

Introduction of the warrant – Mr. Brandt presented the request for changes on the warrant, feasibility report by Ms. Downing. Streamlined by Mr. Brandt, new warrant will be available in the updated packet.

Geoffrey Coram – comment you may want to address the RISE program as the RISE Preschool Program.

Ms. Nazzaro – move to approve Killam warrant article introduction as amended, seconded by Ms. McLaughlin, vote passed 5-0.

Ms. Nazzaro moves to approve the Killam warrant article and motion, seconded by Ms. McLaughlin, vote carries 5-0 as well.

E. New Business

1. District strategic plan presentation – Dr. Milaschewski

Team presenting an updated version of District Strategic Plan, originally this was created back in 2020.

Dr. Milaschewski walked through each of the bullet points and outlined what each will entail in getting this plan in place.

Ms. Nazzaro made a motion to approve 2022-2023 District Strategic Plan, second by Mr. Robinson passed 5-0.

2. Dr. Milaschewski, presented on district handbook to bring consistency throughout the district. Thanks to Ms. Marchant for bringing this to light.

Legal counsel stated that you need to keep the parent/guardian language due to specific legal meaning for those terms.

Dr. Stys is looking into an extracurriculars-specific handbook and each student middle school and above must sign off on accepting the handbook that they have read and agree to abide by the handbook.

Ms. Nazzaro made a motion to approve district handbook seconded by Ms. McLaughlin.

Mr. Robinson asked where the responsibility of constant handbook updates will lie?

Dr. Stys, stated it will remain with her team, to work with legal counsel, principals.

Vote carries 5-0

Motion to adjourn by Ms. McLaughlin seconded by Mr. Robinson vote passed 5-0

Meeting adjourned by Mr. Brandt at 9:15pm.