

Minutes of School Committee Meeting 5.28.2019

A meeting of the Barrington School Committee was held on Tuesday, May 28, 2019 in the Middle School Auditorium. School Committee Chair Dr. Megan Douglas called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm. Present were Dr. Douglas, Ms. Severson, Ms. Clancy, Ms. Bae, Mr. McCrann, Mr. Messoro, Dr. Dillon and Mr. Fiore.

Dr. Douglas asked for a motion to add Public Comment after the Consent Agenda. Ms. Severson moved and Ms. Clancy seconded. The motion passed 5-0 with Dr. Douglas, Ms. Severson, Ms. Clancy, Ms. Bae and Mr. McCrann voting in the affirmative.

Mr. Messoro explained to the community that at the Financial Town meeting the community voted to reduce the School budget by \$246,000. Now it is up to the School Committee to reduce the School budget by this amount. He further explained that the School has 30 days to submit a balanced budget to the State.

Mr. Messoro explained the District began with 5 initiatives for the next school year: the two-tier transportation initiative, mandated curriculum and instruction materials aligned to the State standards, creating a computer information sciences course at the High School, and adding Instructional Coaches for support. The fifth initiative was the increase of a half time psychologist to support the social/emotional learning.

The recommendation Mr. Messoro is presenting to the School Committee is to eliminate one of the two proposed coaching support positions, reduce curriculum materials as a result of the reduction of the coaching position, a reduction in the High School Foreign Language resulting from retirement and replacement, and the reduction at the Middle School and High School library Teacher Assistants. Also, a reduction in High School athletic equipment and expenses, reduction of strategic planning consultant, and the estimated unemployment to cover reduction in staff. This will all represent a total of \$251,061.08.

Mr. Fiore also explained the athletic supplies that will be cut from the original proposed budget.

The School Committee discussed some of the proposed cuts with Mr. Messoro and Dr. Dillon asking for some clarifications on how this will affect the curriculum going forward.

CONSENT AGENDA

Personnel – Appointments

The following personnel and positions were appointed:

Kelly Smith, World Language, Latin – High School

Julie Gladding, Math Specialist/Coach – Middle School

Stephanie Bannon, English – Grade 8 – Middle School

Susan Constable, Early Childhood Coordinator/Autism Coach - Barrington Public Schools

Dr. Douglas asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Ms. Sevetson moved and Ms. Clancy seconded. The motion passed 5-0 with Dr. Douglas, Ms. Sevetson, Ms. Clancy, Ms. Bae and Mr. McCrann voting in the affirmative.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Michael Green - 35 Great Road expressed his thoughts regarding the amount of money that was cut from the budget at the Financial Town meeting was targeted for the school start time and not any reduction in staff or curriculum. He also informed the Committee that he believes that the teacher union in town took a vote and 91% voted against the busing change.

John Palmeri - 17 Doane Road informed the Committee that last Wednesday at the Financial Town meeting the budget was voted down by \$246,000 because the community did not want the school start time to change. He employed the School Committee to stop the school start time initiative.

Amy Nunn - 20 Clarke Road commended the School Committee on all their efforts to promote evidence-based school start times. She acknowledges that there is a lot of controversy around this initiative but the scientific evidence is clear on what is best for the children.

Denise Andreozzi - 215 New Meadow Road read a letter that was drafted by the Teachers' Union not supporting school start time.

Nahum Mitnik - 187 New Meadow Road continued reading the letter that was drafted by the Teachers' Union.

Mary Roberts - 11 Adams Avenue (President of the NEAB) also spoke on behalf of the Teachers' Union against the school start time.

Alison Ashley - 17 Puritan Avenue expressed her concerns for the elementary-aged school children and their health. She feels that the new school start time will be taking sleep from the elementary students to give it to the teenagers. She feels that the school start time initiative should be put on hold until the Committee receives stakeholder feedback and rework the proposal so that it is beneficial to all students.

Parisa Beers - 10 Robbins Drive informed the Committee that there are two petitions that have gathered signatures to stop the school start time initiative. Ms. Beers further expressed that all but 10% of the teachers are against the initiative. She feels that there has been unprecedented damage done with the relationship between the teachers and the School Committee. Ms. Beers asked that the school start time initiative be removed from the budget and begin work to restore the faith with the teachers.

Seth Fisher - 47 Lamson Road asked that the School Committee reject the recommendation made by the Superintendent. He agrees that the school start time should get changed, however, he feels the mission is flawed. He feels the School Committee has an unbelievable opportunity. He feels the School Committee should listen to what is being said and then use it. He feels it will turn things for the better in the town.

Willis Bilderback - 260 Sowams Road expressed his gratitude to the School Committee for their dedication to the health and well-being for the children. Mr. Bilderback stated that he voted for everyone on the School Committee as well as thousands of other people in the town. He doesn't feel that 400 people voting on a budget is democracy.

Katherine Williams from East Greenwich. Ms. Williams was a member of the Ad-Hoc Committee for Late Start and is currently on the Transportation Committee. Ms. Williams first explained that East Greenwich is not going back to a three-tier transportation system. It did not cost the school district \$500,000, but rather it cost much less. She expressed to the Committee that in the beginning everything will be blamed on school start time, however, new routines will be formed and fences will be mended.

Pam Lauria - 56 Martin Avenue stated as a healthcare provider she understands the importance of following consensus science in making policy or prescribing new treatments. She also stated that it is this consensus that informed multiple groups to back the 8:30 start time as the recommended time for all adolescents and high school students. She thanked the Committee for keeping with consensus science as it informs their policy decisions.

Chris Clyne - 20 Briarfield Road explained that this area of study started at Brown University in 1991. Mr. Clyne asked the question - when did we start listening to emotional impasses instead of looking at the data. Mr. Clyne feels there are concerns from the populous that we need to listen to, however, when you have the data you need to rely on the data.

Maria Wah-Fitta - 8 Indigo Road expressed that she employs the Committee to stay on task with the school start initiative. She stated that she feels that there are many families that are for the school start time initiative but are afraid to come forward.

Kathy Killilea - 69 Lamson Road expressed that she wished that people did not vote to reduce the school budget. She stated that she felt that the School Committee and the Administration had made it very clear that two-tier busing and school start times were a priority. She also

expressed that they communicated very well the moral obligation they feel to offer school schedules that allow for the health and well-being for all the children. Ms. Killilea stated that thousands of townspeople voted for the Committee members.

Seanna Zimmerman - 466 Sowams Road asked where were the measurable goals of this start time and the planning for all the students to maintain the academic and extracurricular activities. She feels that the children deserve better planning than what is proposed today.

Carl Kustell - 266 New Meadow Road stated that he moved from a district that has start time later than what is being proposed in Barrington. He stated that this district is a high performing district and has a full schedule of extracurricular activities. He further stated that no one is talking about moving the start time earlier.

Sophia Mecca - 35 Waldron Avenue who is a junior at the High School. Sophia express the concern that the late start time will have at the end of the day. Students will not be able to work and those students who babysit some of the elementary school children will lose those jobs as well.

Maura McCrann - 4 Woodford Road joined the Ad-Hoc committee for school start time in 2016 and at that time there were several issues surrounding the school start time. Ms. McCrann stated that quite a few of these issues have been worked out (after school daycare, some athletic issues and transportation issues). She feels it is now time to work together. If people still have some concerns to get involved at work together as a community.

Sam Read - 226 Foote Street expressed his feelings that the School Committee have ignored the teachers and the voters' concerns over the late start time. He feels that the Committee should talk to the teachers and listen to what they say. They are with the students every day. He also asked the Committee how they will be tracking the success of the late start time.

Deborah Nyer - 30 Adelaide Avenue expressed her disappointment that the message of the voters are not being listened to. She is also disappointment that the teachers are not being listened to and wonders what will happen next school year.

Chris Sarli - 27 Beach Road protested the cuts of the library assistants. He feels that they are the right hand of the library. He also feels that with this cut the library will not be able to perform as it has in the past.

Jamie Burke - 219 Conlin Road thanked the School Committee for sitting through in the face of such tension. Ms. Burke expressed her gratefulness for democracy. She is also grateful she was able to vote for the elected professionals to implement and act on well-researched policies for our students. She feels that we all need to live together and work with each other so as not to add to the stress of our students.

Melissa Coen - 58 Chapin Road looked through all the evidence and came to the conclusion that the late school time makes sense. Ms. Coen has small children and knows that it will be difficult to change to the earlier start time but in looking at the bigger picture she also knows that when her children are in middle school and high school that they will need the extra sleep.

Heather Johnson - 7 River Oak Road expressed her concern that to vote on the Town and School Budget a town member needs to go to a meeting between the hours of 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm. She feels that the vote should be made possible so that the whole community can have their voices heard. She has lived in towns where the votes can be taken from 6:00 am to 9:00 pm. This would enable everyone to be heard.

Stu Moran - 62 Kingsford Avenue, Riverside. Mr. Moran is a PE teacher for the Barrington School District. Mr. Moran feels that the communication surrounding the school start time was not there. He expressed his wishes that the School Committee and the District sat down and talked to the teachers that are working with the children of the community. He feels that with the representation that is at the meeting tonight it is a clear view that not all stakeholders agree with this initiative.

Lisa Daft - 5 Robbins Drive stated that one of the reasons why people move to Barrington is for the school system. She feels that our students, teachers, administration, staff and parents are what make the school system great. It was one of the last school districts that emphasize the collaboration of teachers, administration and school committee. She feels that in 6 months the School Committee has decimated that important aspect of our educational system. She feels this is all because of an initiative that the Committee thinks is worth so many sacrifices. She feels this initiative never considered all the stakeholders. She doesn't feel that the School Committee is following the strategic plan. She feels the two-tier system is not cost effective.

Paul O'Brien - 88 Boyce Avenue gave two examples of schools that have the late start time. Both of these schools are on the Cape. One school has had a late start time for more than six years and they have seen a positive impact on their athletics. The other school that changed their start time and had the elementary level students go to school at 7:45 am and the middle/high school go at 8:45 am, shows a significant change in the elementary level. There were far fewer disciplinary problems.

Kristen Kreuzkamp - 10 Agawam Road expressed that we need to have our high school students get more sleep. Ms. Kreuzkamp quoted that 19% of our juniors have reported that they have seriously considered suicide. Studies show that later start time for our adolescents leads to more sleep and fewer kids having suicidal thoughts.

Lisa Mento – 128 Foote Street expressed that she is very frustrated. She feels that something needs to be done so that the teachers and the district work together. She supports both teachers and the School Committee and feels that when everyone is working together and it is the right time to make the change, then it will happen.

Chris Poirier - 11 Chantilly Drive feels that it is possible to have good science be wrong. He feels that you find the problems at implementation. He feels that the implementation for the later start time has not been thought out. He expressed that if simple questions cannot be answered then the implementation is not there and the initiative will fail. Mr. Poirier feels that taking away the students' after school stress reliever is going to hurt the students more.

Deborah Provolo - 48 Bay Road agreed that if there isn't an implementation plan it will not work. She also stated that if the teachers are not behind the initiative it will not work.

Caroline McTaggart - 60 Adams Point Road expressed her concern over the busing. Her children right now are walking 20 minutes to the bus stop and then are on the bus for 45 minutes. She feels it is not fair to the elementary students to have to ride the buses for 7 - 10 hours a week. A three-tier bus system is needed. She feels that this initiative needs to look at all the students and what is best for everyone.

Gina Pine 479 New Meadow Road - asked Mr. Messore how many school psychologists the district will have next year for elementary. Mr. Messore stated that there will be one full time social worker for grades preK - 3, two full time psychologists and one full time social worker for grades 4-5, as well as a full time psychologist for grades 6 -8. The psychologist and social worker for grades 4-5 will also be chairs for the Middle School and Hampden Meadows. Ms. Pine asked why the added staff. Our elementary psychologist the last few years has a dual role as an early childhood screener and working in the schools. The district has looked at reallocating more time for social workers and school psychologists to be in the schools. In the country it has shown that there has been a need for more social service support for our students at all levels and Barrington has noticed the same and this was to push for the services at the elementary levels. Ms. Pine read the Social Emotional Initiative outline. She feels that the district is shifting the stress with the earlier start time for the elementary students. She is asking that the School Committee not start a later time for the secondary students.

CJ Hilty - 14 Wildflower Road spoke to the Committee about student dignity and digital dignity. Currently at the High School he feels that the Chromebooks do not function as well as a normal laptop would. He feels that there are too many restrictions. He feels the restrictions should be looked at again. He also feels there is not an accessibility of restrooms at all times. He feels the distance from the bathrooms could be a 30 minute walk.

Liam Egan - 14 Stacy Street expressed that he feels the people at the meeting have all raised very valid concerns. Mr. Egan stated that last summer when he worked he got up at 8:00 am to be at work by 9:00 am. This year at school he needs to get up at 6:30 am to be at school on time. He feels that he was more awake and energetic for work during the summer than he has been all year at school. He truly enjoyed both experiences but feels he was far more stressed waking at 6:30 am. He urges the Committee to move forward with the start time initiative and see what effect it will have on the students.

Anthony Arico - 166 Lincoln Avenue feels that we have the best schools and administration in America. He stated that there is a statewide initiative in the plans for a statewide late start time. He feels we have the best schools and we are all working to support all of the students. He would like to see everyone work together.

Arianna Motte - 463 Maple Ave expressed her view as a student. She felt it would be damaging if the extra-curricular were eliminated. She also has worked as a babysitter and would pick up the elementary students after work and this would not be possible if the school start times were changed. She feels that the Committee should listen to the teachers.

Ms. Sevetson moved and Ms. Clancy seconded adjournment of the regular meeting at 8:32 pm and to convene in Executive Session pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws 42-26-5 (a) (2) for Sessions pertaining to collective bargaining with the National Education Association (NEAB) and United Steelworkers AFL-CIO-CLC. The motion passed 5-0 with Dr. Douglas, Ms. Sevetson, Ms. Clancy, Ms. Bae, and Mr. McCrann voting in the affirmative.

The executive session was adjourned at 10:00 pm and the minutes were sealed.

Dr. Douglas announced no votes were taken.

Ms. Sevetson moved and Ms. Clancy seconded to adjourn the regular meeting at 10:00 pm. The motion passed 5-0 with Dr. Douglas, Ms. Sevetson, Ms. Clancy, Ms. Bae, and Mr. McCrann voting in the affirmative.