

SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF THE
TOWN OF FOXBOROUGH

Regular Meeting

Date: April 27, 2020

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: Gala Meeting Room, Town Hall

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Tina Belanger, Mr. Richard Pearson,
Ms. Beverley Lord

REMOTE PARTICIPATION: Mr. Rob Canfield, Mr. Brent Ruter

SCHOOL STAFF PRESENT: Dr. Amy Berdos, Dr. Alison Mello

REMOTE PARTICIPATION: Mr. William Yukna

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES: Were not present

Ms. Belanger opened the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

COVID-19 Update

Dr. Berdos updated the Committee on recent developments regarding the shutdown of schools until the end of the year due to the COVID-19 health crisis. Conversations are taking place on how to acknowledge end-of-year celebrations and bringing closure to the school year, especially for the senior class. Information as it becomes available will be coming from the high school regarding scholarships, class night and graduation.

Remote learning will continue and, as per the guidance from the Commissioner of Education, will focus on content standards. Grading and graduation requirements will be forthcoming.

The Technology Department provided elementary students with email addresses so that they can access Teams for Education (Office 365). This will provide a safe and secure environment for remote learning and will replace Zoom. WebEx will hopefully be rolling out in the next week and will provide an alternate video conferencing opportunity.

Principals are working on transitions for incoming grades five and nine. Dr. Mello stated that principals are sending information to the parents of the incoming Kindergarten class. The Special Education Department has mailed students' Individual Remote Learning Plans, and are holding IEP meetings virtually.

Dr. Berdos has asked for patience as we await further guidance on these and other topics. Discussion with the Committee followed.

Open Public Comment

There were no public comments submitted for this meeting. Ms. Belanger reminded the public how to participate remotely by submitting public comments via the Community Inbox or calling the Central Office at 508-543-1660 prior to the start of the meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Canfield moved; Pearson seconded

Approve the regular meeting minutes of April 6, 2020, as presented

Vote: 5-0-0

Director of Student Services Finalist Interview

Dr. Berdos introduced Mr. Cory Mikolazyk, candidate for the Director of Student Services position. Dr. Berdos described the search process, reviewed Mr. Mikolazyk's background and experience, read comments made by the interview team, and read quotes from his letters of recommendations and references. The Committee welcomed Mr. Mikolazyk to the meeting. Questions and discussion followed. School principals Ms. Diana Myers-Pachla, Ms. Kerry Frazier, Mr. Mike Stanton, and Ms. Michele McCarthy and Technology Director Aaron Hyre participated remotely during this portion of the meeting. Dr. Berdos and the School Committee thanked Dr. Mello and the Search Committee for their diligence in making the hiring process work under such unusual circumstances.

Ruter moved; Canfield seconded

Approve the recommendation made by Dr. Berdos to appoint Mr. Cory Mikolazyk as Director of Student Services, effective July 1, 2020

Vote: 5-0-0

Ms. Lord reviewed voting protocols going forward.

Reviewing of Remaining 2019-2020 School Committee Meeting Dates

Ms. Belanger stated adjustments to the School Committee meeting schedule need to be made in light of rescheduling of the town election to June 8, 2020, and the Town Meeting to June 15, 2020. It was suggested that the May 18 School Committee meeting be moved to May 11; the June 1 meeting remain as is; and the June 15 meeting be rescheduled to June 22. The Committee agreed to those changes by consensus.

School Committee Vote to Reappoint Dr. Amy Berdos as a Voting Member of the Bi-County Collaborative (BICO) Board of Directors

Dr. Berdos explained the structure of the BICO Board of Directors, stating that member district superintendents serve as Board Members. The annual vote to make appointments to the Board of Directors is taken in the spring for the following school year.

Pearson moved; Lord seconded

Reappoint Dr. Amy Berdos to the Bi-County Collaborative Board of Directors for the 2020-2021 school year

Vote: 5-0-0

Burrell Renovation Project Update

Mr. Yukna provided an update on the Burrell Renovation Project. The construction schedule has been reconfigured to take advantage of the school building being closed due to the shutdown. Site work started earlier than planned and is almost completed. Current work included an infiltration system and the installation of new piping, emptying and renovation of thirteen existing classrooms, renovation to the front entrance, inside work on the Preschool area, and completion of the roofing system on the new gymnasium and Preschool.

Per the Governor's guidelines, school construction is considered essential business during the shutdown, and safety standards and social distancing are practiced on site.

Acceptance of Donation

One donation was presented to the Committee for their consideration.

Lord moved; Pearson seconded

Accept the donation from the Foxboro Rotary Club in the amount of \$1,000 to be used for distance learning for students at the high school, with gratitude and enthusiasm

Vote: 5-0-0

Dr. Berdos expressed her gratitude to the Foxboro Rotary Club and to the many people who have reached out to support the schools during this public health crisis.

Other Matters

Dr. Berdos announced that the Foxborough Public Schools has been recognized as one of the "Best Communities for Music Education" for 2020 by the NAMM Foundation (National Association of Music Merchants). Foxborough is one of sixteen communities in Massachusetts to receive this distinction. The Committee thanked the staff and community for their support of the arts at FPS.

Dr. Berdos announced a grant award from the Executive Office of Grants and Research for \$50,000 for school safety and security. Mr. Yukna wrote and submitted the grant. He reported that he has been working with the Foxborough Police and Fire Departments to improve communications within school buildings. This grant will allow for the installation of devices that boost radio signals to make them stronger for inside to outside communication. The awarding of this grant will allow such an installation at Foxborough High School and follows a grant awarded last fall to rekey exterior doors and add more fob controls at the Igo and Taylor Elementary Schools. Additional safety enhancements at the Ahern are the next priority.

At the last meeting, the Committee allowed negotiations to the BICO transportation contract to amend the VanPool agreement due to the school closure. Mr. Yukna reported that a structured amendment has been drafted for a 22% billing discount for the fourteen-district transportation network that uses VanPool to transport out-of-district students. The approval of this amendment

allows VanPool to retain their staff and ensures that districts will be in the best possible situation for out-of-district transportation of students when school resumes. The amendment will be proposed when member district superintendents meet in May. The Committee voiced their full support of Dr. Berdos approving the amendment.

Mr. Yukna discussed financial implications of the current shut down as per a recent meeting with the Town Manager's Office. The FY '21 CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) request has been reduced to two (2) items as follows: the request for buses is reduced to one (1) mini-bus at \$82,500 rather than three (3) buses, and the technology request is reduced to \$100,000 which is needed to keep networks operational. Total adjusted FY '21 CIP request is \$182,500.

He further reported that the district has applied for extraordinary relief under the circuit breaker program to assist with the out-of-district special education tuition shortfall of approximately \$500,000 for FY '20. Because of the shutdown, expenses have dropped (i.e., \$22,000 fuel savings), and costs are curtailed wherever possible. The past practice of returning funds to the town at the end of the year and what that might look like this year was discussed. Mr. Yukna stated that after dealing with out-of-district tuitions, if funds are available the same practice will continue.

Dr. Mello stated that the search for the new Igo Elementary School principal is open until May 8th.

Ms. Lord extended thanks to the Administration and staff, and best of luck to all seniors during this disappointing time.

Ms. Belanger relayed information from Ms. Heather Harding, Chair of the Recreation Board, that a new School Committee liaison to that board will need to be selected when the School Committee holds its reorganization meeting. Ms. Belanger thanked Ms. Lord for her service to that Board.

Ms. Lord stated that voting by mail is encouraged for the upcoming election on June 8th.

Ms. Belanger thanked Mr. Mike Webber of FCA for their assistance with the meeting format.

Canfield moved; Ruter seconded

Adjourn the meeting

Vote: 5-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard Pearson".

Richard Pearson
Clerk

Attachments:

Regular meeting minutes of April 6, 2020
Director of Student Services Candidate Mr. Cory Mikolazyk
2019-2020 School Committee Meetings Schedule
Reappointment to Bi-County Collaborative BOD
Foxboro Rotary Club Donation

Approved: May 11, 2020