

EASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
EASTON, MA

EASTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, April 27, 2023

Minutes of the Virtual School Committee Meeting, April 27, 2023 Virtual Meeting via Zoom convened at 5:01 :p.m. Present: Jennifer Starr, Michelle Durrance, Nancy De Luca, Jacqueline Weisman, and Lauren Loomis.

Also in Attendance:

Dr. Lisha Cabral, Superintendent; Crissy Pruitt, Assistant Superintendent; Lynn Souza, Administrative Assistant to Dr. Cabral and School Committee Secretary; and Joe Boerman, ECAT.

Call Meeting to Order:

Dr. Cabral called the meeting to order and stated in keeping with an act relative to extending certain State of Emergency accommodations, the meeting will be conducted remotely over Zoom. Attendance by Board/Commission members will be remote and remote attendance shall count toward quorum. The meeting will be broadcast live and recorded on ECAT. The meeting will be open to the public, and questions will be taken via the chat feature. Full name and address must be included with the question and questions that have already been answered will not be read.

Reorganization of the School Committee Vote to Appoint Chair and Vice Chair:

On a motion by Ms. Durrance, seconded by Ms. Weisman, with a roll call of 5-0, *Durrance-yes, De Luca-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes, Loomis-yes*, the Committee nominated Jennifer Starr as Chair of the School Committee.

On a motion by Chair Starr, seconded by Ms. De Luca, with a roll call of 5-0, *Durrance-yes, De Luca-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes, Loomis-yes*, the Committee nominated Michelle Durrance as Vice Chair of the School Committee.

On a motion by Chair Starr, seconded by Ms. Weisman with a roll call vote 5-0, *Durrance-yes, De Luca-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes, Loomis-yes*, the Committee moved "Vote to Approve Yankee Sprinkler Contract" to the next order of business.

Vote to Approve Yankee Sprinkler Contract:

David Twombly, Director of Operations presented the contract with Yankee Sprinkler. He noted that \$150,000 was appropriated at Town Meeting as a Capital expense to replace the sprinkler heads on the second floor at the Richardson Olmsted School. A bid went out per Chapter 30B and only 1 bid came in; Yankee Sprinkler at \$144,000. Mr. Twombly said that the plan is to start replacing the sprinkler heads as soon as school ends for the summer with a completion date by August 4th.

On a motion by Ms. Durrance, seconded by Ms. De Luca, with a roll call vote 5-0, *Durrance-yes, De Luca-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes, Loomis-yes*, the Committee approved the Yankee Sprinkler Contract.

Vote to Approve Minutes: 4/6/2023; Executive Session 4/6/2023:

On a motion by Ms. De Luca, seconded by Ms. Weisman, with a roll call vote of 4-0, *Durrance-yes, De Luca-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes, Loomis abstained*, the Committee approved the minutes of 4/6/2023.

On a motion by Ms. De Luca, seconded by Ms. Durrance, with a roll call vote of 4-0, *Durrance-yes, De Luca-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes, Loomis abstained*, the Committee approved the Executive Session minutes of 4/6/2023 but not to be released at this time.

84 Student Movement's 2023 Outstanding Chapter Award:

Kelly Reed, from the Easton Wings of Hope; Eileen Gardner, School Nurse at Easton Middle School; and students Mia Zachos, Madeline Mackzo, Anna Sierra, Rose Sedita, and Ava Labree presented slides about the Easton Middle School 84 Chapter winning the 2023 Outstanding Chapter Award in Massachusetts. The group had visited the State House and was acknowledged with a citation from Speaker of the House Ronald Mariano and State Representative Gerry Cassidy and was given a private tour of the State House by Senator Walter Timilty. The group now known as the 97 Student Movement, focuses on spreading awareness of the dangers of tobacco, vaping, and most recently focusing on mental health concerns.

Senior Event Dates:

Kelly Cavanaugh, Principal of Oliver Ames High School reviewed the upcoming dates of Senior Events for the Class of 2023.

Personnel Change: Retirement - Easton Middle School Paraprofessional:

Dr. Cabral announced the retirement of Donna Wilbur, Paraprofessional at Easton Middle School effective June 27, 2023.

Chair Starr read Donna Wilbur's retirement letter.

Committee members expressed their gratitude for Ms. Wilbur's service to the district and wished her well in her retirement.

On a motion by Chair Starr, seconded by Ms. De Luca, with a roll call vote 5-0, *Durrance-yes, De Luca-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes, Loomis-yes*, the Committee accepted Donna Wilbur's retirement with regret.

Vote to Approve National Teachers' Day Proclamation:

Dr. Cabral announced that National Teacher Day will be May 2nd, 2023 and National Teacher Appreciation Week will be May 8th through May 12th, 2023.

Chair Starr read the National Teacher's Day and National Teacher Appreciation Week proclamation.

On a motion by Ms. De Luca, seconded by Ms. Durrance, with a roll call vote 5-0, *Durrance-yes, De Luca-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes, Loomis-yes* the Committee approved the National Teacher's Day and National Teacher Appreciation Week Proclamation.

Vote to Approve School Nurses' Day Proclamation:

Dr. Cabral announced that Nation School Nurse Day will be May 10th, 2023.

Chair Starr read the National School Nurse Day proclamation.

On a motion by Ms. Weisman, seconded by Ms. Durrance, with a roll call vote 5-0, *Durrance-yes, De Luca-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes, Loomis-yes* the Committee approved the National School Nurse Day Proclamation.

Discussion and Vote on Subcommittee Assignments:

Dr. Cabral said due to the new member of the School Committee, some Subcommittees that Caroline O'Neill, former School Committee member, served on need to be reassigned.

Chair Starr noted that the Committee will be reassigning the only Subcommittees that Caroline O'Neill held a position on and these assignments will go through the end of the school year, June 30th, and that all Subcommittee assignments will be reviewed at a later meeting for the new school year.

The following changes were made:

- FEEE (The Foundation for Excellence in Easton Education) only needs 1 member; therefore Nancy De Luca will remain on the FEEE Committee as the School Committee's representative.
- Naming Subcommittee - Lauren Loomis will be the new representative of the School Committee and it was noted that Caroline O'Neill will remain on the Subcommittee as a town representative.
- School Planning Committee - Because the school project is winding down, Ms. Weisman, who serves as Chair of the School Planning Committee, did not feel it necessary to appoint a second person as a representative from the School Committee.
- Town Budget Subcommittee - Chair Starr agreed to be the second representative of the School Committee replacing Caroline O'Neill.

On a motion by Chair Starr, seconded by Ms. Wesiman, with a roll call vote 5-0, *Durrance-yes, De Luca-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes, Loomis-yes*, the Committee voted on the four subcommittee assignments - FEEE not replace Caroline O'Neill's spot, Naming Subcommittee added Lauren Loomis, School Planning Committee leave Caroline O'Neill's spot vacant, and the Town Budget Subcommittee added Jennifer Starr.

Discussion of Animal Assisted Therapy Policy File IMGA (First Reading):

The Committee reviewed the Animal Assisted Therapy Policy File IMGA and made the following changes as recommended by Dr. Cabral:

- Page 2 under "Creation of Oversight Committee" last bullet removed "*Speech-Language Pathology*" and changed to "*the program*", changed "*pathologist*" to "*handler*", removed "*pathologist's*".

This was the first reading; therefore, no vote was taken.

Discussion of Enrollment of Students Based on Residency Policy File JF-E-3 (First Reading):

Dr. Cabral explained that the district has a Residency Officer and that the program has been very successful. She noted that the current policies pertaining to residency, School Admissions, File JF and Assignment of Students to Schools, File JCA does not state that the district has a Residency Officer and it does not state that there are repercussions to families who are attending Easton Public Schools who do not reside in Easton. She asked that the Committee consider reinstating Enrollment of Students Based on Residence Rile JF-E-3 with the following suggestions:

- Leave the 3rd paragraph of the first page
- Leave #2 an the first page which continues into page 2
- Leave #3 an the second page

This was the first reading; therefore, no vote was taken.

Vote to Approve the School Improvement Plans Schedule:

Dr. Cabral presented the schedule of School Improvement Plans presentations as follows:

- Blanche Ames Elementary and Richardson Olmsted will present at the May 25th meeting
- Easton Middle School and Oliver Ames High School will present at the June 8th meeting

It was noted that the June 8th meeting has a start time of 6:30 due to the Easton Educators retirement celebration and that the presentations take up a chunk of time to keep the rest of the agenda for that evening on the light side.

On a motion by Chair Starr, seconded by Ms. De Luca, with a roll call vote 5-0, *De Luca-yes, Durrance-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes, Loomis-yes* the Committee approved the School Improvement Plans schedule of Blanche Ames Elementary School and Richardson Olmsted School presenting at the May 25th School Committee meeting and Easton Middle School and Oliver Ames High School presenting at the June 8th School Committee meeting.

Public Comment:

Caroline O'Neill, 137 Black Brook Road - "Congratulations to veteran member Michelle Durrance on her recent re-election, and to Lauren Loomis on her first-time election, to the Easton School Committee! I'm confident that the two of you, working alongside your three outstanding colleagues, will accomplish great things!"

Superintendent Notes:

Dr. Cabral said that they are hoping to hold the open house for the Blanche Ames Elementary School in August and have started the planning process. A day will be centered around the kids while the evening will be more adult oriented. She noted that they have taken several districts around the new school, some being Berkley, Scituate, and Holiston. Dr. Cabral said she was happy to report that they have a balanced budget with the Town and the district is set for a 3% operational increase. She said that there are several items, such as the Richardson Olmsted playground, outdoor Tennis Courts, Pickleball Court, and Basketball Court, under Capital that she is hopeful will be approved at the Town Meeting. Dr. Cabral said that Representative Carol Doherty has earmarked \$50,000 for the district towards security projects and it has to pass at the Senate level. Dr. Cabral said that she has invited Senator Timilty to attend an area Superintendent meeting at Blanche Ames to share legislative needs with him and that he has graciously agreed to attend. She spoke of the Merrimack and Stonehill interns that were in the district last year, Merrimack has continued this year and Stonehill has

candidates for next year. She noted that those candidates will work in the district all year long with a stipend in the amount of \$20,000 and serve as another staff member. Dr. Cabral said that the district is potentially hiring one of the Merrimack interns as a permanent employee and will be paid out of a grant. Dr. Cabral said that the district will be getting a new website that will be going live in September. Registration will now be done at the Central Office which will avoid having parents with several children go to several different schools to register. She spoke of working with the RMK (Raising Multicultural Kids) and the community forum event which will be held May 3rd at Blanche Ames Elementary School at 6:30 that will provide people the opportunity to hear the district's initiatives around diversity, equity and inclusion. Dr. Cabral said she took pictures of the students contributing to Day of KindNess around town mulching and cleaning and that everyone had smiles on their faces and that this day is a great tribute to Devin Ness. She reminded everyone of the Town Meeting to be held on May 15th at Oliver Ames High School Auditorium. Dr. Cabral said that she had been invited by Kelly Reed of Easton Wings of Hope to attend The Montana Summer Institute, *The Paradox of the Positive: Preventing Harm by Promoting Health*. She reminded everyone about the Special Olympics to be held on May 5th which will be open to students and their families; however, it will not be open to the general public. She gave a shout out to Lynn Souza, her Administrative Assistant for Administrative Professionals Day and said they are planning a luncheon tomorrow to celebrate. She gave a shout out to Crissy Pruitt for her acceptance into the Boston College Doctoral Program. Dr. Cabral said she has asked Chris Aker, School Resource Officer to attend the next School Committee meeting to provide a summary of the school year.

Assistant Superintendent Notes:

Ms. Pruitt extended her gratitude and the support she received from Dr. Cabral with pursuing her doctorate. She updated the Committee on the status of the Director of Special Services search. She noted that the Committee consists of 10 members and out of 17 applicants the search committee has decided to interview 6 candidates. There will be 2 rounds of interviews taking place next week and the week following. Ms. Pruitt said she has met with the Assistant Principals in the district to begin working on a bullying workshop for families which will be released after the start of the new school year, possibly early October. She said the workshop will not be recorded to create a safe environment for families to speak; however, the presentation will get posted online. Ms. Pruitt said that Massachusetts law requires every district to have a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan; therefore, she had a district meeting with the curriculum team to firm up the district accommodation plan and that it will be presented to the schools next month and presented to the Committee in the Fall. She noted that there will be a website off of the district website for families to know what services are available to them for children who are struggling. She said the team consisted of Ann Weintrob, Director of Curriculum/EL Coordinator, Assistant Principal, Coaches, Special Education Teachers, and General Education Teachers. She said that today she attended the last session of the REDI (Race, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Professional Development series through the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents that she, Dr. Cabral, Melissa Medeiros, Kelly Cavanugh, and Luke Carroll attended. She said they split up so some could attend Day of KindNess and some attended the last session. She noted that over the summer she will be working with the administrative team and they will present to the School Committee on what they covered at the series on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

School Committee Notes:

Ms. Durrance thanked the voters of Easton for re-electing her to a third term and that she is very excited about what is on the horizon. She congratulated Jeff Benson, all the music teachers, and the students for Easton being named 2023 Best Communities for Music Education by the National Association of Music Merchants.

She said that the Tri M has a recital on May 10th, the Orchestra qualified to be in the MICA gold medal showcase. She said the Show Choir received Silver Medal and the Pit Band received Best Pit Band and Outstanding Brass Section in their division. May 4th is the Junior MAJE Festival, May 6th is the Junior SEMSBA, and May 11th is the Oliver Ames High School Spring Concert. She noted that Oliver Ames High School has their Art Show on May 5th in the Cafeteria.

Ms. De Luca said that she was at the Easton Historical Society and 5 students along with Susan Mancuso came over during Day of KindNess and they did a great job cleaning up. She said she gave the students a history lesson about Easton and it was good to talk to them. She thanked everyone in the community who donated a place for the kids to work and for the food and everything. She said it is a wonderful thing that came out of a sad time losing Devin. She thanked Lynn Souza for being their favorite Administrative Professional. She asked Dr. Cabral about the progress at Blanche Ames Elementary School.

Dr. Cabral noted that there have been some supply issues and although there is an April 28th date, she does feel that the new date is the end of May. She said the playground, bus loop, and the parking lot should be finished before school gets out for the summer but the fields will take longer; however, the project is still under budget.

Ms. Weisman welcomed the newest School Committee member Lauren Loomis and that she has known her through Mom's Clubs and that Ms. Loomis has always been an active member of the schools.

Ms. Loomis thanked the voters of Easton and thanked Caroline O'Neill for everything she has done for the past 30 years serving on the School Committee and that she hopes she can make at least a sliver of an impact during her time on the Committee.

Chair Starr thanked Dr. Cabral, Ms. Starzhevskiy, and the Cabinet team who worked on the budget and getting a balanced budget with the Town. She said the presentation to the Finance Committee and Select Board last night was excellent. She looks forward to having a quorum at the Town Meeting well before 7:00 p.m. on May 15th and having the budget approved.

Chair Starr said that the Sophomore Semi Final will take place tomorrow night, the PMC Ride at Blanche Ames Elementary School will take place on Saturday, the first time since 2019. She wished the students good luck on the AP exams, the MCAS, and SATs. She noted that several members will be attending the Massachusetts Association of School Committees' Day on the Hill on May 4th. She said it is a legislative advocacy event to meet with local legislators and thanked the MASC for providing the opportunities.

Executive Session: Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, §21 3 To Discuss Strategy with Respect to Collective Bargaining for Paraprofessionals, and SPEA (Southeastern Public Employees Association)

Secretarial/Clerical Unit:

Chair Starr made a motion to enter into the Executive Session and will return to Open Session, for the purpose of discussion strategy with respect to collective bargaining for Paraprofessionals and SPEA (Southeastern Public Employees Association) Secretarial Clerical Unit and stated that, in her opinion, having this discussion in public would be detrimental to the bargaining position of the School Committee. Ms. Weisman seconded the motion, with a roll call vote of 5-0, *Durance-yes, De Luca-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes, Loomis-yes* the Committee adjourned to enter into Executive Session at 6:43 p.m.

Return to Open Session:

The Committee returned to Open Session at 6:54 p.m.

Discussion and Possible Vote to Accept the Paraprofessional Contract:

Dr. Cabral noted that they had a tentative agreement with the Paraprofessional Unit and they presented the agreement to their unit and they have ratified.

Ms. De Luca thanked Ms. Starr and Ms. Weisman for their work on the Negotiations Subcommittee and noted that the Paraprofessionals are the soul part of the Easton Public Schools and she extended her gratitude to the unit.

On a motion by Ms. Weisman, seconded by Ms. Durrance, with a roll call vote 5-0, *Durrance-yes, De Luca-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes, Loomis-yes*, the Committee accepted the Paraprofessional Contract.

Chair Starr noted the next meeting May 11th at 5:00 p.m.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Chair Starr, seconded by Ms. De Luca, with a roll call vote 5-0, *Durrance-yes, De Luca-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes, Loomis-yes*, the Committee adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Souza
Secretary

Documents:

Minutes 4/6/2023; Executive Session 4/6/2023
Senior Event Dates
Yankee Sprinkler Contract
Donna Wilbur's Retirement Letter
National Teachers' Day Proclamation
School Nurses' Day Procla
Subcommittee Assignments
Animal Assisted Therapy Police File IMGA
Enrollment of Students Based on Residency Policy File JF-E-3
Assignment of Students to Schools Policy File JCA
School Admissions Policy File JF
School Improvement Plan Schedule
Paraprofessional Contract