

GARDNER SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting – January 5, 2021
Zoom Meeting (due to COVID-19 pandemic)

Members present on Zoom: Mayor Michael Nicholson, Chairperson; Jennifer Pelavin, Vice Chairperson; Rachel Cormier, Secretary; James Abare, Anne Hurst, John LaFreniere, and Robert Swartz

School Personnel present on Zoom: Dr. Mark J. Pellegrino, Superintendent
Ms. Brenda Smith, Administrative Assistant
Dr. Catherine Goguen, Chief Academic Officer
Ms. Courtney Dunn, Grants, Communications & Compliance Mgr.
Ms. Joyce West, Director of Pupil Personnel
Mrs. April Yu, Business Manager
Mrs. Rebecca McCaffrey, Gardner School Nurse Leader
Mr. Daniel Forte, Athletic Director

Call to Order

Mayor Nicholson called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm. The meeting opened with a roll call. The meeting was broadcast live on Channel 8, Gardner Educational Television station, Gardner YouTube, and recorded by Terri Hillman, Recording Secretary.

Mayor Nicholson announced that this public meeting is being conducted “virtually” pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L.c. 30A, §20, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Gardner School Committee is being conducted via remote participation.

Reorganization of Committee – Officers

Vice Chair

Mrs. Hurst nominated Mrs. Pelavin to be Vice Chairperson of the Gardner School Committee for the ensuing year.

Mayor Nicholson said that no seconds are required for nominations.

Mr. LaFreniere moved to close nominations for Vice Chair.

Seconded by Mrs. Hurst.

Roll Call Vote – Abare, yes; Cormier, yes; Hurst, yes; LaFreniere, yes; Pelavin, yes; and Swartz, yes. Count – 6 yes.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Roll Call Vote to elect Mrs. Pelavin to be Vice Chair - Abare, yes; Cormier, yes; Hurst, yes; LaFreniere, yes; Pelavin, yes; and Swartz, yes. Count – 6 yes.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Finance Officer

Mrs. Pelavin nominated Mr. LaFreniere to be Finance Officer of the Gardner School Committee for the ensuing year.

Mrs. Hurst moved to close nominations for Finance Officer.

Seconded by Mr. Swartz.

Roll Call Vote – Abare, yes; Cormier, yes; Hurst, yes; LaFreniere, yes; Pelavin, yes; and Swartz, yes. Count – 6 yes.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Roll Call Vote to elect Mr. LaFreniere to be Finance Officer - Abare, yes; Cormier, yes; Hurst, yes; LaFreniere, yes; Pelavin, yes; and Swartz, yes.

Count – 6 yes.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Alternate Finance Officers (2)

Mrs. Pelavin nominated Mr. Swartz to be an Alternate Finance Officer of the Gardner School Committee for the ensuing year.

Mr. LaFreniere nominated Mrs. Pelavin to be an Alternate Finance Officer of the Gardner School Committee for the ensuing year.

Mr. Swartz moved to close nominations for Alternate Finance Officers.

Seconded by Mr. Abare.

Roll Call Vote – Abare, yes; Cormier, yes; Hurst, yes; LaFreniere, yes; Pelavin, yes; and Swartz, yes. Count – 6 yes.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Roll Call Vote to elect Mr. Swartz and Mrs. Pelavin to be Alternate Finance Officers - Abare, yes; Cormier, yes; Hurst, yes; LaFreniere, yes; Pelavin, yes; and Swartz, yes. Count – 6 yes.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Secretary

Mrs. Hurst nominated Mrs. Cormier to be Secretary of the Gardner School Committee for the ensuing year.

Mr. Swartz moved to close nominations for Secretary.

Seconded by Mrs. Pelavin.

Roll Call Vote – Abare, yes; Cormier, yes; Hurst, yes; LaFreniere, yes; Pelavin, yes; and Swartz, yes. Count – 6 yes.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Roll Call Vote to elect Mrs. Cormier to be Secretary - Abare, yes; Cormier, yes; Hurst, yes; LaFreniere, yes; Pelavin, yes; and Swartz, yes. Count – 6 yes.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. LaFreniere moved that the District School Committee vote to approve the Consent Agenda with the following addition to the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 14, 2020:

Page 5 – Resolution E.Q. 2.0.7 add “Mr. LaFreniere moved that the School Committee vote to approve CHPS Resolution E.Q. 2.0.7 as follows:”

- Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting of December 14, 2020 as amended and as recommended by the School Committee Chairperson.
- Approval of the following Warrants as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee:
 - Warrant #21-24 dated 12/10/20 in the amount of \$83,849.00
 - Warrant #21-25 dated 12/17/20 in the amount of \$97,766.94
 - Warrant #21-26 dated 12/23/20 in the amount of \$286,885.09
 - Warrant #21-27 dated 12/31/20 in the amount of \$148,949.84

Seconded by Mr. Swartz.

Roll Call Vote – Abare, yes; Cormier, yes; Hurst, yes; LaFreniere, yes; Pelavin, yes; and Swartz, yes. Count – 6 yes.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Facilities Subcommittee

Mr. Abare, Chairperson, said that the Subcommittee met on December 15, 2020. Minutes of the meeting were presented.

Mr. Anderson, Facilities Director, and Ms. Yu, Business Administrator, gave an update on Moura's Cleaning Services. They met with Moura's management team to address some concerns on the cleaning log and the proper use of the Clorox 360 machines.

As part of the DESE's (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) corrective action, one of the Elm Street School's Special Ed rooms needs to be renovated. Mr. Anderson and his team are working on this special project. Mr. Kristian Whitsett, Jones Whitsett Architects, has provided a free drawing of all the requirements.

The City Building Commissioner has not approved the renovation permit for the Helen Mae Sauter building so the project is on hold.

The Prospect Street School building will be winterized and maintained so that the Community Health Connection can use the building for COVID testing.

Mr. Anderson and Ms. Yu will be working with the City Purchasing Department to order a new dump truck to replace the one that broke down.

Ms. Yu provided a Kitchen Surplus list which will be submitted to the full School Committee for a vote.

NEW BUSINESS

Item #3228 – COVID Tracking Update

Mrs. Rebecca McCaffrey, Gardner School Nurse Leader, presented charts showing the GPS Staff Data as of 12/30/20 – staff sent home w/symptoms, staff negative and staff positive, staff quarantining, staff symptomatic and staff out from school exposure.

Student information was also presented showing student negative, student positive remote, student positive hybrid, student quarantining, student symptomatic and student out from school exposure.

The total case count as of 12/31/20 and the case count for the last 14 days in the Gardner Community and the Massachusetts State Data as of 12/24/20 was also presented.

Item #3229 – Winter Sports Update

Mr. Daniel Forte, Athletic Director, reported that some basketball games are scheduled to begin in early January. The hockey team is scheduled to start games on January 7. All basketball and hockey games will be live streamed so that parents can watch their children play their sports.

Item #3230 – Vaccine Update

Mayor Nicholson gave an update on the vaccine distribution. Heywood Hospital has vaccinated their personnel and all of the School nurses. Vaccinations for first responders are scheduled to be given at City Hall. Plans have been made for distribution to people in phase two.

Item #3231 – Gardner Middle School Transportation

Mr. Arthur Murphy, Principal of the Gardner Middle School, has requested that Middle School students who live one to one and a half miles from the school be given bus transportation. This will relieve many parents from driving their child (children) to school and will help increase school attendance. This will involve thirty-one students and at present there is room on the buses.

Mrs. Pelavin moved that the District School Committee vote to approve a temporary change to the Gardner School Policy to allow students who live one to one and a half miles from the Gardner Middle School to be given bus transportation through the end of the current school year as long as there is room on the bus with the current restrictions regarding spacing of students on the bus.

Seconded by Mr. Swartz.

Roll Call Vote – Abare, yes; Cormier, yes; Hurst, yes; LaFreniere, yes; Pelavin, yes; and Swartz, yes.

Count – 6 yes.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Item #3232 - Curriculum Coordinator Update

The Curriculum Coordinator's Update was included in the packet. Dr. Gougen was present on Zoom to answer questions.

Item #3233 – Special Education Update

The Special Education Update was included in the Packet. Ms. West was present on Zoom to answer questions.

Item #3234– Grants Administer Update

The Grants, Communications & Compliance Update was included in the packet. Ms. Dunn was present on Zoom to answer questions.

Item #3235 – MSBA – New Building Project

The easement for the electrical work for the new school building has been recorded. Dr. Stephen Hemman has been providing the Building Committee with pictures of the construction work that is being done.

COMMUNICATIONS

Dr. Pellegrino reported that the schools are off to strong start for the new year. Teachers are providing good school lessons and students are working well on line.

FINAL COMMENTS

Mrs. Hurst thanked everyone for their hard work, without the team effort the school system would not be as far along as it is.

Mrs. Pelavin also thanked everyone for their work and for thinking outside of the box. Remote learning takes up a lot of a parent's time. She said that a statement regarding MCAS came from the Department of Education today.

Mr. Abare spoke about the virus and things a community should be doing.

Mr. LaFreniere said it will still be a difficult year for the schools but everyone is working hard and he thanked them for their work.

Mrs. Cormier thanked everyone for making learning work for the students. They are getting a good experience. She is looking forward to 2021.

Mr. Swartz is looking forward to a better 2021.

Mayor Nicholson will present his State of the City report on Wednesday, January 7, 2021 at 6 pm. on Channel 8 TV, YouTube, Face Book and radio station WGAW. It will also be presented in Spanish. He thanked everyone and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Swartz moved to adjourn.

Seconded by Mrs. Pelavin.

All members in favor - roll call not required for adjournment.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.

Terri Hillman, Recording Secretary

Rachel A. Cormier, Secretary