

**Tewksbury School Committee
Wednesday, August 18, 2021
Regular School Committee Meeting #2
Tewksbury Memorial High School
Christine McGrath Performing Arts Center
320 Pleasant Street, Tewksbury, MA 01876**

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Keith M. Sullivan, Chairperson
Shannon M. Demos, Vice-Chairperson
Bridget L. Garabedian, Clerk
John R. Stadtman, Member
Nicholas G. Parsons, Member

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT

Christopher J. Malone, Superintendent
Brenda T. Regan, Assistant Superintendent
David A. Libby, Business Manager

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Sullivan called the August 18, 2021, Regular School Committee meeting to order at 5:46 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (File)

Mr. Sullivan entertained a motion to convene an Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with employee groups and/or personnel matters.

Mr. Stadtman moved to enter into the Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with employee groups and/or personnel matters, seconded by Ms. Demos. The School Committee will reconvene in open session at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call Vote - Voting Yes: Mr. Parsons, Ms. Demos, Ms. Garabedian, Mr. Stadtman, and Mr. Sullivan. All Aye. No Opposed. Motion carried 5-0.

At 6:22 p.m., Mr. Sullivan adjourned the August 18, 2021 Executive Session with a motion from Ms. Demos, seconded by Mr. Stadtman. The Committee will reconvene in open session.

Roll Call Vote: Voting Yes: Mr. Parsons, Ms. Garabedian, Ms. Demos, Mr. Stadtman, and Mr. Sullivan. All Aye. No Opposed. Motion carried 5-0.

RECONVENE REGULAR MEETING

At 6:34 p.m., Mr. Sullivan reconvened the August 18, 2021 Regular School Committee meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr. Sullivan reported the August 18, 2021 Regular School Committee meeting will be televised and recorded and may be viewed live on Comcast Channel 22 and Verizon Channel 34 or YouTube/TewksburyTV.com. Under the Open Meeting Law, the public is permitted to make an audio or video recording of an open session at a public meeting. Mr. Sullivan inquired if anyone in the audience was recording tonight's meeting. Seeing none, Mr. Sullivan moved onto the next order of business.

APPROVED 9-22-2021

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Garabedian led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

RECOGNITION

None

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Notes From Tewksbury Memorial High School

No student report this evening.

PRESENTATIONS

None

CITIZEN'S FORUM

Mr. Sullivan presented the rules and procedures to be followed during the Citizen's Forum and acknowledged the community members that could not be in attendance tonight thanking them for their many emails and comments. Mr. Sullivan asked if anyone present would like to comment on any item on the agenda. As a procedural matter, he asked that they state their name and address.

Peter Foster, 156 Marshall Street: Supports parental choice to mask or unmask children.

Mr. Sullivan asked Mr. Foster if he is speaking on behalf of a group, seeing that he was not, Mr. Sullivan stated that he should adhere to the three minute time limit. Mr. Sullivan will listen to each person requesting to speak tonight but they must adhere to the three minute time limit or ten for a person speaking on behalf of a group.

Danielle Newell, 51 Rebecca Lane: Supports optional masks for children.

Amy Lutkevich, 6 Sullivan Parkway: Supports DESE guidelines that masks are only recommended.

Maureen Castiglione (1098 Whipple Road, Tewksbury) and Dina Mancini (15 Kenneth Drive) spoke on behalf of the SEPAC. They read comments from parents of students with disabilities; they did not take a stance on masking or not masking. They hoped people would help kids to avoid stress. For a copy of their report, you may email them at tewksburysepac@gmail.com.

Don Greer, 6 Charlotte Road: Commented that decisions should be based on facts and science asking the Committee to do their research.

Mike Hudd, 67 Catamount Road: Commented that masks don't work.

Leslie Rossetti, 682 South Street: Commented that masks should not be mandated or required.

April McCreary, 2-A Sharon Street: Supports CDC recommendation that masks should be required.

Eric Campbell, 125 North Billerica Road: Commented that masks will not stop the virus.

Shaun Carr, 90 Catamount Road: Commented that masks and remote learning should be optional.

Angela Deluca, North Street: Supports freedom of choice.

Kelly Joyce, 4 Memorial Drive: Supports wearing masks.

Colleen Greer, 6 Charlotte Road: Supports that masks should be a choice.

Micheal Dingivan, 61 Marston Street: Commented that the previous speaker said masks work, was not wearing a mask.

Erin Hudd, 67 Catamount Road: Supports that masks should be a choice.

Michael Viens, 65 Birchwood Road: Opposed to masks but not opposed to people sending children with a mask.

Jen MacLaren, Sesame Street: Supports that masks should be a choice.

Rob Hanley, 2 Hillcrest Road: Opposed to a mask mandate.

Renee Viens, 65 Birchwood Road: Supports that masks should be a choice.

Julie Gonzales, Bryan Lane: Supports that masks should be a choice.

Joel McCreary, 2- A Sharon Street: Supports the science that masks should be in place until vaccines are in place for children.

Mark Tortorici, 390 Kendall Road: Commented on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee and does not support Critical Race Theory to be taught in Tewksbury schools.

Mr. Sullivan asked if there was anyone else in the audience that wanted to speak on anything on the agenda. Seeing no one, Mr. Sullivan officially closed the Citizens Comment at 7:55 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (File)

Ms. Garabedian moved, seconded by Ms. Demos, to approve the July 21, 2021 Regular School Committee meeting minutes.

Roll Call Vote - Voting Yes: Mr. Parsons, Ms. Demos, Mr. Stadtman, Ms. Garabedian, and Mr. Sullivan. All Aye. No Opposed. Motion carried 5-0.

SUBMISSION OF PAYMENT OF BILLS (File)

Ms. Garabedian moved to approve the payroll period ending July 22, 2021, to be approved and certified in the amount and categories as shown \$1,203,379.43, seconded by Ms. Demos.

All Aye. No Opposed. Motion carried 5-0.

Ms. Garabedian moved to approve the payroll period ending August 5, 2021, to be approved and certified in the amount and categories as shown \$1,275,789.05, seconded by Ms. Demos.

All Aye. No Opposed. Motion carried 5-0.

SUPERINTENDENT & STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Malone, Superintendent

Mr. Malone reported that the district has received the approval of the ESSER 2 grant funding for the upcoming year. He added that our Title 1 budgetary allocation is \$190,051.00 for FY 22, which is down from FY 21.

Mr. Malone offered congratulations to Mr. Bellistri and the TPS Summer Academic Recovery Program, thanking the staff involved, Dr. Basteri, Shelli-An Ryan, Kellyn Welch, Brian Desjardins, Natasha MacFarlane, Katie Clark,

and Carol Navetta. Mr. Malone thanked the Committee for participating in today's annual workshop around goal setting and the School Improvement Plans.

Mr. Sullivan opened for questions and comments from the School Committee. Mr. Sullivan thanked Mr. Malone and all the staff for the workshop presentation.

Ms. Theriault-Regan, Assistant Superintendent

Ms. Regan reported that the high school held the 1 to1 Chromebook program last week giving out over 300 devices. She reported that the presentation can be found on the TMHS website. She added that the freshmen will get their devices next week at orientation.

Ms. Regan reported that the principal's letters for getting ready for back to school are on the Consent agenda. Also on each school's website you will find the suggested school supply lists. She reported that during the past two days we have participated in a district-wide administrator retreat culminating in a three hour presentation for the School Committee members as we presented the District Improvement Plan and each school presented their school improvement plan. The plans will be posted on the website. Ms. Regan reported that next week staff will be attending the new teacher's Mentoring Program relating that we have eleven new teachers. We have posted for 1-year only COVID Support staff, one for each school. Ms. Regan pointed out that the Summer Reading list is on the website.

Mr. Sullivan opened for questions and comments from the School Committee members. Ms. Demos noted retirements on the Consent agenda offering congratulations to Mary Abbott and Donna DePierro.

Mr. Libby, Business Manager

Mr. Libby provided an update on transportation relating that the bus routes are posted on the website and the van routes are in the works with the Special Education transportation companies. Aspen has been updated, families can check the Portal for their transportation needs. Mr. Libby presented an update on the ESSER 3 grant application reporting that it is in progress. He reported that a requirement is to seek stakeholder input so families may expect to see a survey in mid-September. Mr. Sullivan inquired if there was a mask mandate on buses. Mr. Malone reported that masks are mandated on transportation, school buses and vans, and required in the nurse's office/suite.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Sullivan asked if any member had questions and/or comments on any item on the Consent Agenda. Seeing no one, Mr. Sullivan asked for approval of the Consent Agenda.

Ms. Demos moved, seconded by Mr. Stadtman, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. All Aye. No Opposed. Motion carried 5-0.

Correspondence

1. TPS Schools' Back School & Orientation Letters (File)
2. Merrimack College - Supervising Practitioners for the Spring 2021 Semester / Course Voucher (File)
3. TMHS 1:1 Device Program & Roll-Out Overview for Families (File)

Enrollment Update

None

PERSONNEL ITEMS

New Hires (Files): Ryan Cunningham, Building custodian, Tewksbury Memorial High School, effective August 11, 2021; Barry Patterson, Head Building Custodian, North Street School, effective August 9, 2021; Michael Bettencourt, Building Custodian, Tewksbury Memorial High School, 1-year only effective August 2, 2021 through June 23, 2022 or the last day of the 2021-22 school year; Venkata Potturi, Classroom Instructional Aide, John Ryan Elementary School,

effective August 30, 2021; Maria Campo, Moderate Special Needs Teacher, Dewing Elementary School, effective August 30, 2021; Kelly Cracchiolo, K-2 Reading Specialist, Heath Brook School, effective August 30, 2021

Transfers (Files): Shaun O'Brien, Lead Night Building Custodian, Tewksbury Memorial High School, effective August 2, 2021; Corinne Rooney, Head Custodian, transfer from the North Street School to the Heath Brook School, effective August 2, 2021; Cara Griffin, K-2 DLC Teacher, transfer from the Heath Brook School to the Dewing Elementary School, effective August 30, 2021

Retirement (Files): Donna DePierro, Classroom Aide at the Heath Brook School, effective June 17, 2021; Mary Abbott, Classroom Instructional Aide at the Dewing Elementary School, effective June 17, 2021

***Appendix B: Co-Curricular** (File)

Tewksbury Memorial High School

Paul Early, Junior Classical League

Kayla McLaughlin, Dance Team

Sue Barnett, Science Team

*APPENDIX B POSITIONS ARE PENDING CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

Acceptance of Donations/Gifts: None

Fundraisers/Raffles: Wynn Middle School PAC Event Calendar for the 2021-2022 school year

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Elementary School Building Committee

Ms. Demos reported that everything is on track with the project. She announced that on September 11, 2021, the first event will be held on the field.

Tewksbury SEPAC

Mr. Parsons reported that the SEPAC will hold their first Parent Support Night on September 9, 2021 and their first Business Meeting will be held on September 16th. He reported that all meetings are accessed through Zoom. For more information go to the SEPAC Facebook page or email them at tewksburysepac@gmail.com.

Wellness Advisory Committee

Ms. Garabedian had nothing to report.

Policy Sub-Committee

The next Policy Sub-Committee meeting will be held on August 26, 2021

POLICY CHANGES, PROPOSALS, AND ADOPTIONS

Policy Recommended for Revision to TPS Policy on First Reading (File)

None

OLD BUSINESS

Summer School Update

Ms. Regan presented the Summer School reporting that 645 students attended the summer programming. She pointed out that on the back page you will find the back to school orientation dates and information. She added that 140 students have registered for the 9th grade student orientation.

NEW BUSINESS

Reopening of Schools

Mr. Malone thanked everyone for the comments and appreciates that you are attending this evening. He presented an update on the CDC recommended guidance for masks relating that the CDC strongly recommends that all students K-6 wear masks indoors, all unvaccinated students grades 7-12 are required to wear masks, masks are to be worn on buses and van transportation, and in the Nurse's Office. Mr. Malone reported that the Tewksbury Board of Health voted 3-2 tonight not to require masks. He presented the results of the staff survey on wearing masks. Mr. Malone presented data from the COVID Dashboard and the daily incident rate in Tewksbury. He reported that the district's physician, Dr. Miller recommends to follow the CDC guidelines. Mr. Malone commented that we have to balance out safety and what is right for students and staff. He reported on the safety precautions the district has in place.

The School Committee welcomed the Superintendent to make a recommendation to the Committee on masks. Mr. Malone commented that the position the Board has is unfair, the decision has been given to the board that is garnered to make education decisions when the state has medical people. These people did not ask to make this decision.

Mr. Malone recommends that the School Committee follows CDC guidance. Recommending that all staff and students wear a mask for a period of 60 days or at which time we can determine that enough people have been vaccinated.

Ms. Demos commented that it is a priority to keep schools open for all and recommends masks for the first quarter of the school year and then reevaluate the situation. In response to a question from Ms. Garabedian, Mr. Malone read the guidance recommendation from DESE. Mr. Stadtman reiterated what Ms. Demos stated and thanked everyone for the emails and phone calls. Mr. Stadtman and Mr. Parsons support Mr. Malone's recommendation. The audience was out of order after hearing the recommendation. Mr. Sullivan called for a five minute recess to allow for the public to leave if they want and reconvened the meeting at 8:52 p.m.

Ms. Garabedian commented that she would like schools to stay open and in-person. She offered thanks to the community and the Board of Health for the input. She supports returning to school with a minimum of masks for unvaccinated staff and students to be evaluated in 30 days. Mr. Sullivan commented that the School Committee has reviewed articles, video, and clips relating that there is no data that states masks work, the vaccination rate in Massachusetts is high, he does not agree with his colleagues. Mr. Sullivan recommends no mask adding that we are able to make changes when necessary. Mr. Sullivan asked what is the pleasure of the Board?

Ms. Demos commented that we have all shared our thoughts and recommended to move onto the next step.

Mr. Sullivan motioned to allow parents in the town of Tewksbury to make their own decision, to allow students in the Tewksbury Public Schools to start school and not mandate masks in schools. Mr. Sullivan asked if there was a second. Seeing none, he asked what is the will of the Board.

Mr. Stadtman stated that as fortified by Superintendent Malone, Mr. Stadtman moved, seconded by Mr. Parsons, to follow CDC guidance for sixty (60) days. All students will wear a mask, at the 60th day, the district will reevaluate.

Mr. Sullivan stated that the motion on the table is for all students and staff to wear masks for the first 60 days and to reevaluate as a School Committee at the end of the 60 days..

Roll Call Vote - Voting Yes: Mr. Stadtman, Ms. Demos, Ms. Garabedian, and Mr. Parsons. Voting No - Mr. Sullivan
Motion carried 4-1.

Mr. Sullivan reported that the School Committee will reevaluate wearing masks in 60 days. Mr. Sullivan announced that the Public Comments are closed.

Daily Substitute Pay Rate Changes (File)

Ms. Regan reported that the district researched substitute rates in surrounding districts. As a result of the findings, she recommends that the district increase the daily rates adding that the increase would be grant funded.

Ms. Garabedian moved, seconded by Ms. Demos, to accept the new daily sub rates as presented. Roll Call Vote - Voting Yes: Mr. Parsons, Ms. Garabedian, Ms. Demos, Mr. Stadtman, and Mr. Sullivan. No Opposed. Unanimous Vote. Motion carried 5-0.

Tewksbury Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee

Mr. Sullivan reported that the Town has started a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee. There is a seat open for a School Committee member. He added that Karen Baker O'Brien is serving on the committee. Mr. Sullivan asked Mr. Malone to reach out to the Town Manager for more information.

Open Meeting Law Complaint. filed 7-29-2021

Mr. Sullivan reported that the School Committee received two Open Meeting Law complaints. The complaint has been disseminated to the School Committee. He added that by law, the Committee must review an Open Meeting Law (OML) complaint within 14 days. Mr. Sullivan turned the meeting over to Mr. Malone. Mr. Malone provided a brief background of the complaint. Mr. Malone remarked that in regards to the individual who wrote the complaint, had they contacted me prior to the School Committee meeting, I would have let them know that my letter referenced the complaint and he did not intend to exclude the individual from attending the School Committee meeting. Mr. Malone requested to delegate responsibility to respond to the complaint to the School Committee Legal Council.

Mr. Sullivan opened to questions and concerns from the School Committee members.

Ms. Garabedian moved to have Superintendent Malone, in conjunction with our Legal Council, to respond to this OML complaint, seconded by Ms. Demos. All Aye. No Opposed. Unanimous Vote. Motion carried 5-0.

Open Meeting Law Complaint. filed 8-10-2021

Mr. Sullivan reported on the second complaint stating it was disseminated to the School Committee and as required by law to review an Open Meeting Law complaint within 14 days, the Committee is reviewing the complaint tonight. He reported that the School Committee did not follow the OML regarding the timely approval of the 2020-2021 Executive Session minutes. The draft minutes were reviewed and declassified in Executive Session tonight. It is the recommendation of Mr. Sullivan to send the Complainant and the Attorney General copies of the Executive Session minutes approved for declassification. He recommends for the Committee to review all draft Executive Session minutes for the past three years for declassification. Mr. Sullivan further recommends to schedule an Open Meeting Law training within the next two months for the School Committee to include Mr. Malone, Ms. Regan, Gail Johnson, and all building based School Councils.

Mr. Sullivan reported that we were in compliance with taking notes for minutes and apologized for not following protocol.

Ms. Garabedian moved, seconded by Ms. Demos, to delegate the responsibility and have the School Committee Chair work with our Legal Council to prepare a written response to the Complainant and the Attorney General.

Mr. Sullivan asked Mr. Parsons how he votes. Mr. Parsons asked to amend the motion to include a self- evaluation of the Committee and establish goals to address our operations and revisit on a yearly basis as outlined in policy. Mr. Sullivan responded that this is a policy issue. He stated that we have a motion and a second on the floor to delegate the authority to respond to the complaint. Mr. Parsons asked to make a motion to change the motion. Mr. Sullivan responded that according to *Roberts Rules*, you cannot make a motion to amend a motion once there is a motion and a second on the floor.

Mr. Sullivan called for a Roll Call Vote - Voting Yes: Mr. Parsons, Ms. Garabedian, Ms. Demos, Mr. Stadtman and Mr. Sullivan. All Aye. No Opposed. Unanimous Vote. Motion carried 5-0.

Mr. Sullivan invited Mr. Parsons to have a further discussion on the topic and that it could be a future agenda item.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MATTERS OF INTEREST

Ms. Garabedian reported that the Wynn PAC will host a Food Truck fundraiser event on September 15, 2021 from 5:00-7:30 PM. The Dewing Playground Social will be held on August 30th, the North Street Playground Social will be held on August 26th, and the Heath Brook Playground Social will be August 19th. Ms Demos reported that she is excited for a tour of school buildings next week and she welcomes the students back. Mr. Stadtman commented that he is looking forward to the Elementary School Building Committee meeting. Mr. Sullivan commented that he is looking forward to the first football game on the new field, on September 11th.

FUTURE SCHOOL COMMITTEE & FUTURE SUB-COMMITTEE & ADVISORY MEETING DATES

- *Tewksbury School Committee*: September 22, 2021; October 5, 2021, Special Town Meeting (SC will attend); October 13, 2021 Regular Meeting
- *Elementary School Building Committee*: August 19, 2021; September 9, 2021; October 14, 2021
- *Tewksbury SEPAC Board Meeting*: August 17, 2021; September 9, 2021 (Parent Support Group); September 16, 2021
- *Tewksbury SEPAC School Safety Sub-committee*: August 19, 2021
- *Wellness Advisory Committee*: September 22, 2021; November 10, 2021; March 23, 2022; May 18, 2022
- *Policy Sub-Committee*: August 26, 2021

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:30 p.m., Mr. Sullivan adjourned the August 18, 2021 Regular School Committee meeting with a motion from Ms. Demos and seconded by Ms. Garabedian. All Aye. No Opposed. Motion carried 5-0.