



Lunenburg Public Schools

Dr. Kate Burnham, Superintendent of Schools

MEETING MINUTES
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, September 4, 2019
Regular Session, Town Hall, 7:00p.m.

School Committee

Heather Sroka, Chair-Present
Wendy Bertrand, Vice-Chair-Present
Brian Lehtinen, Secretary- Present
Jim LaVeck, Present
Carol Archambault-Present

Superintendent

Dr. Kate Burnham-Present

Business Manager/

HR Director

Michael Cassidy, Present

Guests

James Bunnell, Athletic Director

Recording Secretary

Jodi Saldi, Present

1. **Call to order** - Ms. Sroka called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. **Executive Session:** To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel.
 - a. 1st Motion: all to leave the room and reenter.
 - b. Roll call: Heather Sroka, Wendy Bertrand, Brian Lehtinen, Carol Archambault, Jim LaVeck; all present.
3. **Public Comments:** Mr. LaVeck stated he attended the convocation with Ms. Archambault and was very moved by the speakers and the passion. Very moved by the teachers and longevity of so many and very impressed with the teachers and staff. He is looking forward to the school year and focusing on the students.
4. **Review and Approve Warrants:**
 - a. Review and Approve Minutes; all have been reviewed and adjustments have been made:
 - i. June 19, 2019 Regular Session
 - ii. June 19, 2019 Executive Session
 - iii. July 31, 2019 Regular Session
 - iv. August 14, 2019 Workshop Session
 - b. Motion to pass and approve: Ms. Sroka made a motion to pass all. All in favor with the exception of Mr. LaVeck as he was absent from the July 31st meeting and there is no recording for him to review.
5. **Superintendent's Report:**
 - a. On Monday, the opening day of staff, Dr. Burnham and staff began with the district wide convocation at the middle-high school auditorium; Dr. Burnham shared the Commissioners Our Way Forward with all staff and the members of the school committee. Dr. Burnham stated we are entering a new area of public education in the Commonwealth and is very intrigued to see where the new vision of the Commissioner takes us. The first day for students went well; Dr.

Burnham spent time in each building, with the Central Office with Administration, helped receive children at the primary school and again at dismissal time, all week providing assistance. Dr. Burnham and Mr. Cassidy had the pleasure of greeting the first and second graders as they entered the school. A new tradition of an all school meeting is being started by the new Principal, Christna Guertin. They will acknowledge and celebrate birthdays and other accomplishments and they will do this as a full community within the school. A pledge will also be done as well. They will also learn songs, patriotic too, a great community tradition. Dr. Burnham also enjoyed some time at lunch with the high school students chatting. She also had the opportunity to visit sixth grade classrooms and students were impressed by the modern facility. She spent time at Turkey Hill Elementary School as well.

b. We have two new bus drivers with new routes, we have a new administration at the primary school and we have a new location for extended day. We did have some challenges with timeliness in getting children to the correct locations, and getting the bus routes on schedule, however we had a meeting, put new strategies in place, and all has been worked out.

c. She will note, something Dr. Burnham will be watching, and has asked school secretaries and principals to track data regarding change of dismissal plans. We saw many requests for change of dismissal from parents, roughly 25. As one can imagine with so many changes right away, establishing a routine can be very challenging. We may try to implement an advance notice prior to the opening of school for the first week so that the staff has them in advance.

d. The salary schedule for the non-affiliated employees that were discussed at the last meeting and were voted to approve. The Town Hall is asking for the required signatures.

e. Tuesday, September 24, 2019 is our first full day of Professional Development in the Lunenburg Auditorium; this has been shaped by the Behavioral Advisory Council and the Lunenburg Professional Development Committee. The day is being structured by a conference. Teachers should register online. The Federation of Children with Special Needs is presenting again this year on childhood trauma, the same group will present to the community in the evening. Flyers will go out to notify the community. This particular training will be open to bus drivers, custodial staff, secretaries; its intended to be awareness for all. We currently have 11 confirmed breakout sessions in addition to the presentation. All presenters are donating their time so this is at no cost. This opportunity will be opened up to neighboring districts.

f. Notification for full day option for full day extended day communication for those families and provide them with an option.

g. We have been awarded for a 2nd year the Early Literacy Grant; roughly \$38,000.

h. Mosquito prevention: we are putting out a message to the community that we will be treating the fields at the middle school campus. We will also provide additional information on how people can protect themselves from mosquito bites as well. Our Athletic Director has also shared this information with Coaches too. Treatment will be Monday, September 9, 2019 from 9pm-midnight. Additional information will be posted on the website regarding what treatment is being used.

i. Leadership Retreat: the Leadership Team met for two weeks over the summer and worked together to shape the strategy for continuous improvement, mapping out the year ahead, introduced new procedures and processes specifically for human resource and finance. We are going to have monthly district leadership meetings as we did last year but this year we are adding two instructional leadership team meetings a month. This team includes the principal, assistant principals and directors of student services. Based on the reported value of the leadership learning blocks we are doubling the number of blocks this year. We will be visiting each school twice this year verses once last year.

j. Introductions: we have a new Interoffice Secretary, Melissa Michaelides, Primary Schools Secretary, Krissy Carbone.

6. New Business:

Athletic Handbook and new Team Captain's Handbook Approval

. Mr. Bunnell, Athletic Director, has started creating handbooks for the district, so he's brought two of three handbooks for your review, the Athletics handbook and the Team Captain's handbook.

a. Mr. LaVeck asked where participants are to sign in the Captain's Handbook? Mr. Bunnell clarified that the Captain's Handbook is not for all. And student/athlete sign off on-line. Mr. LaVeck thought the content is great and is very impressive. Mr. Bunnell did seek input from the student athletes, parents and coaches. He did also have a meeting with the Fall Captains and reviewed the information. Board agreed it's very complete and comprehensive. Motion to Approve Team Captain Handbook and the Student Athlete Handbook for 2019-2020 school year made by Ms. Archambault, seconded by Mr. LaVeck. Vote: unanimous.

b. Mr. Bunnell will return later with the Coaches Handbook.

- c. **Budget Update:** Mr. Cassidy forwarded a final end of year report for FY2019. He will discuss hiring in his next report. Board likes new format; its clear and understandable. He will also provide municipal reporting on a quarterly basis. Motion to accept budget update as outlined by Mr. Lehtinen, seconded by Mr. LaVeck. Vote: unanimous.
- d. **Personnel Update:** Mr. Cassidy stated we did have a burst of resignations at the end of the school year. We have filled all of our positions. We do still have a part-time custodian position still to fill at Turkey Hill Elementary School and Mr. Londa does have a plan for coverage. And to reflect on some of the resignations, from wanting to work closer to home to better opportunities. Most gave a two week notice. We would not want to leave any district with a hard to fill positions. In those cases we would work out a delayed start date.
- e. We are also finalizing all the advisors/appointments at the middle and high school and all should be complete this week. The hiring is complete and Mr. Cassidy will report back to the committee as soon as possible. Motion to approve resignations, retirements and new hires by Mr. LaVeck, seconded by Ms. Archambault. Vote: Four members concurred, one abstained. Mr. Lehtinen abstained as his wife's sister, Corrine Jones, is listed as a paraprofessional.
- f. **LEA Memorandum of Agreement Approval:** As we know the development of the budget, some of the cuts made to close the gap were stipend positions, department heads at the high school. We were engaged in some dialogue and these are important positions that no one wants to see go. So we worked creativity together and came to non monetary means of compensation to keep important positions in tact. Dr. Burnham recommends we accept this agreement. Ms. Archambault moves to accept as presented September 4th, 2019, seconded by Ms. Bertrand. Vote: unanimous.
- g. **School Supplies Donation from the Salvation Army:** A tote full of supplies. Dr. Burnham recommends we accept and supplies will be divided amongst schools. Motion to accept. Vote: unanimous. Mr. Lehtinen asked if this is a list of supplies of typical supplies. There is: wipes, tissues, crayons, paper towels. We can post grade appropriate list of supplies on website. Motion to acknowledge and accept school supplies by Mr. LaVeck, seconded by Ms. Bertrand. Vote: Unanimous.
- h. **Passios Building Design Committee Appointee:** The Town Manager would like a school committee member to attend. Unsure of meeting time/dates. Would anyone like to volunteer? Committee still being filling developed. Mr. LaVeck may have a conflict so will be pulled out of the running. Ms. Archambault and Mr. Lehtinen may be interested. Motion to appoint Brian Lehtinen made by Mr. LaVeck, seconded by Ms. Archambault.. Vote: unanimous.
- i. **Fall Athletics Report:** Mr. Bunnell is providing an update on participation numbers. There is a decrease in participation. Ms. Bertrand asked what is the plan for football? He will speak to coaching at his next meeting. Some schools currently can fill teams from soccer to cross country to lacrosse. Many kids are still asking for sports such as volleyball. And many students want to play club as scouts look at club more.
- j. **Budget Time Line:** When will discussions begin? Dr. Burnham asked how Board felt about last year's timeline? We don't have the governor's budget in December. Nor do we have the Town Managers input either. The superintendent should still present in December, even if just philosophical. Ms. Bertrand suggested we be prepared to present the full budget the first week of February. This doesn't have to be decided this evening, but Dr. Burnham felt tonight was a good time to open discussion. Mr. LaVeck agrees we need more discussion. Mr. Cassidy doesn't want to have the public's attention lost either. Mr. LaVeck believes we need to see a budget proposal based on students needs and this is what our students need. Mr. LaVeck would like to avoid a 30% gap as he saw last year. Dr. Burnham did state there will always be some unknowns. Ms. Sroka appreciated the vision presented last year by the superintendent. We should be forecasting our needs regardless if they are funded or not; and prioritized as well. Discussions to be continued.
- k. **School Choice Funding:** Mr. Cassidy forwarded a memorandum to the superintendent to forward to the committee. There was inquiring from the public regarding costs asking what the district receives. We do implement school choice at the high school level in Lunenburg. Essentially every district gets roughly \$5000 for a general ed student. For descending students we get a reduction. There is no data on where or why students left district. Mr. Cassidy is not prepared to discuss tonight. Committee would like to see data on where and why students are leaving the district. All the data is raw and Mr. Cassidy can look further into explanations of students. Why since 2002 have numbers dramatically risen? We lost 102 in 2017 in Lunenburg? That's extremely high. Mr. LaVeck wants to know what happened to understand what's going on? ROTC is one example of a program in demand that Lunenburg is not providing.
- l. **Fundraising:** We are starting a new best practice. We'd like to ask our advisors to create a mission statement and maintain an attendance list. We also don't want fundraising going on at the same time as it burdens families. Ms. Sroka asked if athletics will go through the same process? Mr. LaVeck said that it sounds as though you are really giving the opportunity to learn what the process is. All of the advisors had a meeting and limit fundraising to one a year and think about a broader scope. A calendar should be created for fundraisers for the year and include athletic's as well as the

PTO. Ms. Sroka does believe student involvement is key in fundraising. Ms. Bertrand said last years fund raise was not local and we don't have results from it either. Mr. Lehtinen said it would be great to have a student activities advisor. We can report on this at the end of the year as well as the communities feedback too.

m. **School Committee Operating Protocols:** we have revised protocols and made some small tweaks. We will post this on the web site provided committee believes all is captured.

7. Old Business:

Action

a. **Primary School, THES Handbooks, Bus Procedures Manual Final Approval:** Comments and adjustments made in all three documents. Motion to approve as presented by Mr. LaVeck, seconded by Mr. Lehtinen. Vote: unanimous.

b. **Extended Day Enrollment Update/Registration Closing:** There was a bit of shuffling of registrations, the most current numbers are as of Monday morning, including those registered for the extended day program and the one hour before school option, total of 91 Monday, 88 Tuesday, 89 Wednesday, 89 thursday, 90 Friday. For the afternoon, Monday 122, 119, 123, 126, 114, so there have been a lot of adjustments in the last couple of weeks. The Director of the program asked if i would bring forward for consideration potential to closing registration to bring stability to the kiddos enrolled in the program. If we don't want to close registration Dr. Burnham would suggest that each afternoon we keep a cap of 125. Having too many children is a challenge. When we made a decision to relocate we had too few children. The cap of 125 is the total for all. Mr. LaVeck would like to extend registration until September 30th as we've only been back into school for 2 weeks now. Mr. Lehtinen asked if there is a concern that enrollment will be continuous throughout the year? Dr. Burnham suggested it may, possibly due to families needs changing. Mr. Lehtinen would like to see data if enrollment is continuous. Or is just a few students moving into town or has a parent lost their job. Ms. Archambault asked if more registrations are expected for morning? If registration should become full, we could add them to a wait list. Motion to approve cap of 125 students with the exception of 126 on Thursdays and to keep registration open made by Mr. Lehtinen, seconded by Ms. Bertrand. Vote: unanimous.

c. **Facilities Fees Updated Schedule:** Mr. Londa purpose tonight is to request reconsideration for the rates. that was to be approved in May rates going into effect on July 1st. The request for youth soccer did not closing match the number of hours and their needs. So he recommends the grass fields use of a rate of \$13.00 per hour. Mr. LaVeck is less concerned with how much with how much they are paying and is more concerned with are these fees covering this expense? These fields are owned by public schools and need to be properly maintained. So he'd like to see some analysis or damage being done to these fields. This is accumulate wear and tear on fields. Mr. LaVeck doesn't mean to imply that this needs to be revenue generating, but it does need to be break even and be maintained while allowing outside organizations to use fields; and making sure those organizations are paying for the use. And make sure the fields remain usable to our athletes. Motion to approve facility fees as presented by Mr. LaVeck, seconded by Mr. Lehtinen. Vote: unanimous.

Public Comment Open:

Peter Beardmore. I've been advised that I am speaking to you as a citizen and parent. Two comments specifically: regarding the facilities and fields, he's pleased with the flexibility that has been shown as the situation changes. The Lunenburg Bangles has not agreed nor have they ever paid rent on the storage facility that is behind the turf field. The building was built with donated materials and it's been maintained for twenty years. They do not intend to pay rent on that storage facility. He strongly recommends that you invite the leadership of that organization to have a discussion on that point. He understands that you have not been made aware and it's been brought before you twice now. His 2nd comment is with respect to the committees operating principles and he has brought this to your attention before. The public comment is not reflective of the size, spirit or commitment of nearly 300 year tradition of open public comment. Specifically to agenda items that include policy, handbooks, agendas and there may be public information you need to consider and agenda's are not detailed. Frequently people don't know specifics of presentation, or budgets of proposals, and very frequently the documents you are reviewing are not available nor have they been made available to the public either electronically, nor is a paper copy available in the meeting room. He would also like to request that the committee mandate the documents be available in hard copy for the people in the room before and during the meeting.

Mr. Passios, officially here as a member of the Board of Health. He'd like to protect the citizens of Lunenburg and the environment. he applauds the district for setting up the spraying for monday night. it's an initial step. He does believe there is some disconnect with the board and the town and manages of certain entities. He hopes communication if greatly improved as there is confirmation regarding EEE in Shirley, North Leominster and West Nile Virus. Marshall Park and

the entire perimeter has been added to the spraying monday night. There will also be a reverse 911 call to the entire town Sunday night.

Reports- Ms. Archambault could not attend but did watch the August 22nd finance committee meeting. Mr. Allison from the planning board notified the finance committee that the planning board is starting a master plan using \$50,000 from capital planning and seeking a grant to match that. There are also questions regarding the joint meeting, the board of selectmen and waiting to hear from us when on any Thursday in October the auditorium is open and the chairman would contact Dr. Burnham. They are setting up a representative for building design committee and that is Mr. Passios. Also committee being set up for level service and how staffing needs are being developed and what are the priorities for committee and board? At the close of FY19 there are surpluses. The free cash has not been certified but looks like it will be roughly \$1,000,000.00. If anyone is interested, there is an empty seat on the finance committee; the next meeting is September 12th.

Capital Planning Committee: the next meeting is next Tuesday at 530pm.
Athletic Advisory is meeting next Monday at 7pm.

Future Topics for Discussion: none noted

Motion to adjourn at 8:50pm by Ms. Bertrand, seconded by Mr. LaVeck: Vote: unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jodi Saldi, Recording Secretary