

**Pelham School Committee Meeting
Wednesday, February 1, 2017
Community Room, Pelham Library**

IN ATTENDANCE

Cara Castenson, Chair
Ron Mannino
Emily Marriott
Trevor Baptiste
Tara Luce

Mike Morris, Interim Superintendent
Sean Mangano, Finance Director
Lisa Desjarlais, Principal
Debbie Westmoreland, Recorder

1. Call to Order and Approve Minutes

6:35 p.m.

Ms. Castenson called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. Ms. Marriott moved to approve the minutes of January 4, 2017. Ms. Luce seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

2. Announcements and Public Comment

6:37 p.m.

Mr. Mannino announced that the Pelham School Options Committee is scheduled to meet on Monday, February 6 at 5:30 p.m. in the Community Hall.

3. Interim Superintendent's Update

6:39 p.m.

Dr. Morris thanked the Committee for voting to have him join the MA Rural Schools Coalition, noting that the group is sponsoring a Rural Communities Summit on February 9 at Mohawk Trail Regional High School. School Committee members are encouraged to attend, and Dr. Morris is planning to attend. Ms. Desjarlais distributed a flyer regarding a day of special events that Pelham Elementary is hosting on February 6 in celebration of Black History Month. Events include storyteller Eshu Bumpus, musicians, and readers for every classroom. She also reported that there was a garden meeting on Monday so planning has begun for spring planting. Ms. Desjarlais noted that Pat Romney has been working with the Pelham staff, including a workshop today on microaggressions and microaffirmations. She noted that the work with Ms. Romney has been a very positive experience. Dr. Morris noted that Ms. Romney is also working with the district leadership.

4. New and Continuing Business

6:47 p.m.

A. Homework Discussion

DOCUMENT: Homework Primer dated January 17, 2017

Dr. Morris reviewed the highlights of his findings in researching homework. His research showed, in part:

- homework has not increased in recent years;
- consensus is that homework positively influences academic achievement at secondary school but not at elementary school;
- there are non-academic benefits of homework, including at the elementary level;
- grading/feedback on homework increases completion rates;
- homework impacts families and is a major cause of stress and conflict between parents and children;
- other structured activities can also have positive influences on academic achievement;
- there are social justice components of homework; and
- over two hours of homework has been found to be academically counterproductive.

Dr. Morris noted that the homework surveys were very positive regarding not having homework over winter break. He will be sharing those full results with the community by the end of this week. Dr. Morris also noted that he plans to put together a stakeholder group to work with researchers and practitioners to develop some homework recommendations. Ms. Castenson noted that she would like to know if there is any research regarding correlations between homework and classroom behavior. Mr. Mannino asked what the criteria is for students to participate in homework club, where he volunteers. Ms. Desjarlais explained that teachers invite students to attend who they feel can benefit from extra assistance, and noted that participation is not punitive in any way. Discussion followed regarding the research presented.

B. Disposal of Surplus Materials

DOCUMENT: Memo to Michael Morris, Interim Superintendent, and Pelham School Committee from Sean Mangano regarding Surplus Equipment, dated February 1, 2017

Mr. Mangano explained that Pelham received a kiln from Marks Meadow when it closed. The kiln has not been used and Principal Desjarlais would like to dispose of it since it is sitting idle and taking up space. Ms. Luce moved to declare the kiln manufactured by Bailey Pottery and Bartlett Instrument Company in 2002 (SPB-1822-10, 240 volt, 7260 watt, V6-CF, one phase kiln) as surplus and to authorize the Director of Finance to auction off, donate or otherwise dispose of this equipment in conjunction with provisions of MGL 30B. Mr. Mannino seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

C. FY18 Budget Hearing

DOCUMENT: FY2018 Proposed Pelham School Budget dated Wednesday, dated Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. Mangano distributed and reviewed highlights of changes to the proposed FY2018 Pelham School Budget since the last time the budget was reviewed, including adds and cuts details. The proposed budget totals \$2,025,381, which is a \$5,000 increase due to an increase in Medicaid revenue. Mr. Mangano noted that this is the first year that the Pelham budget has had to include a reduction in FTEs, a 2.0 FTE paraeducator cut, due to budget constraints. He answered clarifying questions for members of the committee throughout the review. Ms. Luce asked Mr. Mangano and Ms. Desjarlais to look at the possibility of increasing preschool fees to deal with the the projected shortfall in preschool revenue. Mr. Mangano noted that he will bring information about a potential fee increase for the School Committee's consideration. He will also have a request to increase before and after school program fees.

D. School Choice Vote

Ms. Luce moved that Pelham continue to accept school choice students. Ms. Marriott seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

E. Select Board Special Education Reserve Request

DOCUMENT: Memo to the Pelham Select Board from Cara Castenson, Pelham School Committee Chair, regarding Special Education Reserve Funding

Mr. Mangano noted that the town of Pelham has reserve funds for unanticipated special education needs. This year the district needs to access the funds to cover an unanticipated expense to hire a paraeducator to meet the needs of a new student who has moved into the district. Mr. Baptiste moved to have Chair Castenson request special education contingency funds from the town of Pelham. Ms. Marriott seconded and discussion followed. Ms. Marriott made a friendly amendment to the motion to request funds in the amount of \$22,000. Mr. Baptiste accepted the amendment to his motion and the revised motion was unanimously approved. Mr. Mangano will make the modifications to the memo and send it to the Pelham Select Board and Finance Committee.

F. Accept Gifts

Ms. Luce moved to accept \$382.50 from the Pelham Cultural Council for the Picturing Pelham Art Making Program and \$75 from Lori and John Bocon for purchase of cow bells for music instructors. Ms. Castenson seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

G. Superintendent's Goals

DOCUMENT: Superintendent's Performance Goals dated February 2017

Ms. Luce noted that she is recusing herself from the Superintendent's goals and evaluation. She left the meeting at 8:36 p.m. Dr. Morris reviewed the four goals he has established for Pelham for the 2016-2017 school year, noting that his fourth goal--creating an ALANA Staff Cabinet--cuts across all three districts. After discussion, Mr. Baptiste moved to approve the goals as presented. Mr. Mannino seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

5. School Committee Planning

9:00 p.m.

March topics will include the budget and fee vote, evaluation process, School Improvement Plan, and special education stabilization fund.

6. Adjourn

9:03 p.m.

Ms. Marriott moved to adjourn at 9:03 p.m. Mr. Mannino seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie Westmoreland