



Winchendon Public Schools

Date Approved/Released: 9/15/22

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School Committee Chair: 

School Committee Retreat

August 4, 2022 - 4:00 pm

The Winchendon School, Rhodes Building

Attendance:

Ryan Forsythe, Chair; Greg Vine, Vice-Chair; Larry Murphy; Alicia Jordan; Robert Mullin, Director of Finance

1. Call to order

R. Forsythe states that the meeting is not being broadcast live due to the remote location of the meeting.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Public Comment: None

4. Consent Agenda: None

G. Vine moves to skip Superintendent's Report and go to New Business. Seconded by L. Murphy. Vote is unanimous.

5. New Business:

a. Winchendon Public Schools Website Discussion:

Discussion is had regarding updates to the School Committee page on the Winchendon Public Schools website. The committee wishes to enhance their presence on the site by including photographs and biographical information, as well as email addresses.

b. Subcommittee Definitions & Charges Discussion:

G. Vine states that he checked with other school committees in the region to see if they had mission statements or responsibilities for each of the subcommittees, but so far, he has yet to receive any relevant information. R. Mullin states that it is left up to each individual committee to create a mission statement. Discussion is had regarding several of the subcommittees and what their duties might be.

c. School Committee Policy Discussion:

A policy regarding member attendance is discussed, including potential implications and enforcement for lack of attendance. If the committee put into

place a policy on attendance, the only options for recourse would be minimal, and enforcement of such policies is complicated. G. Vine states that the town charter states that the board of selectmen can remove someone from an appointed board if they miss a certain number of meetings per year. L. Murphy suggests that if such a policy would be spinning their wheels, he would not waste time on it, if it is unenforceable. R. Forsythe asks if any member sees any other policy consideration as they begin to work on policy for the year. L. Murphy states that in previous years, a law firm was hired to go through the committee's policies and update them. He states that it is worth the cost to have an attorney identify policies that are no longer relevant and make suggestions or recommendations for policies that need to be implemented. A. Jordan suggests that once the committee gets its hands on updated policy, that they compare it to other districts rather than go straight to an attorney.

d. Strategic Plan Discussion:

L. Murphy moves to table discussion until the next meeting. Seconded by G. Vine. Vote is unanimous.

e. Update on Remote Massachusetts Public Meeting Options:

R. Forsythe states that on July 18, the governor signed a bipartisan agreement that continues the existing law until March 31, 2023. This means that the committee still has the right to hold remote meetings. A conversation with the town manager's office revealed that they currently do not have the technology in place that would allow them to broadcast and provide the opportunity for people at home to respond at the same time. Discussion is had on what technology updates might allow this to take place. L. Murphy suggests that they ask the town manager what is needed for technology and that the committee might assist in getting the technology. He states that perhaps the IT Director from WPS might be able to explain to the committee what is needed.

Discussion is had about moving the next meeting to August 24. G. Vine moves to move the next meeting from August 18 to August 24. Seconded by L. Murphy. Vote in unanimous.

6. Superintendent's Report:

- a. R. Mullin presents Budget update. The last update included a lot of overdraws, and the district is currently standing with a balance for fiscal year 22 just under \$40,000. R. Mullin continues to work with town hall through what remains with encumbrances for items or services that have not been received yet. G. Vine asks if that is money that goes back to the town. R. Mullin states that it does go back to the town. R. Mullin states that the state law protects the ability to protect regional school districts, who are able to keep up to 5% of their total budget, carrying it over into their following year's budget. He states that we are allowed a reserve account for special education that would allow us to take remaining funds and put them into a reserve account in case of anything catastrophic. R. Mullin states that state legislature passed something to make up food service costs so that all students receive free breakfast and lunch. The district's applications were approved, even if the state had not funded Winchendon for free meals. R. Forsythe

states that just because the district is qualified doesn't mean that an individual would be eligible for other things, such as free sports or transportation fees. R. Mullin states that the district will still collect financial data from families for this reason.

7. Old Business

a. Superintendent Feedback:

Discussion is had regarding the plans for offering the Superintendent some feedback on his performance. It is decided that the committee will be prepared to offer this feedback at the August 24 meeting. G. Vine moves to table this discussion until the next meeting. Seconded by L. Murphy. Vote is unanimous.

8. Future Agenda Items:

Future Agenda items are as follows:

- a. Superintendent Feedback
- b. Strategic Plan Discussion
- c. Remote Meeting Technology Discussion
- d. Murdock Trust Breakdown
- e. Data Presentations
- f. Subcommittee Definitions
- g. Basketball Scholarship for Scott Laverdure and Nick Roy
- h. Chartwells Presentation

9. Executive Session:

G. Vine moves to go into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and to adjourn from Executive Session. Seconded by L. Murphy. Vote is unanimous.

10. Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned from Executive Session.

Respectfully Submitted: Liz Latoria
Liz Latoria, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Documents Attached: None