

## AUBURN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

School Committee Meeting of Wednesday, June 23, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.

Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/98636875620?pwd=MVFpT1FQdFZOWVBFbjZVTjRLcXVTdz09>

### **In attendance:**

George Scobie  
Jessie Harrington  
Gail Holloway  
Dottie Kauffman  
Meghan McCrillis

Maryellen Brunelle  
Beth Chamberland  
Cecelia Wirzbicki  
Casey Handfield (joined at 1:30 p.m.)

**Call to order:** Checking that everyone was in attendance (via Zoom); Mr. Scobie called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

### **MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:**

#### **June 3, 10 and 16, 2020**

Mrs. Holloway made a motion to approve the Minutes; Mrs. Kauffman seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken:

*Roll call vote: Dr. McCrillis - Yes; Mrs. Kauffman - Yes; Mrs. Holloway - Yes; Mrs. Harrington - Yes; Mr. Scobie - Yes;*

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S MEMO:**

#### **Out of State Field Trips**

Dr. Brunelle shared that due to the uncertainty of when school will resume and in what fashion, the decision has been made to hold off on bringing forward any out-of-state field trip requests at this time. She noted that once more information is available, Dr. Handfield will determine when it is best to do so.

#### **Class of 1965 Donation to Class of 2020**

Dr. Brunelle shared that the Class of 1965's 55<sup>th</sup> Reunion has been cancelled due to the pandemic and knowing what the Class of 2020 is missing with the early closure of schools and lack of graduation exercises, they have donated their payments to their reunion instead to the Class of 2020 in the hope that some activity or reunion can be planned. The amount of the donation is \$2,020.

Mrs. Holloway, stating that she was part of the Class of 1965, made a motion to accept the generous donation of \$2,020 from the Class of 1965 on behalf of the Class of 2020; Dr. McCrillis seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken:

*Roll call vote: Dr. McCrillis - Yes; Mrs. Kauffman - Yes; Mrs. Harrington - Yes; Mrs. Holloway - Yes; Mr. Scobie - Yes;*

#### **Citizens' Comments: Presentation from Safety Team**

The Safety Team was in attendance to officially thank Dr. Brunelle for her service to the Auburn Public Schools and Auburn community. They presented her with a plaque, flowers and a card to commemorate the occasion.

#### **Coco's Tropical Ice Donation to Class of 2020**

Dr. Brunelle shared that Coco's Tropical Ice donated a coupon for a free flavored ice to all Class of 2020 graduates as they dropped off their iPads. This donation was worth approximately \$150.

Mrs. Holloway made a motion to accept the donation of free ices for all graduating seniors when they dropped off their iPads; Dr. McCrillis seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken:

*Roll call vote: Dr. McCrillis - Yes; Mrs. Kauffman - Yes; Mrs. Holloway - Yes; Mrs. Harrington - Yes; Mr. Scobie - Yes;*

**Auburn Jr. Woman’s Club Donation to Class of 2020**

Dr. Brunelle shared that Auburn Junior Woman’s Club made a donation in the amount of \$254 to the Class of 2020 to cover the cost of the class DVD and masks and it was her recommendation that the Committee accept this donation with gratitude.

Dr. McCrillis made a motion to accept with gratitude the donation in the amount of \$254 from Auburn Junior Woman’s Club; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken:

*Roll call vote: Dr. McCrillis - Yes; Mrs. Kauffman - Yes; Mrs. Holloway; Mrs. Harrington - Yes; Mr. Scobie - Yes;*

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**FY 2021 Budget Reduction Scenarios**

Dr. Brunelle provided a copy of the budget reduction scenarios drawn up by the Leadership Team. She noted that until budget numbers are known, these are just potential cuts. The furlough days may be needed but Dr. Brunelle is hopeful that the potential salary freeze may not be needed. She stated that she sincerely hopes that Tier 3 is not needed. The state has always placed a high premium on education and hopefully that remains the case here. Dr. Brunelle encouraged the Committee not to vote on these reduction scenarios until actual budget numbers are in hand, with Dr. Handfield bringing it back to them later this summer.

Dr. Brunelle addressed some specific questions from the Committee: System-wide travel was able to be eliminated as it was part of her contract, but is not needed moving forward; potentially eliminating concurrent enrollment is due to the fact during this current school year no money was used for this at all and overall it has been very sparsely used; and to cover the IAs who will not be returning, a deep analysis was done as needs change each year and Dr. Chamberland feels very confident that the children will get the level of care needed in the new school year.

The Chair thanked the Leadership Team for leveling out the budget (if needed) and he agreed that the Committee should wait to vote on it when the time is right.

Mrs. Harrington noted that while Dr. Brunelle is leaving, she stepped up to make sure the District would be alright despite the grim budget forecast.

**Reminder of Next School Committee Meeting**

Dr. Brunelle reminded the Committee that the first School Committee meeting of the 2020-2021 school year was scheduled for Wednesday, July 8<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. via Zoom.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**MASC Resolutions on COVID-19 Expenses and Response to Social, Emotional & Social Justice in our Communities**

Dr. Brunelle provided two resolutions from MASC that all School Committees were being asked to vote in favor of: the resolutions address a) funding for the expenses related to COVID-19 including supplies and equipment needed to help schools reopen safely that originated with some of our CT Valley school committees and b) the response to issues of racism, equity, and diversity that have moved to center stage as the result of the events across the country during the past few weeks as developed by Denise

Hurst, MASC Vice President and former Chair of the Minority Caucus, and Jake Oliveira, MASC Past President and Member of Directors of the National School Boards Association Board of Directors.

Dr. Brunelle noted that because of the urgency and timeliness of both issues, MASC was encouraging districts to consider them locally and respond by forwarding them to:

- Governor Baker,
- Education Secretary Peyser,
- Your State Senator and Representative,
- Senate President Karen Spilka,
- House Speaker Robert DeLeo,

and that Committees do so immediately during this fiscal and public health crisis and the call for social and economic equity.

Dr. McCrillis made a motion to support the MASC resolution, COVID-19 STATE FUNDING, and forward it to those individuals stated above; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken:

*Roll call vote: Dr. McCrillis - Yes; Mrs. Kauffman - Yes; Mrs. Holloway - Yes; Mrs. Harrington - Yes; Mr. Scobie - Yes;*

Dr. McCrillis made a motion to support the MASC resolution, titled, SCHOOL COMMITTEE ANTI-RACISM RESOLUTION, and forward it to those individuals stated above; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken:

*Roll call vote: Dr. McCrillis - Yes; Mrs. Kauffman - Yes; Mrs. Holloway - Yes; Mrs. Harrington - Yes; Mr. Scobie - Yes;*

### **TEACHING/LEARNING REPORT:**

#### **APS Return to School Team Update**

Dr. Chamberland reported that the Return to School Team has been working together to determine meaningful questions to be used in a survey for all families regarding their feelings about their child(ren) returning to school in the fall. All team members have had an opportunity to contribute their thoughts and ideas. The draft survey was shared with the Return to School team at their most recent meeting on Monday, June 22nd. Dr. Chamberland noted that once updates to the survey are completed, it will be shared electronically with families. The Team is hoping to get a robust response to the questions, with secretaries reaching out to families who do not respond electronically so that they can have a clear understanding of the thoughts of our community.

#### **Remote Learning Surveys Update**

Dr. Chamberland noted that as shared previously, the responses from families regarding remote learning were overwhelmingly positive. The primary theme from the comments provided were focused on the idea that students learn best when they are in school but given that was not an option, families were pleased with remote learning. On average, across the district 85% of the families responded positively toward the following choices: students were engaged and interested, there was a good variety of assignments and activities, students learned new material, students maintained previously learned content and the social emotional well being of students was supported. Likewise, across the district, 82% of families responded positively to the remote learning platform that was used at the school their child attends. Areas for improvement noted as patterns in the comments provided by families include increased face to face time with teachers and consistent use of the learning platform across each school.

Dr. Chamberland reported that a staff survey was also conducted on their experience with remote learning. Staff also shared they felt students learned best when in school. Consistent between family and staff responses, 86% of staff across the district believes the remote learning platform they used was effective with students. Staff also indicated that during remote learning students learned new skills and

maintained previously learned skills, over 50% of staff believe they would benefit from additional professional development for either Google Classroom or Schoology as well as training on strategies to engage students in the remote learning environment. Dr. Chamberland noted that she hopes to be able to provide that training from within before the school year begins.

Dr. McCrillis shared that she could not say enough about the teachers going from classroom teachers to virtual teaching in a week. Mr. Scobie added that right across the District it was a great effort and he thanked all of the leadership and all of the teachers.

### **BUSINESS/FINANCIAL REPORT:**

#### **Year to Date Budget Report**

Mrs. Wirzbicki provided a year to date budget report as of June 19, 2020; there were no questions.

#### **Omnibus Transfers #5**

Mrs. Wirzbicki provided Omnibus Transfers for the Committee's information.

Prior to exiting to Executive Session, Mr. Scobie noted that he publicly wanted to officially say goodbye to Dr. Brunelle and to let her know that her service had been greatly appreciated across the District. It had been a special time and he wanted to acknowledge that, but this was it...Sayonara for Dr. Brunelle. She was thanked so much for her service.

One member stated that if Auburn gave out a Key to the City, Dr. Brunelle should have been given one!

Another noted that she made it look easy but nobody has any idea how much it takes to get it done.

Dr. Handfield stated that Dr. Brunelle had done a wonderful job and her administrative team...she has led the District and has been a coach and a mentor and a friend and to remember that she is only a phone call away. He also noted that he was very proud to succeed her.

Mrs. Harrington thanked Dr. Brunelle so much for all she has done stating that she has learned so much including not to carry around other people's monkeys. She was just amazing Mrs. Harrington wished her all the happiness and travel and all that she wanted out of retirement.

The Committee welcomed Dr. Handfield.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

At 1:38 p.m., Mrs. Holloway made a motion per MGL Chapter 30, Section 21(a) (3) to discuss strategy with respect to litigation if any open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares; Mrs. Harrington seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken:

*Roll call vote:*

*Dr. McCrillis - Yes; Mrs. Kauffman - Yes; Mrs. Holloway - Yes; Mrs. Harrington - Yes; Mr. Scobie - Yes;*

Respectfully submitted,

Ailaine Zautner  
Recording Secretary

#### **Referenced Documents:**

Minutes of June 3/10/16 SC Meetings  
Budget Reduction Scenarios  
MASC Resolutions  
Year to Date Budget 6/19/2020  
Omnibus Transfers #5

