

Gardner School Committee

Regular Meeting – February 14, 2022

City Council Chambers, 95 Pleasant Street, Gardner, Massachusetts

Members present: Mayor Michael Nicholson, Chairperson
Jennifer Pelavin, Vice Chairperson
John LaFreniere, Finance Officer
Rachel Cormier, Secretary
Anne Hurst
Shannon Leighton
Robert Swartz

School Personnel present: Dr. Mark J. Pellegrino, Superintendent
Terri Hillman, Recording Secretary
Mark Hawke, Director of Finance and Operations
Dr. Catherine A. Goguen, Chief Academic Officer
Ms. Joyce West, Director of Pupil Personnel
Gino DiVito, Student Representative to the School Committee
Ms. Paula Bolger, Principal, Gardner High School
Mr. Peter McMorro, Principal, Gardner Academy
Mr. Arthur Murphy, Principal, Gardner Middle School
Ms. Alexandra Mabardy, Instructional Technology Teacher, GHS

Call to Order

Mayor Nicholson, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. The meeting opened with a roll call and the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was broadcast live on Channel 8 (Gardner Educational Television Station).

Open Time for the General Public

There was no one from the General Public present at the meeting.

Recognitions by the Superintendent

Dr. Pellegrino recognized Ms. Alexandra Mabardy, Instructional Technology Teacher at Gardner High School, for the exceptional work she is doing for and with the students as Media Specialist in the Library. Ms. Mabardy spoke to the Committee regarding upcoming programs and student clubs which she is planning.

Dr. Pellegrino recognized the companies, organizations, and individuals who contributed to provide a happy holiday season for many students and families in need.

Mayor Nicholson asked if there were any objections to taking Item #3375 – School Improvement Plans (GHS, GA, and GMS) and Item #3376 – 2022-2023 Gardner High School Program of Studies out of order. There were no objections.

Item #3375 – School Improvement Plans (GHS, GA, and GMS)

The following Principals presented their School Improvement Plans for 2021-2024:

- Ms. Paula Bolger, Principal, Gardner High School
- Mr. Peter McMorrow, Principal, Gardner Academy
- Mr. Arthur Murphy, Principal, Gardner Middle School

Each School Improvement Plan outlined the School Mission, the Core Values and the Vision.

The Principals presented the Strategic Objectives for their schools:

- Academic
- Behavioral
- Social Emotional Learning
- Collaboration with Families and Community Partners

The action steps to support the staff and teachers to achieve these objectives were also presented.

Item #3376 – Gardner High School Program of Studies

Ms. Paula Bolger, Principal, Gardner High School, presented the Gardner High School Program of Studies for School Year 2022-2023. After interviewing students as to what they want to gain out of their education, some changes are included in the Program. Starting with the Class of 2024, all students will be required to take the Financial Literacy course.

Consent Agenda

Mr. LaFreniere moved that the District School Committee vote to approve the Consent Agenda as presented:

- **Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting of January 4, 2022**
- **Approval of the following Warrants as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee:**
 - **Warrant #22-28 dated 01/06/22 in the amount of \$33,357.87**
 - **Warrant #22-29 dated 01/13/22 in the amount of \$89,391.55**
 - **Warrant #22-30 dated 01/20/22 in the amount of \$198,555.87**
 - **Warrant #22-31 dated 01/27/22 in the amount of \$402,316.58**
 - **Warrant #22-33 dated 02/10/22 in the amount of \$3,285,748.71**

Seconded by Mr. Swartz.

Vote – so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Facilities Subcommittee

Mr. Swartz, Chairperson, said that the Facilities Subcommittee met on January 18, 2022. Minutes of the meeting were presented. The Subcommittee met at the Gardner Middle School and the Subcommittee toured the building and noted the cleanliness.

Mr. Anderson, Facilities Director, explained about the billing from Modern Pest Services. This service is required under the Integrated Pest Management Plan per the Board of Health. To date there have been no findings in any of the schools.

Mr. Anderson presented a list of upcoming projects with buildings, project descriptions, contractors, and comments noted. This list was presented to the full School Committee.

The Moura's Cleaning Services contract completes on June 30, 2022. The City is in the process of another procurement. The district has been pleased with the work of Moura's Cleaning Services.

Finance Subcommittee

Mr. LaFreniere, Chairperson, said that the Finance Subcommittee met on January 3, 2022 and February 7, 2022. Minutes of both meetings were presented.

On January 3, 2022, the Subcommittee reviewed the Expense Report and Mr. Hawke, Director of Finance & Operations, answered questions concerning several accounts. He also gave an update on some of the major ongoing projects.

The Subcommittee reviewed the Expense Report at the February 7, 2022 meeting. Mr. Hawke explained the issues creating negatives in several accounts. He also gave an update on some of the major ongoing projects.

The Subcommittee discussed the timeline and process going forward to prepare the budget.

Transportation Subcommittee

Mrs. Pelavin, Chairperson, said that the Transportation Subcommittee met on January 20, 2022. Minutes of the meeting were presented.

The first matter before the Subcommittee was the current transportation/bussing overview. Mr. Hawke explained things have been going well with transportation except for an issue with Bus 5 which has been corrected.

The second matter before the Subcommittee was transportation for the new elementary school opening in the Fall of 2022. More ridership is expected and an additional bus will be needed. Special Education transportation was discussed and noted that another bus will be needed for that ridership as they are almost at capacity. Mr. Hawke noted that a request regarding busses has been submitted to Mayor Nicholson's office for budget planning.

The Subcommittee discussed starting times for the schools and a decision must be made by April.

STUDENT ADVISORY MEMBER

Gino DiVito, GHS Student Representative to the School Committee, reported on GHS student activities during the month of January.

NEW BUSINESS

Item #3373 – First Reading of Policies

Mrs. Hurst presented the following policies for a first reading as recommended by the Policy Subcommittee:

- Policy DA Fiscal Management Goals
- Policy DB Annual Budget
- Policy DD Grants, Proposals, and Special Projects
- Policy DIE Audits
- Policy DJ Purchasing

Item #3374 – COVID-19 Update

Dr. Pellegrino reported that presently there are 10 positive cases – 4 staff and 6 students. Staff and students have received self-testing kits for use at home. The State will not require masks as of February 28, 2022. Dr. Pellegrino will make the decision for the Gardner schools as empowered by the School Committee.

Item #3377 – 2022-2023 School Choice Acceptance

Mr. LaFreniere moved that the District School Committee vote to approve acceptance of students under School Choice for the 2022-2023 School Year.

Seconded by Mrs. Pelavin.

Vote – so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Item #3378 – 2022-2023 School Committee Schedule of Meetings

Mr. LaFreniere moved that the District School Committee vote to approve the September 2022 to June 2023 schedule of School Committee meetings as presented.

Seconded by Mrs. Cormier.

Vote – so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Item #3379 – 2022-2023 Annual School Calendar

Dr. Goguen presented two options for the Gardner Public School District 2022-2023 School Calendar. She conducted a survey on Google form and the results of the survey were - 265 parents/guardians and 180 staff members voting in favor of Option #1.

Mrs. Hurst moved that the District School Committee vote to approve Option #1 of the 2022-2023 School Calendar as presented with August 29, 2022 being the first day of school for students.

Seconded by Mr. Swartz.

Vote – so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Item #3380 - Curriculum Coordinator's Update

The Curriculum Coordinator's Update was included in the members' packets. Dr. Goguen was present to answer questions.

Item #3381 – Grants Administrator's Update

The Grants, Communications & Compliance Update was included in the members' packets. Mrs. Dunn was not present this evening.

Item #3382 – Special Education Update

The Special Education Update was included in the members' packets. Ms. Joyce West was present to answer questions.

Item #3383 – SEPAC Update

Mrs. Hurst distributed copies of the Massachusetts State Law regarding Special Education Parent Advisory Councils (SEPAC's). Mrs. Katie Abbott, Chairperson of the SEPAC, has resigned due to her educational work for her Master's degree. Volunteers are needed to continue the work of the parent advisory council on special education.

Item #3384 – MSBA – New School Building Project

Dr. Pellegrino reported that construction of the building is on schedule and on budget.

COMMUNICATIONS

Dr. Pellegrino thanked Katie Abbott for her work on SEPAC – she has done a phenomenal job. He congratulated the GHS Hockey Team – they are in the playoffs this week. He thanked all the School Principals for doing a phenomenal job supporting staff and students.

FINAL COMMENTS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mrs. Leighton attended PTO meetings and is excited about the new school building.

Mrs. Hurst spoke about the positivity in the school system and commended everyone for all they do.

Mrs. Pelavin mentioned that all plans for the schools are starting to come together. She appreciates all the reports being presented to the School Committee.

Gino DiVito is looking at all the advances being made in the schools.

Mr. Swartz thanked all the School Nurses who are working hard to keep staff and students healthy.

Mr. LaFreniere thanked the principals and staff for all their reports to the School Committee.

Mrs. Cormier acknowledged Mrs. Abbott for her work on SEPAC and Ms. Mabardy for her work with students in the GHS Library.

Mayor Nicholson reported that \$100,000 will be distributed to the schools from the Rockwell Fund and he thanked the teachers who put in applications.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. LaFreniere moved to adjourn.

Seconded by Mrs. Pelavin.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Vote – so voted.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.