

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION
OF THE MALDEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Monday, January 10, 2022
Virtual Meeting

Mayor Christenson called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Mayor Christenson read the protocols in accordance with the format used for the meeting as follows: “In accordance with Governor Baker’s March 12th, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 30A, § 18, as well as the Governor’s August 23rd and December 8th, 2020 revised guidance prohibiting assemblage of more than 25 people, this meeting will be conducted via remote participation. In-person attendance by members of the public is prohibited, but all effort will be made to permit public attendance of this meeting via remote access by internet, telephone and public broadcast by MATV/Urban Media Arts on public access television channels. Public access will also be provided by posting draft minutes and/or transcript recording or record of the meeting on the City of Malden website at cityofmalden.org as soon as practicable after this meeting.”

Mayor Christenson led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence for those who have served our country and for those who continue to do so.

Roll Call

The following attendance was taken:

Mayor Christenson	Present
Mr. Drummey	Absent
Mr. McCarthy	Present
Ms. Spadafora	Present
Ms. Macklin	Present
Mr. Weldai	Present
Mr. Gray	Present
Mr. Bernard	Present
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg	Present
Superintendent Noriega-Murphy	Present
Student Representative Jean	Absent
Clerk	Present

Mr. Weldai provided details about joining the language access channels for the meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Mayor Christenson brought forth the matter of the approval of minutes for the December 6th, 2021 Regular Session of the School Committee. Ms. Spadafora made the motion to approve the minutes. Mr. McCarthy seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Christenson brought forth the matter of the approval of minutes for the January 3rd, 2022 Special Session of the School Committee. Mr. Weldai made the motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Bernard seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Ms. Kristina Diggin, Forestdale School Nurse

Ms. Diggin said that the Malden Public Schools (MPS) have been in the forefront caring for the students and staff by taking on new roles since the pandemic started in March 2020. The nurses are frustrated, tired and overwhelmed with carrying out the additional duties which often require working extra hours before and after-school as well as weekends without additional compensation. Ms. Diggins continued that nurses are sometimes disrespected by parents for being the bearer of bad news and that the nurses lack support from the Superintendent. Ms. Diggins mentioned that the Director of Nursing, Ms. Tramondozi has been covering for nurses who are out sick or on vacation. Due to all the additional duties that nurses have taken on, important screenings for students have not been provided. Ms. Diggin said that the nurses need support and help now although job postings for additional help have been made.

Ms. Jessica Gold Boots, Malden Education Association Vice-President

Ms. Gold Boots urged the School Committee to take steps to meet the urgent health and safety demands brought on by the surge of COVID-19 cases. Ms. Gold Boots continued that the staffing levels are currently low and help is needed. Staff including nurses are over-worked and overwhelmed. Even students are affected and stressed by the on-going pandemic. Ms. Gold Boots offered suggestions including; pool testing to be opt-out and not opt-in to increase participation; providing medical grade surgical masks to staff and students; prepare multi-lingual communication regarding the frequently changing CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) guidelines and urge the Department of Public Health to do the same; having virtual caregiver conferences; and use ESSER funding to help with efforts. Ms. Gold Boots called for the Malden School Committee to hold the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the Offices of Commissioner Jeffrey C. Riley and Governor Baker accountable in ensuring that schools continue to be safe and healthy places for children. Ms. Gold Boots said that all need to work together as a united team to show the leadership students and families deserve.

Juliana Davidson, Senior at Malden High School

Juliana said that based on a survey that she had initiated to fellow students, 45.9% of the 490 students who responded fully supported remote learning. Juliana also said that there are high student and teacher absences. The results were sent to Commissioner Riley, Board of Education and the Board of Health. Juliana requested the Malden School Committee to make student voices heard and share the message with DESE as well as the governor as it is not safe or healthy to continue this way.

Ms. Penny Kalman, Salemwood Teacher

Ms. Kalman spoke about the Director of Humanities, Mr. Hurley leaving his position in the district and the loss to the district as Mr. Hurley's leadership provided support for many teachers. Ms. Kalman asked for a plan to fill 75 vacancies as well as attract and retain teachers. Ms. Kalman also mentioned about class sizes being too large at the Salemwood School in comparison to other schools in the district. Ms. Kalman requested a follow-up meeting that was promised to discuss what happened on the first day of school at the Salemwood School, as well as training. Ms. Kalman added that the additional tutors that were promised on August 21, 2022 would be helpful as there are a number of students who have missed more than 20 days of school due to COVID-19.

Ms. Rebecca Griffith, Malden High School Teacher

Ms. Griffith spoke in support of the school nurses and the challenges they are facing. Ms. Griffith said that the nurses need more healthcare professionals to support their work. Ms. Griffith requested more effort in recruiting for these jobs.

Superintendent's Report

1. District Updates and Highlights

Superintendent Noriega-Murphy apologized and acknowledged the work of the nurses as well as the Director of Nursing, Ms. Patricia Tramondozzi. Superintendent Noriega-Murphy proceeded to provide updates and highlights on: enrollment; attendance; steps taken to prepare for the extreme cold day on Tuesday, generous donation of winter hats from City Councillor Amanda Linehan; new School Committee members; School Councils; Student Governments and Student Council representatives; distribution of test kits to students and staff; KN-95 masks distribution to staff; events at schools during winter; lunch room accommodations following safety protocols; having family liaisons help nurses; extension of ACCESS testing period until March; as well as a reminder that there will be no mid-year and end-year exams at schools this year. Superintendent Noriega-Murphy also mentioned that the City Fire and Police Departments were keeping her updated on the welfare of families and students at an apartment building where a fire was raging during the time of the meeting.

Superintendent Noriega-Murphy called upon Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Pam MacDonald; District Family Counselor, Ms. Kristy Magras; Guidance Director, Ms. Erin Craven; Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Laryssa Doherty; Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Emilys Pena; Literacy and Title I Director, Ms. Victoria Mulkern; STEM Director, Dr. Doug Dias; and Athletics, Health and Wellness Director, Mr. Charlie Conefrey to provide further updates in other areas.

In response to Ms. Spadafora, Ms. Magras said that the number of homeless students is usually around 100 or 110 every year. Last year, the numbers were slightly lower because identification of students was hampered with remote schooling. In response to another question, Assistant Superintendent MacDonald said that the district will continue to fund an Out-Of-District student's placement even if they become homeless. If the student finds permanent living arrangements outside of Malden, the school district will work with the new district on transitioning the student.

Ms. Spadafora suggested that the test & stay option could be promoted during vaccine clinics. Assistant Superintendent MacDonald said vaccinated students who are identified as a close contact do not need to sign up for the test & stay option in order to continue attending school. Assistant Superintendent MacDonald said that the district is encouraging more caregivers to sign-up their students for pool testing using the online link or with paper forms. Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said that the district is looking to work with faith based organizations to help spread the message to encourage caregivers to sign-up their students for pool testing. Assistant Superintendent MacDonald said that pool testing is done by an outside agency and that they are working on making it more efficient so that fewer retests would be needed to identify who

tested positive. Mr. Weldai expressed interest in hearing more information during future meetings about the scheduling work done for each subject in the K-8 schools around time on learning.

Subcommittee Reports

1. Subcommittee Assignments – Mayor Christenson

Mayor Christenson and Ms. Spadafora announced the subcommittee assignments.

Motions and Resolutions

1. Donation from Lueders Environmental, Inc. – Mr. Weldai

Mr. Weldai requested a motion to accept the donation from Lueders Environmental Inc.

Mr. Bernard made the motion to accept the donation of \$75.00 from Lueders Environmental Inc. Mr. McCarthy seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Kindergarten Enrollment Cut-Off Date – Mr. Weldai

Mr. Weldai made the motion to refer the kindergarten enrollment cut-off date to the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee. Ms. Spadafora seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Residency Policy – Mr. Weldai

Mr. Weldai said the changes proposed in the residency policy refer to the necessary documents needed to determine residency in order to enroll a student.

Mr. Weldai made a motion to approve only the section in the policy regarding the documentation needed to establish residency so that it can be included in the registration booklets that need to be printed soon. Ms. Spadafora seconded for the purposes of discussion.

Ms. Spadafora said the policy had been previously referred to the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee but that the committee has not met yet to discuss any changes. Mr. Bernard agreed that the matter needs to be discussed by the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee.

Mayor Christenson said that it was the requirement for an affidavit that was the issue. Mr. Weldai said timing is also an issue because the registration booklets are about to be printed and an updated residency documentation list needs to be included. Assistant Superintendent Doherty said that the areas identified in the process for registration that has become challenging for residents is the residency policy. Assistant Superintendent Doherty added that there might be a delay in the printing of the booklets if the changes cannot be approved in a timely manner.

Ms. Spadafora said that the policy needs to be reviewed by the subcommittee to ensure that other changes that might be needed are highlighted. Ms. Spadafora added that a subcommittee meeting can be convened quickly in order to have the policy revised in a timely manner. Mayor

Christenson said that once the subcommittee has reviewed the policy, the School Committee will have a meeting to review and approve changes.

Personal Privilege

Executive Session

Ms. Spadafora made a motion to enter into Executive Session at 8:19 p.m. Mr. McCarthy seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Drummey ABSENT

Mr. McCarthy voted YES

Ms. Spadafora voted YES

Ms. Macklin voted YES

Mr. Weldai voted YES

Mr. Gray voted YES

Mr. Bernard voted YES

Ms. Rose-Zeiberg voted YES

Mayor Christenson voted YES

Motion passed with 8 votes in favor and 1 absence.

The committee reconvened to the Regular Session at 8:53 p.m.

Ms. Spadafora made the motion to approve a 2.5% cost of living increase for non-union employees: System Administration Manager, Clerical PIC Manager, Food Services Assistant Director, Communications Specialist/Building Monitor, After-School Director, Facilities Manager, Data Specialist and Admin Attendance Supervisor retroactive to July 1, 2021. Mr. McCarthy seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Ms. Spadafora made a motion to adjourn at 8:54 p.m. Mr. Bernard seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

I certify that a notice of this meeting was filed with the Clerk of the City of Malden in the manner provided under Chapter 39, Section 23A of the General Laws.



Shirley Dorai, Clerk