

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION  
OF THE MALDEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Monday, May 6, 2024

Herbert L. Jackson Council Chamber Room #106 - 215 Pleasant Street  
And Virtual Meeting

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

Mayor Christenson read the docket items for the 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	Present
Mr. McCarthy	Present
Ms. Spadafora	Present
Ms. Macklin	Present
Ms. Hortie	Present
Mr. Gray	Present
Mr. Bernard	Present
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg	Present
Superintendent Noriega-Murphy	Present
Student Representative Abel	Absent
Clerk	Present

**Approval of Minutes**

**1. Regular Session Minutes of April 1, 2024**

Mayor Christenson brought forth the matter of the adoption of minutes for the April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 Regular Session of the School Committee. Mr. Drummey made the motion to adopt the minutes. Mr. McCarthy seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

**Public Comment**

Ms. Dawn O’Toole, 130 Adams Street, Malden

Ms. O’Toole said that on February 23, 2024, the Massachusetts Scholastic Press Association recognized 12 outstanding students at its 2024 All-State High School Journalism Staff. Malden High School’s Blue and Gold, Co-Editors-in-Chief, Daniel O’Toole and Hadjar Yousfi received this honor. Ms. O’Toole added that both students attended the New England Scholastic Press Association’s Annual Spring Conference at Boston University on May 3, 2024 where they were recognized for their accomplishments. Ms. O’Toole said that as a proud parent of one of the students’ she was looking forward to both of them being celebrated somewhere district-wide, either in a newsletter or the School Committee district updates to highlight the academic achievements of our Malden Public School (MPS) students. Ms.

O'Toole said that she was not trying to diminish the athletic teams' successes but asked when academic triumphs will be held in that same esteem. Ms. O'Toole continued that she was glad to see that seven students were selected for the POSSE and QuestBridge scholarships but said that caregivers and stakeholders in Malden want to hear about all the accomplishments of all MPS students.

Ms. Bonnie Littlejohn, 127 Emerald Street, Malden

Ms. Littlejohn said there are multiple IEP (Individualized Educational Plans) violations at Malden High School (MHS). Ms. Littlejohn provided an example of a special education teacher who moved to a Team Chair position and another special education teacher replacing her in the classroom which is not communicated to caregivers. Ms. Littlejohn continued that three months later, the special education teacher who filled in the vacancy is no longer there and the position is not filled by another special education teacher. This has resulted in special education students no longer receiving services from special education teachers required by law through their IEPs. In addition, all the general education teachers who co-taught with the special education teachers have double the responsibility as their special education co-teacher is no longer there and their classes consists of general education and special education students on IEPs. Ms. Littlejohn said that she has been advocating for the special education students and general education teachers but it has been over one month and nothing has been done. Ms. Littlejohn said she has addressed this matter in the proper manner but has been told inconsistent facts. Ms. Littlejohn asked for this situation to be addressed immediately.

## **Superintendent's Report**

### **1. District Updates and Highlights**

Superintendent Noriega-Murphy thanked Ms. O'Toole and Ms. Littlejohn for their feedback stating that more attention will be paid to the details and students receive their services.

Superintendent Noriega-Murphy invited MHS seniors, Aiden Luciano and Nick Duggan, to present their student survey findings. Both students presented the data.

In response to Mr. McCarthy' question, Aiden said that bigger clubs are able to advertise their club through social media but smaller clubs place flyers throughout the building and most students do not have time to read the flyers. In response to another question, Nick said that there are many times during the day, through home room, club fair or advisory that information about clubs are publicized. In response to Ms. Rose-Zeiberg, Aiden said that most students advocated for a 5-minute break for the 80-minute class to make it more manageable.

In response to Ms. Hortie, Aiden and Nick said that students were provided about 7 courses that could be offered but that they also had the option of writing any others into the form. In response to another question from Ms. Hortie, Aiden and Nick spoke about the support services they have utilized. Ms. Hortie provided suggestions on how students can promote their clubs to increase membership. Nick agreed and added suggestions. In response to Mr. Bernard, Aiden said that since the respondents' emails were not tracked, they do not have a way of finding out why some students did not utilize the student support services. Aiden added that there was a note in the survey encouraging students to reach out if they had questions or concerns but none of the 160 respondents did so. Mr. Bernard said that if this survey is done again in the future, more questions to find out reasons why someone chose a certain option could be added. Ms. Spadafora commented that the survey only had an 8% response rate. Ms. Spadafora suggested

that reminders for the survey could be done during morning announcements. Aiden explained how the survey was administered. In response to mayor Christenson, Aiden said the Health Center was not listed as an option. Mayor Christenson and Superintendent Noriega-Murphy thanked both students for all they have done during their time at MHS.

Superintendent Noriega-Murphy provided updates on the Mental Health Month; counseling dashboard; celebrations; MHS senior events; Special Education Open Forum; Early Release Day on May 7<sup>th</sup>; summer programs; enrollment data; registration update; and special education programs.

In response to Ms. Hortie, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Ms. Pam Macdonald, explained the programs at the various schools. In response to Ms. Spadafora, Ms. Macdonald said that they are continuing their efforts in trying to get more out-of-district students back to Malden Public Schools (MPS).

**2. Student Opportunity Act (SOA) Plan 2024-2027**

Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said that the SOA is a three year plan and that it was already approved before she started in MPS. This plan for 2024-2027 is to continue to address learning gaps that resulted from the pandemic. Superintendent Noriega-Murphy provided more clarification about the plan.

In response to Mayor Christenson, Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said that if approved, most likely the district will find out before the end of June if DESE might award some funds and that there is no financial obligation from the district.

Ms. Spadafora made a motion to approve the 2024-2027 SOA Plan so that it can be sent to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Mr. McCarthy seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Superintendent Noriega-Murphy thanked the Class of 2024 to conclude her report.

**Subcommittee Reports and Discussions**

**1. Budget Subcommittee Update – Ms. Spadafora**

Ms. Spadafora said that the Budget Subcommittee met on April 8<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. The subcommittee reviewed the recommendation of the district for a balanced budget. Ms. Spadafora continued that the requested budget was \$94,745,636 and the budget that was provided totaled \$93,389,664 which resulted in a deficit of \$1.3 million. The district recommended that the current open positions be closed and the salaries be used to close the deficit. Ms. Spadafora said that some positions and contracted services were moved to be funded through a grant instead of using Chapter 70 funds which resulted in a balanced budget for 2024-2025. The proposed budget passed unanimously at the Budget Subcommittee. Ms. Spadafora said that once the budget book is prepared, there will be a budget public hearing as well as be brought to the School Committee.

**2. Superintendent Search Committee Update – Ms. Spadafora**

Ms. Spadafora acknowledged the members of the Superintendent Search Committee. Ms. Spadafora read a memo that the Superintendent Search Committee members received:

*The Malden Superintendent Search Committee met over a three-month period to prepare for the search process and conduct an initial screening of applications and interviews with candidates. A total of 14 individuals submitted complete application packages. The Search Committee invited seven candidates to interview, one of whom withdrew to accept a position in another district. Six candidates were formally interviewed. It now becomes the responsibility of the School Committee to establish the final stages of the search process that will include scheduling dates for the candidates to visit Malden, meet stakeholders and engage the School Committee in a formal public interview.*

*The Malden School Committee owes a debt of gratitude to the members of the search committee who diligently reviewed all submitted materials, prepared questions and interview the candidates before deliberating thoughtfully and thoroughly in making their recommendations. The committee voted to submit the following candidates to the School Committee for formal, public interviews.*

*They are presented in alphabetical order:*

- Brent Conway, M.Ed, Assistant Superintendent, Pentucket Regional School District
- Robin Desmond, M.Ed. (ABO), Chief Academic Officer, Lowell Public Schools
- Timothy Sippel, ED.LO, Executive Director of Schools, Worcester Public Schools
- Paul Texeira, MA, GAGS, Director of English Learners and Title III, Medford Public Schools

Ms. Spadafora, on behalf of the School Committee thanked all the members of the Superintendent Search Committee for their time, commitment and dedication to the process. The open and honest conversations that were had behind closed doors to ensure that the future leader of this district is chosen based on qualifications, skills and everything that Malden is looking for in a leader.

In response to Mr. McCarthy, Ms. Spadafora confirmed that two separate Special School Committee meetings will be held to hold two interviews on each night for the four finalists. Mr. Glenn Koocher who was invited to the podium said that the finalists would be called to visit and at the end of the day would be interviewed. Mr. Koocher said that from this point on, everything is public and none of the finalists have the expectation of confidentiality.

In response to Mayor Christenson, Ms. Spadafora said that she anticipates having the interviews and deliberation within the next two weeks. In response to Ms. Macklin, Ms. Spadafora said that she anticipates the next meetings to be around 3 hours in duration.

Ms. Macklin also asked a clarifying question if the vote would be for all four finalists together. Ms. Spadafora confirmed that the vote would be for all four finalists and Mayor Christenson explained that members always reserved the right to make any additional motion if they wanted to remove or add other candidates.

Mr. Gray acknowledged the skills as well as talents of the search committee members and thanked them.

### **3. Policy and Procedures Subcommittee – Ms. Rose-Zeiberg**

Ms. Rose-Zeiberg said that the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee met on April 29<sup>th</sup> and approved the draft minutes of March 26<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Rose-Zeiberg continued that the subcommittee reviewed the PreK-12 Program of Studies and the PreK-12 Student Handbook which includes the code of conduct, homework policy, vandalism policy and honors pathways. Ms. Rose-Zeiberg added that the subcommittee also considered reviewing the policy manual. Ms. Rose-Zeiberg said she wanted some feedback on whether to proceed to look at costs for the policy manual updating process.

In response to Ms. Spadafora, Ms. Rose-Zeiberg said that the handbook will be brought before the School Committee in June for approval. Ms. Spadafora said that the policy manual review could be discussed at a joint Budget as well as Policy and Procedures Subcommittees meeting. Mayor Christenson said that from the city perspective, the approach has been to not start something new for the upcoming fiscal year.

### **Motions and Resolutions**

#### **1. Donation from Stoneham Bank to the Class of 2024 – Ms. Spadafora**

1. Ms. Spadafora said that the Stoneham Bank has been a generous contributor to MHS for the past two years. They have donated funds to purchase yearbooks for students that experience financial barriers. They donated a welcome back lunch for staff in the fall of 2023. They have continued their generosity with a \$2,000 donation to help defray the cost of all end of the year activities for the Class of 2024. Their generosity is as boundless as our appreciation.

Ms. Spadafora made a motion to accept the \$2,000 donation from Stoneham Bank to help defray the cost of all end of the year activities for the Class of 2024. Ms. Macklin seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **2. Donation from Quincy Butter to the Linden Field Day Committee – Ms. Spadafora**

Ms. Spadafora said that this donation is from Quincy Butter, a Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) at the Linden S.T.E.A.M. Academy. Ms. Spadafora continued that Quincy wanted to do something extra special for the students and has been quite involved in Field Day each year. Quincy's partner's grandfather is 92 years old and does a bunch of independent philanthropy work. Quincy asked him if he would be able to support the school by providing a donation and he graciously said yes and wrote a check for \$500 to be used by the Linden Field Day Committee for maybe equipment upgrades or something else.

Ms. Spadafora made a motion to accept the \$500 donation for the Linden Field Day Committee. Mr. Bernard seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **3. Superintendent Search Candidate Recommendation - Ms. Spadafora**

Ms. Spadafora made the motion to accept the following four finalists for Superintendent as recommended by the Superintendent Search Committee and begin the formal public process: Brent Conway, Robin Desmond, Timothy Sippel, and Paul Texeira. Ms. Rose-Zeiberg seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Drummey voted YES

Mr. McCarthy voted YES

Ms. Spadafora voted YES  
Ms. Macklin voted YES  
Ms. Hortie voted YES  
Mr. Gray voted YES  
Mr. Bernard voted YES  
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg voted YES  
Mayor Christenson voted YES  
Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Spadafora thanked Ms. Maria Luise, Ms. Kashawna Harling and Mr. Glenn Koocher and Ms. Alicia Mallon for their contribution to the search process.

### **Personal Privilege**

### **Executive Session**

Mr. Drummey made a motion to enter into Executive Session at 7:48 p.m. Mr. Bernard seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

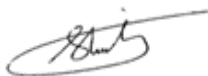
Mr. Drummey voted YES  
Mr. McCarthy voted YES  
Ms. Spadafora voted YES  
Ms. Macklin voted YES  
Ms. Hortie voted YES  
Mr. Gray voted YES  
Mr. Bernard voted YES  
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg voted YES  
Mayor Christenson voted YES  
Motion passed unanimously.

The committee reconvened to the Regular Session at 8:02 p.m.

### **Adjournment**

Ms. Spadafora made a motion to adjourn at 8:03 p.m. in honor of Mr. Frank Stella. Ms. Hortie 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.



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Shirley Dorai, Clerk