

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**REMOTE MEETING**  
**JUNE 29, 2020**

Present: Ms. Andrea Prestwich, Chair  
Ms. Kate Bowen, Secretary  
Ms. Amy Checkoway  
Mr. Michael Crowley  
Ms. Tara Donner  
Ms. Evelyn Gomez  
Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent  
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent  
Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Finance, Business and Operations

**1. OPENING BUSINESS**

1.1 Return from Open Session

Andrea Prestwich noted the School Committee had been in Executive Session.

1.2 Citizens' Concerns

There were no citizens' concerns.

1.3 Adjustments to the Agenda

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

1.4 Chair's Report

1.5 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Phelan reported the Class of 2020 had virtual graduation due to concerns about COVID-19. The district is hoping to have a gathering at Harris Field sometime in August to celebrate the graduates. Principal Taylor sent a survey to families asking their thoughts about a possible cruise depending on how the health issues are at the time. Each of these options must be met with approval from the Belmont Health Department and State Guidelines if they take place.

Governor Baker and Commissioner Jeff Riley sent guidelines to school districts regarding the opening of schools in September. Belmont has been working on options for the past month or so. Every district is being asked to create a feasibility study explaining how in-person school can take place. The plan is to run a range of all three options which were presented at a previous School Committee meeting. It is the district's hope that Belmont will receive level

funding or even level funding plus in order to take on the task of opening schools in the fall. There has been no DESE guidance offered related to buses yet.

Belmont Public Schools will have a dedicated area on the website to post information related to the opening of schools in September.

Superintendent Phelan and Chair Andrea Prestwich welcomed new School Committee member Evelyn Garcia Gomez. Evelyn was selected by the School Committee and Select Board to replace the seat of Susan Burgess-Cox, who resigned in April.

School Committee members asked questions related to how school might take place in the fall. The State will not have final guidance on these issues until mid August.

A suggestion was made by Tara Donner in response to community feedback to partner with community members who are involved with Safe Routes to Schools to look for ways to increase safety for students walking and biking in order to avoid adding more buses.

## **2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

No unfinished business.

## **3. MAJOR BUSINESS**

### **3.1 Rink Proposal**

Superintendent Phelan presented the timeline for the ice rink proposal in order to have the rink proposal considered at the fall Town Meeting. The group overseeing this proposal (John Phelan, Jeffery Wheeler, Amy Checkoway, Glenn Clancy, Jon Marshall) has met several times to assess it. They may want to extend the timeline.. That would give members time to meet over the summer to review it more carefully. The Committee discussed the timeline in context of other major fall plans.

### **3.2 Summer Planning for School Committee Meetings**

The School Committee discussed plans for meetings to take place over the summer. There may be a meeting of the Finance Subcommittee on July 2 at 9:00 a.m. The Financial Task Force II would like to meet with the School Committee to provide responses to questions on the presentation made at the Select Board meeting on June 28. This meeting may take place during the week of July 6 – July 10. The School Committee also has meetings planned for July 16 and August 11.

### **3.3 Federal Funding Update – Resolution**

At a previous School Committee meeting, Secretary Kate Bowen presented a resolution she had written regarding federal funding for schools. The resolution was not reviewed at that meeting due to a lack of time, so Ms. Bowen presented it again for their review.

The School Committee discussed the resolution and agreed to support it.

*On a motion offered by Michael Crowley and seconded by Tara Donner, it was **VOTED** unanimously on a roll call vote to adopt the Federal Funding Resolution.*

### 3.4 MASC Resolution

School Committee member Amy Checkoway read the resolutions suggested by Massachusetts Association of School Committees. One resolution pertains to state funding to cover additional costs related to COVID-19 during the next school year. The other resolution is a statement on anti-racism. These resolutions have been voted favorably by other school districts and Belmont is being encouraged to do so as well and then forward to Governor Baker and additional elected officials. School Committee members supported the resolution related to additional funding. Discussion took place on the anti-racism resolution with some members feeling the language was not comprehensive enough. Supt. Phelan and Asst. Supt. Darias shared some of the work being done in the district to address racism and bias. Amy Checkoway offered to help create language more specific to Belmont. Catherine Bowen noted that the resolution calls for a review of policy to address systemic racism, which the Committee supported.

The School Committee agreed to vote in favor of the anti-racism resolution in order to join surrounding communities but then work on creating a resolution more crafted to Belmont, which can be voted on later in the fall.

*On a motion offered by Amy Checkoway and seconded by Tara Donner, it was **VOTED** unanimously on a roll call vote to approve the Resolution on COVID-19 Expenses.*

*On a motion offered by Michael Crowley and seconded by Catherine Bowen, it was **VOTED** unanimously on a roll call vote to approve the Resolution on the Response to Social, Economic and Racial Justice in Our Communities.*

Superintendent Phelan and Assistant Superintendent Darias provided an overview of Culturally Responsive Teaching, which has been taking place in Belmont for the past several years.

The work in culturally responsive teaching began four years ago with a survey of the faculty, students and families. The survey indicated black/brown students did not feel as safe as other students did. Janice Darias has been leading the work on culturally responsive teaching, which helps explain implicit bias and how to interrupt patterns we have in order to create a more welcoming environment.

### 3.5 Superintendent's Evaluation

Each year the Superintendent is evaluated against goals set in the fall. This process is similar to one for administrators and educators in the district and the Commonwealth.

Superintendent Phelan provided an overview of his 2019-20 Year End Summative Evaluation including the goals listed below.

### **Goal 1: Effective Strategic Planning**

Topic: Strategic Long Term Planning on District Reconfiguration Education Plan

Superintendent Rubric:

- Standard IV Professional Culture: (A) Mission Core Values and Meetings (C) Communication, (D) Continuous Learning Staff and Administrator (E): Shared Vision Indicator

Belmont Public Schools 2019-2020 Strategic Plan:

- A. 2. Utilization of District Configuration Education Plan (DCEP) committee work to frame and organize the districts vision for teaching and learning, culture, and new school groupings.

Belmont School Committee 2019-2020 School Year Goals and Priorities:

- 3. Belmont Middle and High School and Related Issues
  - a. District Configuration Planning

### **Goal**

*To lead the district through the strategic planning of the grade configuration work. This work will be conducted through the actions of the Superintendent's Cabinet Team, the Leadership Council and direct work with teachers via committee and professional development opportunities.*

### **Goal 2: Effective Strategic Financial Planning**

Topic: Strategic Long Term Fiscal Planning to support the District's Financial and Educational Needs

Superintendent Rubric:

- Standard II Management and Operations (E) Fiscal Systems
- Standard III Family and Community Engagement (A) Engagement Community and Stakeholders
- Standard IV Professional Culture (C) Communication

Belmont Public Schools 2019-20 Strategic Plan:

- B. 2. Work Collaboratively to identify the ongoing and future fiscal needs of the district to support the advocacy of an override for the FY21 budget process
- B. 3. Continue to work with Town officials to develop short and long term plans to support the fiscal needs of all Town departments including schools.

Belmont School Committee 2019-2020 School Year Goals and Priorities:

- 1. FY21 Budget

### **Goal**

*To lead the district through the strategic fiscal planning of the next five years. This work will be conducted through the actions of the Superintendent's Cabinet Team, the Leadership Council and the direct work with Town leaders and participation on the Financial Task Force 2 Committee.*

### **Goal 3: Student Learning Goal**

Topic: Provide Career Vocational and Technical education options to Belmont students

Superintendent Rubric:

- Standard I: Instructional Leadership (B): Instructional – Meeting Diverse Needs
- Standard III: Shared Responsibility - Student and Family Support

Belmont Public Schools 2019-2020 Strategic Plan:

- A: To prepare all students for college, career, and life-long learning.

Belmont School Committee 2019-2020 School Year Goals and Priorities:

- Decisions related to career and vocational and technical education

**Goal**

*To advocate for and provide career and vocational and technical education career (CVTE) options for students in Belmont.*

Superintendent Phelan explained the key actions and benchmarks for each goal and provided an evaluation performance narrative with artifacts for each goal. The School Committee was provided with an evaluation form to complete and send to Andrea Prestwich, School Committee Chair. She will create a summary of the evaluation with comments, which will be discussed at the next School Committee meeting.

SC members offered comments and thanks to Supt Phelan for the level of detail on his evaluation.

3.6 School Opening Survey Results

Assistant Superintendent Janice Darias provided an overview of the School Opening Survey results. These results will be used to inform the ongoing work related to the opening of schools in September.

Survey questions were related to topics such as whether parents would send their children to school if schools were open for everyone, which type of opening parents preferred, (full opening, hybrid or remote learning). In the event schools have to choose a remote learning option at some point, the plan is for more synchronous learning, which parents appreciate.

The survey will be shared on the Belmont Public Schools website but will not include comments.

**4. SUBCOMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES (as needed)**

4.1 Finance Subcommittee

The Finance Subcommittee will meet on July 2 at 9:00 a.m.

4.2 Policy and Procedure Subcommittee.

There are some potential policies related to the opening of schools, which may need to be reviewed by the School Committee at a future Policy and Procedure meeting.

4.3 Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee.

There was no report from the Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee.

4.4 Capital Budget Committee

The School Committee normally has a representative on the Capital Budget Committee. Amy Checkoway offered to be the representative until the next School Committee meeting where subcommittee assignments will take place.

#### 4.5 Warrant Committee

The last meeting of the Warrant Committee was a joint meeting with the Select Board and School Committee. The group discussed the status of the Financial Task Force II. The next meeting will take place on July 1 where they will discuss budget scenarios and assumptions being considered by the Financial Task Force II.

#### 4.6 Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee

The next meeting of the Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee is in two weeks. The Design Team provided the initial infrastructure for an orchestra pit which will be decided on in the fall.

#### 4.7 Community Path Committee

The next meeting of the Community Path Committee will take place next week. Borings for the Alexander Underpass should be completed by July 16 for the public meeting that evening.

#### 4.8 Financial Task Force II

The Financial Task Force II provided a presentation to the School Committee, Select Board and Warrant Committee last week. They discussed the possibility of seeking an override next year. There is a structural gap in the use of non-recurring revenue for recurring expenses.

#### 4.9 Rink Working Group

The Rink Working Group is scheduled to meet on July 9.

### 5. OTHER BUSINESS

#### 5.1 Consent Agenda – None

#### 5.2 Personnel Items - None

#### 5.3 Business Items – None

#### 5.4 Approval of Minutes

May 26, 2020 School Committee Minutes

June 9, 2020 School Committee Minutes


*On a motion offered by Tara Donner and seconded by Michael Crowley, it was **VOTED 5-1-0** on a roll call vote to approve the minutes of May 26, 2020 and June 9, 2020.*

June 16, 2020 School Committee Minutes

*On a motion offered by Amy Checkoway and seconded by Tara Donner, it was **VOTED 4-2-0** on a roll call vote to approve the minutes of June 16, 2020.*

6. **ADJOURN**

*On a motion offered by Tara Donner and seconded by Amy Checkoway, it was **VOTED** unanimously on a roll call vote to adjourn the meeting at 5:15 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted by   
Catherine Bowen, Secretary