



Georgetown School Committee School Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 14, 2024

Meeting Minutes

51 North Street
Georgetown, MA 01833
(978) 352-5777

Approved 4-24-2024

Michael Hinchliffe, Chairman
Cheryl Lachendro, Vice Chair
Lauren King, Clerk
John Cancellara
Stacy McMaster

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Attendance:

Cheryl Lachendro
Stacy McMaster
Michael Hinchliffe
Lauren King
John Cancellara

Dr. Margaret Ferrick
Mike Cassidy

Absent: Hannah Stevens, Student Representative

Consent Agenda Call to Order: Meeting Called to Order at 6:31PM

- a. **Motion to approve Budget Hearing Meeting Minutes of 2-29-2024, School Committee Meeting Minutes of 2-29-2024, Negotiations Executive Session Meeting Minutes of 2-28-2024 & Budget & Finance Meeting Minutes of 2-1-2024 & 3-6-2024.** The School Committee made no objections. All minutes were approved as presented.

Report from the Student Representative - N/A

Public Comment:

Pursuant to Georgetown School Committee policy BEDH, public comment is limited to 3 minutes per speaker, not to exceed 15 minutes in total, and the subject matter is limited to issues within school committee authority. Comments made during the public comment

portion of the meeting do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the Georgetown School Committee.

Dr. Margo Ferrick explained that she submitted a revised budget that has added back one Math Support staff. She reviewed how she was able to reinstate the position by finding \$91,034 in the budget.

Public Comment

Joe Maribito shared why he moved to Georgetown. He feels that Dr. Ferrick is the expert, and emphasized that as a community we need to come together. He spoke about not allowing things to continue as the status quo. He asked that the School Committee vote to approve the budget and move this district forward.

Meg Johnson stated that she moved here 11 years ago with a baby and then started teaching here. She wants to disrupt the status quo, but disagrees with the manner in which it is being addressed. She spoke about students having a trusted adult at school and wondered if that one trusted adult may be on the chopping block. She stated that “We can and should be concerned about the academic data and consider the needs of the whole child”.

Nicole Carleo shared concerns for vast ambiguity of the budget, and expressed her appreciation for her children’s teachers, and the small class size.

Tim Larson invited the School Committee members to come visit staff and students at the middle school.

Nicole Gallant stated that she has a school choice older son and asked that her 4th grader be accepted as a School Choice student as well.

Michael Tortoise stated that it is not acceptable to him to lose good teachers. He is opposed to a value subtraction. “We cannot cut teachers from this budget”. He spoke about the teachers being the experts in the subject matter.

Unfinished Business

Michael Hinchliffe explained the role of the School Committee with the budget. He explained that this budget is different from the past 10 years because it was zero based. He explained that the budget was built based on the needs of the district. He explained that the town has made it hard to do what needs to be done with the proposed budget being cut by FinCom each year. Michael discussed MCAS data. Michael Hinchliffe addressed some of the concerns and comments of the community.

Dr. Ferrick stated that she believes in the budget and that it is 100% right for kids. She stated that the idea that she is causing harm is such a disconnect for how she really walks in the world. She shared that she knows it is going to work because it is modeled after Westford and Westford is the top 10 in the state. She wants an administrator in small grade bands to own the teachers, the students, the families, and the WIN blocks. She shared that a turnaround school in Boston was successful because of small “academies” that were created. She is in the classrooms and sees the unbelievable joy. She said that we need to be together because if we’re not the kids are not going to get what they need.

Cheryl Lachendro stated that our teachers are top notch and amazing professionals who are dedicated to their profession and that she has full confidence that this plan worked out with our teachers. Cheryl shared that her son’s class has had 22 or 23 students in his class every year so most teachers have experienced 22 or 23 students and she has never heard that was a problem before. She has every reason to believe that it will continue. Cheryl stated that the district is not firing teachers but that they are being laid off, but she believes that most of the teachers will have a job in the district next year.

Dr. Ferrick stated that they are very confident that 4 or less teachers need to be cut.

Stacy McMaster asked if the budget should pass tonight, will each line item exist as it does today or is it not going to stay there. Dr. Ferrick mentioned that she is willing to listen and move on some things. Stacy McMaster said that it is overwhelmingly clear that the town does not want to lose the math interventionist position. Stacy McMaster said that we all love the teachers in our district. She mentioned that she has received many emails and she has read each and every one of them.

Lauren King made a motion to reduce the AP positions at Penn Brook and the Middle School and adjust the tutors and paraprofessional lines to shift the money back into the general education teaching fund. Lauren also asked to reduce the extra paraprofessional positions and add back into the teaching fund. The motions made by Lauren were focused on line item amounts. Michael Hinchliffe mentioned that lines 4, 5 & 7 are contractual obligations. Michael Hinchliffe and Dr. Ferrick discussed the HR position salary and explained that there is also a part-time HR position 15 hours a week. Stacy McMaster seconded the motion so that the School Committee could deliberate. Stacy McMaster shared that she likes the assistant principal position for the middle school. Stacy believes that the middle school needs more direct attention from administration in her opinion. Cheryl Lachendro shared that the assistant principals in our district are going to be boots on the ground. Cheryl Lachendro believes change is necessary. Lauren King expressed her thoughts on specific line items and where she feels

money can be shifted. Stacy McMaster asked if the paraprofessional line was realistic since in the past it has been difficult to hire for these positions. Mike Cassidy believes if the positions are posted soon, he is confident the district can fill them. Michael Hinchliffe read the motion as shown above to clarify for the vote. Vote taken. Lauren King was the only member in favor. Motion failed.

John Cancellara provided feedback from the community. John spoke about the plan for modernization and improvement - John Cancellara said that he has heard good things and hopes it will help our kids. John Cancellara spoke about the Administration - he has picked up a fair amount of gratitude from the teachers and the community. People are grateful that we have excellent teachers and administration paying attention to it. There is acknowledgement and ownership of it. John Cancellara thinks that everyone is looking forward with a lot of hope and people are aware that we are on an edge here. John clarified that the words "Chopping Block" is disingenuous. He stated that we are only buying a part of the curriculum this year. We are not doing it all this year. The class size is variable already right now.

Motion to approve the FY25 Superintendent's Budget as presented with a 6.32% increase.

Stacy McMaster moved the motion. Cheryl Lachendro seconds the motion. Vote taken. Michael Hinchliffe, Cheryl Lachendro, Stacy McMaster, and John Cancellara are in favor of the motion. Lauren King objects. Motion carried.

Motion to approve School Committee Policy Section B as presented. Cheryl Lachendro moved the motion. John Cancellara seconded the motion. Vote taken. Michael Hinchliffe, Cheryl Lachendro, Stacy McMaster, and John Cancellara are in favor of the motion. Lauren King did not vote.

Financial Report - Mike Cassidy

Mr. Cassidy shared the FY24 budget report as a report of progress and shared a summary of federal grants. Mr. Cassidy stated at this time there is a surplus of funds. Mike Cassidy explained that federal grant money carries over. He explained that it can be bridged with our local budget. Mike Cassidy shared information on the revolving accounts. Mike Cassidy spoke about the school supply amounts remaining will be part of the transfers in front of the School Committee tonight. Mike Cassidy also mentioned that any unfilled positions salaries will be moved as well. Mike Cassidy spoke about the reasons for the transfers ie. retirements, sick leave buybacks, long term substitute expenses and day to day substitute account (approximately 5 subs per day), and underfunded accounts, legal and maintenance fees and special education services.

Motion to approve the line item transfers in the amount of 100,604.99 as presented.

Cheryl Lachendro moved the motion. Stacy McMaster seconded the motion. Vote Taken. Michael Hinchliffe, Cheryl Lachendro, Stacy McMaster, and John Cancellara are in favor of the motion. Lauren King did not vote. Motion carried.

Subcommittee/Liaison Committee Reports

Michael Hinchliffe provided brief information on the following.:

Negotiations 2-28-2024 are still ongoing with the GEA.

Budget and Finance met to discuss the budget revisions.

Michael Hinchliffe requested a curriculum update at one of the future School Committee Meetings. *This item has been added to the April 11, 2024 meeting.*

New Business -

Mike Cassidy provided the following information on the proposed Perley Integrated Preschool tuition increase.

- Shifting to a full staffed DESE certified model
- Looking at a 5% increase in tuition
- Take a year to look at what impact that salary increase will have on our enrollment
- Dr. Ferrick says as we enter a strategic planning stage, she wonders if it makes sense for preschool to really be the academics and see if there are alternative ways to provide before and after school supervision
- Registration is currently happening - so how does that impact enrollment and the budget?
- Cheryl Lachendro wants to mention that we have changed the model back to what it was where we have DESE certified teachers
- Michael Cassidy stated that Georgetown residents are our number one priority and ideally families who can fill the 5 day spots

Motion to approve the Perley Integrated Preschool 5% tuition increase for FY25.

Cheryl Lachendro moved the motion. John Cancellara seconded the motion. Vote taken.

Michael Hinchliffe, Cheryl Lachendro, Stacy McMaster, and John Cancellara are in favor of the motion. Lauren King did not vote. Motion carried.

Mike Cassidy discussed the bus bid. Mike Cassidy explained to the School Committee that North Reading Transportation was the only company who responded to Georgetown sending out 16 bids. This will be a 3 year contract for \$1,385,100. \$382,500 for FY25 is in the budget that was approved tonight. This is an estimated cost. It is possible that there could be reductions in transportation such as athletic transports. Mike Cassidy explained that we got market adjusted to increase our fees to what some other districts are currently

paying. Michael Hinchliffe asked if it was possible to find out why other vendors are not interested in bidding for the Georgetown transportation. Mike Cassidy will look into it further. John Cancellara asked Mike Cassidy to talk to neighboring districts to see if we may be able to bid future contracts on a regional basis.

Motion to approve the Bus Bid as presented in the amount of \$1,385,100. Cheryl Lachendro moved the motion. John Cancellara seconded the motion. Vote taken. Michael Hinchliffe, Cheryl Lachendro, Stacy McMaster, and John Cancellara are in favor of the motion. Lauren King did not vote. Motion carried.

Superintendent Dr. Ferrick made a recommendation to open 10 slots in 7, 9, and 10. She provided the following information on anticipated enrollment.

- K -
- 1 - 88 (4)
- 2 - 103 (5)
- 3 - 93 (4)
- 4 - 93 (4)
- 5 - 103 (5)
- 6 - 107 (5)
- 7 - 109
- 8 - 91
- 9 - 82
- 10 - 75
- 11 - 79
- 12 - 63

Motion to add 10 School Choice slots to grade 9 and 10 for FY25. Michael Hinchliffe seconded the motion. Vote taken. Michael Hinchliffe, Cheryl Lachendro, Stacy McMaster, and John Cancellara are in favor of the motion. Lauren King did not vote. Motion carried. The School Committee discussed revisiting this (*April 11th meeting*) and possibly adding other grades at a later date.

Dr. Margo Ferrick explained the PD days for the 2024-2025 school year as reflected on the new school calendar. She also stated the last day of school for 2024-2025 will be June 13, 2025.

Motion to approve GPS 2024-2025 school calendar as presented. Cheryl Lachendro moved the motion. Stacy McMaster seconded the motion. Vote taken. Michael Hinchliffe, Cheryl Lachendro, Stacy McMaster, and John Cancellara are in favor of the motion. Lauren King did not vote. Motion carried.

Surplus of old curriculum was tabled for more information.

There was a brief discussion regarding creating a process for GEF grants.

Motion to approve the GEF Grants as presented (below). Cheryl Lachendro moved the motion. Stacy McMaster seconded the motion. Vote taken. Michael Hinchliffe, Cheryl Lachendro, Stacy McMaster, and John Cancellara are in favor of the motion. Lauren King did not vote. Motion carried.

Bennett Pawlusiak, \$1230

Faith Connors, \$994

Brian Fanning, \$499.95

Marianne Fravel, \$2,026.76

Megan Johnson & Monica McGinnis, \$1,795

Monica McGinnis, \$1,380

Motion to move into Executive Session under the purpose of Chapter 30A §21 (a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting would hurt the committee's bargaining or litigating position and the chair so declares. *Georgetown Education Association and the chair stated the Committee would not return to public session.*

Cheryl Lachendro moved the motion. Stacy McMaster seconded the motion. Vote taken.

Roll Call Vote:

John Cancellara - Aye

Stacy McMaster - Aye

Lauren King - Aye

Cheryl Lachendro - Aye

Michael Hinchliffe - Aye

Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:02PM.

Submitted By,

Lauren King, School Committee Clerk

Tracy Parker, School Committee Secretary

Michael Hinchliffe, School Committee Chair

