

**Lenox Public Schools
School Committee
Via Remote Access
March 22, 2021 @ 6:30pm**

Join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88166224696?pwd=T3FPdjNkcFFzdi9odlV1VjdxOGdUQT09>

Passcode: 146064

MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert Munch, Christine Mauro, Anne Marie O'Brien, Frances Sorrentino, David Rimmler, Molly Elliot and Robert Vaughan

ALSO PRESENT: William Cameron, Melissa Falkowski

I. CALL TO ORDER. RV, Chair; 6:30 pm

II. HEARING OF VISITORS

- Public comment. Kristine Cass: Lenox Public Schools budget does not show the same austerity as reflected by other town departments. Hope the School Committee will not pass the 4.78% increase budget, and will work to reduce the increase to 3%.
Anthony Patella thanked all those involved for allowing the short basketball to happen safely.

III. CORRESPONDENCE. Memo from Ms. Cass & Mr. Feder, which will be addressed later in the meeting. Email from Ellen Loftus to all SC members with concerns about curriculum, specifically the poem *Howl* used in 10th grade. Hope that the district would present both sides of issues going forward. Shari Butler shared a concern that a parent was seen at one of the basketball games when other parents did not have the opportunity to attend in person.

IV. BOARD REPORT

- School Committee Meeting Minutes – February 25, 2021

MOTION by ME and seconded by FS to accept the minutes of the February 25, 2021 meeting.

RM: aye

CM: aye

AO: abstain

FS: aye

DR: aye

ME: aye

RV: aye

Approved 6-o, one abstain.

- School Committee Meeting Minutes -- March 1, 2021

MOTION by FS and seconded by DR to accept the minutes of the March 1, 2021 School Committee meeting.

RM: aye

CM: aye

AO: aye

FS: aye

DR: aye

ME: aye

RV: aye

Approved 7-0.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- LMMHS building remediation update. Taking steps to remove and abate fire retardant materials, with the potential that it contains asbestos. Remote last week, had hoped to be back in school tomorrow, but that is not the case. More and slower work than anticipated. Will be remote for the remainder of this week. Hope to occupy the building again next Tuesday, but depends on the completion of the work. State asbestos monitor has been on site twice. All air quality testing has resulted in better quality than required by the state's standard of post asbestos remediation occupancy of a facility, which is more stringent even than the OSHA standard.
- Reopening of school update. The Commissioner has demanded that all elementary schools resume instruction full time in person by April 5. Commissioner does not have right to order schools back in session, but was recently given the authority to determine what counts toward structured learning time. Parent informational meeting to be held tomorrow evening at 6:30 pm. Will also be a meeting for LMMHS families sometime next week.
- Student Opportunity Act – vote required. WC: Approval by the School Committee of the Student Opportunity Act Plan is required.

MOTION by DR and seconded by AO to approve the Lenox Public Schools Student Opportunity Act Plan. Discussion ensued regarding the components of the Lenox Public Schools plan, and previous efforts along these lines.

RM: aye

CM: aye

AO: aye

FS: aye

ME: aye

DR: aye

RV: aye

Approved 7-0.

- Pooled COVID testing for athletes. WC: Notified by Lee of a requirement for athletes in Football co-op to participate in pooled testing. Proposing that this be the case for our Fall2 and Spring sport athletes. Minimize possibility for

virus to be spread among this group of students in close contact. Several Committee members agreed this was a good idea.

- Half day and PD day upcoming for Morris. WC: Brenda Kelley is scheduling a half day on March 30 and a PD day on Thursday, April 1 to plan and prepare for return to school on April 5. Families will need to decide if their students are in person or fully remote beginning April 5 through the end of the year. There will be no opportunity to switch at a later date.

RV: We accommodated basketball and will be starting Fall2 and Spring sports soon. An acknowledgement to all athletes that we have many students for whom this year would have been their opportunity to shine as seniors. All other activities as well; theatre, art, woodworking, etc. I am sorry about that, even though there is nothing we could do about it. The public missed out on those performances as well.

VI. NEW BUSINESS. RV: Kim Dion is preparing for review and requires the School Committee approval of these documents as part of the School Committee policy book. The implementation of ESSA dictated these changes.

- Adoption of MASC Homeless policy JFABD – vote required

MOTION by RM and seconded by CM to approve the Homeless policy:

RM: aye

CM: aye

AO: aye

FS: aye

ME: aye

DR: aye

RV: aye

Approved 7-o.

- Adoption of MASC Foster Care policy JFABF – vote required

MOTION by ME and seconded by DR to approve the Foster Care policy:

RM: aye

CM: aye

AO: aye

FS: aye

ME: aye

DR: aye

RV: aye

Approved 7-o.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

VIII. PUBLIC HEARING OF SCHOOL DEPARTMENT FY22 BUDGET

[FY22 Budget Summary](#)

RV: Met with MF, WC and Chris Ketchen this morning to discuss correspondence from KC and MF. We can either vote on budget tonight as presented, vote to approve a lower

or higher number, or not vote tonight at all and hold the vote at the April 5 School Committee meeting. MF presented budget comparison to FY21 and initial FY 22 preliminary budget. RV: Discussed at length this morning with WC and MF, \$245K over the 3%, felt 1/3 of the extra % (\$80,000) could be identified to be cut. Town administration indicated more effort should be made to get closer to the 3% increase number. Discussion ensued regarding direction of budget presentation. RM: Noticeable gap between our budget and the number from the Town/Finance Committee. Need to sit down and understand the numbers, this meeting is not the place to do that. CM: Agree with regard to budget gap. We should be good stewards in regards to our budget, which is a major portion of the town budget. RV: We have been fortunate over the past years, budget has been approved all 38 years I have been here. Would be best to have the support of our Finance Committee and the Select Board and approve a budget at a lower amount. DR: Would like to say that I feel some areas of our budget are underfunded, specifically need for dedicated middle school administrator and greater funding to meet needs of students with special needs.

MOTION by RM and seconded by CM to postpone the vote on the budget to the April 5 meeting.

RM: aye

CM: aye

AO: aye

Me: aye

DR: nay

FS: aye

RV: aye

Approved 6-1.

IX. SUBCOMMITTEES

- Human Resources
- Finance
- Teaching and Learning
- School Culture and Community Relations
- Governance and Leadership
- Lee/Lenox Shared
- Southern Berkshire Educational Future
- Strategic Planning

MOTION by FS and seconded by RM to adjourn.

RM: aye

CM: aye

AO: aye

ME: aye

DR: aye

FS: aye

RV: aye

Approved 7-0.

Meeting adjourned 7:58 pm.

X. DOCUMENTS IN PACKET

- School Committee Meeting Minutes – February 25, 2021
- School Committee Meeting Minutes -- March 1, 2021
- Student Opportunity Act Plan
- MASC Homeless policy JFABD
- MASC Foster Care policy JFABF
- [FY22 Budget Book](#)
- Motion to approve budget

Submitted by *Amy Noble Novitsky*.