

Lenox Public Schools
School Committee
Via Remote Access
January 4, 2021 @ 6:30pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89696824470?pwd=RmZ6cVg3MjQ4SkxmRGM2N0h4emxYZz09>

Passcode: 702854 Webinar ID: 896 9682 4470

MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert Vaughan, Christine Mauro, Molly Elliot, Frances Sorrentino, David Rimmler, Robert Munch

MEMBERS ABSENT: Anne Marie O'Brien

ALSO PRESENT: William Cameron

I. CALL TO ORDER. RV; Chair, 6:42 pm. RV reminded everyone of the revised protocols for meetings

II. HEARING OF VISITORS

- Public comment. SC and/or WC have received a large number of communications over the last week(s). Concerns re: Reopening or opening K & 1 to full time: Tabitha Picket-Vahle, Kristen Moriarity, Alexa Bermudez, Jennifer O'Brien, Ollie Welch, Alexis and Christopher Kennedy, Elizabeth Fowler, Ashley Scherben, Christopher & Karen Fenton, Aviva Wichler, Jennifer Brinton.

III. CORRESPONDENCE

IV. BOARD REPORT

- School Committee Meeting Minutes – December 7, 2020

MOTION by CM and seconded by ME to approve School Committee Meeting Minutes of December 7, 2020.

ME: aye

CM: aye

FS: aye

DR: abstain

RM: aye

RV: aye

Approved 5-0, one abstain, one absent.

- Update on Superintendent Search. Search Committee of 13 members holding interviews, two each this Tuesday and Wednesday, and next Monday and Wednesday. Looking to select 3-4 candidates to bring to the full School Committee.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Announcement: School at LMMHS will be remote on the day the PSAT test is to be administered later this term.

- Deliberation on resumption of Athletics. WC asked that Mike Knybel, Brian Cogswell and David Pugh be able to speak to the Committee. MK: Still concerned that sports would

combine the cohorts we are keeping separate, and the equity issue, especially with travel, is still a concern as well. Vote is still to hold off on athletics. BC: Follow up on Mike's direction, a number of other schools are still waiting to see what happens after this winter vacation. Follow along Mike's path at this point. DP: Still my major concern--the safety. Working with the ADs, a lot of wait and see across the county. Concur with Mike and Brian. RV: Hopeful we could resume athletics at some point. WC and I had an impactful meeting with local health officials. Indicate schools have not been the source of spread of COVID in the local communities. Would like to support the opening of winter sports, but understand the issue of mixing cohorts.

DR inquired regarding splitting/alternating days. Max Digrigoli: As a student, the cohort system is awesome to a certain level, but the system is falling apart after school regardless of sports. Cohort argument isn't relative. Lenox athletes are a key element of the county sports leagues. Hurting other athletes outside of Lenox because of lack of competition from Lenox athletes. Athletes are responsible and respectful of teammates to stay out of practice if ill. RV: Tim Wilson, via Q&A, indicates split practice schedule could accommodate separate cohorts. WC: Agree with Mr. Digrigoli that cohorts were not designed to keep students apart, but to divide the student body to fit in to the classroom at the appropriate distancing. But travelling to and from practice/events is an issue. RM: Thanks to Dr. Cameron for clarification of the purpose for cohorts. In normal times, we need to strive for equity in all things. Equity might not be as imperative in these extraordinary times. MK: Still very important not to send mixed messages regarding equity. DP: Nordic does have club up and running, Alpine working with Otis Ridge in that capacity until Bousquet is ready to open. Really concerned about the safety of our students. RM: If Clubs are being sanctioned, why can't the school offer the opportunity? Clubs can make equity a real issue. Jim Harwood: Thanks for the opportunity to speak and to all your efforts. Is the practice-only model being considered? ME: Don't think as a public school it's our role to provide this for the students. Tom Romeo, Robert Alderton also spoke in favor of allowing Nordic and Alpine skiing to take place. ME commented on the need for carpools to get students to practice and events, and the difficulty of carpools under COVID protocols.

MOTION by RM and seconded by CM to reopen the ski seasons in whatever limited fashion is necessary in these COVID times.

DR: aye

ME: nay

CM: aye

FS: nay

RM: aye

RV: aye

Approved 4-2, one absent.

- Anticipated resumption of In Person Instruction on January 19, 2021. WC: RV and I had meeting with Ad Hoc group of medical personnel from Berkshire County. Two upshots of the discussion: 1. The discussions should continue throughout the year on some basis as long as the virus is among us 2. Since JLMC represents both our and LEA interests it would be beneficial to invite members of those groups to a joint meeting. Trend of cases of the virus is currently down (except in Lee, but particularly in Pittsfield) so hybrid instruction will resume on January 19 unless something happens prior to that date.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Update on Lower Grades Reopening Task Force. RV: Met today at 5:00, to develop a motion for consideration at tonight's School Committee meeting to fully open K-1 on January 19. During the meeting determined to push that date back to February 1 or 22, and to focus only on K and 1 and wait on 2. Lot of concern from parents in survey regarding students changing teachers after 4 months. Not something to be done lightly. Will meet again next week, to look at other options which do not include having students switch teachers. Not feasible to open K-1 to full time if a number of students would be required to switch teachers. Kristen Moriarity encouraged task force to continue to listen to teachers' concerns, and to keep the needs of the most vulnerable students in mind. DR: Vulnerable students can also be those with economic disadvantages, etc. in addition to age/grade, iep, 504s, or ELLs.

VIII. SUBCOMMITTEES

- Human Resources. Continuing with Superintendent Search.
- Finance. Will be sharing info with the Town Finance Committee soon.
- Teaching and Learning
- School Culture and Community Relations
- Governance and Leadership
- Strategic Planning. Meeting Thursday this week with the goal to present a plan to the School Committee at a meeting soon.

MOTION by ME and seconded by FS to adjourn.

ME: aye

CM: aye

DR: aye

FS: aye

RM: aye

RV: aye

Approved 6-0, one absent.

Meeting adjourned 8:09 pm.

IX. DOCUMENTS IN PACKET

- School Committee Meeting Minutes – December 7, 2020

Submitted by *Amy Noble Novitsky*.