

# Georgetown School Committee

## School Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 28, 2024

### Meeting Minutes

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

Approved 4-11-2024

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

.....  
Attendance:

Michael Hinchliffe

Cheryl Lachendro

Stacy McMaster

Lauren King

John Cancellara

Dr. Margaret Ferrick

Absent: Hannah Stevens, Student Representative

\*\*\*\*\*

1. **Call to Order: Michael Hinchliffe called the meeting to order at 6:30PM.**

2. **Consent Agenda**

**Motion to approve School Committee Meeting Minutes of 3-14-2024,**

**Executive Session Meeting Minutes of 3-14-2024 and Negotiations**

**Executive Session Meeting Minutes of 3-25-2024**

Lauren King spoke about the meeting minutes from 3-14-2024 missing information and thought they misinterpreted her motions and thoughts. Lauren King will send Tracy Parker an email clarifying her information that was stated on 3-14-2024. The meeting and the minutes will be reviewed for accuracy.

**Motion to approve Executive Session Meeting Minutes of 3-14-2024 and Negotiations**

**Executive Session Meeting Minutes of 3-25-2024.** No objections. Motion carried.

3. **Report from the Student Representative - N/A**

Steven D. Sardella and Jean Elna Tibbetts Spurr joined the meeting to request a diploma be granted for Jean Elna Tibbetts Spurr who did not receive one for the Class of 1959. Steven Sardella spoke of Jean's life experiences and her schooling records. He spoke about her attendance. He spoke about the requirements for a diploma and/or a certificate. He discussed that currently a passing grade is a D because requirements have changed over the years. He spoke

about her outstanding citizenship, the flags that she has hung on her home. He requests that she is awarded this diploma for 1959. He mentioned that this would not be of any financial value but it would bring her and her family so much happiness. He spoke about yearbooks having her pictures in the yearbooks. Steven Sardella stated that he was a history teacher.

Michael Hinchliffe stated that he has requested information from the School Committee Attorney on how to proceed since he has never had a request like this before tonight. Dr. Ferrick stated how unbelievable this is. She stated that Jean has accomplished so much and feels bad that Jean has carried this for so long, feeling this way. Dr. Ferrick spoke about past experience with a student who received a diploma at age 23. Steven Sardella spoke about his wife receiving a diploma through the Haverhill School Committee. Michael Hinchliffe stated that he will be in touch as soon as information becomes available.

### **Report of the Superintendent**

Spotlight on Excellence - N/A

#### **Report of Progress**

Dr. Ferrick explained to the School Committee that MCAS testing has begun. Many classes today were practicing MCAS during the superintendent's walkthroughs. The third round of safety drills have taken place. Penn Brook was slightly more advanced. These drills are lockdown drills and for Penn Brook also included an evacuation drill. The superintendent gave a big shout out to Taylor Ford. The superintendent stated that unification drills will be taking place at a later time. The superintendent spoke about the unification kit that cost approximately \$500 per school. She explained that Taylor Ford presented her pitch at Awesome Georgetown and was awarded \$1000 for the unification kits. The superintendent also mentioned that the Kiwanis Club has agreed to pay the rest.

The superintendent spoke about Spring sports including co-op sports. The superintendent spoke about the Curriculum Council led by Kate Donlin and Laurie Greenwood and stated that they have been working on getting the new curriculum. Wit & Wisdom has been selected for Grades K-8. Math Curriculum and Middle School Science are being selected as well.

Guilfoyle, a Public Relations Firm, has partnered with the district. News releases have been put out over the last week. Lauren King questioned if there was a yearly contract and if this was in the budget. Dr. Ferrick explained that the cost was included in line items. The superintendent stated that the Police & Fire Departments are also using Guilfoyle for public relations.

Dr. Ferrick spoke regarding the budget. Dr. Ferrick explained to the School Committee that she reinstated an ELA position at GMHS and also a math interventionist. Dr. Ferrick worked with the school principal to find the money to reinstate the ELA teacher. Cheryl Lachendro asked about electives. Dr. Ferrick explained that AP classes will not be cut. She spoke about early college offerings being looked into. Lauren King questioned Dr. Ferrick regarding the budget. Lauren stated that she is horrified that someone was let go only to be reinstated within a week. Lauren said that she believed there was already a discussion regarding Drama being part of ELA. Lauren

King is concerned that more discoveries like this may be made if errors were made in the budget. Cheryl Lachendro asked if Dr. Ferrick realized they may need this English teacher. Dr. Ferrick expressed that money was not found, other things were cut. Dr. Ferrick explained that the daily sub was cut for GMHS and membership dues and other items were cut. Lauren King expressed again that she prefers teachers over memberships for administrators. John Cancellara stated that it wasn't an (oopsiedaisy). John Cancellara stated that "they" made other cuts. Dr. Ferrick spoke about the teacher being fully aware of the discussions regarding their position.

Dr. Ferrick clarified that these moves were based on licensure and budget cuts. She explained that some teachers were not working under the correct license. She explained that "for example", a teacher may have an elementary license for Grades 1-6, but actually teaches a content area and they may not have the correct license for that, so they are being moved. Lauren King asked questions about the licensure and involuntary transfers Dr. Ferrick will get back to her on the language regarding transfers and involuntary transfers in the contract. Dr. Ferrick explained that the 22 moves had a domino effect.

John Cancellara asked why the teachers are talking to students about these moves. John Cancellara feels there needs to be an investigation. Lauren King spoke about Negotiations being at an all time low. Michael Hinchliffe asked Dr. Ferrick to look into the teachers talking to the students about the moves and layoffs. John Cancellara spoke about the emails that the School Committee is receiving from parents regarding the teacher moves. Michael Hinchliffe explained that this is an operational issue and is not managed by the School Committee but did ask the superintendent to get information and report back to the School Committee. Dr. Ferrick asked for members of the School Committee to respond to parents and ask them to reach out to the principals, and include her in the emails.

Dr. Ferrick spoke about supporting teachers. She spoke about mentor programs and about making small committees of teachers to see what teachers want. Stacy McMaster interrupted to ask questions about licensure. Dr. Ferrick explained that the district did not need to notify teachers about these moves until July 15th and explained that after the budget was approved, principals started mapping out the moves. Dr. Ferrick stated that Mike Cassidy, HR Director, met with the unions last Tuesday and informed them of the moves that were issued to staff on Friday. Lauren King stated that she believes the moves were more intense than anything she ever has seen. Lauren King stated that the School Committee passed a budget to cut 10 teachers. The other 4 members of the School Committee disagreed that they did not pass a budget to cut teachers. Lauren King stated that the budget was passed to cut 10 positions. Lauren King was asking for acknowledgement that 22 moves was a lot. Dr. Ferrick spoke about the longevity of teachers in Georgetown. Dr. Ferrick agrees that 22 moves is significant but it was necessary to save people. Michael Hinchliffe spoke about the preschool moves years back that had quite a few moves at that time. This was at the time when the district changed the preschool model. Stacy McMaster wanted to clarify that she did not vote to cut teachers or move teachers. She voted on the budget that would bring change to the district.

Dr. Ferrick spoke about the FY25 budget being approved with the override money in it. All of the town's budgets include the override money. Dr. Ferrick stated that 3% will be cut out of the school budget if the override does not pass. Dr. Ferrick stated that we all need to work together (teachers, admin, secretaries, etc.). Dr. Ferrick said that we need the override. She spoke about the disconnect. She stated that we need to agree to disagree on certain things and work together.

Dr. Ferrick talked about the four public forums for next week for those who want to learn more. These forums are for anyone who wants to come and listen and ask questions.

#### **4. Financial Report - N/A**

- a. Quarterly budget report - N/A
  - i. Local Budget - N/A
  - ii. Revolving Accounts - N/A
  - iii. Grants - N/A
- b. Line Item Transfers - N/A

#### **5. Subcommittee/Liaison Committee Reports**

Michael Hinchliffe mentioned that Negotiations met on Monday and the next meeting is April 10th.

#### **6. New Business -**

GMHS Program of Studies Updates - **Tabled until a later date**

Student Opportunity Act Plan

Margo spoke about Georgetown not getting any more money but explained that the District is still required to do a report. This report is due April 1st. Margo stated that Laurie Greenwood did a great job. This report focuses on underperforming Students and the plan for improvements.

**Motion to approve SOA as presented. Cheryl Lachendro moved the motion. John Cancellara seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.**

Crest Capital Plan 2024-2030

Dr. Ferrick spoke about the capital needs for Crest. There is no financial responsibility for Georgetown at this time. If we don't vote, it means we accept it. Michael Hinchliffe spoke about WVT getting criticized for not looking into a capital plan. Margo spoke about building repairs for Crest (sidewalks, etc). Stacy McMaster expressed that she didn't feel ready to vote. The members of the School Committee deliberated. This vote would require a 2/3rds vote among all the districts in the collaborative. This item was tabled until 4/11.

Baker Adams Timeline

Michael Hinchliffe explained that every year the School Committee gives out the Baker Adam's Scholarship. He reviewed the timeline with the members of the School Committee.

**Motion to approve the Baker Adam's Timeline as presented and to thanks Tracy for the work that she does every year for this.** Cheryl Lachendro moved the motion. John Cancellara seconded the motion. Vote taken. All in favor. Motion carried.

Approval of Agreement between GPS & the GYCC.

Michael Hinchliffe mentioned that this is an extension of an existing MOU.

**Motion to approve the agreement between the GYCC and the Georgetown School Department.** Cheryl Lachendro moved the motion. John Cancellara seconded the motion. Vote taken. All in favor. Motion carried.

Acceptance of donation from the Georgetown Music Parents in the amount of \$1500. (\$750 for Six Flags, \$400 Drama Program, \$350 buffer for donation account.)

Michael Hinchliffe explained the donation. Michael will abstain from the vote, Since he is the VP of the Georgetown Music Parents.

**Motion to accept the donation from the Georgetown Music Parents in the amount of \$1500.** John Cancellara seconded the motion. Vote taken. All in favor. Motion carried.

FY24 FC161 Grant Increase - \$15,000 to \$33781

Dr. Ferrick provided a brief summary of how the money will be used, some of which will be training for Wit & Wisdom.

**Motion to accept the FY24 FC161 Grant increased from \$15000 to \$33781.**

Cheryl Lachendro moved. John Cancellara seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Negotiations Subcommittee Reorganization

Michael Hinchliffe explained that Lauren is not running for re-election and therefore needs to be replaced for the Negotiations Subcommittee. Stacy McMaster offered to be the alternate.

**Motion to appoint Michael Hinchliffe and John Cancellara as the Negotiations Subcommittee with Stacy McMaster as the alternate.**

**Cheryl Lachendro moved the motion. John Cancellara seconded the motion. Vote taken. All in favor. Motion carried.**

There was a brief discussion regarding the Baker Adam's Scholarship presentation at graduation. The member(s) who will be off the School Committee in May are welcome to attend and participate.

There was a brief discussion about the last day of school for FY24.  
This will be determined at the April 11th meeting.

## **7. Unfinished Business**

## FY25 Budget Update

Michael Hinchliffe spoke about the last couple weeks being difficult for all those involved. He spoke about his respect for teachers. He spoke about process. He spoke about the FINCOM reducing the budget for the last 8 years. He spoke about the 3 budgets that were prepared. FINCOM approved a 6.32 increase because they believe in the superintendent's plan. Reduction of 3% would need to happen if the override does not happen. This would be over a million dollars. He stated that no one wants to see layoffs. Teachers were asked to move, but if the budget gets cut, more teachers will be cut. He spoke about the transparency that Dr. Ferrick has shown by not waiting until July 15th to let teachers know about the changes. He spoke about communications being improved for the district.

### 8. 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.*

Mike Donahue joined the School Committee to make a public comment. Michael Donahue thanked the members of the School Committee (with the exception of Lauren King) and the superintendent. He stated that they all rose above the negativity. He spoke about the Tik Tok video degrading our town and the realignment of the union. He spoke about Joe Pittella's post on facebook about teacher moves, including his own. Mike Donahue said that comments for Joe Pittella's posts are turned off. He spoke about Joe Pitella not being correctly licensed. Mike Donahue spoke about Joe Pittella's license being in elementary with an English endorsement, but not one in history or social studies. Mike Donahue stated that he is not an expert with education licenses but with the recent uproar about teacher impact and movement he asked that the administration guide the public on Joe Pittella's move. Is the move more consistent with his skill set and license rather than the public's interpretation, he asked. Mike Donahue spoke about information found on the MTA website regarding guidance about the union members wearing black and wearing union pins on the same day as parent teacher conferences and providing scripts to parents. He stated that this is another tactic to control the narrative to the public. Mike Donahue asked to challenge the union and make negotiations in public.

Lauren King stated that she does not post anything negative on social media.

### 9. Executive Session - N/A

### 10. Adjourn at 8:09. CL moved. JC second.

**Reminder - Gala tomorrow night at Black Swan**

**Respectfully Submitted By,  
Tracy Parker, School Committee Secretary**