

**GARDNER SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**Regular Meeting – April 13, 2020**  
**Zoom Meeting (due to pandemic of COVID-19)**

Members present on Zoom: Acting Mayor Elizabeth Kazinskas, Chairperson; Jennifer Pelavin, Vice Chairperson; Anne Hurst, Secretary; James Abare, Rachel Cormier, John LaFreniere, and Robert Swartz

School Personnel present on Zoom: Mark J. Pellegrino, Superintendent  
Ms. April Yu, Business Administrator  
Dr. Catherine Goguen, Chief Academic Officer  
Ms. Joyce West, Director of Pupil Personnel  
Ms. Courtney Dunn, Grants, Communications & Compliance Manager

**Call to Order**

Acting Mayor Elizabeth Kazinskas, called the meeting to order at 7 pm. The meeting opened with a roll call. The meeting was broadcast live on Channel 8 television and recorded by Terri Hillman, Recording Secretary.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**Mrs. Hurst moved that the District School Committee approve the Consent Agenda as presented:**

- **Approval of minutes of regular meeting, March 9, 2020**
- **Approval of the following Warrants as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee:**
  - **Warrant #20-37 dated 03/12/20 in the amount of \$128,652.82**
  - **Warrant #20-38 dated 03/19/20 in the amount of \$60,204.27**
  - **Warrant #20-39 dated 03/26/20 in the amount of \$266,638.97**
  - **Warrant #20-40 dated 04/02/20 in the amount of \$54,893.76**
  - **Warrant #20-41 dated 04/09/20 in the amount of \$104,823.50**

**Seconded by Mr. Swartz.**

**Vote – so voted.**

**Acting Mayor Kazinskas abstained from voting.**

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Finance Subcommittee**

Mr. LaFreniere, Chairperson, said that the Subcommittee met on April 6, 2020. Minutes of the meeting were presented.

The Subcommittee reviewed the Finance packet for March 2020. Ms. Yu will research and report back to the Subcommittee regarding encumbered total amounts. Since Schools are closed now, some encumbrances will be adjusted accordingly.

Superintendent Pellegrino gave an update on the FY21 level services budget. Due to the pandemic, the economic impact is uncertain and there is concern whether the State can keep the Student Opportunity Act for the next 7 years.

Schools have been closed since March 16, 2020 and it is uncertain when they will reopen. The District leadership team immediately lined up food services and have served 8,346 meals from March 16 to 31. On April 6 bus delivery started to nine bus stops. DESE has been very supportive of the school's efforts to service the children with meals.

Ms. Yu has been working with DESE and other business managers at MASBO on the issue of paying the bus transportation company when schools are closed. She will keep the Subcommittee updated.

**Transportation Subcommittee**

Mrs. Pelavin, Chairperson, said that the Transportation Subcommittee met on March 16, 2020. Minutes of the meeting were presented.

The team from North Reading Transportation (NRT) was present and introduced themselves. The timeline for rolling out the transportation service was discussed. As soon as the student roster is received, NRT will start working on the bus routes. Transfinder's routing software will be utilized and Gardner will purchase the same routing software.

Special Ed in-district transportation was also discussed.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Item #3126– Second Reading of Policies**

**Mrs. Hurst moved that the District School Committee approve the following policies for a second reading as recommended by the Policy Subcommittee:**

- **BEDH**            **Public Comment at School Committee Meetings**
- **BIBA**            **School Committee Conferences, Conventions, and Workshops**
- **BID**             **School Committee Compensation and Expenses**
- **KHA**             **Public Solicitation in the Schools**
- **KHB**             **Advertising in the Schools**
- **JBB**             **Educational Equity**
- **JEB**             **Entrance Age (Currently JBB)**
- **JFABE**          **Educational Opportunities for Military Children**
- **JLCA**           **Physical Education of Students**
- **JLCC**           **Communicable Diseases**
- **JLCD**           **Administering Medication to Students**

**Seconded by Mrs. Pelavin.**

**Vote – so voted.**

**Acting Mayor Kazinskas abstained from voting.**

**Item #3127 – Calendar Discussion**

Discussion took place regarding canceling the school vacation scheduled for the week of April 20, 2020. Superintendent Pellegrino presented the results of a call survey to parents/guardians and a survey to teachers. Over 1,000 parents and 93% of teachers voted to cancel the vacation and to shorten the school year by the four vacation days.

**Mr. Swartz moved that the District School Committee vote to cancel the school vacation scheduled for the week of April 20, 2020 and that the four vacation days count as school days making the end of the school year June 16, 2020.**

**Seconded by Mr. Abare.**

**Vote – so voted.**

**Attorney Kazinskas abstained from voting.**

**Item #3128 – Virtual Learning for Students**

**and**

**Item #3129 – Breakfast Lunch Program**

School Committee Members were in agreement with Superintendent Pellegrino's request to consider Items #3128 and #3129 together.

Superintendent presented a PowerPoint outlining what has been done for the students since the first day of school closing. A breakfast and lunch program was started with Whitson's stepping right up and making sure students received food. The first distribution took place at the High School. The program was later expanded to the Waterford Street School and now there are buses making food distribution at scheduled stops and times throughout Gardner to help families who do not have access to the schools.

Teachers also jumped right in and contacted high risk students and their families. The Care Coordinator was helpful in finding resources and helping the families connect with their services. Technology was provided for teachers and they are keeping students engaged. Meaningful remote learning is being provided appropriate to public education. All students are being supported and Chrome books and iPads have been distributed.

Administration is making sure students have what they need for remote learning. MCAS has been eliminated for this year but we are still doing everything possible to keep student learning moving forward.

Ms. Dunn is working to obtain any possible grants. They are outlined in her report to the School Committee.

We are working with the Teachers Union regarding what to do on Negotiations and Teachers' Evaluations.

We are moving from reactive to proactive planning during this epidemic time.

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**Item #3130- Curriculum Coordinator Update**

The Curriculum Coordinator's Update was included in the packet. Dr. Goguen was present to answer questions.

**Item #3131 - Special Education Update**

The Special Education Update was included in the packet. Ms. West was present to answer questions.

**Item #3132 – Grants, Communications & Compliance Update**

The Grants, Communications & Compliance Update was included in the packet. Ms. Dunn was present to answer questions.

**Item #3133 – MSBA – New Building Project**

The project continues to move forward and the Committee is scheduled to meet on May 20, 2020.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Superintendent Pellegrino thanked the teachers, building administrators, entire District team, the students and the community for being flexible and understanding during this crisis.

**FINAL COMMENTS**

Mr. Abare spoke about the epidemic being a course in reality for everyone.

Mrs. Hurst congratulated Superintendent on receiving his Doctorate. She thanked everyone who has pulled together to continue students' learning progress.

Mrs. Pelavin thanked all of the staff in the Gardner Public Schools for their efforts at this time. She urged everyone to fill out their 2020 Census Form as they are very important.

Mrs. Cormier was amazed at how quickly the teachers got curriculum out to students.

Mr. LaFreniere asked everyone to stay safe and follow the rules that have been put in place to help slow the epidemic.

Mr. Swartz also urged everyone to complete the 2020 Census Form. It is important to fill it out as it will be the means of receiving Federal money in the future.

Acting Mayor Kazinskas thanked everyone throughout the District for all they are doing – it is truly appreciated.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Mrs. Pelavin moved to adjourn.**

**Seconded by Mr. Swartz.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:42 pm.

**Vote – Unanimous.**

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Anne Hurst, Chairperson

**Terri Hillman, Recording Secretary**