

# **Gardner School Committee**

**Regular Meeting – May 9, 2022**

**City Council Chambers, 95 Pleasant Street, Gardner, Massachusetts**

Members present: Mayor Michael Nicholson, Chairperson  
Jennifer Pelavin, Vice Chairperson  
John LaFreniere, Finance Officer  
Anne Hurst  
Shannon Leighton  
Robert Swartz

Member absent: Rachel Cormier, Secretary

School Personnel present: Dr. Mark Pellegrino, Superintendent  
Terri Hillman, Recording Secretary  
Mark Hawke, Director of Finance and Operations  
Joyce West, Director Pupil Personnel Services

## **Call to Order**

Mayor Michael Nicholson, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7 pm. The meeting opened with a roll call and the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was broadcast live on Channel 8 (Gardner Educational Television Station).

## **Open Time for the General Public**

No one from the General Public requested to speak.

## **Recognitions by the Superintendent**

Dr. Pelligrino recognized the members of the Elm Street School Student Council. Student Council Co-Advisors, Ms. Beth Tata and Ms. Corey Tawczynski, presented certificates to those students present. Ms. Tata listed the many activities that the students took part in during the school year and how they were always so willing to help. They are incredible leaders. A group picture was taken after the ceremony.

Dr. Pelligrino recognized Ms. Beth Tata, Guidance Counselor at Elm Street School, for her 28 years of service to the Gardner School System. Beth is retiring this year and will be missed.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Mr. Swartz moved that the District School Committee vote to approve the Consent Agenda as presented:

- Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting of April 11, 2022, as recommended by the School Committee Chairperson.
- Approval of the following Warrants as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee:
  - Warrant #22-41 dated 04/07/22 in the amount of \$76,587.87
  - Warrant #22-42 dated 04/14/22 in the amount of \$184,239.37
  - Warrant #22-44 dated 04/28/22 in the amount of \$3,877,918.84

Seconded by Mrs. Leighton.

Vote – so voted.

Mayor Nicholson, Chairperson, abstained from voting.

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Facilities Subcommittee**

Mr. Swartz said that the Facilities Subcommittee met on April 14, 2022. Minutes of the meeting were presented.

Mr. Wayne Anderson, Facilities Director, presented a list of projects with updates as to progress and expected completion. Substantial completion of the new Elementary School is expected by July 15, 2022. Central Office renovations and the GALT move at Elm Street School are expected by August 2022.

**Finance Subcommittee**

Mr. LaFreniere said that the Finance Subcommittee met on May 5, 2022. Minutes of the meeting were presented.

The Subcommittee reviewed the Expense Report. Items that have negative balances will have transfers from existing funds to cover them.

Projects around the district were discussed and updates presented.

Student-staff meal pricing was discussed but it was decided to wait until the June meeting to make a decision about any increase. More information is needed.

**STUDENT ADVISORY MEMBER**

Gino DiVito, GHS Student Representative to the School Committee, was not present this evening.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Item #3406 – Second Reading of Policies**

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

- Policy DJ Purchasing
- Policy JEB Entrance Age

Seconded by Mr. Swartz.

Vote – so voted.

Mayor Nicholson, Chairperson, abstained from voting.

**Item #3407 – COVID-19 Update**

Dr. Pellegrino reported that the number of COVID-19 cases are up but it is nothing to be concerned about. Mrs. McCaffrey, District Nurse Leader, is keeping everything updated.

**Item #3408 – 2022-2023 Kindergarten Registrations and Summer School**

Dr. Pellegrino said that at present 105 students are registered for Kindergarten. Everything is ready for Summer School to begin at Waterford Street School.

**Item #3409 – Appointment to Keystone & CAPS Collaborative**

Mrs. Pelavin moved that the District School Committee vote to approve the appointment of Dr. Mark Pellegrino, Superintendent, to represent the Gardner School District on the Keystone Educational Board of Directors, and to represent the Gardner School District on the CAPS Collaborative Board of Directors.

Seconded by Mr. Swartz.

Vote – so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

**Item #3410 – Superintendent's Goals**

Dr. Pellegrino gave a quick overview of his goals which will be presented at the June School Committee meeting. His goals will include creating a culture of dignity in the schools and engaging families in their children's education.

**Item #3411 - Curriculum Coordinator's Update**

The Curriculum Coordinator's Update was included in the members' packets. Dr. Goguen was not present this evening.

**Item #3412 – Grants Administrator's Update**

The Grants, Communications & Compliance Update was included in the members' packets. Mrs. Dunn was not present this evening.

**Item #3413 – Special Education Update**

The Special Education Update was included in the members' packets. Ms. Joyce West was present this evening.

**Item #3414 – SEPAC Update**

Mrs. Hurst reported that there is still a need for a chairperson for the SEPAC

**Item #3415 – MSBA – New School Building Project**

Dr. Pellegrino reported the new school building project is on time and on budget.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Dr. Pellegrino will publish the start time for the new elementary school next week so that teachers and parents can plan.

**FINAL COMMENTS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Mrs. Leighton spoke about positive things happening in the schools. She attended the K-4 Art Gallery at WSS.

Mrs. Hurst spoke about the Guidance Counselors and their work with ESS Student Council representatives who were recognized tonight. She said that May is Mental Health Month and people should reach out to people having difficulties.

Mrs. Pelavin attended the Art Gallery and was amazed at how much work the students have done. Many parents were there and people were purchasing the art work.

Mr. Swartz plans to attend the Special Olympics. He hopes the students recognized tonight will not lose their momentum. He thanked Seaman Paper and Garlock Industries for their contributions to the junior and senior classes to put towards their prom.

Mr. LaFreniere thanked the ESS Student Council representatives who were recognized tonight for all the work they do at their school.

Mayor Nicholson thanked the ESS Student Council students for coming to the School Committee meeting. He announced the paving schedule which may affect traffic conditions. Because pricing is going up in June, the City is trying to get as much paving done as possible before that date. He thanked all the students who helped with litter cleanup this past weekend.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. LaFreniere moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Swartz.**

**Vote – so voted.**

**Mayor Nicholson, Chairperson, abstained from voting.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

---

Rachel A. Cormier  
Secretary