



### Meeting Notice

Board/Committee Name: Orange Elementary School Committee

Day/Date: January 8, 2024

Time of Meeting: 6:00PM

Location: Fisher Hill Elementary School

Media Center

59 Dexter St.

Orange, MA 01364

### MINUTES

1. Call To Order - Stephanie Conrod, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:08pm.  
Members present: Yarelyn Ramos-Martinez, Crystal Clarke, Mallory Ellis.  
Others present: Dr. Zielinski, Michele Tontodonato, Dr. Lewis, Paul Fraleigh, Phil Saisa, Bruce Scherer, Josefa Scherer, David Mastroianni and many other OES staff members.  
Minutes taken by Christine Rodriguez.
2. Pledge of Allegiance - Liam Ellis, a grade 5 student, led the pledge of allegiance.
3. Public Comment - Bruce Scherer read a letter to the committee regarding the use of facilities and his concern that community partners and organizations have not been able to use the building. He said Helene Holmes has recently been denied access to the gym for the ORA program that has run for over 40 years. Stephanie stated that the topic of building use is on the agenda and will be discussed later in the meeting.
4. Approval of Minutes - ***On a motion made by Mallory Ellis and seconded by Crystal Clarke, the committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of November 13, 2023 & December 18, 2023. Roll call taken by Stephanie Conrod.***
5. Principal's Report - Dr. Lewis reported that the pilot snack schedule for grades 4 - 6 has been going well. The winter concert was a success and next year they are looking into having two concerts in the day and two at night since attendance was so high. The penguin patch, book fair and calendar fundraisers were a success.
6. Report of the OETA - Dave Mastroianni read a statement which addressed concerns over the use of funds to hire more administrative positions over the past couple years (Social Worker, 504 Coordinator, etc.). They appreciate the working snacks for grades 4 - 6 but they have not received the tracking system and hope snack times can be moved to the afternoon. The first parent forum at Fisher Hill was held last month. A repeated concern from parents is a lack of communication on discipline issues. Parents also had concerns about what kinds of discipline are appropriate. There is also a lack of communication regarding some after school activities for parents and teachers. The HVAC system is slowly getting better but they still have some

concerns. Report cards will be distributed at the end of the month. Stephanie suggested that some of the discipline issues can be discussed with the School Council.

7. January Items

a. Spotlight in the Classroom - Leanne Lovell shared a presentation on grade 5 science and social studies. Social studies has a new curriculum, "My Wonders" and they are using the "KnowAdam" curriculum for Science. Each child has their own set of materials to do experiments. She said it is hands on and very engaging and has an online component.

b. CAPS Annual Report & Audit - These reports are on file. Dr. Liz said that the next CAPS meeting is on Wednesday.

c. Use of the building - There have been several questions about the use of the building and Dr. Liz explained that at this time they are not renting the building to outside groups since we still have a temporary occupancy permit and the town will need to vote to decommission the building use back over fully to the school department. Bruce Scherer addressed the matter of the occupancy permit and said once the permit is issued, temporary or otherwise, the building is complete. There is nothing that precludes anyone from being in the building at any time. He spoke to the building inspector as well as Marty Goulet and it is legal to be in the building. He said that we should be encouraging and supporting community activities and that the town wants Fisher Hill to be a public building. Michele stated that Mahar has been offered for all events. The Fisher Hill rental and application process and fee schedule need updating and the School Committee will be working with the Town Manager on this. The committee decided that in the meantime, the groups that are already established with the schools (ORA, OETA and VOC) can fill out the old building use form until something is created electronically and the rest of the process is updated. The Policy & Planning Subcommittee will meet in early February and can discuss the building use policy.

d. Annual Town Election reminder - Stephanie reminded everyone about the upcoming election on February 5th at Cheney St. from 7:30am - 7:30pm.

e. District Calendar - Dr. Liz reviewed the two draft calendars (on file). The committee will vote on the final calendar at their next meeting.

8. Matters for Action or Vote

a. Legal Retainer - Michele explained that the legal fee has gone up for the first time in five years but is still less expensive than paying by the hour. Dr. Liz said the district receives excellent service from our legal team. They are quick to respond and provide good advice.

**On a motion made by Crystal Clarke and seconded by Mallory Ellis, the committee voted unanimously to approve the FY25 legal retainer for the Duprere Law Firm. Roll call taken by Stephanie Conrod.**

b. Director of Special Education - Dr. Liz reported that the position of Special Education Director was posted and advertised in October 2023. A total of three applications were received for the position. The subcommittee met to review the applicants and decided to interview all three. All three candidates were called and offered the opportunity to interview. After being contacted two of the candidates declined the offer of an interview. The subcommittee moved forward with the interview of the third candidate. The subcommittee decided to move the candidate's name forward to the School Committee for approval. All three districts need to vote to approve the appointment.

**On a motion made by Mallory Ellis and seconded by Crystal Clarke, the committee voted unanimously to approve Dr. Philip Saisa for the position of Special Education Director for Orange Elementary. Roll call taken by Stephanie Conrod.**

c. Policies - Dr. Liz stated that the Communication and Policy Subcommittee continues to work through the policy manual as advised by MASC. The policies presented at the last meeting are up for a second read/vote.

i. First Read - The committee did a first read on the following policies:

EB Safety Program

EBB First Aide

EBC Emergency Plans

EBCD Emergency Closure

EC Buildings and grounds maintenance

EC-1 Regional Buildings and Grounds maintenance (will need a future vote to delete this policy) - this is covered under EC

ECA Buildings and Grounds Security

ECAF Closed Circuit Television policy and procedures

EEAA Walkers and Riders

EEAE Bus Safety Program

EFC Free and Reduced price food services

IHBG Home Schooling

ii. 2nd Read/Vote - The following policies were presented for a 2nd read/vote:

AC Nondiscrimination policy including harassment and retaliation

ACAB Sexualharrasment policy for sexual harrasment against students

BDFA School councils

BHE Electronic Communication Policy

CA Administrator Goals

CBI Evaluation of the Superintendent

CE Administrative Councils, cabinets and committees

***On a motion made by Mallory Ellis and seconded by Yarelyn Ramos-Martinez, the committee voted unanimously to approve the following School Committee policies as presented; AC, ACAB, BDFA, BHE, CA, CBI, CE. Roll call taken by Stephanie Conrod.***

9. Sub Committee / Liaison Updates

a. Report of Union #73 Committee - have not met recently.

b. Report of the R.C. Mahar Representative - Dr. Liz reported that there is no current RCM representative until the School Committee reorganizes in February or March. Mahar's meeting is this upcoming Thursday.

c. Report of the Leadership, Accountability & Measurement Subcommittee - - no meeting

d. Report of the Resources & Capacity Subcommittee - Michele reported that they met last Wednesday and there are journal entries that need approval.

***On a motion made by Crystal Clarke and seconded by Mallory Ellis, the committee voted to approve the journal entries as presented. Roll call taken by Stephanie Conrod.***

Michele distributed the initial FY25 budget (summary sheet on file). She stated that she doesn't have the whole picture and revenue numbers are coming out at the end of the month. She will be presenting the entire budget to the School Committee on February 12th. Johnna Hebert

voiced concerns about needing to cut again and mentioned the large number of administrators in the district.

- e. Report of the Communications & Policy Subcommittee - Dr. Liz reported that the sub-committee met in December and will be meeting in early February to continue working on the policy review.
- f. Report of the CES Representative - There is currently no representative. Stephanie encouraged someone on the committee to volunteer as the CES representative and advocate for this area.
- g. Report of the CAPS Representative - Dr. Liz reported that there was no December CAPS board meeting and the January meeting will be held on Wednesday.
- h. Report of the School Building Committee - no updates.
- i. Report of the SEPAC Representative - This committee has not met.

Stephanie announced that this is her last meeting and has been proud to serve all of this time. She will continue to be an advocate for OES.

10. Next Meeting - February 12, 2024

11. Executive Session - ***On a motion made by Mallory Ellis and seconded by Crystal Clarke, the committee voted unanimously to enter into executive session per M.G.L. Chapter 21(a)(3), to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with union personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with union personnel as declared by the chair, not to return to regular session but to adjourn the meeting from executive session. Roll call taken by Stephanie Conrod.***

12. Adjournment

Approved: 2/12/24

Signature of Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_

The agenda reflects topics that the Chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed.

Public Comment Protocols

The School Committee welcomes public comment on items that are within the scope of the School Committee's responsibilities. The Public Comment agenda item is reserved for this purpose. Members of the public wishing to address the Committee should be aware of the following guidelines:

- The Chair will recognize those wishing to speak and give them the floor. Only persons recognized by the Chair may speak. For purposes of the minutes, speakers should identify themselves at the beginning of their remarks.
- The purpose of Public Comment is to receive input from the community, not to engage in prolonged conversation with the Committee. The Chair will ensure that any comment or question that requires a response from the committee or the School Department will be addressed in a timely manner.
- All comments should be addressed through the Chair, not any individual committee member or to others in attendance.
- Speakers are expected to respect confidentiality. This includes the confidentiality of the speaker's own child/ren as well as that of school staff and personnel.