

**Approved MINUTES
MARLBORO SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Wednesday June 3, 2020 at 6:00 PM**

In Attendance:

Board:

Douglas Korb (Chair)
Dan MacArthur (Vice-chair)
Lissa Harris (Clerk)
Celena Romo
David Holzapfel

Administration:

Bill Anton (Superintendent)
Wayne Kermenski (Principal)
Laurie Garland (Business Manager, WCSU)

Faculty & Staff:

Jesslyn Mullett
Pam Maille
Kate Morgan
Aaron and Emily Walsh
Liz Greco
Raphael Rosner
Patti Donnelly

Kayla Jager
Angela Mousseau

Students:

Mackenzie Cliché
Naneh Pittman
Honora Walsh
Hazel Harris

Members of the Public:

Peter Barus (Recorder)

(Chat messages appended as part of this public meeting)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:05PM.

Mr. Korb welcomed students from South El and explained the video conference protocols for public meetings.

Changes to the agenda

Moved Ms. Greco's class project before building projects

Members of the Public

Members of the Faculty

School Updates/Requests

South El lass project

Mr. Kermenski commended the fifth and sixth graders who had written letters for well-written, clear, articulate, persuasive reasoning with supporting data and interviews; and acknowledged the South El students and Ms. Greco for the project and for the hard work the students put in, observing that it was a great and needed topic to end the year and catapult into next year. Ms. Greco was invited to discuss context and the experience of getting to this exciting point.

Ms. Greco discussed studying various activists and how young people make their voices heard and find ways to bring lasting change; how the students chose what they were passionate about and wanted to write for; that they did a lot of research and interviews; that all writing was done at home; and thanked the Board for reading the many essays with the seriousness they deserve.

There was discussion; a range of choices; expanding the idea; a democratic process; it was suggested that Executive Session was not needed for this public discussion. Students were invited to speak. Mr. Holzapfel asked students how their classmates felt about next steps, if there had been discussion. Students were praised for the quality of their writing.

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There was discussion of the logistics of engaging the community, such as a survey, Friday Notes, the South El webpage on the MES site; and about voting on colors and a mascot, but not on the flags.

Mr. Holzapfel suggested including links to the students' writings with anything that goes out, that it would be a disservice if they were not accessible to everyone. Mr. MacArthur concurred and suggested promoting reading before voting. Mr. Kermenski noted the Board's and Administration's openness to the request about a mascot and colors and suggested announcement on Front Porch Forum and social media, hoping for guidance from the Board on how to proceed, and how far to take it.

Suggestions to the Board included narrowing down the selection of colors and selecting three mascots for the community to choose from. There was discussion of teaching about preferential voting systems and methods. The students were invited to take part in the discussion; there was consensus that their letters were all compelling, and that their request to fly flags for Black Lives Matter and LGBTQ+ should be approved. There was discussion of how to fly flags properly.

Mr. MacArthur moved that the School Board approve of allowing the students to fly the *Black Lives Matter* and *LGBTQ+* flags on the flagpole at their discretion. Second by Mr. Holzapfel.

There was discussion; whether it would be the students or the community flying the flag; a representation of the whole community; that this was an action of the Board, not the community, as the community had not been consulted. Mr. Korb offered to draft language addressing the current national state of affairs for approval next meeting. Ms. Greco observed that, as students had written, there could be strong feelings about the flags, and anticipated welcoming further discussions. There was discussion of alternatives such as attaching the flags to the school building, prominently displayed but not on the flagpole. Ms. Greco suggested that the pole would be important, even if not the same pole. Mr. Kermenski suggested that the pole should not be an issue, citing the traditional order from the national and state flags, with others below on the same pole; and that all are raised and lowered together.

Mr. MacArthur was asked to re-state the Motion.

Mr. MacArthur moved that the School Board approve the suggestion from the South El students that the *Black Lives Matter* and *LGBTQ+* flags be flown on the school flagpole. By roll call vote, the Motion was **Passed Unanimously**.

Building projects

Mr. Korb noted the sale of the Marlboro College campus. Mr. Kermenski discussed projects with the current structure, not related to the college, as projects that may help, or potentially hinder, what can be done in the fall; and noted that MES has grown to 110 students with more expected; that the school was not designed for this large a population; that MES is becoming a larger institution; that he had met with Mr. Walsh and Ms. Chaine about what would be needed, and the numbers, and whether more space is needed per person, suggesting a review.

Mr. Korb noted an email from L'After program (appendix); and that the projects under discussion were COVID19 related.

Mr. Kermenski discussed a list of projects (shared on screen); three categories.

Current Building Needs

- Roof of 5-6 in need of repair

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- Roof at 4, JH and a flat roof between there and 5-6, Principal's office
- The real number for the septic system is 126
- Painter recommends gray exterior paint, good coverage for one coat. Mr. Korb polled the members; there was consensus on gray exterior. Painting had begun.

Switch North EI and Library

- Teachers do not want to make this change now, but it would improve use of space
- 23 children hanging up their stuff
- There was discussion; that the storage space for North EI would be built into the library.

The faculty was asked about the idea, and it was noted that a clear decision was needed; and a question raised, that if South EI was unsafe, where it could be moved.

Mr. Walsh reported discussing this idea with Ms. Garfinkle, suggesting that the Library would not be safer than South EI; and noted a potential structural hazard, with the area open for inspection by an engineer; that no engineer had been hired.

Mr. MacArthur will look into this. It was noted that Mr. Medina was being kept informed of the situation.

Mr. Kermenski explained that the classrooms need not be moved: storage space is the issue, and it would entail expenditures. It was noted that funds would be in the budget by the first of July for this kind of need. Mr. Kermenski discussed funds both on hand and anticipated.

Mr. Korb discussed the Equalized Pupil count, and its potential impact on the budget, noting that the Weighting Study will itself be studied, but changes were not expected. Mr. Kermenski noted that EQP is averaged to avoid sharp ups and downs, and that it will go up, but MES is looking good in that area.

Mr. Kermenski will look into a better solution for North EI cubbies with the teachers.

Ms. Romo asked about a list of compliance items for opening in the Fall.

Mr. Kermenski discussed moving the projects despite some challenges, taking the list to Banwell, noting that the roof could be a very big expense; and will discuss finances with Ms. Garland. There was discussion noting the absolute necessity of the repairs in question.

Mr. MacArthur will communicate with Mr. Medina and look for engineers, starting the physical process.

Mr. Kermenski discussed health and safety needs; inadequate number of hand-washing sinks for PE, Music, and only one sink in the Library with 22 students expected; and noted that sanitizing machines were purchased at WCSU, and schools could be sanitized overnight; and suggested hiring additional personnel, perhaps offering extra work to bus drivers; that a one-hour training in cleaning surfaces is the requirement; and discussed potentially hazardous exposure to cleaning chemicals.

Mr. Kermenski asked for more custodial help.

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Mr. MacArthur suggested that the WCSU develop a team to keep the sanitizing machines busy. There was discussion. Mr. Kermenski noted that he had suggested to the Superintendent that additional custodial help be hired to run the machines at night.

Mr. Kermenski will return to the Superintendent with the Board's support for the idea.

Mr. Kermenski discussed increasing the Pre-K Playground, noting that it may not need a climbing structure, and that funds would come from The Meeting House School funds, no cost to MES. There discussion; of minimal expense to satisfy a need; that playground structures are not a high priority. Mr. Kermenski suggested that the current structures should be removed, and raised beds created.

Mr. Kermenski discussed transportation, had heard recommendations of 12 passengers in a 72 passenger bus; and would be asking families to avoid using the buses, drive students to school; and suggested staggering classes to maintain safety in the parking lot, will survey and promote parents driving children to school, possibly start Pre-K and K fifteen minutes later.

Mr. MacArthur suggested the plan to sell a bus should be deferred. Ms. Jager observed that the sale was thought to help the budget issue, but that keeping all four is necessary now. There was consensus.

HVAC was discussed. Mr. Kermenski noted two large air-handlers on the roof that are old, estimated at \$23,000 per unit to replace; and the classroom ventilators had been serviced, but this should be checked; and that CO₂ monitors were needed to give exact PPM; the current system is not sufficiently accurate to regulate air quality; and that a project with Jeffers & Sons had been on hold, and should be restarted, in consultation with Banwell. There was discussion of expenditures, and the benefits of air monitors.

Regarding the food program, Mr. Kermenski discussed alternative solutions, first, serving in the hallway, the space is narrow and with additional students is exceeding capacity; and second, only one chef at a time can cook; and strategies involving the Outback look hopeful; the distance from the kitchen, the need for a refrigerator or not; costs reaching \$30,000-\$35,000; if this situation is too much, knowing that would help in other decisions; and discussed having two sittings, Pre-K and K at one time, and then 5-8; the challenge of doubling supplies for the Outback; that the multiple uses of the building require rapid and thorough cleaning without time for mopping.

It was suggested that the kitchen could be moved; that the architects should be part of the conversation; that water and septic systems should be considered. Mr. Holzapfel discussed the architects and a bond, placed on hold pending resolution of the Marlboro College campus; Mr. Korb noted uncertainties about what the state will do, and bringing the architects back now that the College has been sold. Mr. Holzapfel recalled a phased plan that could include the larger plan the architects had presented, and suggested that the architects be involved.

There was discussion of reducing line length by doing classes in shifts as well as meals; combining classrooms. Mr. Kermenski discussed one-way hallways (primary going outside and in the front to lunch). Mr. Walsh raised safety concerns, and possible legal issues; that having children go outside is not workable; that the building needs to be addressed properly; that maybe a reduction in students is necessary for safety. There was discussion of the challenges of time and contractor scheduling. It was suggested that flexibility will be necessary; local initiatives, and not always waiting for the state to act.

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Mr. Korb noted that the Board is asking to present the list to the architects and anticipate a bond next year for a new school structure. There was discussion.

Mr. Kermenski will communicate with Anthony Gerard about HVAC; Banwell about the construction list; and Ms. Garland about loans and custodians.

Ms. Romo suggested that there may be more flexibility when school opens; staggered days by grade, between online and in-person; building projects normally in summer may have to be done other times to do what's necessary for a safe building; and suggested that the architects had been asked for two tracks and should have something ready.

Mr. MacArthur anticipated flexibility and possibly funding as well, and suggested having vendors lined up; but cautioned against spending before that is known; that he had informed Banwell about the College sale; and that they are needed for a long term plan, but much smaller decisions as well, for efficient project financial management; and to get feedback.

- Mr. MacArthur will communicate with Banwell about the list and Anthony Gerard about HVAC.
- Mr. Kermenski will communicate with Mr. Anton about loans, custodial help, building painting started.
- Mr. Korb will communicate with Mr. Werner about adding to WCSU board meetings.

COVID-19 Updates

Mr. Kermenski noted that new instruction ends Friday; that next week there will be three half-days for any work students need to complete, and teachers can complete report cards; that there is a new template for K-4, and 5-8 will have a modified report card as well; that on June 11, 12 and 15 it is permissible to work in person, and the staff will be asked back those three days to work in the building, focusing on transition meetings; that a plan is in development with the Academic Support Team to give students a good start next year; that this is the last chance to discuss next year; that the state guidance is that in-person, potential hybrid and dismissal may all happen at once, or in any combination; and that there will be some work to see what that could look like.

Mr. Kermenski invited everyone to Sunset Lake Monday at one for a paddle, noting that some people are leaving, and that will be an opportunity then for good-byes. (It was noted that Sunset Lake would be less crowded than South Pond.)

Mr. Kermenski observed that Mr. Medina had been leading the WCSU in envisioning what it will look like to open, working at NewBrook and L&G, developing protocols and pilot projects; and will be invited to consult on the building issues; that the work is going rapidly; that Mr. Medina has been the go-to person for the WCSU on best practices; and acknowledged the Director of Operations for his contributions.

Mr. Kermenski discussed the need to relax and regroup, and maintain the calm control it takes, that ripples out through the community.

Mr. MacArthur discussed SBA Weighting Study webinar, 12:00-1:00PM, noting that the Legislators can change the Yield, and can change the penalty percentage; and he will ask that they consider both of those actions; there was discussion; it was noted that the author of the Study would be presenting.

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Board Retreat Committee Follow-up

There was discussion of volunteers and actions. Ms. Harris and Ms. Romo will review the last meeting.

It was noted that the next meeting will be postponed for graduations. Mr. Kermensky explained that the event will run from 5:00PM to 6:00PM; that eighth grade graduates will be asked to arrive at 4:45PM at the parking lot, and at 5:00PM they will be led by the Windham Sheriff and a bus, and drive down South Road as a parade; there will be stations for onlookers to cheer them on; at the College will be another bus at the end of the route; this will be in Friday Notes, Front Porch Forum and social media; there will be a meeting to make sure permitting is covered; an all-call will go out Friday and/or Monday and Tuesday, to remind people of the parade.

Final Questions (Public)

Q: Two former graduates would like to ask permission to post Black Lives Matter signs. Mr. Korb noted that the flags had been approved, and invited comment. Mr. Holzapfel asked more about the signs; they would be on the fence along the road. There was consensus in approval.

Q: The parking lot is used by many people from many states, raising potential security concerns. There was consensus acknowledging but not being led by such concerns.

Mr. Korb moved to allow former and present students to display signs for Black Lives Matter and racial justice on school property. Second by Mr. Holzapfel. By roll call vote, **All in Favor.**

Approve Minutes (5/27)

Ms. Harris moved to approve the Minutes for May 27, 2020. Second by Mr. Holzapfel. By roll call vote, **All in Favor.**

Executive Session – Contracts and Legal

Mr. MacArthur moved to enter Executive Session.

The Board entered Executive Session at approximately 8:10PM (recording does not contain the time).

Adjourn

Respectfully submitted, Peter Barus, Recorder, June 5, 2020

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Appendix

18:06:31 From Lissa Harris To Liz Greco(privately) : hehe thanks
18:09:27 From AA-ron : Doug can you please put up the spreadsheet again?
18:13:35 From Angela Mousseau : Could we have a ballot box that people put their votes into during the parade?
18:16:21 From Jesslyn : I was proud to be interviewed :)
18:16:34 From Hazel : :)
18:17:01 From Jesslyn : Google form?
18:17:46 From Hazel : sure
18:19:18 From Jesslyn : You might also ask if the community wants to put other options out there too...
18:19:24 From Jesslyn : ?
18:20:09 From AA-ron : Honora has arrived :)
18:22:19 From Jesslyn : Liz, could you and the newspaper staff publish the writing in the Chronicle?
18:22:35 From Liz Greco : We could. It would be a very long issue haha
18:23:45 From Jesslyn : What if students refined their pieces to “press releases”?
18:24:33 From AA-ron : honora says the class could pick
18:24:43 From Jesslyn : We could put out a survey to the school (at least 5-8) in the next few days.
18:24:50 From AA-ron : I agree with David honors says
18:25:18 From Kate Tarlow Morgan : This is so great to have this general conversation involving students. Bravo! However, i was very much was hoping to be part of the covid-19 discussion. i have ideas. I have a previous commitment after 6:30, so I can’t stay. Of course, there is time to brew on this. Thank you. Kate
18:27:09 From AA-ron : Honora says she’s willing to vote between top 2. You guys narrow it down.
18:27:30 From Naneh : I agree with Honora
18:27:34 From Jesslyn : Liz can do it if anyone can
18:32:21 From Jesslyn : I hope you will note that it was due to the power of their persuasive writing
18:34:27 From Dan : The School Board approves the suggestion from the South El students that the Black Lives Matter and LGBTQ flags be flown alternatively on the school flagpole.
18:34:27 From AA-ron : You go Doug!!
18:35:49 From Dan : See above motion but last phrase says “on school property “ in stead of “on the school flagpole”.
18:36:36 From Kenzie♡♡ : I suggested that
18:36:56 From Jesslyn : I can also help with knot tying (#sailor)
18:39:49 From Angela Mousseau : Woohoo!!!
18:40:14 From Liz Greco : Thank you all so much!!!
18:40:25 From Lissa Harris : Thank you Liz and South El!!!!
18:40:43 From Naneh : Thank you!
18:47:28 From Jesslyn : What’s the cost difference?
18:49:25 From Celena Romo : if 5/6 is unsafe do you consider moving south EL to the library?
19:10:09 From Kayla Jager : bus crew is of course available to help in any way we can. we do need a better idea of how next year will look in terms of time commitment for drivers and we can go from there!
19:14:04 From Jesslyn : Have JH start a bit later...
19:14:05 From patti donnelly : Yes! to parents driving if they can.
19:14:10 From Jesslyn : They would be OVER THE MOON
19:16:09 From Lissa Harris To Jesslyn(privately) : There’s research about the benefits of a later start for teens - maybe a JH petition to the board? I’m happy to help, I’d like to see JH start later too.
19:23:22 From patti donnelly : Would that be COVID safe to all eat in caf. or would it be staggered?
19:23:47 From AA-ron : the idea is staggered
19:25:28 From patti donnelly : Those little first graders going down the stairs is a nailbitter to watch.
19:33:19 From Angela Mousseau : Only one way at a time...not permanently.
19:34:32 From Gail MacArthur : I will get in touch with Banwell tomorrow, get them back on board..... we do not have much \$\$ left with them.....

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19:35:19 From Angela Mousseau : Can't a certain number of kids all walk one direction to get in line and then turn around and face the opposite direction...not going outside in a circle.

19:36:46 From Angela Mousseau : A solution to many of these issues would just be to stagger when students are physically at the school.

19:47:10 From Jesslyn : We also have a template for 5-8

19:51:32 From Jesslyn : AND KIDS

19:59:03 From Dan : Retreat: My recollection: that Wayne's ideas are great as written but we wanted teachers to have access to the same kind of time.....

20:00:26 From Jesslyn : I hope you all will come to the parade!!

20:03:05 From Jesslyn : The lead bus parks at Mboro to signify the end

20:03:23 From Jesslyn : We have talked about htat

20:03:26 From Jesslyn : that

20:04:04 From Kayla Jager : first bus will be at intersection on rt 9 and south with banner to point toward

20:04:08 From Kayla Jager : the parade

20:10:33 From Kayla Jager : Lives over property!

20:12:19 From Raphael Rosner : thank you all.

20:12:36 From Dan : Thanks Raf.....

20:12:54 From Jesslyn : Thanks everyone