

UNION #28 JOINT SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE
Monday, November 16, 2020
Final Minutes

Present: Kip Fonsh, Craig Cohen, Jen Malcolm Brown, Gene Stamell, Beth Erviti, Erik Semb, Johanna Bartlett, Dan Hayes, Melissa Burke, April Thompson, Members; Lauren Thomas-Paquin, Chair; Principals of U#28 Schools; Bruce Turner, Director of Finance and Operations; Jennifer Culkeen, Superintendent; Public Guests.

1. Meeting Called to Order by Lauren at 6:47 P.M.

2. Public Hearings: None.

3. Approval of the Minutes from September 21, 2020:

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 21, 2020. GENE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS. (ONE ABSTENTION.)

4. New Business:

1. FY22 Union #28 Budget - Discussion and Vote:

Bruce presented the FY22 Union #28 Budget to JSC and explained some of the changes (increases in several salaries and copier leases, decreases in office expenses such as rent and cleaning services). The overall budget is about 0.5% less than last year's. The total is \$684,246. JSC thanked Bruce for his work on this budget and asked several questions about the status of state monies as well as the balance of budget savings vs. increases related to decentralizing Central Office. Pru has decided to retire in June rather than in January

DAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE FY22 UNION #28 BUDGET AS PRESENTED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$684,246. ERIK SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.

2. Contract Review - Superintendent, Director of Finance and Operations and Director of Student Support Services:

Lauren asked how the contract reviews will be carried out. Jen explained the process; the position of Director of Student Support Services position will be posted after December. A subcommittee will be in charge of negotiating new contract offers to the Superintendent and Director of Finance and Operations, both of whose contracts are up this year.

5. Old Business: None.

6. Budget and Personnel Committee:

7. Superintendent Report:

Jennifer reported that EES phased in last week; things seem to be going well. LES is phasing in K-2 on a hybrid basis now, SES is returning in December for K-2, and SRS plans to return to a hybrid model in January. Governor Baker has issued new guidance, directing schools to close classes only as a last resort (when there is evidence of transmission in a class or when community transmission rates reach certain thresholds). Schools in gray, green, and yellow communities are expected to have fully face-to-face learning if possible. Each non-complying district will be audited. The Commissioner confirmed that Reopening Plans require committee approval but that there's administrative leeway to shift dates in order to respond to changing conditions. The Leadership Team will continue to monitor conditions and meet with the School Nurses for their feedback.

Kip confirmed that parents can still choose remote-only learning for their children without penalty: yes, this is correct. Also, what does an "audit" entail in this case? The Commissioner has not shared all the details of this process. School attendance data is being monitored. Our schools are planning on doing half days at first to avoid

the logistical complications of serving lunch. Melissa asked if any of our schools are in danger of being audited: no, not that Jen knows at present.

8. Director of Finance and Operations Report:

Bruce reported that Central Office has moved into their decentralized locations at the schools. Everyone's set up and comfortable, and they thank the schools for helping in this process and providing the space. We're working through some issues with air handlers at LES. Our project at SRS is in the final stages and should be done by Thanksgiving. Right now, Bruce is working on individual school budgets, and the state is finally moving on its budget; it looks like level funding for Chapter 70 funds for three of our school districts. This is less than what we were anticipating, but we're working through it.

9. U#28 Policy Subcommittee: No report.

10. News/Updates from Each School and Union #28:

Wendell/New Salem: Kelley Sullivan reported that about half the staff are working in the building now; custodians are busy catching up on summer work that was put off due to the construction. The school is looking fabulous because of this project; we're so happy the town approved it. Things are moving along. We're excited to have more children in the building, and more staff there soon. Johanna said we hammered out a very specific MOA with teachers that was voted on last week; these details led to the decision to put in-person teaching off until January. There are many parents pushing for this, but we'll have to see what the infection numbers look like.

Leverett: Craig reported that there was a volunteer work day at the school this past weekend; a lot of people showed up to help prepare the outdoors for comfortable instruction for the students when they return. We approved an MOU with the teachers' union and have been having productive JLMC meetings at which we keep everyone updated with current numbers in Leverett and surrounding towns.

Shutesbury: Lauren reported that the decision to return is incredibly high stakes for everyone; it's incredibly emotional. If all goes well, K-2 will be heading back to in-person learning Dec. 2. Jackie Mendonsa shared something unique to SES: there are pretty much an equal number of people on each side of the in-person instruction issue. This isn't the case in other districts, where there seem to be more people in favor of a return. This puts us in a really tricky place, with emotions running so high and so much at stake. Lauren said the feedback about the quality of remote instruction itself was all positive; it's just that remote instruction is difficult for children and parents. Jen noted the high amount of parent participation at school committee meetings now; perhaps we can continue to use online meetings to allow more participation in the future.

Erving: Lisa Candito reported that in-person learning is evenly dispersed throughout the building, K-6. Things are going smoothly so far. Erik said he appreciated all the difficult discussions and decisions that we're making as committee members. But it's very nice to see all the kids there, six feet apart, all over the outdoors. Our teachers are happy too, since they'd rather be with their kids than not. Thanks to our fantastic staff. Lisa said it's definitely a hard call, but we've put a lot in place to protect the staff and the kids; we redesigned the whole building behind the scenes.

Jen said that Pam Rogers has been instrumental in organizing us all and supporting all of our work. She's amazing! A heartfelt thank-you to her. JSC enthusiastically agreed.

11. Future Items to Discuss:

- Next Meeting Date: Monday, January 11, 2021
- Budget & Personnel Committee - TBD

12. Adjournment at 7:45:

ERIK MOVED TO ADJOURN. GENE SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.