PEMBROKE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, October 2 2018
North Pembroke Elementary School Library
7:00 PM

Call to Order
Mrs. Scroggins called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

Present from Administration:  Mrs. Erin Obey, Superintendent; Marybeth Brust, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Learning; Jessica Duncanson, Director of Special Education

Present from Committee:  Suzanne Scroggins, Vice Chair; Michael Tropeano and David Boyle
Remote Participation:  James Agnew, Secretary
Late:  Patrick Chilcott arrived at 7:41 pm

Acknowledge & Schedule Visitors
Mrs. Scroggins welcomed the visitors.

Adjustments to the Agenda
Added science surplus materials

Approval of Bill Schedule
Bills were circulated for committee approval.

Communications
Mrs. Obey said Renee Bock contacted her regarding beginning contract negotiations.  Mrs. Obey said the teacher’s contract is up this June and she reminded the committee that Mrs. Scroggins and Mr. Chilcott are the member of the Negotiations Committee, with Mr. Agnew as an alternate.  She added that Mr. Sharkey is no longer working for the MTA so there will be a new representative.  Mrs. Scroggins reminded the committee that there cannot be three school committee members present at negotiations meetings because it would constitute a quorum.  Mr. Tropeano asked Mrs. Obey to reach out to the Selectmen to find out who is representing them.

Consideration of Approval:  School Committee Meeting Minutes of August 21st and September 4th

VOTE:  On a motion made by Michael Tropeano and seconded by David Boyle, it was voted, by roll call vote, to approve the School Committee Meeting Minutes of August 21, 2018 and September 4th as presented.

Voting Yes:  David Boyle, Michael Tropeano and James Agnew
Voting No:  none
Abstaining:  Suzanne Scroggins
Absent:  Patrick Chilcott

Superintendent’s Report
Consideration of Approval: Homeschooling Request

Mrs. Obey presented the homeschooling request and said this is a continuation of last year and Mr. Talbot is in favor of it.

VOTE: On a motion made by Michael Tropeano and seconded by David Boyle, it was unanimously voted, by roll call vote, to approve the homeschooling request from Alicia Pilalas for her daughter Nicole as presented.

Voting Yes: Suzanne Scroggins, David Boyle, Michael Tropeano and James Agnew
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: Patrick Chilcott

Budget for Certification

Mrs. Obey said the annual process of the committee is to certify the budget number going into Town Meeting. She explained there is a surplus of $65k due to the IT Director position not being filled. Mrs. Obey went on to say that there was an extraordinary number of move ins of English Language Learners (ELLs), with 11 coming into Bryantville. She said the district has 46 ELLs representing 14 languages and only two staff members to service these students. She added that the district cannot adequately service the 46 ELLs with the number of students at Level 1 and Level 2 of services. She clarified that Level 1 and Level have very little English. She requested to take the $65k surplus and post for an ELL teacher, knowing the pool is light at this time of year. She explained that she didn’t know of this need when the warrant was open. Mrs. Scroggins asked if the ELL guidelines changed and therefore warrants this additional staff. Mrs. Obey said the guidelines around ELLs changed three years ago not recently. Mrs. Duncanson added that there are 11 students at Level 1 and that is high. Mr. Boyle asked if there are specific languages where the numbers are higher and Mrs. Duncanson said the influx of Portuguese students has been high. Mrs. Scroggins asked if other districts are seeing these kinds of trends and Mrs. Obey said the influx in general is due to the hurricane in Puerto Rico but that is not affecting Pembroke. Mrs. Duncanson added that it is hard to tell if students are coming as a result of relocation.

VOTE: On a motion made by Michael Tropeano and seconded by David Boyle, it was unanimously voted by roll call vote, to certify the budget as amended moving the $65k from line 1 Budget Reserve to line 217 ESL District Teacher for a total of $33,259,352.00.

Voting Yes: Suzanne Scroggins, David Boyle, Michael Tropeano and James Agnew
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: Patrick Chilcott

Mrs. Scroggins asked Mrs. Obey if there are any changes or trends that the committee should be watching for. Mrs. Obey said the Special Education and Vocational tuitions are fully funded and in line at this point. She added that she is keeping an eye on the utility piece to make sure the district is getting the solar reimbursements.

VOTE: On a motion made by Michael Tropeano and seconded by David Boyle, it was unanimously voted, by roll call vote, to create an ELL teacher position for 2018-2019 school year.

Voting Yes: Suzanne Scroggins, David Boyle, Michael Tropeano and James Agnew
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: Patrick Chilcott

Mr. Boyle asked if this is a one-year position and Mrs. Obey said she will have to look at the number of ELL students come next year.

Enrollment Information
Mrs. Obey explained that the district has to report enrollment on October 1st each year for state funding purposes. She reviewed enrollment at the elementary and secondary levels and said numbers are on the higher end in some classes at the elementary level but nothing stands out. Mr. Tropeano asked about vocational tuitions and Mrs. Obey said it is at the budget max as there were two students that moved to Pembroke that were already attending vocational schools. She said the Chapter 74 law has changed in that freshmen year at vocational schools is exploratory. She said she anticipates having move students going to Silver Lake as a result of the policy the committee created. She added that the number attending vocational and parochial has schools has been stable for the past 10 years.

Mr. Tropeano suggested mentioning to the Advisory Committee that the district would have lost funding for 100 but gained it due to full day kindergarten. Mrs. Obey said the secondary level class sizes were high in the past but not any longer and this could result in reductions of staff if the enrollment rate continues at this pace.

NEASC Update
Mrs. Obey said the five-year progress report was accepted at the NEASC June meeting. She explained that the PHS accreditation process began in 2011 but was delayed to 2013 due to administrative turnover. She said the school’s next accreditation cycle will begin the fall of 2020. She added that the value of accreditation is sometimes questioned, as it is costly and time consuming. Mr. Agnew said accreditation creates structure and stewardship around performance and he is in favor of it. Mrs. Brust said it involves a lot of work and it costs about $100k including the site visits. Mrs. Obey said in the years without a site visit is costs about $7k. Mr. Tropeano said he recalls it being a major distraction for staff involved. Mr. Agnew said he thinks if this a partnership where NEASC will help the district to achieve outcomes and strategic, financial and academic goals, then there is a return on investment. He said he would like to participate and learn more about the process. Mrs. Scroggins said if the decennial accreditation is in 2023, the committee will have to begin talking about it in a couple of years. Mrs. Obey said NEASC is behind and it might be more like 2024. Mrs. Brust said she has mixed feelings about it but added that they have a new process and it is supposed to be better so she will look into it. Mr. Tropeano said he is interested in finding out districts that are not doing it and what college admissions thinks about it. Mrs. Scroggins suggested gathering info on other districts and bringing it back to the committee.

Discussion of Fall Town Meeting Articles- Surplus land – Washington Street parcel
Mr. Tropeano said he, Mr. Chilcott, Mrs. Obey and Mrs. Brust met with Mr. Thorne about budget strategy. He referred the committee to the Town fixed cost information. He said the $17.5m for Town fixed costs does not leave not much in budget dollars. He said they talked about how to grow revenue and the thought was to enter a lease agreement using Town land for a piece of commercial real estate. He said they decided on a parcel of land on Washington Street, which is 18 acres between Disch’s and Marylou’s and is reserved to build an elementary school. He said the committee talked about turning it over to town control, changing the zoning and finding a partner to build a commercial property. He said the first step is to move it to town control and the second is to change the zoning. Mr. Chilcott said the school committee has to vote to allow it to move forward. He read Article 19 on the Town warrant to the committee. Mrs. Scroggins asked what it is currently zoned for and Mr. Tropeano said it is zoned for mixed use. Mrs. Scroggins said she is concerned if the Planning Board will change the zoning. Mr. Chilcott said he had a brief conversation on the zoning today. EO said the vote tonight is to deem it surplus, which allows Article 19 to exist. Mr. Chilcott said Article allows the Board of Selectmen to do whatever is in the best interest of the Town. Mrs. Scroggins asked if there are any Town owned properties that are near any school that could be done as a swap. She said she is trying to ensure that the district comes out with something. Mr. Tropeano explained that property around the schools is Town property and explained the minimum requirement of the size of the building and land around it. Mr. Chilcott said this huge chunk of land is sitting there doing nothing. Mr. Boyle said the homeowners in that area would have to be reassured as to what is going to be built there. Mrs. Scroggins said that going for the revenue is a great idea and she would like to hear of other ideas down the road. She said the committee should consider that there could be a district need for land down the road. Mr. Chilcott said the reality is something needs to be done about the revenue issue and this idea seems to be the quicker way to impact revenue. Mr. Tropeano said the difficulty in getting an operational override is significant. Mrs. Scroggins said she agrees and she is here to protect the school district, students and staff.
VOTE: On a motion made by Michael Tropeano and seconded by David Boyle, it was unanimously voted, by roll call vote, to declare the parcel of land identified on Assessor Map as F9-1 as parcel 1 consisting of 18.12 acres at the addresses and directions in Article 19 surplus.

Voting Yes: Patrick Chilcott, Suzanne Scroggins, David Boyle, Michael Tropeano and James Agnew
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

Mr. Boyle said he does not see the savings for the district and he is concerned about the residents. Mr. Chilcott said there is no savings but instead it would generate revenue to the Town. He added that there could be in excess of a $1.8M shortfall next year as a Town, so the idea is to market this now in preparation for 2020. Mr. Tropeano said if we do not start to do something now it is going to be an even bigger problem.

Future Meeting Dates and Topics
11/6/18

Mr. Chilcott said there will be another joint budget report out again at the next meeting.

VOTE: At 8:08pm, on a motion made by Michael Tropeano and seconded by David Boyle, it was unanimously voted, by roll call vote, to adjourn.

Voting Yes: Patrick Chilcott, Suzanne Scroggins, David Boyle, Michael Tropeano and James Agnew
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

Materials
Agenda
Visitor Sign in Sheet
Minutes of August 21, 2018 and September 4, 2018
PHS Homeschooling Request
Budget Detail
ELL PowerPoint
NEASC Letter
Washington Street Property Documents
Enrollment Trends & History
Course Enrollment Information

APPROVED: October 16, 2018

MOTIONS

VOTE: On a motion made by Michael Tropeano and seconded by David Boyle, it was voted, by roll call vote, to approve the School Committee Meeting Minutes of August 21, 2018 and September 4th as presented.

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Voting No: none
Abstaining: Suzanne Scroggins
Absent: Patrick Chilcott
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Voting Yes: Suzanne Scroggins, David Boyle, Michael Tropeano and James Agnew
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: Patrick Chilcott

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Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
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Voting No: none
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Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none