

TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
147 POND STREET, FRANKLIN MA 02038

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes

January 20, 2021, 7:00 PM - REMOTE

Mr. Mushnick, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**Members Present:**

Brian Mushnick, *Chair*, Norfolk  
Gregory St. Lawrence, *Vice Chair*, North Attleboro  
Douglas Brown, *Secretary*, Seekonk  
David Bento, Medfield  
Jonathan Dowse, Sherborn  
Michael Galasso, Wrentham  
Kathy Gaudreau, Medway  
Louis Hoegler, Walpole  
Patrick McMorrان, North Attleboro  
Steve Sullivan, Walpole  
Robert Vozzella, Franklin  
Peter Wiernicki, Franklin

**Members Not Present:**

Jane Hardin, Millis  
Stanley Widak, Plainville

**Others Present:**

Stephen Dockray, Superintendent  
Daniel Haynes, Business Manager  
Michael Procaccini, Principal

**SECRETARY'S REPORT**

A motion was made by Mr. Hoegler and seconded by Mr. McMorrان that the minutes of the December 16, 2020 School Committee meeting be approved as written.

*Motion passed with two abstentions.*

**INTRODUCTIONS**

Mr. Dockray introduced Maureen Johnson, Dental Assisting Teacher and TCTA President, John Martin, Director of Special Education, and a visitor

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Mr. Mushnick noted that today was an historic day: Inauguration Day.

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

None.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

***FY22 Budget***

Mr. Dockray reported that enrollment is down again, from 930 last year to 902 this year, which creates a large assessment increase for those communities where there is an enrollment increase. He has received word from Medway and Walpole where assessments have increased. Mr. Dockray indicated that firm numbers will not be available until Chapter 70 Aid numbers are received in February.

Mr. Dockray indicated there will be a Budget Subcommittee meeting on Wednesday, February 10, around 5:00 PM and another one will be scheduled if needed, noting that the budget must be approved by the School Committee in March.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT (CONTINUED)**

### ***FY22 Budget (continued)***

Mr. Haynes reported that a maximum increase of 3.5% is targeted which would be approximately \$750K.

Mr. Haynes indicated we just received notification of what the 2021 state revenue would be and he is expecting that will be flat in 2022, forcing it to the taxpayers of our member communities.

Mr. Haynes noted that the delay in the implementation of the Student Opportunity Act will affect the minimum contributions in our communities so we will be higher above the minimum than we have in the past.

Mr. Haynes added that when he shared numbers with Medway and Walpole, he pulled together a per pupil expenditure report for 2018 and 2019, looking at the other 25 vocational schools. The per pupil number went down by \$9.00, and \$8.70, respectively. There are only 5 vocational schools that have a lower per pupil number than Tri-County, indicating that we have been responsible with the funds.

Mr. Haynes reported that salaries and benefits are 76% of Tri-County's budget. We are looking at level funding our FTEs for staff with where we stand right now. He also noted there have been requests to increase staffing in two shops and add one academic teacher. Mr. Haynes indicated he anticipates holding to what payroll is currently, due to some shifts and changes that took place: retirements resulting in lower pay grades and faculty members who left and were not replaced, etc. He also noted that there will be additional savings in the retirement of the Superintendent and Director of Continuing Education and the hiring for those positions next year.

Mr. Haynes mentioned another positive is a lower than anticipated increase in health benefits 3%. Mr. Haynes also noted there are some equipment needs that may not be handled through the Perkins Grant which would come out of the budget.

Mr. Haynes reported that after the last payment, the OPEB Trust exceeded \$1M for the first time.

## **SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH COMMITTEE**

Mr. Mushnick indicated that 30 applications had been received and, after several meetings, the committee chose seven candidates for interview. After these interviews the plan is to narrow that down to two for the next interview session. Mr. Mushnick plans to bring a selection to the School Committee hopefully by the end of February or in March. The Search committee has met some strong candidates with diverse backgrounds who are anxious to be a vital member of the Tri-County community.

In response to questions, Mr. Mushnick indicated that:

- Applicants who have not been selected for interviews have not been notified yet as it was too close to the application deadline.
- The plan is to present only one candidate to the School Committee.
- There were no internal candidates.

## **REMOTE ACADEMIC LEARNING LAB**

Mr. Dockray reported that the Remote Learning Lab has begun. The Lab was created to assist those students who have been failing and/or not doing well with remote learning. Mr. Procaccini added that the students who were selected represent about ½ of those students with failing grades, as mentioned at the last meeting.

**REMOTE ACADMIC LEARNING LAB (continued)**

Mr. Martin, Director of Special Education, explained that over 100 students were identified who met at least one of the criteria we felt were important. One was the students had one or more failing grades during the first trimester. A lot of these students struggled with the content, posting grades in the single digits up to the 20s or 30s. We also looked at anecdotal evidence over the course of last year when we went into the remote experience in the spring and the fall. Data was also taken from teachers, school adjustment counselors, guidance counselors and parents. Attendance was also looked at.

Mr. Martin noted that having the students present at the school, with adults looking over their shoulders, making sure they were on task, encouraging them, answering and clarifying questions, in a way provided structure and support that may not have existed in the home environment.

Ninety-one of the 101 families that were invited in, accepted the invitation. The program began with tenth grade and 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and will repeat next week with the 9th grade and 11th grade.

Mr. Martin reported he spent a considerable about of time in the Lab observing the students and adults, and at least from the body language and facial expressions, while the students were not excited to be there, they were on task doing what they were supposed to do, and he is optimistic that they will end up being more successful by being present in the school. More data will be available next week.

Mr. Martin anticipates the lab will run to the end of the school year, depending on the variables, such as the COVID restrictions.

In response to a question, Mr. Martin indicated that when the project was first started, it was presumed that the special education students would be primary, but as time went on, we found there were a good number of regular education students who were struggling with remote learning. There are approximately 20 general education students and 80 special education students, a distinct ratio.

Mr. Procaccini noted that approximately one third of our students are special education so if you look at the reverse, there have been a significant amount of students that have been successful. With 300+ special education students out of 943 total students, 200+ students are doing fairly well.

In response to questions, Mr. Martin indicated that:

- so far technology in the building has been good with no major issues.
- transportation is maxed out and requirements are very strict
- there are also required protocols for students' lunches, which limits capacity
- more students would require more staff
- some creative scheduling required resource reallocations and we do not want to stretch ourselves too much

Mr. Dockray noted that vaccinations of teachers and bus drivers would help with the transportation issue. Mr. Sullivan added that CDC and DESE are relaxing, to some extent, the 3-6 ft rule; and statistical data shows that no one is getting sick on the buses which is probably due to the open windows.

**DISCUSSION OF WARRANTS**

***Warrant Subcommittee Report***

Mr. Haynes reported the following warrant totals: Operating: \$1,155,450; Payroll(3): \$1,529,177; Payroll taxes and deductions; \$584,178; Transportation; \$95,903; HLD Insurance \$223,038; Utilities \$23,263; Medicare \$20,487; Performance Contract: \$39,645; Repairs: \$33,264.

**TOPICS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED BY THE CHAIRPERSON 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING**

Mr. Hoegler suggested that the School Committee recognize the award received by Michelle Tilden, as it is an honor for us to have someone like Ms. Tilden represent Tri-County.

A motion was made by Mr. Hoegler, and seconded by Mr. St. Lawrence that a letter, signed by the Chair, be sent to Ms. Tilden.

*Motion carried unanimously.*

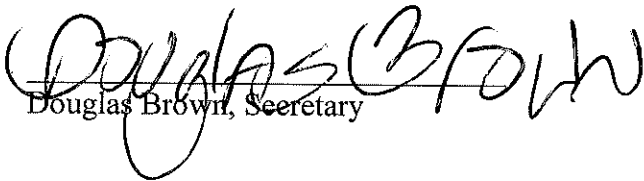
**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Mr. Hoegler and seconded by Mr. McMorran that the School Committee meeting be adjourned.

*Motion carried unanimously.*

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

  
Douglas Brown, Secretary