



FINAL

MINUTES  
MINUTEMAN REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
MARCH 28, 2023, 6:00 p.m.

**Present:**

- |                                |                                    |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Pam Nourse, Chair (Acton)      | Steve Ledoux, Vice-Chair (Concord) |
| Alice DeLuca, Secretary (Stow) | Jeff Stulin (Needham)              |
| Erika Elzey (Bolton)           | Judith Crocker (Lexington)         |
| Michael Ruderman (Arlington)   | Ford Spalding (Dover)              |

**Absent:** None

Lancaster has not yet appointed a member to fill their seat on the Committee.

**Weighted Vote:** Weighted Vote present at start of the meeting: 100%

**Others Present:** Dr. Dawson, Rich Ikonen, Nikki Andrade, and Julia Pisegna

**Town Officials Present:**

- |                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Dave Martin (Acton)        | Brian Boyle (Bolton)        |
| Jason Corell (Acton)       | Terrie Ackerman (Concord)   |
| Christine Anderson (Acton) | Eric Michaelson (Lexington) |
| Annie LaCourt (Arlington)  | John Connelly (Needham)     |

1. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Ms. Nourse welcomed all those that joined the meeting and shared that the purpose of the meeting is to present, discuss, and get feedback from representatives of our member towns on the potential of adding additional towns to the district.

a. Presentation and Discussion with Member Town Officials Concerning the Potential Addition of Towns to the Minuteman District - Dr. Kathleen Dawson

Dr. Dawson stated that the Committee members wanted to share this information with the towns and introduced the members of the Communications, Access, and Admissions Subcommittee – Pam Nourse (Acton), Alice DeLuca (Stow), and Jeff Stulin (Needham).

Mr. Stulin provided 20-year information about Minuteman enrollment from member and non-member towns. He explained the efforts undertaken to pursue a new building and discussions about enrollment. After much discussion with MSBA, the school size of 628 students was decided upon. A new Regional Agreement was created which allowed the towns that did not want to stay to leave the district. Of the 16 towns, seven communities left, leaving nine member towns. The new building was completed in two years, on time and on budget.

Along with the new school and programs, the applicant pool from in-district students has doubled in three years. This impacts assessments as member towns send more students while dollars from out-of-district students no longer come in. He noted that there is a building project underway that will be completed by our students to help achieve higher enrollment without adversely impacting quality of education.

As we continue to be forward-thinking, we are considering if nine-member towns are the right membership for the district or if we should add another partner to help us pay the capital costs.

Dr. Dawson summarized Mr. Stulin's remarks and added that several towns that have expressed an interest in joining the district, a process that takes approximately two years. She shared that industry partners have expressed the need for employees, across the state there has been increased interest in career technical education, and competition for the programs is going to grow.

She added that some of the team's guiding questions focused on how to prepare for the possible impact of new high schools (Arlington in 2024), how we might increase access to what Minuteman offers without jeopardizing educational integrity, and the impact of increasing enrollment and capacity.

Dr. Dawson explained considerations for increasing capacity so that member town students would not be waitlisted. She added that also under consideration is what a fair buy-in would be to join Minuteman, especially as our nine-member towns paid a lot for the new building.

Dr. Dawson reiterated that we never want to jeopardize our program offerings, or the level of teaching and learning that our students are receiving. One of the factors that we use to gauge that is when students come to Minuteman, they come with a passion for a program and whether they would get one of their top three choices, even if enrollment increases. From 2018 to 2027, with the low range of number of students at 123, we were able to make a 98% placement of our students in their first choice. With 191 students, 89% were able to get their first choice and 9% got their second choice. At 181 students, we were able to maintain 93% of our students getting their first choice, so we feel that if we were to add another member town, we would not jeopardize students getting access to the program of their choice.

Dr. Dawson thanked her team for putting together financial models and options to determine which was the fairest and most equitable before determining what information to present to the town representatives. She noted that the Regional Agreement determines the calculations for member towns.

Mr. Ikonen then highlighted the FY19 assessments to date based on our nine member towns, the debt service including our feasibility study and athletic fields, and the amortization of three years, as stated in the Regional Agreement, for any town interested in buying into the district.

Dr. Dawson stated that the addition of an additional town would require all nine town meetings voting in favor. The earliest time period that a new town could join would be the school year of 2025 and fiscal year of 2026. She previously met with the town administrators and town managers to present this information. Some administrators expressed their opinion that if adding a member town to save some money means that one of their students has to be on the waitlist, they are not in favor.

She reiterated that the School Committee felt that communication and open dialogue with our member towns is very important so that the towns are as informed as possible.

Town representatives asked follow-up questions about the capital formula, slot allocation system (which provides a guaranteed number of seats per member town), incremental fees for special education and capital costs, and expressed their thoughts on fair buy-in for towns that might join, and towns that were previously members of the district but left.

Dr. Dawson shared that next steps would include a favorable vote at all member town Town Meetings to approve adding an additional town to the district.

Ms. Nourse added that the next steps of the Communication, Access, and Admissions Subcommittee are to reflect on the feedback received, consider all options and figure out what makes sense to bring forward.

Mr. Stulin said the preparation will be useful in case the right opportunity comes up to create 4 classrooms. Mr. Spalding requested a summary document.

Ms. Nourse thanked all that attended. She reiterated that the decision ultimately belongs to the town meetings. Committee members will continue to update the towns.

**b. Approval of the Overnight Trip for the Minuteman Robotics Club to Attend the Eastern States Exposition April 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> in West Springfield, MA**

**ACTION 2023 #33**

Moved (Spalding) and seconded (DeLuca)

**VOTE:** To approve the overnight trip for the Minuteman Robotics Club to attend the Eastern States Exposition April 5<sup>th</sup>– 8<sup>th</sup> in West Springfield, MA, as presented

8 members present at time of vote

Weighted Vote present: 100%

Weight needed: > 50%

Final percentage results of vote: 100%

Vote:

Acton, Pam Nourse	Yes
Arlington, Michael Ruderman	Yes
Bolton, Erika Elzey	Yes
Concord, Steve Ledoux	Yes
Dover, Ford Spalding	Yes

Lexington, Judy Crocker	Yes
Needham, Jeff Stulin	Yes
Stow, Alice DeLuca	Yes
<b><i>Final status of the vote:</i></b>	<b><i>Approved unanimously</i></b>

Committee members asked if there would be sufficient adults to supervise, and asked where the students would be staying.

**4. ADJOURNMENT:**

**ACTION 2023 #34**

Moved (Stulin) and seconded (Spalding)

**VOTE:** To adjourn the meeting

8 members present at time of vote

Weighted Vote present: 100%

Weight needed: > 50%

Final percentage results of vote: 100%

Vote:

Acton, Pam Nourse	Yes
Arlington, Michael Ruderman	Yes
Bolton, Erika Elzey	Yes
Concord, Steve Ledoux	Yes
Dover, Ford Spalding	Yes

Lexington, Judy Crocker	Yes
Needham, Jeff Stulin	Yes
Stow, Alice DeLuca	Yes
<b><i>Final status of the vote:</i></b>	<b><i>Approved unanimously</i></b>

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Pisegna  
District Assistant

Alice DeLuca  
Secretary