



FINAL

MINUTES
MINUTEMAN REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
APRIL 11, 2023, 6:30 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

1. CALL TO ORDER: OPEN SESSION

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Ms. Nourse welcomed all those that joined the meeting.

2. ADOPTION OF REMOTE PARTICIPATION

NOTE: To approve remote participation by all members of this Minuteman School Committee pursuant to and in accordance with Sections (2) and (3) of the Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law made by Governor Baker on March 12, 2020, and pursuant to the Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, as amended most recently by Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 signed by Governor Healey allowing such remote participation until March 31, 2025, any or all members of this Minuteman School Committee are permitted to participate in this meeting via remote participation.

ACTION 2023 #35

Moved (DeLuca) and seconded (Crocker)
To approve remote participation as written in the agenda

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
Final status of the vote:	Approved unanimously

3. STUDENT UPDATE

a. First Robotics Club

Student Sunyah Agarwal (Lexington) and member of the First Robotics Club shared the teams' accomplishments at the Western New England event in Springfield held on March 18th and that they qualified for the New England District Championships.

Student River Araujo (Acton) shared that while the team did not qualify after District Championships to move on further, they are very excited about their great season and will use that momentum to grow the team for the next competition season.

b. SkillsUSA:

Student Cole Traywood (Acton), President of the SkillsUSA Chapter, highlighted the largest number of medals won in all three categories - Gold, Silver, and Bronze.

Student Kaytaki Pathak (Arlington) provided an update on the students that will be moving on to State competition. She also shared some of the community service projects the group has participated in such as increased access to menstrual products in the school, donations of products made to the Women's Lunch Place in Boston, an online fundraiser which raised \$3,300.00 to benefit Days for Girls, as well as a fundraiser to go to Nationals. She added that a fellow Minuteman student will be singing the National Anthem at the State Conference.

c. Wolbach Farm / Sudbury Valley Trustees Presentation

Student Patrick Warner (Needham) from Environment Science described the environmental site assessment the students did in Acton/Boxborough to determine the potential presence of any federal or state-regulated environmental contaminants. The group walked around the work site, collected data, and photos and created a written report for the ArcGIS story map presentation.

Student Cameron French (Arlington) from Environmental Science detailed the report students presented to the Sudbury Valley Trustees which shows historical aerial footage of the map, what the land has been used for originally, and why that is important now.

The map highlighted the land as it became more developed year by year since 1987. It also included a site radius map which includes the nearest features within a half-mile radius. The site visit survey highlights the points of possible contamination and pollution encroachment which could be potentially problematic., and they provided a list of recommendations for the site to the Sudbury Valley Trustees.

Ms. Nourse thanked the students for their very impressive work.

Ms. DeLuca congratulated the SkillsUSA students for their great work.

4. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

VOTE: To enter Executive Session and return to Open Session for the following reasons:

- a. Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, Section 21 (a) (3) for the purpose of discussing strategy as it relates to collective bargaining with the Minuteman Faculty Association, as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee, as declared by the Chair with Dr. Dawson attending.

ACTION 2023 # 36

Moved (Crocker) and seconded (Spalding)

To enter into Executive Session

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
<i>Final status of the vote:</i>	<i>Approved unanimously</i>

5. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

- a. Ratification of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Minuteman School Committee and the Minuteman Faculty Association for a Collective Bargaining Agreement for the Period of July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2026

Ms. Nourse thanked all those involved in the negotiations process. Mr. Ledoux added that it was an open and honest process and recommended approval.

ACTION 2023 #37

Moved (Ledoux) and seconded (Stulin)

VOTE: To approve the Memorandum of Agreement between the Minuteman School Committee and the Minuteman Faculty Association for a Collective Bargaining Agreement for the period of July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2026

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
<i>Final status of the vote:</i>	<i>Approved unanimously</i>

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Dawson confirmed there were no public comments received.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of the following:

1. Draft Minutes of January 7, 2023
2. Draft Minutes of January 24, 2023
3. Draft Minutes of March 14, 2023
4. Approval of List of Monthly Donations

Mr. Stulin requested that the draft minutes of March 14th be removed from the Consent Agenda.

ACTION 2023 # 38

Moved (Stulin) and seconded (DeLuca)

VOTE: To approve the following:

Draft Minutes of January 7, 2023

Draft Minutes of January 24, 2023

Approval of List of Monthly Donations

8 members present at time of vote

Weighted Vote present: 100%

Weight needed: > 50%

Final percentage results of vote: 88.43%

Vote:

Acton, Pam Nourse	Yes, abstain from January 7 th
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
<i>Final status of the vote:</i>	<i>Approved unanimously</i>

Mr. Stulin expressed his concern with the minutes and suggested that the Officers review the minutes process in a manner that fulfills our obligation and is less burdensome.

ACTION 2023 #39

Moved (Crocker) and seconded (DeLuca)

VOTE: To approve the draft minutes of March 14, 2023

8 members present at time of vote

Weighted Vote present: 100%

Weight needed: > 50%

Final percentage results of vote: 91.52%

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	Abstain
Stow, Alice DeLuca	Yes
<i>Final status of the vote:</i>	<i>Motion Passed</i>

5. CHAIR'S REPORT, *Pam Nourse*

a. For the Good of the Organization

Ms. Nourse shared that the School Committee retreat included the presentation on Dr. Dawson's Entry Plan and Report of Findings and was a very productive day. She thanked Dr. Dawson for her extraordinary work and the vision embedded in it. The School Committee is supportive of her focus on teaching and learning and the positive vision for Minuteman.

Ms. Crocker added that she is looking forward to the Top Chef Competition!

5. PRINCIPAL’S REPORT – George Clement

a. School Goals Update

Co-Op - Mr. Clement provided an update on co-op which includes 60 students currently participating, 36% of our eligible students. Our goal was to have 50% of the eligible students out on co-op. He noted that this is the first time that we have had one student from every program on co-op. He explained that some of the barriers include age requirements, available funding, job market needs, and lack of transportation. Currently, there are 29 juniors out on co-op. The team continues to build relationships through our General Advisory Board members who look for opportunities for students.

MCAS - There were goals for ELA and math for MCAS. He identified the school-wide effort to help students which includes formative assessments using Edulastic software, MCAS practice sessions, tests on Tuesdays and Saturdays, and the CTE programs integrating literacy.

Social/Emotional Learning – There was school-wide professional development on the impact of poverty and trauma on learning. The team continues to develop strategies and mapping for tier-one interventions doing universal screenings. They are flushing out the MTSS framework. We do a really good job, and we need to write out what we do to support kids.

Ms. Nourse thanked Mr. Clement for the update.

Comments from Committee members:

Ms. DeLuca asked for a summary about the SkillUSA championship for any new members of the committee. Mr. Clement noted that the students demonstrate their skills in their CTE areas, in job interviewing, mathematics relating to engineering, how to bind wounds, things like that. It starts in building, then districts, then states, then nationals. The advisors put in a lot of work; the kids wear a blazer. There are a lot of rules and details. We put an emphasis on SkillsUSA throughout the building, and the require the students to make presentations so they do well.

b. Approval of the Overnight Trip for the Minuteman SkillsUSA to attend the Massachusetts SkillsUSA Championship on April 27-29, 2023, in Marlborough, MA

Mr. Clement shared that SkillsUSA Championship event is where students have an opportunity to showcase their skills in different CTE areas. Students are very dedicated and work very hard for it, and the event is taken very seriously. There are both female and male advisors present.

ACTION 2023 #40

Moved (Stulin) and seconded (Spalding)

VOTE: To approve the overnight trip for the Minuteman SkillsUSA to attend the Massachusetts SkillsUSA Championship on April 27-29 in Marlborough, 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
Final status of the vote:	Approved unanimously

8. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT, *Dr. Kathleen A. Dawson*

a. Approval of Lesley University’s Use of Facilities for their 2023 Threshold Gala on Saturday, May 6, 2023

VOTE: To approve Lesley University’s Use of Facilities for their 2023 Threshold Gala on Saturday, May 6, 2023

Mr. Ikonen introduced Jill Ziemba and Timothy Grillis of Lesley University. Ms. Ziemba thanked Minuteman for their partnership and detailed the 2023 Threshold Gala event to be held on Saturday, May 6th. The event is a fundraiser with all proceeds going towards the Threshold Program which is celebrating its 40th year. The program helps young adults with diverse learning styles gain independence and confidence. The event will include a reception and dinner with beer and wine, and a program. The event will end at 9 PM after the program.

Lesley University will provide its own security team, all of whom are CPR certified, as well as bartending services from New England Bartending Services, all of whom are TIPS certified.

Mr. Grillis added that New England Bartending Services has a catering liquor permit to serve the beer and wine. Two bars will be set up in the building, one in the foyer and one in the student union. All of the beer and wine will be served by TIPS certified bartenders. There will also be a Certificate of Insurance with an umbrella of \$5M in case of damage. He has personally been catering for over 30 years. He will show Mr. Ikonen how they will set up the tables and how everything will go so that the function is streamlined. In response to a question from Mr. Spalding, he confirmed that New England Bartending Services obtains a one-day liquor permit from the Town of Lincoln.

Ms. Nourse asked if Minuteman students will be involved. Mr. Grillis said that they had done a prior event at Minuteman in October. The students set up the buffet for them. If they can do this again, it would be ideal especially if they are culinary students who look to go on to the next level. Ms. Ziemba also expressed an interest in having someone who is familiar with the audio-visual equipment help, so that would be another opportunity to help.

Mr. Stulin asked for confirmation that this event is in line with all of our various policies. Dr. Dawson confirmed.

ACTION 2023 #41

Moved (Spalding) and seconded (Crocker)

VOTE: To approve Lesley University’s Use of Facilities for their 2023 Threshold Gala on Saturday, May 6, 2023

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
<i>Final status of the vote:</i>	<i>Approved unanimously</i>

11. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

- a. School Building Committee – Ford Spalding
 - o North Out Building

Mr. Spalding shared that the project is moving very slowly. We are under budget, and late. The contractors hope to have the work done in mid-May and then the students can begin their work, under the direction of Al St. George. The students will work through the summer with an anticipated completion date of September/October.

- b. Communication, Access and Admission – Jeff Stulin

Dr. Dawson shared that the meetings have been held with Town administrators and managers to present the possibility of a buy-in process should the towns be interested in adding a new member to the district. Four towns have inquired about the possibilities of joining.

School Committee members also held a presentation meeting with members of the Towns Selectboards and Finance Committees.

Mr. Stulin added that the outcome of the meeting with the members of the Selectboard and Finance Committees, as well as Dr. Dawson's meeting with Town administrators and managers, is that they wanted to ensure that as many slots were available to the member towns as possible at this time and that is their primary focus. They also expressed concern about the waiting list.

The Communications, Access, and Admissions Subcommittee will continue to discuss all options and paths to move forward. He added that there were many compliments about Minuteman from our member towns.

- c. Transition Taskforce – Ford Spalding
 - o Superintendent Profile

Mr. Spalding noted that the Transition Taskforce, whose members include Mr. Spalding, Mr. Stulin, Ms. Nourse, and Ms. DeLuca, were charged with being a resource to Dr. Dawson as she assumes the responsibilities of Superintendent of Minuteman.

The team reviewed the Superintendent's Profile, dated October 2021 but developed over several years with help from various members of the community, students, parents, and staff. It was used as the framework for the selection of the new Superintendent. All candidates were told how they met the characteristics in the document and how they intended to reach the goals described. It will be used to evaluate Dr. Dawson's first year at Minuteman. Dr. Dawson presented her Report of Findings to School Committee members which defined her observations and learning activities since she began her tenure. Committee members unanimously endorsed her report and the findings therein. We assume it will be a collaborative, working roadmap for Minuteman's future, for our students and our future students. Her Report of Findings will be presented to the full Minuteman Community.

Mr. Spalding invited all to review the Superintendent's Profile as it is the foundation of where Minuteman is going and where the Superintendent is leading us. We will then move to our call to action and continue our progress forward.

Mr. Stulin shared that as a member of the Taskforce, he has enjoyed watching Dr. Dawson's plan evolve and her strong focus on moving teaching and learning forward. He is excited about her vision and her approach to her mission as dictated by the School Committee. He shared that she has met his expectation and hope as to where her focus is, and he supports Dr. Dawson's efforts fully.

Ms. DeLuca stated that she really likes the Superintendent Profile as it serves as a road map, and she feels Dr. Dawson is doing a terrific job with the map she was given. She added that she is very dedicated to Minuteman and it truly matters to her that this school be a great place for kids and she is looking forward to the next steps.

Dr. Dawson thanked Committee members for their kind words, encouragement, and acknowledgment of her work. She thanked her leadership team and she looks forward to building a trusting and collaborative relationship with all of the staff and hopes they will come together in the best interest of the students.

d. Announcement of Determinations of the School Committee regarding its April 8, 2023 Review of Minutes from Executive Sessions held by the School Committee during Meetings held from January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2019, and meetings held from January 1, 2023 through March 14, 2023, inclusive.

Ms. Nourse read the following announcement into the record:

During an executive session of its meeting on April 8, 2023, the School Committee reviewed the executive session minutes for the following meetings of the Committee and voted to release those minutes in their entirety as the purpose for the executive session has concluded:

February 11, 2014, executive session a;
April 8, 2014, executive session a;
May 20, 2014, executive session a;
June 17, 2014;
July 8, 2014;
March 12, 2015;
April 14, 2015
June 16, 2015
July 7, 2015;
October 13, 2015, executive session b;
October 17, 2017 executive session b;
November 14, 2017 executive session b;
December 12, 2017;
January 16, 2018;
April 10, 2018, executive session a.
May 15, 2018, executive session a;
June 12, 2018, executive session a and c;
December 11, 2018, executive session b;
January 15, 2019;
September 17, 2019;
October 22, 2019, executive session c;
November 19, 2019; and
September 27, 2022

During an executive session of its meeting on April 8, 2023, the School Committee reviewed the executive session minutes for the following meetings of the Committee and voted to acknowledge that the purpose for the executive session that was called continues to exist, but to release those portions of the minutes that are no longer related to that continuing executive session purpose, subject to redaction by the District's Records Access Officer for all available exemptions under the Public Records Law, including without limitation, redaction of information relating to the continuing executive session purpose:

February 11, 2014, executive session b
April 8, 2014, executive session b
May 20, 2014, executive session b
February 24, 2015
October 13, 2015, executive session a
December 13, 2016, Executive Session 1
January 19, 2017
September 19, 2017

October 17, 2017, executive session a
November 14, 2017, executive session a and c
April 10, 2018, executive session b
May 15, 2018, executive session b
June 12, 2018, executive sessions b and d
November 13, 2018
December 11, 2018, executive session a
October 22, 2019, executive sessions a and b
October 29, 2019

12. FINANCE REPORT

a. Finance Subcommittee Report – *Steve Ledoux*

Mr. Ledoux provided an update from the Finance Committee’s recent meeting where they had a very brief presentation of the audit report and reviewed the selection for a financial advisor for the OPEB Trust Fund. He will continue to provide updates to members in the future.

b. FY22 Audit Presentation – *Scott McIntire*

Mr. Ikonen introduced Scott McIntire and Bridget Costello of Marcum LLC to present the FY22 report and the results of the June 31, 2022, report.

Mr. McIntire updated members that in January 2022, Melanson Heath merged with the national CPA firm Marcum LLC as they needed the resources of a larger firm to be able to continue to practice in the Commonwealth and perform services to cities, towns, and school districts. The audit as presented is from Melanson, but the completed audit will be issued as Marcum LLP.

Mr. McIntire then reviewed the audit of the financial statements of the district.

He highlighted several key points of the financial statements and auditor’s opinion, a copy of which the Committee had in their packet. He was pleased to share that the audit of the district financial statements went very well, and they found the books and records to be in good working order, and key reconciliations were completed on time, and as a result of that they did not need to propose any significant audit entries. He reported that based on the auditor’s opinion, the financial statements of the district are in accordance with the generally accepted accounting principles in the United States. He stated that district financial statements are materially fairly presented, sometime referred to as a “clean” audit.

He then went through the report, which he noted looks different from prior years. He noted that the pension assets are reported as of June 2022, but based on Dec. 2021. OPEB liability (other than pension) was \$20,850,743 which has come down about \$5 million over the year, due to a change in the allowable discount rate. The audit went very well, with great cooperation from Ms. Andrade and the staff.

There are two new accounting standards that will apply in FY2023. GASB has one relating to subscription-based information technology arrangements, and PPP (public and private partnerships) where there is a joint agreement. These two new accounting standards need to be implemented. A lot of their clients are looking to outsource the information technology arrangements. These two new standards are not simple.

Comments from Committee members:

Ms. DeLuca noted that the report mentioned 10 policies that the district, the OPEB trust fund or the MMRC does not have and asked if those policies are needed. Mr. McIntire shared that auditors are big on organizations having policies and procedures, and he believes it is something that organizations should strive to implement.

Mr. Stulin asked if there was anything in these financial statements that should be of concern or be brought to the Committee's attention. Mr. McIntire suggested keeping an eye on the relationship between the favorable results of operations on the budgetary basis of accounting and in the amount of excess and deficiency (E&D) that is used, noting the inflationary pressures that are out there.

Ms. Crocker asked how the district might get a AAA rating. Mr. McIntire suggested speaking to a financial advisor, such as Hilltop Securities, as there is a lot that goes into ratings. Only 5% of the annual operating budget can be in the unassigned fund balance. He is not aware of school districts that have a AAA rating, partly because of that limitation.

Ms. Nourse noted that the district has not taken the 10% de minimus indirect rate. Mr. McIntyre said that is very typical of a school district. They are not shifting general funds or indirect costs to the federal grants, although it is permissible.

Ms. DeLuca inquired, in terms of workforce development, if there is an actual lack of workers in the area of accounting. Mr. McIntire said that students prefer to go in to finance or more specifically data analysis. There are articles in the Wall Street Journal about this problem.

Single audits:

Ms. Andrade asked Mr. McIntire to address the single audits of federal programs in the report. Melanson (Marcum) audited two this year – education stabilization (ESSER) and special education cluster. They found the books to be in good order. They did not find any noncompliance that could be material to the program.

c. OPEB Study Committee Update

Mr. Ledoux provided members an update on the OPEB Advisory Group which presented a recommendation report to the School Committee to adopt a six-year funding plan for budget line item 5250 - retiree insurance. The OPEB Advisory Group believed that the ESCO lease ended in FY2024, however, the last payment is in FY2025. Due to this correction, he is recommending an updated funding plan for the FY2025 budget of \$800,000 which is a 5% increase from FY2024, and then an additional increase of \$300,000 in FY2026. He added that is feasible since the ESCO lease ends in FY2025 and believes we should revise the policy at the next meeting.

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION

For the following reasons:

1. Pursuant to Purpose 1 of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 30A, Section 21 (a) (1)): to consider complaints or charges against a public officer, employee, staff member, or individual, namely to review and consider an Open Meeting Law Complaint filed on April 3, 2023, against the School Committee by Sheila Nagle of Minuteman Faculty Association.

ACTION 2023 #42

Moved (Stulin) and seconded (Crocker)

To enter into Executive Session and not return to Open Session, with Dr. Dawson and Julia Pisegna to consider complaints or charges against a public officer, employee, staff member, or individual, namely to review and consider an Open Meeting Law Complaint filed on April 3, 2023 against the School Committee by Sheila Nagle of Minuteman Faculty Association.

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
<i>Final status of the vote:</i>	<i>Approved unanimously</i>

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Pisegna
District Assistant

Alice Deluca
Secretary