

IN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
 Worcester, Massachusetts
 Thursday, April 2, 2020
 Agenda #13

In order to participate in all future public meetings in the Esther Howland Chamber, please call 415-655-0001 (Access Code: 735751404) to participate.

The School Committee of the Worcester Public Schools met in Open Session at 7:23 p.m. in the Esther Howland Chamber at City Hall on Thursday, April 2, 2020.

There were present at the Call to Order:

Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley,
 Ms. McCullough, Mr. Monfredo and Ms. Novick and
 Mayor Petty

Mayor Petty stated that the School Committee will recess into Executive Session to discuss the following items:

Executive Session 1.

gb #0-134 - Administration
 (March 27, 2020)

To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares – Contractual Arbitration – Three Teachers – Evaluation Grievance/ Educational Association of Worcester, Unit A.

To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares – All District Labor Unions – Coronavirus/COVID-19 Related Issues.

To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel – Non Represented Employees of the District – Coronavirus/COVID – 19 Related Issues.

On a roll call, the vote was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria Mrs. Clancey,
Mr. Foley, Miss McCullough,
Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick,
Mayor Petty 7

Against the motion: $\frac{0}{7}$

The motion carried.

There were present at the Call to Order:

Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Ms. McCullough, Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick and Mayor Petty

On a roll call of 7-0, the School Committee recessed to Executive Session from 6:00 p.m. to 7:20 p.m.

The School Committee reconvened in Open Session at 7:23 p.m.

There were present at the second Call to Order:

Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Miss McCullough, Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick and Mayor Petty

The Pledge of Allegiance was offered.

2. APPROVAL OF RECORDS

aor #0-13 - Clerk (March 25, 2020)

Executive Session
Minutes/approval of

To consider approval of the Executive Session Minutes of February 6, 2020 and March 5, 2020.

On a roll call, the vote to approve the item was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey,
Mr. Foley, Miss McCullough,
Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick
Mayor Petty 7

Against the motion: $\frac{0}{7}$

The motion carried.

Minutes/approval
of

aor #0-14 - Clerk (March 27, 2020)

To consider approval of the Minutes of the School Committee Meeting of Thursday, March 26, 2020.

On a roll call, the vote to approve the item was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey,
Mr. Foley, Miss McCullough,
Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick
Mayor Petty 7

Against the motion: $\frac{0}{7}$

The motion carried.

IMMEDIATE ACTION

Student
Representatives

3. qb #0-112 - Administration
(March 25, 2020)

To consider input from the School Committee's student representatives.

Mayor Petty asked the student representatives to introduce themselves.

Daniella Obenewaa introduced herself and indicated she was from Worcester Technical High School.

Kwaku Nyarko introduced himself and indicated he was from Doherty Memorial High School.

On a roll call, the vote to file the item was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey,
Mr. Foley, Miss McCullough,
Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick
Mayor Petty 7

Against the motion: $\frac{0}{7}$

The motion carried.

GENERAL BUSINESS

- 4. gb #0-113 - Administration (March 26, 2020) Donations

To consider approval of the following donations:

- \$12 from a donor to the Worcester Public Schools
- \$200 from donors to the Head Start Programs at Greendale & Mill Swan in memory of Tig Richardson to be used for books and other educational materials.

On a roll call, the vote to approve the item was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey,
 Mr. Foley, Miss McCullough,
 Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick
 Mayor Petty 7

Against the motion: $\frac{0}{7}$

The motion carried.

- 5. The Mayor considered the following item gb #0-114, gb #0-115, gb #0-116 and gb #0-117 together.

gb #0-114 - Administration (March 26, 2020) Prior Fiscal Year Payment/Central MA Transit Management

To approve a prior fiscal year payment to Central MA Transit Management in the amount of \$127.50 for bus passes.

gb #0-115 - Administration (March 26, 2020) Prior Fiscal Year Payment/DATTCO Sales & Service

To approve a prior fiscal year payment to DATTCO Sales & Service in the amount of \$1,388.20 for services rendered in FY19.

Prior Fiscal Year
Payment/
Ransford
Environmental
Solutions

gb #0-116 - Administration
(March 26, 2020)

To approve a prior fiscal year payment to Ransford Environmental Solutions in the total amount of \$425.00 for services rendered in FY19 at Wawecus Road School (\$150), Clark Street Developmental Learning (\$150) and Foley Stadium (\$125).

Prior Fiscal Year
Payment/S&S
Worldwide

gb #0-117 - Administration
(March 26, 2020)

To approve a prior fiscal year payment to S&S Worldwide in the amount of \$30.49 for items received for the Child Study Department in FY19.

On a roll call, the vote to approve the items collectively was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey,
Mr. Foley, Miss McCullough,
Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick
Mayor Petty 7

Against the motion: $\frac{0}{7}$

The motion carried.

Grant/School
Nutrition
Equipment
Assistance

6. gb #0-119 - Administration
(March 26, 2020)

To accept the School Nutrition Equipment Assistance Grant in the amount of \$65,755.

On a roll call, the vote to approve the item was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey,
Mr. Foley, Miss McCullough,
Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick
Mayor Petty 7

Against the motion: $\frac{0}{7}$

The motion carried.

7. gb #0-120 - Ms. McCullough
(March 26, 2020) Learning/update on

To provide an update on the virtual learning occurring within the district including, but not limited to, Special Ed, IEPs, 504s, AP and Dual Enrollment.

- gb #0-132 - Mrs. Clancey
(March 27, 2020)

Compensatory
Services/students with
IEPs

Request that the Administration provide a report regarding the way in which it will provide service, including compensatory services, for students with IEPs.

(gb #0-120 and gb #0-132 were considered together)

Mrs. Seale indicated that she spoke with the Commissioner and the Assistant Commissioner of Education regarding services to students with disabilities during the pandemic. The most important concern right now is to keep the parents and students healthy and safe. The Special Education Department has been working diligently to keep in contact with the parents and families and is currently working on the level of educational needs for these students. She indicated that the district has identified learning opportunities for these students and that the WPS has provided a website, webinars and links for the parents to help child/ren around mindfulness and relaxation at home. There is also an online program, TeachTown, for parents to access the child's teacher. Through the guidance of DESE, the district is looking into developing learning plans for students based on the level of services that the Special Education teacher will provide through consultation as well as through direct services based on the IEPs. At this time, DESE stated that the IEPs do not have to be implemented as written but it is the district's responsibility to address the individual needs of the students to insure that they receive the appropriate education. The district will continue to get updates from DESE.

Mrs. Clancey requested information on how the district is going to service students with compensatory services when school is back in session.

Mrs. Seale stated that the guidance from DESE has not yet been provided for compensatory services. What DESE has shared is the fact that it is looking at it through the lens of additional services. That is determined individually through the IEP process and the district is not able to have IEP meetings at this time. Once the students return to school, the IEP teams will reconvene to determine whether or not the students are in need of compensatory services based of their regression or recoupment of skills.

Ms. McCullough requested that the Administration provide, in an email or Friday Letter, updates on the virtual learning occurring within the district including, but not limited to, Special Ed, IEPs, 504s, AP and Dual Enrollment.

On a roll call, the vote to file the item was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Miss McCullough, Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick Mayor Petty	7
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Against the motion:	$\frac{0}{7}$
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The motion carried.

Third Quarter
Grades/consider
pass or fail system

- 8. gb #0-121 - Miss Biancheria
(March 26, 2020)

Request that the Administration consider a pass or fail system for third quarter grades.

Miss Biancheria asked the Administration to explain how students will be graded if they do not return to school for the fourth quarter. She further stated that the fourth quarter grades would enable some students to graduate and not receive Certificates of Attainment.

Superintendent Binienda stated that the schools are in the third quarter marking period and the principals indicated that they have enough marks in the system to grade the students. It is unknown what is going to happen for the fourth quarter. If students do not return to school, there is a policy that allows teachers to drop the lowest graded quarter so the students will be graded on the third instead of the fourth quarters. Teachers have also allowed students to pass in late assignments and continue to do so. She further stated that the district is waiting for guidance from the State relative to MCAS. Seniors have already taken the tests and are waiting for their grades. With guidance from the Commissioner, the Administration has developed a rubric that teachers will use to give feedback on the fourth quarter work. Students will not be graded for the fourth quarter.

Miss Biancheria made the following motion:

Request that the Administration provide a response on whether students will be graded for the fourth quarter marking period and indicate what the end results would be for students' grades.

On a voice vote, the motion was approved.

Miss McCullough requested a copy of the rubric.

Superintendent Binienda stated that she would forward it to the School Committee.

On a roll call, the vote to refer the item to the Administration was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Miss McCullough, Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick Mayor Petty	7
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Against the motion:	$\frac{0}{7}$
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The motion carried.

- Seniors/diplomas 9. gb #0-122 - Miss Biancheria
(March 26, 2020)

Request that the Administration notify the seniors regarding the granting of diplomas to those who meet the requirements.

Superintendent Binienda stated that the seniors are not usually notified that they are graduating until the end of April or the beginning of May. At this point, the retest results and MCAS appeals have not yet been received from the State. Once these are received, students will be notified by phone. There are also students who will do buyback and guidance counselors will contact them regarding outstanding work to be completed. When everything is compiled, they will again call the students to let them know if they will graduate or not.

Miss Biancheria stated that she would like to volunteer her time to make calls to seniors regarding their graduation status.

Ms. Novick inquired as to the number of seniors that have the MCAS as a barrier to graduate.

Superintendent Binienda stated that each school keeps a record and that the MCAS Specialist knows how many schools have appeals out and will provide the response.

Ms. Novick asked if there were any arrangements made for students doing work using technology which requires online access.

Superintendent Binienda stated that the Gerald Creamer Program is the only program not up and running yet. Once the agreement with the EAW is finalized, teachers will be contacted as well as students.

Ms. Novick requested that the Administration keep the School Committee apprised of student graduation issues.

On a roll call, the vote to refer the item to the Administration was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey,
Mr. Foley, Miss McCullough,
Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick
Mayor Petty 7

Against the motion: $\frac{0}{7}$

The motion carried.

Mayor Petty left at 8:20 p.m. and returned at 8:25 p.m.

Vice-chairman Foley chaired the meeting from 8:20 p.m. to 8:25 p.m.

10. gb #0-123 - Mr. Monfredo
(March 26, 2020)

Drop Everything and
Read Day Program and
Poem In Your Pocket
Day/celebrate in April

Request that the Administration share with families the Drop Everything and Read Day Program(DEAR) during the month of April in honor of Beverly Cleary's birthday and consider implementing the POEM IN YOUR POCKET DAYS during the weekend of April 25th.

On a roll call, the vote to refer the item to the Administration was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey,
Mr. Foley, Miss McCullough,
Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick 6

Against the motion: 0

Absent: Mayor Petty $\frac{1}{7}$

The motion carried.

11. gb #0-124 - Mr. Monfredo
(March 26, 2020)

Parents' Guide to
Student Success/add to
WPS website

Request that the Administration notify the Citywide Parent Planning Advisory Council and PTOs about the website on the Parents' Guide to Student Success from the National PTA's website regarding ideas for working with your child/ren at home.

Ms. McCullough made the following amendment to Mr. Monfredo’s item:

Request that the Administration **place on the WPS Extended Learning website information regarding** the Parents’ Guide to Student Success from the National PTA’s website with ideas for working with your child/ren at home.

On a roll call, the vote to refer the item as amended to the Administration was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey,
Mr. Foley, Miss McCullough,
Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick
Mayor Petty 7

Against the motion: $\frac{0}{7}$

The motion carried.

Grant/MassHire
Central Regional
Workforce 12.

qb #0-118 - Administration
(March 26, 2020)

To accept the MassHire Central Regional Workforce Grant in the amount of \$5,300.

Ms. Novick requested information on the timeline and process for the MassHire Central Regional Workforce Grant that was signed by the City Solicitor on November 8, 2019.

Superintendent Binienda stated that she would provide the information on the timeline and process for this grant.

On a roll call, the vote to approve the item was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey,
Mr. Foley, Miss McCullough,
Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick
Mayor Petty 7

Against the motion: $\frac{0}{7}$

The motion carried.

13. gb #0-125 - Mr. Foley
(March 27, 2020)

Student Opportunity
Act for Early Literacy
Initiatives and
Curriculum

In response to a question from the Student Opportunity Act proposal regarding the success of the Early Literacy initiatives and curriculum, request that the Administration present comprehensive data showing the test scores for all student subgroups since these initiatives started. This data should show changes over the years, with a particular emphasis upon the WPS student subgroups targeted through SOA funding (Hispanic students, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities).

- gb #0-126 - Mr. Foley
(March 27, 2020)

Early College Program/
Demographic success
of

Request that the Administration provide data from the current Early College Program in the WPS that would show the demographic make-up of those students who have participated in the program. In particular, indicate the number of students from the targeted WPS student subgroups (Hispanic students, English Language Learners, students with disabilities) and provide evidence that the Early College program is attracting students from these subgroups who were achieving at a lower level than their peers until high school.

(gb #0-125 and gb #0-126 were considered together.)

On a roll call, the vote to refer the items collectively to the Administration was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Miss McCullough, Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick Mayor Petty	7
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Against the motion:	<u>0</u> 7
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The motion carried.

School Building
Projects/
discontinue
contraction during
the pandemic

14. gb #0-127 - Ms. Novick
(March 27, 2020)

Request that the Mayor ask the City Administration to reconsider the decision to continue construction on school building projects during the current pandemic.

Ms. Novick withdrew this item.

Mr. Monfredo left the meeting from 9:00 p.m. to 9:15 p.m.

Vendors/
payments for

- gb #0-128 - Ms. Novick
(March 27, 2020)

Request that the Administration report on the current payment of vendors, in light of MGL Ch. 41, sec. 56, requiring that services be received in order to be paid for.

Durham School
Transportation/
utilization of

- gb #0-131 - Mrs. Clancey
(March 27, 2020)

Request that the Administration provide a report regarding how the City is utilizing Durham busses and drivers during the pandemic.

(gb #0-128 and gb #0-131 were considered together.)

Mr. Allen stated that, during the State closure, there are a number of vendors that are still being paid for their services to the school districts. The Administration is waiting for guidance from the Department of Revenue or DESE and it has not formally made payments to those vendors yet. To date, the guidance that DESE has provided is that the Special Education Collaborative is considered to be an extension of the school system and should be fully paid under the tuition assessment that was in the Budget. In addition, the district's tuition payment for in district transportation should be negotiated at a lower rate to continue services when the closure ends.

The district has reached an agreement with Durham School Services in the amount of 77% of the daily rate which will cover the cost of their employees' contractual earnings. This is a savings for the system of about \$85,000 per week. Durham School Services has also been available for the system by providing transportation for the homeless to both North High and Worcester Technical High schools.

Ms. Novick asked if there is evidence that Durham School Services is paying their employees.

Mr. Allen stated that, as part of the agreement, Durham is required to provide evidence of the weekly payroll.

Ms. Novick asked if there are any other outstanding vendors that have not been discussed.

Mr. Allen stated that the system is still waiting for guidance from DESE regarding out of district transportation providers.

Ms. Novick made the following motion:

Request that the Administration provide the information on out of district transportation services when DESE provides its guidance.

On a roll call of 6-0-1 (absent Mr. Monfredo), the motion was approved.

On a roll call, the vote to file the items collectively was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Miss McCullough, Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty	6
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Against the motion:	0
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Absent: Mr. Monfredo	$\frac{1}{7}$
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The motion carried.

Classroom
Coverage for
Teachers

16. gb #0-129 - Ms. Novick
(March 27, 2020)

Request that the Administration report on coverage of classes of students whose teachers are on an extended leave or otherwise not working.

Ms. Boulais stated that the Superintendent has made the decision to retain the long-term substitute teachers that were currently teaching a classroom before the closing of the schools regardless of whether the teacher they were covering for returns or not. The Superintendent extended the commitment for long-term substitute teachers until May 1, 2020 due to the current circumstances. This will insure that, if there is a teacher that does goes out on a leave, a long-term substitute will be available to assist in that classroom. She further stated that, due to the current work conditions, many teachers who were either out or scheduled for a leave of absences decided to continue to work.

On a roll call, the vote to file the item was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey,
Mr. Foley, Miss McCullough,
Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty 6

Against the motion: 0

Absent: Mr. Monfredo $\frac{1}{7}$

The motion carried.

Advanced
Placement Exam
Policy/consider
amendment to

17. gb #0-130 - Ms. Novick
(March 27, 2020)

To waive the policy requiring that students who take A.P. courses must take the A.P. test for that course.

Ms. Novick stated that she is asking her colleagues to take a vote to withdraw the policy on Advanced Placement Exams until the end of the school year.

She stated that requiring a student to take the exam is unjust given the circumstances and that the State has changed the exam from multiple choice to a 45 minute online written version that has to be mailed in. She further stated that she is concerned about the various software applications that the students have to download and their privacy issues. She feels that it is an equity issue.

Superintendent Binienda stated it is too early to make that decision to withdraw the policy and believes that every student must take the test. If the student doesn't take the test, he or she will drop to an honors class not the A.P. one. Due to the guidance from the State, students will only be tested on work that has been done from August to March.

Dr. Ganas stated that not only are the A.P. Coordinators, Principals and Administration providing additional support to students during this time but also the College Board has provided additional support to these students through their A.P. Classroom Program. The A.P. exam will only cover the contents learned through March and it will consist of two documents within the content area of the course. The students will have to analyze these two documents and submit their exam. If students do not have WiFi or a Chromebook, College Board has stated that it will provide the tools and supports to those students to allow them to take the exam. As for student privacy, the WPS will be getting guidance from the State soon along with the two dates for the exams and an indication of what software will be required.

Ms. Novick stated that if a student wants to be among the top 10% of their class, the only way that can happen is if a student pays for the A.P. exam. If they cannot pay for the exam, then they will not be able to become a valedictorian or salutatorian because the A.P. credits will not be on their transcript. She also stated that students have 2 dates to take the exam on their home computers or in writing, which in the past was multiple choice questions.

She wondered what that would look like in terms of the grading and scoring of this exam and does not think the system should be requiring students to take the exam at this time.

Dr. Ganius stated that the A.P. exam's fee is 93 dollars and that most of the students are on free or reduced lunch which allows them to take tests for a reduced cost of 15 dollars. When a student submits the form for the reduced fee, there are no questions asked. If a student is unable to pay the 15 dollars, the district does supplement it for them.

Ms. Novick stated that the form that the parents fill out has the income information on it which clearly states that you have to have a certain level of income to qualify for the reduced fee and this form is filled out after the student signs up for the A.P. course. She further stated that during the pandemic, the students should not be required to take the test.

Dr. Ganius stated that the all high schools provide an A.P. Family Night where information is provided to the parents and students on all available courses, an overview of the programs and the fees for the exam. The students are also told about the benefits of taking the A.P. exam to help them prepare for college.

Superintendent Binienda discussed the reduced fee and stated that all principals will help a student that is not able to pay for that reduced fee and therefore it is not an equity issue. In addition, the WPS awards A.P. diplomas to students who take the exam.

Student Representative Kwaku Nyarko discussed the difference between what the students expected when they signed up for the A.P. course and what is happening now. The A.P. Program from the College Board is a platform for students to take practice test questions. This is good but that program was designed on what the test was, not what it is now. To take a test in 45 minutes which was originally a two-hour exam is not feasible. He believes that the test should not be mandatory at this time. He feels that it is not the A.P. exam that makes the class advanced but rather the hard work and the challenges that make it advanced.

Mr. Foley stated that the two different issues being discussed are equity and the A.P. exam. He would like to discuss these issues at a later date when the Committee and the Administration are able to review all the information. He also stated that he was happy to hear that the College Board is providing support to the students and would like the Administration to encourage them to take the test. However, he thinks that it should not be mandatory and the Committee should waive the requirement at this time.

Ms. McCullough indicated that many parents are concerned that what their child has studied in the A.P. course is not what will be on the test and that their child is not comfortable taking the exam at this point in time. She also reiterated what Superintendent Binienda had stated, that if a student chooses not to take the A.P. exam, it will impact their GPA and that course will be considered an honors course on their transcript.

Mrs. Clancey requested that all parents and students are notified of the information regarding the benefits of taking the A.P exam and the impact of not taking it.

Mr. Foley questioned that if the Committee votes to waive the policy to allow students not to take the A.P. exam, why can't it also waive the policy to keep the course as an A.P course not an honors course for those students who don't take the exam.

Superintendent Binienda stated that there would be no benefit to those students who do decide to take the test. Why should the students who decided not to take the test get the same benefit as the students who did take the test.

Ms. Novick made the following amendment to her item:

Request that the School Committee strike the final 2 sentences of the Advanced Placement Exam Policy, effective for this school year as follows:

Students must take the Advanced Placement Examination in their course in order to receive Advanced Placement credit for the course. Students who do not take the Advanced Placement Examination, but pass the course, shall receive honors credit for the course.

On a roll call of 5-2 (nays Miss Biancheria and Mr. Monfredo), the item as amended was approved.

On a roll call, the vote was as follows:

For the motion: Mrs. Clancey, Mr. Foley, Miss McCullough, Ms. Novick, Mayor Petty	5
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Against the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mr. Monfredo	$\frac{2}{7}$
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The motion carried.

18. gb #0-133 - Mrs. Clancey
(March 27, 2020)

Student Learning/
efforts during the shut
down

Request that the Administration provide a report on ongoing efforts to engage students in learning during the shutdown.

On a roll call, the vote to refer the item to the Administration was as follows:

For the motion: Miss Biancheria, Mrs. Clancey,
Mr. Foley, Miss McCullough,
Mr. Monfredo, Ms. Novick
Mayor Petty 7

Against the motion: $\frac{0}{7}$

The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Helen A. Friel, Ed.D.
Clerk of the School Committee