MASCONOMET REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

December 18, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: J. McLean, Chair, Boxford
E. Clements, Boxford
A. Heaphy-Tenney, Topsfield
L. MacInnis, Middleton
J. Horrigan, Boxford
W. Hodges, Topsfield
T. Currier, Vice Chair, Middleton
M. Ogden, Topsfield
K. Petrone, Middleton
C. Bolzan, Boxford
M. Alexander, Middleton

MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: M. Harvey, Superintendent

A. **Call to Order** – J. McLean Chair, called the School Committee Meeting of December 18, 2024, to Order at 7:02pm, at the High School Library.

B. **Remarks from the Chair**
J. McLean thanked the School Committee for the work done this year and advised that Budget season is beginning. At the next meeting there will be an update on progress of the School Committee goals.

C. **Public Comment** –
Sarah Guido, Topsfield, spoke regarding her support of the turf field project, and spoke about the need for a multi-use stadium for all sports.
Joel Harington, Topsfield, spoke against the turf field and plastic waste.
Cynthia Boccia, Masco paraprofessional, spoke regarding the lack of contract with the Paraprofessionals and why she chose to become a paraprofessional.

D. **Student Advisory Board Update** – None

E. Appointment of Brad Denton to the Position of Assistant Superintendent for Student Services
M. Harvey informed the School Committee that Brad Denton has been "Acting Assistant Superintendent for Student Services" since March 2024. He reviewed his background at Masconomet, his relationships with staff and the community and his understanding of the needs of Special Educators. He presented Brad's strengths, his commitment and what he has accomplished thus far in his acting role, adding that he has led the review of the Special Education Dept. programming. Based on Brad's experience, his relationships and his current performance in the acting role, M. Harvey is recommending to appoint Brad Denton.
A. Heaphy-Tenney proposed tabling the vote until the next meeting to provide adequate time for consideration and questions related to the recommendation. Discussion ensued about the recommendation and the assessment and appointing process. Several committee members asked for more information and data to back up the recommendation. M. Ogden stated that it is not the School Committee's role to hire Brad Denton, it is Superintendent Harvey's role to hire staff.

A motion was made to approve the appointment of Brad Denton as Assistant Superintendent of Student Services by M. Ogden, seconded by M. Alexander.
Brad Denton informed the School Committee that he is a member of the Masco community and is taking this role seriously, not as a steppingstone position. Masco is a big part of his life and who he is. J. Horrigan expressed his concerns. M. Harvey clarified that approving the motion is allowing him to enter into a contract with Brad for this position. A. Heaphy-Tenney stated that she did not have enough time or information to support approval, given that the details of the recommendation were provided only hours before the meeting and that she did not feel prepared to move forward with the vote today. T. Currier added that it is the School Committee's job to hire the Superintendent and trust him to make the best hiring decisions and do his job. L. McInnis added that Brad Denton has attended and presented at a number of School Committee meetings and is part of the Leadership Team. She supports the recommendation. M. Alexander agreed and trusts M. Harvey's recommendation acknowledging that M. Harvey has reviewed Brad's work over the last several months prior to making this recommendation.

Rollcall Vote:

A. Heaphy-Tenney: abstain	**J. Horrigan – abstain**	**C. Bolzan – yes**
W. Hodges – yes	**K. Petrone – yes**	**T. Currier -yes**
E. Clements – abstain	**M. Ogden – yes**	**M. Alexander – yes**
L. MacInnis – yes	**J. McLean - yes**	

MOTION: Approve recommendation of Brad Denton
VOTE: 8-0-3, Motion Carried

F. <u>Athletic Field Presentation</u>

Fred Glore, Boxford, introduced Pam Newcombe of PJC Organics and Susan Chapnick of the Arlington Conservation Commission. He reviewed the beliefs, benefits, limitations and presentation goals of Real Grass is Safer.
Fred reviewed the benefits of natural grass v. artificial turf including most athletes prefer natural grass, the environmental benefits, lower cost, no definitive end of life and supports of sustainability initiatives. The limitations of natural grass include maintenance, overuse and use of fertilizers and herbicides/pesticides. Fred also reviewed the cost comparison over a 10-year projection period between natural grass and turf field.
Pam Newcombe, PJC Organics, presented the Athletic Field Performance Tiers. She conducted a site walk of Masco fields in September and again in December. Based on use expectations the fields were not in bad shape. She reviewed improvements that could be made to the existing fields.
Susan Chapnick, Arlington Conservation Commission reviewed her resume and experience for the School Committee. She stated that research shows that very low levels of chemical components in the infill are soluble in water and the chemicals can percolate into the groundwater and contaminate soils. The chemicals that are not soluble in water can migrate with the particles of the turf. She reviewed possible chemicals used in alternative infill other than chrome rubber. She reviewed findings regarding heat on a turf field in Maryland in 2021. She reviewed the human impacts of extreme heat and the environmental impacts from heated runoff.

Susan Chapnick also spoke regarding Executive Order No. 618, which covers biodiversity goals against turf and Executive Order No. 569 which covers preparation for impacts of climate change and resiliency. She stated that turf fields add to pollution, have impacts on groundwater and surface water, wildlife habitat and biodiversity impacts.
Fred Glore recapped the expectations and recommendations of Real Grass is Safer for the District to consider for the athletic fields. He recommended establishing a sub-committee to review the field replacement.
M. Ogden asked if the fields presented for comparison host 15 teams each season as there was no comparison in the presentation. The Masco field hockey team did not play any games at Masco, which contributed to the condition of the field. She also asked if the organic fertilizer is regulated, what the infill was on the turf field in the heat slide and if water is needed for the natural fields. Discussion followed regarding playable hours on the Masco fields. She also added that discussions regarding a turf field have been ongoing for 15 years. J. McLean stated that Masco has 1 field for 11-15 teams during the fall season. The teams need access to the field for playoffs in the fall and there is currently no controlled access to the fields to be able to host playoff games. Information regarding playable hours on grass fields compared to turf fields would be helpful. Masco currently has the DCI subcommittee who is reviewing the field project, and no additional subcommittee is needed. Discussion followed regarding playable hours for Masco teams and the design proposal for 2 fields. A feasibility study was conducted by Stantec and presented to the School Committee. The report provided by Berry & Dunn was discussed. Access to these historical documents was discussed and will be provided to the new members.

G. <u>First Reading of Policy Section D</u>

M. Ogden reviewed the subcommittee recommendations and changes to Policy Section D. All of the sections referring to procedure will be deleted. The School Committee does not have authority or oversight in day-to-day procedures. T. Currier added that a few of the sections are redundant. A motion was made to approve Section D as presented by T. Currier, seconded by A. Heaphy-Tenney and unanimously approved.

MOTION: Approve Section D
VOTE: 11-0, Motion Carried

H. <u>Superintendent's Report</u>

M. Harvey recognized DECA which attended the District 24 Conference Dec. 10-11, with 114 students in the top 7 who will compete at the state conference. He congratulated the Science Team which came in 2nd at the December meet. The School Quality Measures Survey will be sent to students, faculty, and parents on January 6th. On January 6th and 7th, the Nurses and Counselors will administer SBRIT Health Screening.

I. <u>Sub-Committee Reports</u>

<u>Community Relations</u> – the next community dialogue will be January 22, 2025; and the survey discussed at the last meeting will be live by mid-January and provided to the entire community.
<u>DCI/Building Committee</u> – met December 13th regarding the HVAC study proposal in the amount of $156,000. They are waiting for other estimates to be provided for the softball

fields and elevators. The next meeting will be January 10, 2025, to review the additional estimates and prep for a presentation to the School Committee.
Anti-Racism – met prior to the School Committee meeting where the charter was reviewed, and outreach was discussed.
Policy – meeting January 13, 2025.
Liaison Updates – Middleton Select Board is meeting January 7, 2025.
Topsfield will schedule a meeting with the Select Board. Boxford held their monthly breakfast.
Negotiations – Next meeting with the Mediator is January 9th regarding the Paraprofessional negotiations.

J. Consent Agenda

1. Approval of December 4, 2024, Minutes.
2. Warrants in the amount of $2,042,081.42.
3. Accept MEF Grant.
4. Approve Overnight Disney World Field Trip date change.

A motion was made to approve the Consent Agenda, by T. Currier, seconded by M. Alexander and approved.

MOTION: Approve Consent Agenda
VOTE: 10-0-1 with J. Horrigan abstaining, Motion Carried.

The Meeting was adjourned at 9:18pm.

Submitted By: _____ Approved: _____
Lynn Viselli, Recording Secretary Date

Per the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, the list of documents that were either distributed to the Masconomet School Committee before the meeting in the packet or at the meeting.

1. Agenda
2. Appointment to Assistant Superintendent for Student Services
3. Athletic Fields Presentation
4. Policy Section D
5. Consent Agenda