

Gardner School Committee

City Council Chambers, 95 Pleasant Street, Gardner, Massachusetts

Regular Meeting – June 12, 2023

Members present: Mayor Michael Nicholson, Chairperson
Jennifer Pelavin, Vice Chairperson
Rachel Cormier, Secretary
John LaFreniere, Finance Officer
Anne Hurst
Shannon Leighton
Robert Swartz

School Personnel Present: Dr. Mark Pellegrino, Superintendent
Terri Hillman, Recording Secretary
Dr. Catherine Goguen, Chief Academic Officer
Ms. Courtney Dunn, Grants, Communications & Compliance Manager

Call to Order

Mayor Michael Nicholson, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. The meeting opened with a roll call and the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was broadcast live on Channel 8 (Gardner Educational Television Station).

Open Time for the General Public

No one from the General Public requested to speak.

Recognitions by the Superintendent

Dr. Pellegrino welcomed Ms. Christine Rayner, School Adjustment Counselor, Gardner Elementary School. She and Dr. Pellegrino introduced and presented certificates to two groups of GES 4th Grade Students. Two groups were recognized – 24 members of the Student Council and 23 members of the Peer Leaders. Many parents, siblings and friends of the students were present and it was an exciting time.

Dr. Pellegrino thanked the students for their service to the school and their fellow students. The students presented a picture to Mayor Nicholson.

Mayor Nicholson declared a recess (6:45 pm) of the School Committee meeting to allow time for a photo of the students to be taken on City Hall steps.

The meeting reconvened at 6:51 pm.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. LaFreniere moved that the Gardner Public School Committee vote to approve the Consent Agenda as presented:

- Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting of May 8, 2023 as recommended by the Chair.
- Approval of Minutes of Special Meeting of May 23, 2023 as recommended by the Chair.
- Approval of the following Warrants as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee:
 - Warrant #23-45 dated 05/11/23 in the amount of \$327,891.86
 - Warrant #23-46 dated 05/18/23 in the amount of \$430,279.98
 - Warrant #23-47 dated 05/25/23 in the amount of \$244,803.20
 - Warrant #23-48 dated 06/01/23 in the amount of \$548,754.95

Seconded by Mr. Swartz.

Vote – so voted.

Mayor Nicholson, Chairperson, abstained from voting.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Facilities Subcommittee

Mr. Swartz, Chairperson of the Facilities Subcommittee, reported that the Subcommittee met on June 8, 2023. The meeting took place in Gardner Elementary School and the minutes of the meeting were presented.

- The new concession stand and restroom facility were being used during the GHS graduation.
- The Maintenance Department now has the necessary equipment to maintain the turf at Watkins Field.

The Subcommittee voted to recommend to the full Committee that the Helen Mae Sauter Building and surrounding property, including Stone Field and the playground area behind Elm Street School be declared surplus on or about July 14, 2023 as recommended by Mr. Hawke, Director of Finance & Operations. (See Item #3527.)

Finance Subcommittee

Mr. LaFreniere, Chairperson of the Finance Subcommittee, reported that the Subcommittee met on June 8, 2023. Minutes of the meeting were presented.

The Subcommittee reviewed the Expense Report. Mr. Hawke noted that the process to close unused PO's and transfer funds within budgets to cover any negative balances has started. He presented the current status of all Revolving Funds which are healthy and should end the year with positive balances.

Student Advisory Board

Amber Cameron, Student Representative, was not present this evening.

NEW BUSINESS

Item #3526 – Keystone Educational Collaborative

Mr. LaFreniere moved that the Gardner Public School Committee vote to approve Keystone Educational Collaborative’s (2 Shaker Road, Shirley, MA) proposed purchase and construction at 143 Joslin Street, Leominster, MA.

Seconded by Mr. Swartz.

Vote – So voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Dr. Pellegrino, who represents Gardner on the Keystone Educational Collaborative Board of Directors, explained that the Collaborative needs more space to support students. This proposed facility will support twelve classrooms, ancillary service space, office space and conference space for the member districts. A vote of approval is needed from all member cities and towns.

Item #3527 – Declaration of Surplus Property

Mr. LaFreniere moved that the Gardner Public School Committee vote to declare the Helen Mae Sauter Building and surrounding property including Stone Field and the playground area behind Elm Street School as surplus school property on or about June 14, 2023 as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee.

Seconded by Mr. Swartz.

Vote by Roll Call – Mrs. Cormier, yes; Mrs. Hurst, yes; Mr. LaFreniere, yes,

Mrs. Leighton, yes, Mrs. Pelavin, yes and Mr. Swartz, yes.

Count – 6 yes.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

An Assessor Parcel View of the area was presented.

Item #3528 – FY24 Contract Amendments (AFSCME, Unit A, Unit B)

Mrs. Hurst moved that the Gardner Public School Committee vote to approve the Contract Amendment between the City of Gardner School Committee and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees AFL-CIO, State Council 93, Local 1717 as follows:

- **Article XXII – Stay Well Buy Back**
- **FY 24 - Salary Schedule**

Seconded by Mr. Swartz.

Vote – So voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Seconded by Mrs. Leighton.

Vote – 5 in favor; 1 abstention (Mr. LaFreniere).

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Mrs. Hurst moved that the Gardner Public School Committee vote to approve the Contract Amendment between the City of Gardner School Committee and the Gardner Education Association - Unit A and Unit B - as follows:

Unit A

- **Article XXII – Leaves of Absence**
- **Section 1, Paragraph E – Stay Well Buy Back**
- **Appendix B – Salary Schedule**

Unit B

- **Article XXII – Stay Well Buy Back**
- **Appendix A – Salary Schedule**

**Seconded by Mrs. Leighton. Vote – 5 in favor; 1 abstention (Mr. LaFreniere).
Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.**

Item #3529 – Superintendent’s Evaluation

Mrs. Pelavin moved that the Gardner Public School Committee vote to accept the End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluation Report for Superintendent Mark Pellegrino, EdD, dated June 12, 2023, as presented.

**Seconded by Mr. Swartz. Vote – so voted.
Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.**

Mrs. Pelavin moved that the Gardner Public School Committee vote to grant a 5% (five percent) salary increase to Superintendent Mark Pellegrino.

**Seconded by Mr. Swartz. Vote – so voted.
Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.**

Item #3530 – Curriculum Coordinator Update

The Chief Academic Officer’s report was included in the members’ packets. Dr. Goguen was present this evening.

Item #3531 - Grants Administrator Update

Ms. Courtney Dunn, Grants, Communications & Compliance Manager, presented her report to the Committee. A printout of the report was included in members’ packets.

- FY23 Entitlement Grants received have increased
- FY23/24 ESSER III/IVAQ total allotment was \$5,966,958. Ms. Dunn reported on funds spent in FY23 and plans for remaining funds in FY24.
- FY23 Competitive Grants awarded have increased.
- FY24 Grant Application in Process – Partnership with Monty Tech After Dark Program to serve 20 GHS students seeking vocational training (training to begin in FY25, but grant will support planning) Chapter 74 Perkins Funding.
- DESE is currently in the process of changing the grant management system, to a new program. Ms. Dunn will be attending a training session on June 26, 2023.

Item #3523 – Special Education Update

The Special Education Update Report was included in the members' packets. Ms. Joyce West, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, was not present this evening.

Item #3524– SEPAC Report

Mrs. Hurst reported that the SEPAC Committee is trying to set up regular monthly meetings.

Item #3525 – MSBA – New School Building

Dr. Pellegrino reported on the ribbon cutting event held at the GES. There were many representatives from the community present.

COMMUNICATIONS

Dr. Pellegrino reported on the Middle School's band and chorus Spring Concerts. The gymnasium was packed for both shows. At the Great East performance all groups earned gold except the 6/7 grade chorus who earned platinum.

Dr. Pellegrino told the Committee members that Mr. Arthur Murphy , Principal of the GMS, is resigning from his position.

Dr. Pellegrino thanked the Committee members for their evaluation of his work during the past school year.

FINAL COMMENTS

Mrs. Leighton said it was a great school year. She thanked everyone for helping in her position as School Committee member. She congratulated all the GHS and Gardner Academy graduates.

Mrs. Hurst thanked everyone for the work accomplished this year. She shared thoughts about her years on the School Committee.

Mrs. Pelavin congratulated the graduates and wished everyone a Happy Summer.

Mr. Swartz congratulated the 4th grade students who were recognized this evening. He attended the Gardner High and Gardner Academy graduations and congratulated those students. He wished everyone a great summer.

Mr. LaFreniere congratulated the graduates and Dr. Pellegrino on a good evaluation. He has been a member of the School Committee for 20 years and sees things working very smoothly in the recent year.. He wished everyone a great summer.

Mrs. Cormier said it was great to see all the 4th grade students here tonight and especially the many parents who attended the recognition ceremony. It is a great reminder of what we are doing here. She mentioned the letter Mr. Murphy received from Mr. Tom Walter, a judge for the recent music festival held at the Middle School. The letter is in Mr. Murphy's report to the School Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Pelavin moved to adjourn.

Seconded by Mr. LaFreniere.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Vote – so voted.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.

Rachel Cormier
Secretary

Terri Hillman, Recording Secretary