

FINAL

RICHMOND SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING Tuesday, March 12, 2024 - 6:00 PM

PRESENT: Beth Choquette, Superintendent/Principal; Ina Wilhelm, Chair; Karen Youdelman; Kimmie Leeco; Nate Steele; Mary Shook, Dir. SPED

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 15, 2024: Ina moved to approve the minutes as amended. She was seconded by Kimmie and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

BUDGET UPDATE: The increase over last year's budget was reduced from 7.5% to 4.58%. The Committee will be meeting tomorrow to review the revised budget with the Budget Advisory Committee. Beth outlined the changes that resulted in that decrease.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT: Beth noted that MCAS testing will run from March 27th to May 31st, which is a longer period than usual. It will be necessary to extend the MCAS testing as 8th graders are now piloting the MCAS Civics Test, which is new this year.

Beth has invited Manny Nogueira, an Amateur BMX National Champion to display his skills and talk to the students about bullying and how to be a buddy, not a bully. Funding for this event will be under the Safety, Health and Wellbeing of Students section of Title grants.

A discussion followed of a presentation in March by Katie Novack (Universal Design for Learning), funded under Professional Development grants.

POLICIES:

EFC - Universal Free School Meals. That is the name of the policy as expanded by the State. One of the questions raised by the change is whether Richmond is qualified under CEP. If so, only the second of the two bulleted sections need to be followed.

EFD School Nutrition Program Charge Policy. There was considerable discussion as to how negative balances of payments would be handled and how that would impact the students. The Committee worked on wording this section of the policy so that no student would be embarrassed when asking for food and that no hungry student would be denied food. The Committee also discussed having parents contact the Administration Office directly rather than going through Tammy Jervas of Food Services, with questions concerning the state of their account.

A second reading and vote on the policies worked on at this meeting will take place at the next meeting.

SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Mary Shook reported that she has applied for an Extraordinary Relief grant, which she doubts Richmond will qualify for this year since they cannot include transportation in the application. She does think, however, that it will be granted to Richmond next year and that Richmond will get the Circuit Breaker grant in July.

New IEP Update: The Special Ed. Teacher and Mary have done the training and will speak with Beth about doing training for the staff after the MCAS is done. Mary spoke to the efficacy of the IEP program, especially when combined with other additional supports that have been put in place for the students. She will contact Rebecca Phillips, SPED Director and Superintendent in Hancock to work on another SEPAC meeting for parents in the spring.

Transitions Meetings for Students moving on to High School: Once Mary knows which high schools graduating students are choosing to go to, she will contact the parents and the schools.

FINANCIAL REPORT: No great changes. Ina raised a question about the School Committee Legal Expenses line, which Beth will refer to Sharon.

Karen asked about custodial services. When advised that Richmond has hired two custodians, she asked if there would be savings if the work was outsourced. Beth felt outsourcing was much more expensive. In response to a question from the Committee, Beth said she will check with Tracy to see if he uses software to track maintenance costs.

Ina moved to accept the proposed budget as presented. Kimmie seconded and the motion passed by unanimous consent.

Nate asked that Beth send out a notice to parents, advising them of an FDA advisory warning of high levels of lead contamination in cinnamon. They particularly noted that dollar store brands and other, cheaper brands showed the worst levels.

There being no further business before the Committee, Ina moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:11. Kimmie seconded and the motion was adopted by unanimous vote.

Submitted by: Phyllis LeBeau