

**Richmond Consolidated School
School Committee
Executive Session Meeting Minutes
Friday August 7, 2020 at 6:00PM**

Approved

Meeting to be held by conference call due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

An Executive Order from the Governor of Massachusetts relieves public bodies from the requirement in the Open Meeting Law that meetings be conducted in a public place that is open and physically accessible to the public, provided that the public body makes provision to ensure public access to the deliberations through telephone, internet, or satellite enabled audio or video conferencing or any other technology that enables the public to clearly follow the proceedings of the public body in real time. In addition, all members of a public body may participate in a meeting remotely; the Open Meeting Law's requirement that a quorum of the body and the chair be physically present at the meeting location is suspended.

All other provisions of the Open Meeting Law, such as the requirements regarding posting notice of meetings and creating and maintaining accurate meeting minutes, as well as the limited, enumerated purposes for holding an executive session, remain in effect.

Present: Adeline Ellis, Ina Wilhelm, Dewey Wyatt, Dr Peter Dillon, Neal Pilson, Jill Pompei

Executive Session. In public session Motion by IW, AE 2nd, roll call all in favor 4:45pm.

Purpose: to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining for teacher contracts (because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect of the bargaining position of the School Committee, and to conduct a strategy session in preparation for negotiations with non-bargaining unit personnel, both pursuant to MGL c.39 § 23B A

Peter updated the School Committee on status of negotiations on the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for school opening with the Richmond Educational Association (REA). Peter, Dewey, Neal, Jill have been participating on behalf of the District. There has been a series of very productive meetings. Given all the factors, Peter will recommend starting remotely.

Nice progress being made on a long list of items being negotiated. The group is working on metrics from Richmond and Berkshire County to drive objective decision making. Expectations around remote work will be extraordinarily stronger than what was in place in the spring. We are working to first get professionals safely in to the building (to promote collaboration, direct support, getting more comfortable). It is important to get to a point they feel safe and comfortable so they can effectively do their work.

There was discussion about the frustration those representing the District had with what appears to be a strong influence on us locally, from the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA), and the push to do nothing but remote. The challenges and complexities in Richmond and Berkshire County are far from that in Boston or other large districts. We are losing out on advantages and strengths that Richmond has.

Ina asked about the Re-Opening Committee, that included teachers, and the work done on opening plans prior to this. Jill explained the group felt opening in person was very likely not the way to go. They were working on hybrid and remote models, but the benefit of working more on hybrid was that it had elements of both so that forced group to think through everything. No one on that committee expressed one way or another they didn't feel comfortable going to the building. The teachers articulated wanting to go only with remote only after the MTA presented their view. Dewey said it was frustrating in how the negotiations started with a low collaborative tone, feeling less like a small organization, but more like a large, less agile one. However, Dewey feels we have gotten over that hump and there is now very good open dialogue, improved trust, and good focus toward a workable plan.

Ina said when we are remote, there needs to be accountability, clear schedules, lesson plans, measures. Peter has stressed this point. Adeline asked about overcoming the emotional aspects and feeling safe. Peter said a good part of the discussion is having good metrics that are timely to make sound decisions for any shift in plans.

More work to be done. A SC vote on initial opening plan is to be made in public session.

Return to open session returned 5:07pm All in favor.

Submitted by DW