

TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED MINUTES

OF

THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

SPECIAL MEETING

OF

MARCH 18, 2020

SUBMITTED FOR THE APPROVAL OF:

THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

AND

THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

“AN OPEN MEETING ADVANTAGE FOR THE COMMUNITY OF METHUEN”

RECORDED BY:

DEIDRE RUNGE, PUBLIC RECORDER

**TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED MINUTES**  
**METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**MARCH 18, 2020**

The Special Meeting of the Methuen School Committee was posted for 5:30PM at Methuen High School, Media Center and phone in:

“Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 30A, Section 18, and the Governor’s March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Methuen School Committee is being conducted via remote participation by the Methuen School Committee. No in-person attendance of members of the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Governor’s Order. Individuals that would like to have access will be given information at the beginning of the meeting.

**CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE:**

**ROLL CALL**

Ryan DiZoglio (Present @ MHS)  
Karen Hallbauer (Present @ MHS)  
Jessica MacLeod (Present by Phone)  
Susan Nicholson (Present by Phone)  
Louann Santos (NP)  
Jana Zanni Pesce, Vice Chairperson (Present by Phone)  
Mayor Neil Perry, Chairperson (Present by Phone)

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Ryan DiZoglio  
Karen Hallbauer  
Jessica MacLeod  
Susan Nicholson  
Jana Zanni Pesce, Vice Chairperson  
Mayor Neil Perry, Chairperson

**MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:**

Louann Santos

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Brandi L. Kwong, Ed.D. Superintendent of Schools  
Eric S. McGee, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessments and Grants  
Ian Gosselin, Business Administrator

Edward Lussier, Director of Technology  
Seth Graham, MCTV Film Crew  
Martha Sirois, Public Recorder

**CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE:**

Mayor Perry called this Workshop/Business Session to order at 5:30 p.m. with a quorum of Members in attendance, and listed above.

**Acceptance of the Agenda**

**MOTION:** Member Hallbauer moved to accept the Agenda for March 18, 2020  
Member Nicholson seconded the Motion

**AMENDMENT MOTION:** Mayor Perry asked for a motion to amend the agenda and add a #3 Postponement of the March 23<sup>rd</sup> workshop and to reschedule on March 30.

Member Zanni Pesce moved to add the amendment  
Member Nicholson seconded the Motion

**ROLL CALL**

Ryan DiZoglio (Y)  
Karen Hallbauer (Y)  
Jessica MacLeod (Y)  
Susan Nicholson (Y)  
Louann Santos (NP)  
Jana Zanni Pesce, Vice Chairperson (Y)  
Mayor Neil Perry, Chairperson (Y)

**VOTE:** 6-0-0 Approved

**AMENDMENT MOTION:** Mayor Perry asked for a motion to accept the agenda as amended  
Member Zanni Pesce moved to approve the agenda as amended  
Member Nicholson seconded the Motion

**ROLL CALL**

Ryan DiZoglio (Y)  
Karen Hallbauer (Y)  
Jessica MacLeod (Y)  
Susan Nicholson (Y)  
Louann Santos (NP)  
Jana Zanni Pesce, Vice Chairperson (Y)  
Mayor Neil Perry, Chairperson (Y)

**VOTE:** 6-0-0 APPROVED

**APPROVED AGENDA AS AMENDED:**

**ROLL CALL**

Ryan DiZoglio (Y)

Karen Hallbauer (Y)

Jessica MacLeod (Y)

Susan Nicholson (Y)

Louann Santos (NP)

Jana Zanni Pesce, Vice Chairperson (Y)

Mayor Neil Perry, Chairperson (Y)

**VOTE:** 6-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

**Flag Salute**

**Public Participation**

There was a phone number posted 978-722-6080 for the public to call into the meeting.

There was no Public Participation

**#1 Personnel Matters requiring Committee Action**

The Mayor asked for a motion on compensation during emergency closure.

**MOTION:** Member Hallbauer moved that the Methuen School Committee approve the payment of its hourly employees their regular rates of pay during the three-week period of time when school is closed based on the Governors directive.

Member DiZoglio seconded the Motion

**DISCUSSION:**

Member Pesce – Do we know if it is illegal to pay these people that don't have a contractual reason to be paid.

The Superintendent explained that Superintendents have not received any direction from the State yet. She told them that legal and surrounding superintendents that she meets with daily, say that a majority of School Committees are paying hourly staff from now to April 7 per the Governors Stay at Home Order. There is a difference of opinion on per diem staff. We are looking at the fact that we have a directive to close our schools. She told the Committee her plan to have the hourly employees work at different jobs.

Member DiZoglio – I understand the concern regarding the legality, but even if we approve this and the Governor says differently that would override our vote.

Mayor said he was uncomfortable voting yes tonight not knowing all the information. He wants to have people repurposed to receive pay. We have 3 options, vote yes and the Governor can overturn, no is not what I want to see for our staff or we table for now.

Member MacLeod – There are many other districts doing this. I think it is unnecessary to delay the vote.

Member Nicholson – I actually agree with two of the Mayors options. We vote either to table or to vote yes. I believe we should take a vote today. If the staff applies for unemployment on Monday, the cost would ultimately come back to the district. I am ready to vote yes and take care of our staff

**ROLL CALL**

Ryan DiZoglio (Y)

Karen Hallbauer (Y)

Jessica MacLeod (Y)

Susan Nicholson (Y)

Louann Santos (NP)

Jana Zanni Pesce, Vice Chairperson (P)

Mayor Neil Perry, Chairperson (P)

**VOTE:** 4-0-2 APPROVED

**#2 School Closure Update**

The Superintendent updated the Committee about the Methuen Public Schools’ staffing plan and explained how the district is working in the now.

**#3 Postponement of the March 23<sup>rd</sup> workshop and to reschedule on March 30.**

The Superintendent asked the Committee to consider moving the March 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting since they were meeting tonight.

**MOTION:** Member Nicholson motioned to move the March 23<sup>rd</sup> workshop to March 30<sup>th</sup>

Member Pesce seconded the Motion

**VOTE:** 6-0-0 APPROVED

**ADJOURNEMENT**

With no further business from the Committee, the Mayor asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:27 p.m.

**MOTION:** Member DiZoglio motioned to adjourn the Special Meeting  
Member Nicholson seconded the Motion

**VOTE:** 6-0-0 APPROVED

**Respectfully submitted,  
Deidre Runge, Public Recorder  
Methuen Public Schools**