

TRURO SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
June 11, 2020 5:15 PM
Truro Central School Virtual Zoom Meeting
AGENDA

Chair - Kenneth Oxtoby
Vice Chair - Michelle Jarusiewicz
Dennis Clark
Christine Roderick - Secretary

Superintendent- Mike Gradone
Principal - Bob Beaudet
Director Student Services - Stephanie Costigan
Recorder-Kathleen Rosenkampff

- 1. Call to Order:**
- 2. Approval of Minutes: May 14, 2020**
- 3. Dates to Remember:**

June 25 - TSC meeting
July 16 (?) - TSC meeting
August 20 (?) – TSC meeting

4. Administrator's Report:

- 4.1 Superintendent/Mike Gradone - TCS Reopening Committee**
- 4.2 Principal/Bob Beaudet - reopening so far; remote learning update**
- 4.3 Director Student Services/Stephanie Costigan - summer school (extended school year)**

5. Visitor/Faculty Statements:

6. Subcommittees:

7. Unfinished Business:

7.1 Superintendent's Goals - There are four goals carried over from prior years:

Reading - The goal on which we had made real progress has taken a serious hit from the Covid-19 closure. We want at least 90% of our students to make at least a year's progress in Reading. Because of the emergency closure, we have two problems: some students certainly did not, because remote learning simply doesn't support the corrective diagnostic instruction necessary to support readers who struggle; and we have no chance to assess students' status and needs, because that requires teachers and children together for diagnostic interaction. This goal will have to be revised and continued, likely for a couple of years.

Staff Development - Once again, the impact of the closure is significant. Our teachers have done a remarkable job of adjusting on the fly, essentially without preparation, to the new realities of remote learning. I admire both their commitment, and their enthusiasm for the task. With the real possibility of continuing remote learning in some fashion (to be determined, no sooner than August, and maybe on and off all year), we have to focus on what we learned this spring, how we can make it better, and what other elementary schools have learned on the same journey.

Emergency Planning - Life is what happens while you were making other plans. The planning we had in mind a year ago was moving along nicely. We were building a stronger relationship with the Police Department. We even had the fourth draft of our new Pandemic Plan

ready to roll out, back on March 14. Until we have a vaccine, planning will be part of everyday life at TCS.

Family and Community Engagement - This is hard to do, remotely. Since early March, we've made a particular effort to be responsive to the Town's needs, whether budget, or facility (Town Meeting, Farmers Market), or just showing the School Department is part of the Town team. Families, on the other hand, have faced unimagined demands for their children's education. We may try to assess their perspective as we reopen. I don't expect we'll ask any more of them than we have to, for at least a few months.

The Committee may wish to add a goal or two to the list. The membership has changed since these were made priorities, and new perspectives may suggest different ones. This topic should appear on each agenda, until the Committee is satisfied it has a solid basis for moving ahead. A vote will be appropriate when the Committee reaches that point.

7.2 Budgets update - As we close out Fiscal 2020, and wait for Town Meeting's consideration of our request for FY21, we should keep an eye on FY 22, as well. There are uncertainties about local revenues, state aid, and the possibility of federal support for state and local budgets. Together, the impact next year is likely to continue into at least the 2021-22 fiscal and school year.

As the current year draws to a close, we have in place a budget freeze at the request of the Town. The Town Manager and I have had conversations about the details of the freeze; for example, she suggested the best way to finish the handicapped railing project was to charge it to the current operating budget, which has already been appropriated, rather than seek a new appropriation in next year's capital plan. We will also proceed with technology purchases within the current capital plan, and begin preliminary purchases of masks, gloves, and other protective equipment.

In a normal year, we would also spend some of the remaining operating balance on supplies for next year, and prepayment of a portion of ongoing Special Ed tuitions, as allowed by state law. The rest of the operating budget balance would be turned back to the Town at the close of the fiscal year. It's not yet clear whether this is advisable under the freeze. I may have some guidance from the Town by the time of next week's meeting.

Turning to next year, FY21, we were asked to reduce our request of Town Meeting, and my response was the list the Committee reviewed in May. The priority in developing those reductions was sustainability; the ability to cover those cuts next year and beyond without reducing staff or services to children. The goal is not only an adequate budget in FY 21, but a sufficient foundation on which to build the FY22 budget. Deep cuts in '21 that must be restored in '22 (for instance, in a Special Ed tuition that will continue to be necessary for several years) would be short-sighted. I will try to avoid such reductions, and be certain that their implications are understood, should they be necessary at some point. They do not appear to be, at the moment.

There are many interwoven factors in play: operating expenses; unexpended end-of-year balances to support the Town's Free Cash; future budgets; and persistently, the unanticipated costs of coping with the virus, which will set in as we plan to reopen. All of these will play out against a backdrop of reduced revenues at all levels of government. With no simple answers, the Chair's suggestion that the Committee meet more often than usual makes good sense.

No vote is necessary. The Committee may choose to take a vote, after its deliberation.

7.3 TCS Position on Support for Black Students - Parents and staff have inquired about whether the school will and should take a position on the country's racial troubles. Not surprisingly, this is an issue across the state, sufficient to have prompted a legal opinion from the Superintendents' Association general counsel supporting a Committee's right to take a stand. That opinion is enclosed. A vote may be in order.

8. New Business:

9. Other:

10. Executive Session: To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining. A memo will be forthcoming.

11. Adjournment:

Town Clerk

Posted: June 9, 2020

The matters listed above are those reasonably anticipated by the chair that may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

The meeting will take place on the Zoom meeting platform. Members of the public who wish to participate in real time may find the online address on the Truro Central School home page, or may be invited by emailing rosenkampffk@truromass.org. The meeting will be recorded and posted to the home page.

