

UXBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE
April 26, 2023
UXBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY/ZOOM

School Committee Members in Attendance:

	Present	Absent
Dr. Bernie Audette, Chair	X	
Mrs. Chris Pezzullo, Vice Chair	X	
Mr. Pat Tuer, Member		X
Mr. Barry Desruisseaux, Member	X	
Mrs. Tiffany Bashaw, Member	X	
Mr. Jon Rota, Member	X	
Dr. Lisa Mobley, Member		X

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1. Call to Order

Dr. Audette called the meeting to order.

2. Pledge of Allegiance (6:32)

3. Public Comment (6:33)

No public comment

4. Student Representative Update (6:33)

No update

5. Superintendent Update (6:34-7:00)

a) Safety Town Hall:

Dr. Audette thanked Dr. Baldassarre and his team for hosting the public safety town hall and said he appreciated the collaboration between the schools and Uxbridge public safety. Dr. Baldassarre said the district will publish some answers that arose from questions asked at the town hall for the public to read.

Uxbridge School Committee Meeting Minutes
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b) After School Program:

Dr. Baldassarre passed out to the Committee an overview of the after school program. The program started that afternoon. It is being coordinated by Christine Marshall and is currently offered at Taft on Mondays and Wednesdays and at Whitin on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Each session lasts two hours. The sessions consist of guided project-based learning activities that are theme based. Current enrollment is 60 students from Taft and 40 students at Whitin. All students that applied were accepted into the programs. Dr. Baldassarre said the program is projected to run under budget.

Mrs. Pezzullo asked how the program was being funded. Dr. Baldassarre said it is being funded through a wellness grant and ESSER 3.

Dr. Baldassarre said that there is a 21st century learning grant that can help fund this program in the future. He has successfully applied to this grant in a previous district. He said the grant process is extensive and he would need a team and appropriate time to produce the application. The deadline for this grant is June 3, 2023. Grant funding would last for three years at which time the district could reapply.

Mrs. Pezzullo asked how the district will measure student growth for program participants. Dr. Baldassarre said the district will measure SGPs (student growth percentiles) of those students who attended the program versus those who did not.

Mrs. Pezzullo asked if the district is able to accommodate ELL students and/or students that need individual supports in the after school program. Dr. Baldassarre said yes.

Mrs. Pezzullo asked if all after school staff were from Uxbridge. Dr. Baldassarre said yes, but the district is able to use people from outside the district.

Dr. Audette asked when the 21st century grant would be awarded. Dr. Baldassarre said before July.

6. Assistant Superintendent Update (7:10-7:37)

Dr. Dwyer gave an overview presentation of ELL teaching and learning in the district. The program is focused on teaching functional and purposeful language skills. The district currently has 37 ELL students across all three schools and Dr. Dwyer said that number has been pretty stable over the last few years.

Mr. Rota asked how students with low English speaking skills communicate in class. Dr. Dwyer stated the district has a formal curriculum to help.

Mrs. Bashaw asked if correspondence from the district is currently translated to the languages needed. Dr. Dwyer said that through Google Blackboard the district has that capability and they continue to work with that program. She said the district has translated its registration packet to include versions in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Arabic.

Mrs. Pezzullo asked if the district was using students to help translate for their ELL classmates. Dr. Dwyer says that students do help do that and it was appropriate and she approves of it.

Mrs. Pezzullo asked that when ELL students reach a grade where they now have multiple teachers, do all their teachers have the tools to keep teaching practices consistent for those students. Dr. Dwyer said that the district has ELL professional development each year to help with teaching strategies and that grade level teachers have team time to help work on this during the year.

Dr. Audette asked whether the district has instructional technology that helps with ELL instruction. Dr. Dwyer responded that there is, but that she does not prefer students use it during the school day but rather have more direct time with their ELL teachers. She said the technology is helpful for after school enrichment.

7. FY23 Budget Update (7:00-7:10)

Mr. Aicardi presented an updated projected EOY for FY23. The current projected deficit is approximately \$140K. He continues to ask department heads to use discretion with budget requests. He believes there is still some softness in the OOD transportation and tuition lines and that there is the possibility that the overall deficit could be reduced by a number somewhere in the \$20-30k range. The plan is to continue to update the Committee on the status at every meeting.

Mrs. Pezzullo asked if there were any transfers the Committee needed to approve. Mr. Aicardi said there were none.

Dr. Audette asked if the administration would prefer to give their recommendations for managing the shortfall at the May 17 meeting since there would be several current Committee members leaving the Committee after the town election. Mr. Aicardi stated the administration would be able to give a better recommendation if the Committee waits until June.

8. Job Description - Groundskeeper (A) (7:37-7:49)

Mr. Aicardi added that the proposed position would be for 19 hours and have no benefits. He said that the district had added a full-time maintenance position into the budget several years before but is currently only using half of that allocation for the facilities secretary. This position would be for the other half of that appropriation.

***Motion:** Mr. Desruisseaux made a motion to approve the Groundskeeper job description. Mrs. Bashaw seconded the motion. The Committee voted in favor of the motion 5-0. The motion passed.*

9. New Playground Information (7:49-8:03)

Dr. Audette thanked Dr. Baldassarre and Mr. Aicardi for their compilation of additional information on the playgrounds that the other boards in town had requested and thanked those boards for favorable support on the district's capital requests.

Mr. Rota asked what would happen if the town invests in these playground requests and then determines that it is determined the district might need a new building. Dr. Baldassarre said that the playground representative he spoke with said that good quality playground equipment is movable.

Mrs. Pezzullo expressed concerns that because of the Taft playground's location, there might be security concerns. Dr. Baldassarre said that while he could not address that specifically at this meeting, he and the Police Chief have plans that he believes will satisfy those concerns once their plan is able to be publicly shared.

10. Policy KF (A) - Second Reading (8:03-8:28)

Mr. Aicardi said his recommendation is to use the IRS definition to define what qualifies as a non-profit in respect to Policy KF.

Mrs. Pezzullo asked how much the district typically collects in rentals. Mr. Aicardi said that a ballpark estimate was \$20-30K a year. He said he believed about half of that amount would have come from rentals by non-profit organizations.

Mrs. Pezzullo asked why some of the newly proposed rates for profit organizations decreased from the original policy. She noted that some also went up. Mr. Aicardi said he sent out a survey to see what other communities were charging and adjusted rates according to that.

Mrs. Pezzullo asked what happens when a group rents school space during non-school hours, who is in the building as a staff person who is there to open and close the building, make sure windows and doors are locked, etc. Dr. Baldassarre said that as of that moment he does not believe they have a designated site supervisor but he would encourage that.

Mr. Desruisseaux said that supervision was a concern for him as well. He shared a hypothetical example where part of the school might have been locked to prevent unauthorized access for renters, but a fire alarm went off and those areas were unable to be used for exits.

Dr. Baldassarre said he believed there are certain people in the district that can be trained on what to do and they could be partners with the schools on expenses, but that site supervision should be a hallmark of the policy when a private agency that is making money on the use of the facility but saw the difference in those types of private agencies that make money on the use of school facilities versus those organizations that feed the Uxbridge community. Mrs. Pezzullo said she wanted to see in the new policy that designated staff must be available. Or if that should maybe be stated in another policy. She said that she felt this needed to be black and white.

Mr. Desruisseaux said that he did have a concern with renting out school facilities because it opens schools up to security issues. He posed the question that while it is good to open up facilities for local groups, whether it was worth it.

Dr. Audette said that the issue with security has to be covered in this policy in some shape or form because they need to lay out the expectations clearly and that it appeared that there was a bigger discussion that needs to happen in regard to this policy and that he sensed the Committee was not necessarily ready to vote on the policy that night and that there were too many unanswered questions. Mr. Desruisseaux agreed and thought that maybe the district should talk to the fire and police chiefs for advice.

Dr. Baldassarre said he will bring a recommendation as to how to handle site supervision for rentals to the Committee's May 17, 2023 meeting.

Dr. Audette confirmed that the IRS definition of non-profit was acceptable for the KF revision. The Committee confirmed that they were okay with the proposed rental rates as well.

No motion was made.

11. 2023-2024 School Choice Slots Grade 9 (A) (8:29)

Dr. Baldassarre recapped that at the previous Committee meeting, Grade 9 had an administration recommendation of “up to 10 seats.” Dr. Baldassarre said the new recommendation is 0 seats for 9th grade.

Motion: *Mr. Desruisseaux made a motion to accept zero in grade nine. Mrs. Pezzullo seconded the motion. The Committee voted 5-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.*

12. Old Business (8:30-8:41)

Mrs. Pezzullo asked if there was a proposed date to present the school improvement plans. Dr. Baldassarre said that there was not, but that they were working on it.

Mr. Rota asked if students in the district had the ability to look up inappropriate material on their Chromebooks. Dr. Dwyer said that the technology director had turned on alerts through the GoGuardian program that will notify the district administration if students access inappropriate material. She said that the technology director realized those alerts had been turned off, but they are now in effect. She said that some students had been able to bypass some of the restrictions through extensions. Mr. Rota said that he was recently able to see inappropriate content on a school Chromebook and was concerned about whether there was still access to it by students. Dr. Dwyer and Dr. Baldassarre said they were troubled by this and will look into it and report back to the Committee.

13. New Business (8:41-8:45)

Mrs. Pezzullo thanked the administration for hosting the town hall on safety. She asked if it was possible to conduct an anonymous survey to the district staff that helps assess whether the staff feels they have the training and resources that make them feel comfortable with being prepared to handle district emergencies. She hoped that if this was conducted prior to the ending of the current school year it would allow the administration time to analyze feedback in preparation for the upcoming school year. She suggested that the Committee place the survey as an actionable item at the next school committee meeting.

14. Full Committee Meeting Minutes Vote - 2/3/2023, 2/26/2023, 3/1/2023, and 4/5/2023 (8:46)

Motion: *Mrs. Pezzullo made a motion to accept all three sets of minutes as presented. Mr. Desruisseaux seconded the motion. The Committee voted in favor of the motion 5-0. The motion passed.*

15. Adjournment (8:46)

Motion: *Dr. Audette entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Desruisseaux moved the motion. Mrs. Bashaw seconded the motion. The Committee voted 5-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.*

The meeting adjourned at 8:46PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debbie Stark

Uxbridge School Committee Recording Secretary

School Committee Members:

Mr. Barry Desruisseaux, Chair

Ms. Arlene Liscinsky, Vice Chair

Mr. Ed Maharay, Clerk

Mr. Ben Casper, Member

Mr. Dave Shinnick, Member

Mr. Aaron Lenart, Member

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