

UXBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

June 6, 2023

Uxbridge High School Library

7500 LANE TOWN CLERK
2023 JUN 27 PM 4:37

School Committee Members in Attendance:

	Present	Absent
Mr. Barry Desruisseaux, Acting Chair	X	
Mr. Benjamin Casper	X	
Ms. Arlene Liscinsky	X	
Mr. David Shinnick	X	
Mr. Aaron Lenart	X	
Mr. Ed Maharay	X	

1. Call to Order

Mr. Desruisseaux called the meeting to order.

2. Honoring of Retirees

Ms. DeMarco shared that Whitin has two retirees and then recognized Ms. Terri Larsen for her work in the district.

Mr. Rubin recognized Ms. Kathy Penza from UHS.

Dr. Baldassarre stated that Whitin teacher, Ms. Joyce Fraine, could not make the meeting but he will be visiting her classroom with Ms. DeMarco the next day to present her with her retirement plaque.

3. Glenn Koocher-Executive Director of Mass Assoc of School Committees

Mr. Koocher presented the Committee with two packets. The first one was a PowerPoint presentation on the basic roles and responsibilities of school committees. The second one was a handout on the interpretation of finer points of school committee membership.

Mr. Koocher gave a presentation to the Committee on its basic roles and responsibilities.

He said he could come back and help present on specific areas such as fiduciary responsibilities and the budget process. He warned that one thing that can create problems from time to time is when one party (the superintendent or the school committee) makes decisions that undermine the authority of the other party to make the decision they are entitled to make.

Mr. Maharay said he did not feel that it made sense for a school committee with so many newly elected or appointed members to have an evaluation of the Superintendent. Mr. Koocher said that

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the Committee should focus right now on creating an evaluation cycle that goes from July 1 to June 30 of next year, set the goals, and determine the criteria that the Committee will use to evaluate the Superintendent and a year from now allow everybody to weigh in.

Mr. Shinnick asked if the Committee should engage the Superintendent to get his feedback on the evaluation process. Mr. Koocher said yes and that the Committee could engage in informal conversation with former school committee members for feedback. He said that the Committee will agree with the Superintendent on the evidence the superintendent will provide, but among the things the Committee can also consider is feedback and comments from the community. He stated that that is a distinct right of the school committee. Mr. Shinnick clarified that he was also trying to find out if the new Committee should ask the Superintendent if he would still like an evaluation in this cycle. Mr. Koocher said that theoretically they should be conducting an evaluation but was not sure how they could do it without the members that had been on the Committee throughout most of the year who are no longer here.

Mr. Maharay asked Mr. Desruisseaux whether the Committee had a form for the evaluation. Mr. Desruisseaux said there was a sample from DESE that was available.

Ms. Liscinsky stated that she not believe it was fair for Dr. Baldassarre to have an evaluation by a Committee that did not have a prior history working with him. She felt that as a tool they should keep the evaluation simple and then the Committee could link it to goals and accomplishments. She inquired about other workshops and development opportunities that might be available to school committee members and Mr. Koocher shared several options.

4. Annual Appointment of Superintendent to Bi-County Collaborative

Ms. Liscinsky made a motion to appoint. Mr. Maharay seconded the motion. The Committee voted 6-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

5. Executive Session

a. To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares; UTA Contract Negotiations Unit A

b. To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining session or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel

Mr. Desruisseaux stated that after executive session the Committee would be returning to open session.

Ms. Liscinsky made the motion to go into executive session. Mr. Casper seconded the motion. By roll call vote: Ms. Liscinsky: Yes, Mr. Casper: Yes, Mr. Shinnick: Yes, Mr. Maharay: Yes, Mr. Lenart: Yes, Mr. Desruisseaux: Yes. The Committee voted 6-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

The Committee entered executive session at approximately 7:53PM.

6. Review and potential modification of Ed Davis Contract

Dr. Baldassarre asked the Committee if they had any questions about what he had said.

Mr. Maharay said his concern was that some of this was political because if this was coming from the Superintendent and not the school committee it might look like it was self-serving. He said he wondered if the contract should be signed by the school committee instead of the superintendent. He also said that in reference to the deliverables, he felt it would be nice if it could be articulated that there would be a set of recommendations for the Committee as well as potentially an executive summary that could be shared with the public.

Mr. Desruisseaux said that he believed that some of the things that should be modified within the contract included that the school committee be part of this process and he would like to make sure that anything that comes out is not going to put a bad light on anyone that has served on the Committee or any past administrator. He said he believed that this study is something he felt needed to be done based on the amount of turnover the district has had.

Aside from suggesting changes, Mr. Desruisseaux asked the Committee whether they had any specific questions regarding the contract.

Mr. Shinnick asked if the town or district attorney had reviewed the contract. Dr. Baldassarre said they had not.

Mr. Casper asked that since there was already an executed contract, whether the district had asked the Ed Davis group if they would be receptive to any changes. Dr. Baldassarre said he had had minimal contact with the Davis group but he felt that they probably would not say no to revisions, but he also felt like the group was at the end phase and in the evaluation stage. Mr. Casper then stated that he felt it would be a much better received arrangement, publicly, if "Dr. Michael Baldassarre" was replaced with "Uxbridge School Committee" in every circumstance of the contract.

Mr. Maharay said one of his suggested changes was to make "The Client" become the "Uxbridge School Committee." He passed around a breakdown of his and Mr. Desruisseaux's proposed changes to other members of the Committee. Mr. Shinnick asked for clarification as to what Dr. Baldassarre's involvement would be if Ed Davis agreed to the modified contract. Dr. Baldassarre said he would need to speak with counsel for clarification.

Mr. Shinnick referenced a part of the contract that said that the Ed Davis group could put Uxbridge schools as a client on their website and stated that he would prefer that Uxbridge remain off their website. Mr. Casper stated that they should ask if that area of the contract could be removed. The Committee agreed.

Dr. Baldassarre clarified that the reason he wanted to seek advice from counsel was because there was potentially information about a child and he wanted to see if anything needed to be redacted before information was released to the Committee.

Mr. Maharay asked for clarification on the objective of the contract--whether it was to tell the district areas it could do better or whether it was to give facts as to what had recently transpired. Dr. Baldassarre said his original intention was to evaluate what had taken place and how we could improve and then, because of the accusations that took place on social media, he had no concerns with an investigation taking place and stating what had happened. He said he had remained quiet because he wants the third party to be able to speak to the situation themselves.

Mr. Desruisseaux asked the Committee that, if they could take full control of the contract, after Dr. Baldassarre gets counsel's advice, whether they would like to do that. He also asked if the Committee had any issues with the changes proposed by himself and Mr. Maharay.

Mr. Shinnick wanted to get clarification on the proposal to expand the scope of the contracts to include a bigger time frame than just the most recent events, and if so, for how long. Mr. Desruisseaux said he would like to see an analysis of turnover over the last two years. Mr. Shinnick said he believed that both the recent events and the situation over the last two years was something he felt should be studied, but he wanted to know if the Committee should combine that analysis into one study, or perhaps treat them as two separate reviews. The Committee felt two separate reviews were preferred and to let the current one, since it was nearing completion, to just focus on the more recent events.

The Committee then reviewed the contract's proposed changes page by page.

Dr. Baldassarre stated that he wanted it to be clear to the public that he had no issue with the oversight going only to the Committee.

The Committee decided to add a completion date of "on or before June 30, 2023."

After the review was complete, Mr. Desruisseaux asked Dr. Baldassarre to speak to counsel and they will get the contract marked up to hopefully approve and sign at the next school committee meeting (June 13, 2023).

Ms. Liscinsky made a motion that the Committee accept the proposed changes on the Ed Davis contract as noted. Mr. Mahary seconded the motion. The Committee voted 6-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

7. School Committee Reorganization

Ms. Liscinsky made a motion that Barry stay on as chair. Mr. Maharay seconded the motion. The Committee voted 6-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Mr. Maharay made a motion to appoint Ms. Liscinsky as vice-chair. Mr. Casper seconded the motion. The Committee voted 6-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Mr. Desruisseaux made a motion to appoint Mr. Maharay as clerk. Mr. Shinnick seconded the motion. The Committee voted 5-0-1 in favor of the motion. Mr. Maharay abstained. The motion passed.

Dr. Baldassarre reminded the Committee about the need to fill the subcommittees at some point. Ms. Liscinsky asked for a breakdown of the subcommittees that the district has had in the past.

Dr. Baldassarre stated that the subcommittees have been policy, finance, facilities, and negotiations. He also said that he had been hoping all year for an academic achievement and engagement subcommittee.

8. Adjournment

Mr. Desruisseaux entertained a motion to adjourn. Ms. Liscinsky moved the motion. Mr. Casper seconded the motion. The Committee voted 6-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 10:18PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debbie Stark

Uxbridge School Committee Recording Secretary

School Committee Members:

Mr. Barry Desruisseaux, Chair

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C. Edw. Maharay
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Mr. Ed Maharay, Clerk

DocuSigned by:
Benjamin Casper
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Mr. Ben Casper, Member

DocuSigned by:
Arlene Liscinsky
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Ms. Arlene Liscinsky, Vice-Chair

Mr. David Shinnick, Member

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Aaron Lenart
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Mr. Aaron Lenart, Member