

# OAK BLUFFS SCHOOL COMMITTEE

## Meeting Minutes

8:00AM, Tuesday, March 21, 2023

At the Oak Bluffs School

Committee Members Present: Kathryn Shertzer (Chair), Rizwan Malik, Kris O'Brien  
OB School Staff Present: Dr. Megan Farrell (Principal), Denitsa Alton  
Superintendent's Office: Richie Smith, Mark Friedman\*, Hope MacLeod\*  
Public: Mark Leonard, Juliet Mulinare (Recorder)

### Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:08am by Chair Kathryn Shertzer.

### Public Comment

Mark Leonard, Chairman of the Affordable Housing Committee, was present to check in with the Committee and listen in on the meeting.

### Principal's Report

- Approval for Cost Associated with Dividing Room #125Dr. Farrell informed the Committee that they need to divide one of the resource rooms into two separate spaces. She has hired an architect and they are evaluating the options. The work will take place over the summer break and the cost estimate is \$21,000.

*MOTION PLACED ON THE FLOOR BY MR. MALIK TO APPROVE THE REQUEST FOR \$21,000 TO MAKE THE NECESSARY MODIFICATIONS TO RESOURCE ROOM #125. MS. O'BRIEN SECONDS THE MOTION, NO FURTHER DISCUSSION, ROLL CALL VOTE: MALIK – AYE, O'BRIEN – AYE, SHERTZER – AYE.*

Motion passes unanimously (3-0).

- Student Dress Code  
Dr. Farrell presented an updated policy for the dress code, drafted by the students and staff. She continued that while she wants to give the students what they want, she has some concerns about whether allowing bare midriffs is appropriate for an elementary school setting. Her priority is to protect the students from anything that might contribute to a negative body image.

\*Mark Friedman and Hope MacLeod arrive to the meeting.

The Committee discussed the policy and Ms. O'Brien suggested some changes to the wording to promote inclusivity; she also stated that while it's great for the students to contribute to the School's policies, the adults must step in when necessary for the protection of the kids. Dr. Farrell and the Committee agreed with the proposed changes; Dr. Farrell will incorporate them and bring the updated policy back for approval at the next meeting.

- School/Police/Fire Emergency Protocol Update\  
Dr. Farrell told the Committee she has been working with the Police and Fire Chiefs, as well as the County's Emergency Manager, to establish protocols for emergency events. Mr. Smith stated that it has been an interesting school year with a lockdown for the bank robbery back in November, and another lockdown at the Edgartown School due to a SWAT call. He said the central office has re-engaged with a company called Synergy 911 to make sure everyone is prepared for future emergencies. The Committee discussed how to improve communication between the various Schools and respective parents.

## **Superintendent's Report**

- **School Choice Vote**

Mr. Smith stated that every year, each of the island schools reaffirms its option to participate in school choice. This year, it will be advertised on April 1<sup>st</sup>, with applications due June 15<sup>th</sup>. Each school's principal makes his/her own decision about how many children can be accepted, based on a number of factors. Mr. Smith stated that all of the other school districts have reaffirmed their option to participate and he is asking the OB School Committee to do the same. Dr. Farrell agrees; the Oak Bluffs School has participated in the option for over 20 years.

*MOTION PLACED ON THE FLOOR BY MS. O'BRIEN TO CONTINUE THE OAK BLUFFS SCHOOLS' INVOLVEMENT WITH THE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM. MR. MALIK SECONDS THE MOTION, NO FURTHER DISCUSSION, ROLL CALL VOTE:*

*MALIK – AYE, O'BRIEN – AYE, SHERTZER – AYE.*

Motion passes unanimously (3-0).

- **Payment for Weston & Sampson Fields Analysis**

Mr. Friedman stated that the High School is requesting that the OB School contribute to the costs of the field sampling for PFAS that was performed on the OB School field. He stated that, although the High School was the one that requested the testing in OB, the results are becoming an issue that the Town needs to address, and Weston & Sampson has now met with both the OBSC and the Selectboard to discuss those results. The requested contribution from the OB School is \$743. Members of the Committee all expressed concern that the Oak Bluffs School is being asked to pay for something that they did not ask for or approve prior to the work being done. Ms. O'Brien further stated that the purpose of the testing in OB was to provide context for the on-going debate about the new fields at the High School, it was not testing that specifically benefitted the residents of Oak Bluffs or the School. Mr. Friedman and Mr. Smith acknowledged the Committee's concerns but in an effort to put the issue to rest, he encouraged the Committee to agree to cover the cost. The Committee opted to table the request until they have a chance to review the minutes and/or recording of the meeting where the additional testing was voted on.

## **Financial Report**

Dr. Farrell stated that there is not much to report; the current financial report shows some negative lines but those deficits will all be made whole by the end of the year. School lunches will continue thanks to the hard work of Ms. Alton. Dr. Farrell is working on upgrading the School's wifi, which will cost about \$89k, of which ~\$80k is covered with grant funds. Other upcoming projects include the exterior painting at \$30k to be approved at Town Meeting, and the Boiler replacement, which has completed drawings with work anticipated to be done during the summer 2024.

## **Special Education Director's Report**

Ms. MacLeod will send out her newsletter electronically to the Committee so they can access the links that are included.

## **Old/New Business**

None.

## **Correspondence**

None.

## **Approval of Minutes**

The draft minutes under consideration for approval are: January 17, 2023 and February 22, 2023.

*MS. O'BRIEN MOVED TO APPROVE THE 1/17/23 and 2/22/23 DRAFT MINUTES; MR. MALIK SECONDS. NO FURTHER DISCUSSION, ROLL CALL VOTE:*

*O'BRIEN – AYE, MALIK – AYE, SHERTZER – AYE.*

Motion passes unanimously **(3-0)**.

**Adjournment**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 25, 2023 at 8:00am.

*AT 9:37AM, MR. MALIK MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING; MS. O'BRIEN SECONDS, NO FURTHER DISCUSSION, ROLL CALL VOTE:*

*MALIK – AYE, O'BRIEN – AYE, SHERTZER – AYE.*

Motion passes unanimously **(3-0)**.

**Documents on File:**

- OB School Policy for appropriate student attire-1
- OBS SC March 22-23
- OBSC Financials March 2023

Minutes submitted by: Juliet Mulinare