

**EAST LONGMEADOW SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**



District Mission

"Our mission in the East Longmeadow Public Schools is to promote achievement and accountability in all endeavors as we educate today for the challenges of tomorrow"

DATE: September 21, 2020
TIME: 6:00 P.M.
WHERE: Superintendent's Conference Room

Meeting called to Order by : Gregory Thompson, Chair
THIS MEETING IS BEING HELD REMOTELY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GOVERNOR OF MASSACHUSETTS' MARCH 12, 2020 ORDER SUSPENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE OPEN MEETING LAW MA G.L.c. 30A, SECTION 20.

PER THE GOVERNORS' ORDER THE PUBLIC WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PHYSICALLY ACCESS THIS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC CAN ACCESS THE MEETING VIA LIVE STREAM AT:

<https://zoom.us/j/96521593161?pwd=eHB0VUY0eG5EQ3hsTWFxbTFHUVPQdz09> Passcode: 387207

As a preliminary matter, this is Gregory Thompson, School Committee Chair. Permit me to confirm that all members and persons anticipated on the agenda are present and can hear me. Members, when I call your name, please respond in the affirmative

Sarah Truoiolo - here
William Fonseca - here
Antonella Raschilla - here
Elizabeth Marsian-Boucher - here
Gregory Thompson - here
Gordon Smith, Superintendent - here
Pamela Blair, Asst. Supt for Business - here
Kathy Celetti, Recording Secretary - here
Heather Brown, Dir. of Curriculum - here

Approval of Minutes-None

2.1 Approval of the August 6, 2020 regular session meeting minutes.

**William moved to approve the August 6, 2020 regular session meeting minutes, Elizabeth seconded the motion
Chair: Any further discussion, hearing none, all those in favor say aye (5), those oppose nay (0), motion carries (5-0)**

2.2 Approval of the August 24, 2020 regular session meeting minutes

**William moved to approve the August 24, 2020 regular session meeting minutes, Elizabeth seconded the motion
Chair: Any further discussion, hearing none, all those in favor say aye (5), those oppose say nay (0), motion carries (5-0)**

2.3 Approval of the August 24, 2020 executive session meeting minutes

**Antonella moved to approve the August 24, 2020 executive session meeting minutes, Elizabeth seconded the motion
Chair: Any further discussion, hearing none, all those in favor say aye (5), those oppose say nay (0), motion carries (5-0)**

2.4 Approval of the September 3, 2020 executive session meeting minutes

**William moved to approve the September 3, 2020 executive session meeting minutes, Antonella seconded the motion
Chair: Any further discussion, hearing none, all those in favor say aye (5), those oppose say nay (0), motion carries (5-0)**

2.5 Approval of the September 3, 2020 regular session meeting minutes

**William moved to approve the September 3, 2020 regular session meeting minutes, Elizabeth seconded the motion
Chair: Any further discussion, hearing none, all those in favor say aye (5), those oppose say nay (0), motion carries (5-0)**

Opportunities for Visitors to Address the Committee:

Committee/Sub-committee Communications

Elizabeth : I would like to say that my daughter started school as a sophomore this year. And as much as I know she would love to be in school because a lot of school is about being there. I know that she is currently focused in her classes, they are direct, they are learning things, and they are not trying to go from one teaching situation to another teaching situation. They are not half time watching a zoom and back and forth. It's clean, it's neat, and it's been well presented. I think that we've focused ourselves beautifully in that we are not trying to do two things. You know, we are doing one thing and we are doing it well and I think that we made the right decision. I know it's not a perfect decision, but I think for us, it's the best.

Gregory : I would like to take this opportunity to respond, there have been some inquiries the past few days, and we did receive a letter from Commissioner Riley from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. An inquiry in terms of our timeline when we plan to make a decision, perhaps on changing the model we are at. I just wanted to state publicly and we will do the same to Commissioner Riley that we have a plan that we made. It was one of the three plans that were approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and it's to go fully remote and we will make a decision on mid-December on whether or not we are able to change models. That would be for January 15th. So that's the plan that we have had in place now for a month. We have had our staff, which has had the opportunity to focus on a plan. We know exactly what our educational process will look like for the next four months. We do have multiple students back in many of the schools. Those are students that have to be in the buildings. So we have brought them back successfully to some extent or another. We feel like, Beth as you said, we are on the right course, and we are going to stay the course to that regard. We will get back to the Commissioner and we will keep moving forward the best we can.

Superintendent's Report: None

Assistant Superintendent of Business Report

4.2.1 ELHS gift donation to purchase a bench for the Spartan Walkway was presented by Ms. Blair
The Nichols family wanted to honor their daughter who was an ELHS 1985 graduate and passed away recently.

**Elizabeth motioned to accept the gift donation from the Nichols family for a Spartan bench in the amount of \$3,015, William seconded the motion.
Chair: Any further discussion?**

Elizabeth: I just wanted to say that Mrs. Nichols was my 6th grade teacher. She filled in for a teacher that had gone out and she 's a wonderful women. She raised wonderful children, great family. She was a fabulous person, and I am happy that we are doing this. She 's a good person, and artistic beyond belief. Thank you

Chair: The motion has been made and seconded, any other discussion, hearing none, all those in favor say aye (5), those oppose say nay (0), motion carries (5-0)

Old Business: None

New Business

6.1 School Committee Rep for Cafeteria Negotiations was discussed. Bill stated that he would like to be SC rep for negotiations.

Elizabeth moved to appoint Mr. Fonseca as SC Rep for negotiations with our cafeteria staff , Antonella seconded the motion.

Chair: Any further discussion, hearing none, all those in favor say aye (5), those oppose say nay (0), motion carries (5-0)

6.2 Request from EL Marlin's to practice here at ELHS was presented by Charles Gray, President, Coach Cora and Ms. Prather. Mr. Gray said that we need to get our kids back into the water. We are looking to provide a safe environment for their mental well-being. Thank all our coaches for all their thoughts, creativity and what they have done to put this pretty comprehensive plan together. In addition to following all the state guidelines, we employed some guidance from USA Swimming to have the necessary precautions and protocols in place. The plan is to have three to four sessions a night depending on the interest and numbers. The sessions will be 50 minutes long. When kids come to practice they will be at practices in two cohorts. Swimmers will practice on a Monday, Wednesday schedule, and a Tuesday, Thursday schedule. Depending if you are cohort A, you will practice three days a week, and then cohort B will only practice two days a week, switching the cohorts the following week. There will be three swimmers per lane. One swimmer on the deep end, one swimmer on the shallow end and one swimmer in the middle. Swimmers will have their swim suits under their clothes so that they will be ready to swim. Take clothes and masks off when ready to swim. When done, they will dry off, put clothes and mask on and exit on the tennis court side of the building. Locker rooms will not be used.

Chair: You mentioned that you will not be using the locker room, what about the two bathrooms in the hallway if the student/athlete needs to use the bathroom. Are we going to have to have those unlocked?

Mr. Smith: We set up a bathroom that can be used (one-person bathroom) off of the pool.

Chair: Coach Cora, are you going to be able to do that many practices in a night?

Coach Cora: Yes, there are more of use to help coach, giving us more flexibility so that coaches are only expected to coach two nights a week.

All of us are lifeguards and previous USA swimmers or former college swimmers, etc. We are also looking to have Ben O'Connor come on board who is a high school coach, along with a few others to help out with lots of experience.

Mr. Smith: We are certainly endorsing this and certainly want to see the Marlins start up again.

Coach Cora: We had a question last week, what do we do with parents who want to stay on deck and watch their kids, if their kids are younger swimmers. If you are signed up for a certain time, that's when you have to come. We are going to tell parent's; they need to stay out in their cars during practice, if there was an emergency, they could come in and get their child. Or when they sign in, they need to give us the phone of the parent in charge of their child. When they come in, they will go to the spot designated for them, take their clothes off, swim, go back to their spot dry off, get dressed and exit out the door where their parents should be waiting for them.

William moved to approved the Marlin Swim practice at ELHS, Elizabeth seconded the motion

Chair: Any further discussion, hearing none, all those in favor say aye (5), those oppose say nay (0), motion carries (5-0)

6.3 Athletic Sub-committee's recommendation for Fall Athletics was by Mr. Paige and Mr. Magee.

Mr. Magee: We have two athletic user fee proposals and we will talk a little bit about spectators. The first proposal is for Field Hockey, Golf, Soccer, Cross Country and Volleyball. We would like to reduce the user fee from \$149 to \$100. The reason for the deduction is that the district will not be providing transportation, also because athletic schedules will be reduced from 25-50%. There will be no gate revenue to offset the difference. The reduction will not have a negative impact on the winter or spring season or on the athletic budget for this year. If any athletic season is shut down due to COVID-19, then the athletic user fee will be prorated based on the time of shut down and a family credit would be issued to each family.

The second proposal is for Football and Cheerleading because those are Level 1 athletic user fees and the proposal is to reduce that user fee to \$50, this will not apply or carryover to their competitive season in March and April. The user fee for March and April will most likely be a higher amount set in the future by the school committee. Cheerleading and Football Level 1 practices would be set at three times a week for an hour and a half. The coaches will have approximate ratio of 15 athletes per coach.

William moved to approve the athletic user fees at \$100 for Field Hockey, Golf, Soccer, Cross Country and Volleyball and \$50 for Cheerleading and Football as presented, Elizabeth seconded the motion.

Chair: That would be for the fall 2020 school year only.

Elizabeth: We should also maybe put that there will be a pro-rated amount if we have to shut down.

Chair: You want to make that the motion Bill, (Yes). Motion has been made by William, seconded by Elizabeth. Any further discussion?

Hearing none, all those in favor say aye (5), those oppose nay (0), that motion carries (5-0).

Mr. Magee presented Athletic Spectator Information. The PVIAC made the decision to not allow spectators at indoor volleyball competitions. They made the decision not to allow any "away team spectators" at any outdoor athletic competitions. Parents will not be allowed to attend any away athletic events. PVIAC has left it up to the home team's School Committee/administration/Health Dept. to decide if they are going to allow "home team spectators". Ms. Petrosky did get clarification from MA DPH that each athletic participant is allowed one spectator. Based on her clarification, ELHS home outdoor athletic event proposal from myself and Mr. Paige would be to allow one spectator per ELHS athletic participant for all home games. The AD would give each athlete an athletic pass to be used by one of his/her family members to attend a home outdoor ELHS athletic event for that particular sport and level.

Mr. Smith: We are working with ELCAT to live stream athletic events, as well as other district doing the say for home game.

Mr. Magee: We are meeting tomorrow with other school district to come up with visiting school guidelines, we will have information to send to the visiting schools about how to access the live stream. We will be communicating with each school before each athletic event.

Chair: It doesn't make a lot of sense to me that we would not allow visiting parents to watch as they drive their kids here because we are not providing transportation. As a parent who wants to spectate, it doesn't necessarily say that I don't want home parents not to watch either.

William: Kevin, are we going to have some police coverage?

Mr. Magee: Yes, I believe the first couple of home athletic events makes sense to have a police officer there.

Chair: To enforce what, escort a visiting parent from another team off the field.

Chair: This is PVIAC, what is their authority over how we operate?

Mr. Smith: They are in charge of our league to a certain extent, they can issue in certain situations where you know we have to pay a penalties or we are not allowed to compete.

Mr. Paige: Volleyball is easier to explain. The reason for no spectators for volleyball is we have a capacity of people allowed in the gym at one time and that number is 50. Once you factor in the two teams, coaching staff, officials you would be limited to very few people. I serve on the PVIAC board, I did take a stance at advocating for visiting families view and attend those games, but concern amongst the people on the board and other districts is management and regulations of outside visitors attending those games both prior and during, some districts were talking no fans so they wanted to make sure there was consistency across all of the different schools in the PVIAC.

Chair: What if they sit on the hood? If I am going to bring my daughter to a soccer game, I would probably sit in the car to watch and I may try and stand outside the fence to watch.

Mr. Paige: You talking about going to an opposing school?

Chair: Yes, to say no fan is going to watch the game, knowing they are going to co-mingle with our fans, are they going to check passes.

Mr. Smith: Yes, they are checking passes.

Mr. Paige: We are all on the same side in terms of the thinking and how we would approach this from EL perspective, but if you're looking big picture across PVIAC they do want to have a consistent message when traveling from community to community.

Chair: When is the first game?

Mr. Magee: The first game is October 1st.

Chair: So Kevin to that point can we make ourselves the ELHS an island unto its own and our policy, I'm proposing this, not saying we are doing it. One pass per player both teams, welcome to EL. Can we do that.

Mr. Paige: I think certainly the district can do and make whatever decision they would like to do, however, the PVIAC as a whole may decide to take action in accordance with their own rules. Which means we could forfeit competitions.

Elizabeth: Mr. Paige, maybe after that first game they might find, there is a lot of space out here, is that something you can bring back to the PVIAC, maybe you guys can keep that as an open thought process so that maybe we can get more parents in.

Mr. Paige: That's actually not a bad idea, to see how these things play out and see if they are manageable. There are always things we can bring back for discussion.

Elizabeth: I have something else I'd like to say, we didn't discuss this at the sub-committee meeting. Is there any way that maybe we could allow seniors to have two parents? We have kids that are seniors, it's kind of their last hurrah, I don't think there are that many seniors in any one game that is going to make those numbers go up.

Mr. Paige: Right now the guidelines state one spectator per athlete, if those guidelines loosen, and there is ever an opportunity to increase, I think we can work with them, and what our guidelines allow us to do.

William: So we will be revisiting this again.

Chair: I don't like this whole thing, it's a slap in face to the visiting team. Basically, they are saying because we control this stadium, you can't come in. I almost think we shouldn't have any spectators if that's the way we are headed and I want to be a spectator.

Mr. Paige: Some schools are considering not having spectators.

Chair: Mr. Paige, can we inquire about, if we have 20 athletes on a team, we would like to give 20 passes to the visiting team and 20 passes to our team and we will rotate how we see fit.

Mr. Paige: the state guidelines allow that, it's good, it's just getting people on board with allowing visitors from other communities to attend. The guidelines from the state already say that you can do that. It's one spectator per player on each team. I can bring your concerns to the committee and bring it back to you. Not sure when the board is going to meet before Oct 1st.

Elizabeth: Any little thing you can get for the kids would be appreciated.

Sarah: Who is monitoring this and what are the consequences if it's not followed? In the Rec Dept., there are fees for coaches who don't follow the rules. Is it the coaches, or the umpires who are on the hook, or the referees or the police in the parking lot?

Mr. Smith: It would be the administrator supervising the game.

Chair: So we are not prohibiting anyone from entering the campus at all, at the gate to let them in and out correct? (CORRECT) How do we enforce a parent from a visiting team not stand just away from the field a bit?

Mr. Paige: The guidelines is for people to have common sense and try to do their best to meet those state guidelines.

Sarah: I'm worried about our coaches all of sudden getting fees put on them for not enforcing rules or guidelines and then we are not in compliance, because spectators are not doing what they should be doing.

Mr. Smith: The fees would come back to the schools, any penalties that would be put in place on ELHS

Mr. Paige: I recommend that we at least for now fall in line with what the rest of PVIAC is doing.

Chair: When is the next board meeting.

Mr. Paige: Probably mid-October. I did like what you said earlier Ms. Boucher in terms of seeing how things start and seeing if these things are manageable and then if things are working potentially layering in opportunities for more people to attend.

Chair: My proposal would be, we have a meeting on the 19th of October, if we want to approve this as presented now through October 19th and hear again from the PVIAC before then, I would be willing to do that. I realized the season will start before PVIAC meets again.

Elizabeth moved for the fall 2020 season, we will allow outside spectators to attend games with one spectator per athlete. Indoor events will be held without spectators through October 19, 2020, and we will revisit it, William seconded the motion.

Chair: Any further discussion?

Sarah: We need to clarify; I think you said one athlete.

Elizabeth: I'm sorry, one parent per student home athlete.

Chair: Any further discussion? Hearing none, please say aye (5), those oppose nay (0), that carries (5-0)

Mr. Paige: Thank you guys, you have been awesome the last couple of months.

Chair: We are off to a good start, thank you both for your time tonight.

William moved to adjourn at 6:59PM, Elizabeth seconded the motion.

Chair: Any further discussion? All those in favor say aye (5), those oppose (0), motion carries (5-0)

Minutes Recorded by: Kathy Celetti

Respectfully submitted by: Superintendent Smith

Signature