

COUNCIL OF CHELMSFORD SCHOOLS

Chelmsford High School - McCarthy Middle School - Parker Middle School
Byam Elementary School - Center Elementary School - Harrington Elementary School - South Row Elementary School
Chelmsford Integrated Preschool

Minutes of January 26, 2026 meeting Zoom meeting 7:00 pm start, adjourned: 8:46 pm

Welcome – Lisa Bryant, Co-President

Photo Commission Update - Amanda Collison, VP

The Council voted on the distribution of photo commission funds to each school.

- Amanda C. explained that LifeTouch checks were mistakenly sent to schools instead of the Council of Schools. Harrington deposited their check, while the other six checks were reissued correctly.
- Lisa B. reminded everyone that \$6,000 would be withheld from the total commission to replenish Council funds.
- Amanda C. listed commission amounts for each school before Council's portion: Parker (\$3,685.07), Center (\$2,109.96), McCarthy (\$3,320.85), South Row (\$2,144.85), CHIPS (\$998.18), Byam (\$2,580.07), and Harrington (\$1,864.77).
- **Conclusion**
 - All schools voted to approve the distribution.
 - Harrington will need to return \$669.83 to the Council of Schools.

Minutes – written by Melissa Brennan, Secretary

- Discussion of change to minutes to reflect Harrington Walk-a-thon raised \$7,300 instead of the \$3,493 previously reported
- Motion to accept minutes, including change -passed
- Alysun Kenney first, Ashley Cakounes seconded.
- All in favor

Treasurer's Report - Courtney Cooper, Treasurer

- Bank account balance of \$72.16
- Council needs to reimburse Ginger Skoog and Courtney Cooper for expenses incurred
- Council of schools will only be providing one scholarship this year
- Motion to approve Treasurer's report - passed
- Ginger Skoog first, Alysun Kenney seconded

Community Read-In Report - Melissa McCaffrey, VP

- Confirmed the first week in March for the community read-in
- Asked for school liaisons from each school
- Started recruiting readers

Principal's Report, Donna Omobono (Center)

- Sam Drazin came in - PD for elementary schools, parent night, student facing work at Harrington, South Row, and Center. He focuses on empathy and kindness
- South Row hosted 1st Turkey Trot and plans on making it a tradition
- Center School will be celebrating a One Center, One Community event at end of March
- Center hosting Bingo in February
- Byam will be participating in the Great Kindness challenge

- Harrington held a large Veterans Day assembly
- Harrington implementing new cloud based dismissal system
- Inquiry to see if McCarthy foreign language teachers would like to attend upcoming elementary school cultural events as introduction to language department

Superintendent's Report – Dr. Jay Lang, Superintendent

Parker Building Project

- After evaluating all possible sites, now focused only at Parker site.
- Using that site allows reimbursement for demolition of Parker.
- 3 configuration options being considered: grades 5-6, grades 4-6, or grades 7-8.
- Decision on grade choice will be made between now and June.
- Council of Schools may be asked to assist with community outreach and support for project
- Parent and community support will be crucial for the override vote in winter 2027

Budget

- Initial concerns over potential cutbacks have been alleviated
- Lower special education costs and higher reimbursements have helped
- Budget presentation to school committee will be in February and go to Town Meeting for approval in April
- The school calendar for next year has been approved

Capital Improvements

- South Row will undergo significant improvement, including a new roof, ceiling replacement, lighting upgrades, and a new ADA-compliant bathroom
- Three schools will receive new elevators
- Byam driveway will be repaved with new curbing and basketball court lines

Other

- PTOs should be submitting invoices to Dr. Lang ASAP and not waiting until end of year

McCarthy REPORT, Alysun Kenney

- Enrichment Programs - Sam Drazin, Christmas Carol for 7th Grade
- Staff Appreciation Events - Pluck a Turkey, Cookie Stroll
- Project 300 Food Drive
- Fundraisers - Globetrotters, book fair, River Hawks, no brainer

Parker REPORT, Alysun Kenney

- Enrichment - Pyramids and Pharaohs, learning the ropes
- Upcoming events - Snowflake Social
- Craft fair was successful

South Row REPORT, Ashley Cakounes

- Sam Drazin visit
- Cookie Dash for Staff
- Successful fundraisers - spiritwear, dining to donate at Zesty's, Riverhawks
- Enrichment - 4th graders going to Boston Symphony in March, Good Pickin Farm bunnies and books event,
- Roller Kingdom Night in February, craft afternoon with Tiny Tiles mosaics
- Collaborating with National Honor Society has been great

Harrington REPORT, Dana Roof

- Enrichment - Sam Drazin, Pumpkin Math
- Fundraiser - Read-a-thon in November (came in lower than expected - government shutdown, competition with walk-a-thon)
- Confusion by some parents of who benefited from walk-a-thon and read-a-thon
- Was not able to contribute to parent evening with Sam Drazin, appreciate invite; budget is lower than other schools
- Discussed challenges with fundraising and competition with school-led initiatives.

Field Day

- Walk-a-Thon fundraiser benefits field day only - raised \$7000 for field day
- Questions regarding who holds that money and in what account
- Competition for fundraisers for PTO, PTO seeing decrease in revenue
- Dr. Hirsh to follow up to make sure all monies are passed through business office

Cost Sharing for Sam Drazin

- Harrington did not cost share for travel expenses, and did not know other schools were cost sharing
- Ms. Omobono confirmed that principals used their professional development funds for teacher portion of presentations
- Dr. Hirsh will follow up with Mr. Ramalho (South Row) regarding allocation of travel costs

Funding

- Seeing declining fundraising profits
- Can not run all activities due to decrease in funds
- Discussion on working with other schools to run events/fund raisers partnerships to benefit both
- Council members offered to meet with PTO to brainstorm

Center REPORT, Ellen Ellis

- Successful Recycle Day
- Utilized NHS students for volunteers
- Staff Appreciation Events - soup and chilli lunch, restock the classroom
- Enrichment Programs - Concord museum, bubbles from Discovery Museum

- Winter gift room was a success

Byam REPORT, Carolyn Sousa

- Fundraisers: UMass hockey game, Rebecca's nut-free cookie fundraiser (\$5,000 profit) Dining for Dollars at KJ's, Boo Bash,
- Staff Appreciation: holiday lunch, classroom restock
- Enrichment: Discovery Museum
- Upcoming events: Sweetheart Dance (question about opening it up to other schools), Roller Kingdom
- Had new parents getting involved

CHIPS REPORT, Beth Dalley

- Enrichment: Animal adventure enrichment, music performance from 6th graders
- Fundraiser: Successful basket raffle (\$1100).

Meeting Adjourned – 8:46pm

Ended without adjourning due to Zoom meeting crasher with nudity