

Matthews Committee on Education (MCE)

April 4, 2019 Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

Paul Bailey, Mayor
Erin Ferrell-Harper
Becky Hawke, Staff Liaison
Kelly Morris
Joanna Schimizzi
Kristen Shaben
Susannah White
Jeff Miller, Town Commissioner

Absent:

Dane Jackson

Call to Order at 6:01 p.m. by Mayor Paul Bailey

Mayor Bailey went over general housekeeping items, including Commissioner Jeff Miller's ex-officio status on the committee and Assistant Town Manager Becky Hawke's status as staff liaison. The Town Board will select the Chair of MCE because they will serve as alternate to the Municipal Education Advisory Committee (MEAC). A Chair has not yet been selected because the MCE is not yet fully-appointed. Chair selection and remaining appointments are expected to be completed prior to the MCE's next meeting in May.

Mayor Bailey also went over the current Board initiative to identify the direction of and initiatives for each Board Advisory Committee. The Mayor emphasized that the role of Advisory Committees like the MCE is to advise the Board of Commissioners and Robert's Rules of Order also apply to MCE meetings.

Mayor Bailey went over the purpose of the MCE, which is to enhance the educational experience for all the students in Matthews. Anything the MCE can do to support, provide information or gain information is a positive. The Mayor explained the MCE was not established for the purpose of looking to create a Town Charter School. Establishing a Town Charter School could be a recommendation, if desired by the Committee, but is not the original intention for the Committee.

Introductions of all attendees were made.

Mayor Bailey explained that the Town has had to advocate in the past to get schools constructed in Matthews; CMS tries as hard as they can but the County and State control funding. He noted that each appointee on the MCE has a different strength and that is why they were selected.

Becky Hawke went over the public records aspect of the email addresses that have been provided. She also noted the group will select a vice-chair and secretary once the Committee is fully appointed.

Mayor Bailey also noted that conducting business over email can be construed as a public meeting; as would meeting for dinner and discussing business of the group, as an example.

Commissioner Jeff Miller went over the by-laws of the group, including the format of future meeting agendas. He also discussed things to consider when setting a meeting day/time of every month.

Commissioner Miller also identified some of the schools that serve students in Matthews and suggested each Committee member take 1-2 schools and become well-versed on them, perhaps on the following “hot topics”:

- What is percentage of overcrowding? Or underutilized?
 - Individual class size (suggested by Erin Harper)
 - Performance of schools (suggested by Becky Hawke) – Kristen Shaben noted that performance should be viewed as more than test scores
 - Joanna Schimizzi noted much of this data can be found via greatschools.org
- What are traffic patterns? Are they effectively managing traffic or are they queueing on public roads?
- Do they have trailers? How old are they? Are they secure?
- Turnover concerns – what is driving it?

Ms. Schimizzi also suggested:

- Family engagement and communication to families/the community, as well as other metrics. She offered to curate this aspect of information for the committee.

Ms. Shaben suggested:

- How is classroom instruction being individualized so all levels are learning appropriately. This is known as differentiated levels of instruction.

Ms. Shaben also noted that security concerns also needs to include school resources (counselors, mental health)

Ms. Harper noted that school class size and overcrowding are intertwined with school security.

Ms. Shaben noted there is a CMS budget meeting next week, April 11 at Crown Point Elementary from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Kelly Morris suggested a standardized approach and noted greatschools.org and some of the other resources she is familiar with may have some of the information being sought.

Commissioner Miller suggested adding:

- Diversity of students and staff

Commissioner Miller agreed to pull together draft metrics criteria for the Committee to review at their next meeting.

Committee members also expressed interest in keeping an eye on state legislative issues that might impact education in Matthews. Becky Hawke suggested the Town’s Communications Coordinator could help keep an eye out for these items, as she is already monitoring legislative activity on behalf of the Town.

Related to the School Survey, Ms. Hawke also suggested a letter of introduction from Mayor on Town letterhead to schools that will be surveyed as a means of informing the schools about the committee

and promoting participation. The letter will explain the MCE, that the school will be contacted by a Committee member (and will name the committee member) with a survey to gather information regarding the schools that are educating Matthews students, and request participation. Ms. Hawke agreed to have a draft prepared for the Committee to review at their next meeting.

Ms. Hawke also suggested that what schools that will be surveyed need to be defined. Will it only be schools within Matthews Town boundaries? Is it within a certain distance of Town boundaries? After significant discussion, the group agreed that schools outside of Town boundaries that are still located within a relatively-short distance could reasonably be considered options for Matthews children. A distance of 7-miles from Town boundaries was determined to be 'reasonable.' A list of schools falling within this boundary will be prepared for the next meeting.

The Committee asked for the number of students ages 5-17 in Matthews. According to 2016 US Census Bureau data, there are 5494 children ages 5-18 living in Matthews.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 14, 2019 beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Topics to be revisited include reviewing the letter from the mayor, reviewing and establishing metrics/format for asking questions, and the list of all schools located within Matthews, plus all schools located with a seven-mile radius from Town boundaries.

Commissioner Miller made motion to adjourn at 7:53 p.m. Ms. Shaben seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.