Members Present:
Ms. Janet Askenburg (Chair), Mr. Michael Rigney (Vice-Chair), Ms. Evelyn Thoren (Secretary), Mr. Nicholas DeSilvio, Mr. Al Thomas

Also Present:
Dr. Frank Tiano (Superintendent), Dr. Kristan Rodriguez (Assistant Superintendent), Ms. Kathleen McWilliams (Business Manager), Ms. Anne Marie Fiore (Technology Director), Mr. Bradley Brooks (Director of Student Services), Ms. Rebeca Martinez (Personnel Director), Ms. Joanne Nebalski (Food Service)

Call to Order:
Mrs. Askenburg called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Opening Remarks:
Ms. Askenburg thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. She described that the press may come to the meeting and it could be possible that what they say could be in the newspaper. She also said that there should not be any discussion against personnel. If there is an issue with a teacher or administrator, they should discuss this with the principal. She explained that the purpose of the meeting was for the committee to receive input from the community, what they feel is going well and not well and where the public would like to see improvement. She also made note that no personal information regarding student details should be given.

New Business

1.0 Public Input (Questions and Answers/Comments)

Approximately 25-30 people attended this Public Input Session.

Of these, the following 16 attendees gave input to the School Committee:

- Daniel Erdosy, student
- Jonny Corbett, student
- Timothy Shay, student
- Siyuan Ma, student
- Tim Cassels, student
- Cameron Engdaho, student
- Pat Landrigan, student
- Helen Claire Andrus, student
- Sarah Duffett, student
- Nicole Bettinelli, student
- David Lapierre, 2 Alcorn Road
There were many members from the Chelmsford High School AP Government and Politics course present at the meeting. Daniel Erdosy addressed the committee first and introduced the class members present at the meeting. The purpose was to comment on the food service changes. Mr. Erdosy said that some of the strides have been positive, such as the increase in nutrition, but some of the changes have been too strict. His classmates then provided their arguments on what they feel should be changed in order to make the food policy better at the high school.

Jonny Corbett and Timothy Shay, students at CHS, discussed the new food portion size. They discussed how athletes are not getting the calories they need in order to participate in sports after school. The students that are most affected are the ones that have the first lunch served at about 10am. If they have this lunchtime and then play sports from 2pm – 3pm, they don’t have enough energy to perform as best as they can in their sports. These students may not get home until 5-6pm. Before the new regulations, DECA sold pizza directly after school. DECA is no longer selling pizza. There is a new regulation from the state that food cannot be served until ½ hour after school dismissal. Ms. McWilliams made the point that DECA could sell pizza ½ hour after the school dismissal time. Dr. Tiano explained how the federal state guidelines have changed and Chelmsford is working on how to be compliant. He also discussed the Wellness Committee that met today to put together a comprehensive plan for all schools.

Siyuam Ma and Tim Cassels, members of DECA at the high school, explained that DECA is confused on what they can sell for food after the school day ends. Are they allowed to sell any type of food after? Ms. McWilliams said that they can, and the new Wellness Policy will help to guide their decisions as well. There should be alternate foods they can sell after school. The sales from the after school pizza are a huge part of DECA’s funding. They have changed to selling cereal (will be available in the next few weeks) but they are not as optimistic about selling this. The sales from DECA also help students learn business aspects. Mr. Rigney asked what the revenue was from pizza. Last year it was $3000. Currently, they have not made any revenue this year. Last year, Sal’s pizzas were delivered between 2 and 2:30pm. Ms. McWilliams recommended that students take advantage of the unlimited vegetables and fruits that are available at lunchtime with a paid lunch. Students can eat as many of these as they want. Dr. Tiano recommended that the students discuss these issues with the DECA advisors as well.

Cameron Engdaho was a member of the before school café. Every Wednesday at 6:45am he would help to sell bagels, muffins, donuts and coffee before school. Last year the revenue from this was $2000, which was spent on new books and eBooks for the library. Additionally, working at the café was very useful for business education. Ms. McWilliams said that due to the regulation, the sales would have to be up until ½ hour before school. She said that food service is looking into implementing a breakfast program at the high school.

Daniel Erdosy then spoke of the new calorie range being 750 – 800 calories at lunch. This is less than is necessary for many athletes. He also thought that fruits and vegetables may take more calories to burn than they actually give. He discussed the Styrofoam that is being used at the school, and suggested that further improvements could be made to reduce the carbon footprint at the school.
Pat Landrigan and Helen Claire Andrus, CHS students, then discussed the food waste. They passed around a picture of a school lunch showing cheese on top of most of the food. They asked about how fresh the main course is. Ms. Joanne Nebalski said that it is much fresher this year than in the past years. She also said additionally, there are many new fruits and vegetables being offered as well as the improved deli line. Ms. Nebalski said that Chelmsford is introducing a lot of new foods this year. A recent program she attended stated that whenever a new food is introduced it takes 10-15 times for the students to accept it. She said it’s hard to tell right now being the beginning of the year, and encouraged the students and their friends to try it. She also recommended that they give their feedback to the kitchen staff, as the staff brings back feedback to the food director. Mr. Landrigan asked about the amount of food, if it is the maximum. Ms. Nebalski said that it is definitely the maximum and they have to be careful not to go over. Ms. McWilliams said that this year, there is actually less waste than in previous years. Ms. Askenburg also brought up the suggestion box for food service; this is on the front page of the CPS website. Dr. Tiano voiced his excitement for the new food service department that they are really working hard to implement new items to meet the regulations. Ms. Askenburg recommended that an input box be setup on the website, to just get feedback on the menu items. She also mentioned that at every school committee meeting there is a section for public comments, and for the students to feel free to follow up. The new Wellness Committee has a student representative as well, and this representative should be able to take suggestions and proposed solutions to the committee. The committee said it is the 3rd week of October and it is still new, couple of months to go through to get feedback. He said the food service is constantly working on this – working on regulations and how to get food into it. He said they are excited for their food department. Askenburg asked about setting up something on the website – to just get feedback on the menu items. She also mentioned that at every school committee there is a section for public comments, to feel free to follow up.

Sarah Duffett, a high school student, spoke about the Wellness Policy and asked for the committee’s support to take their food issues to higher levels. They need to have a voice to the state representatives. Mr. DeSilvio recommended that the committee take this as an action item at the next Day on the Hill. Mr. Rigney also suggested that the class members write a letter to the school committee with their proposals/concerns. Ms. Askenburg recommended that the students write themselves to our representatives and senator.

The teacher from the class, Mr. Cole, wrapped up by stating how impressed he was with the students in the class and that it was their own initiative to come to the meeting.

David Lapierre, from 2 Alcorn Road, addressed the committee. He is the president of Chelmsford Friends of Music. He would like to promote the activities of the Friends of Music. He came to the meeting to share his enthusiasm of the music programs, and encouraged the committee to do everything they could to support arts in the school. He made note of the Chelmsford Winds Assemble, being run by volunteers at the high school because it is not recognized formally as a club. He would like to have this assemble recognized as a club status, in order to receive help with funds towards it.

Nicole Bettinelli, a sophomore at the high school, addressed the committee. Last Thursday she attended the Black-out Bullying Rally at the Youth Council of the Governor. They watched the documentary movie, Bully. The other students that attended the rally spoke about different activities they are doing at their school to promote anti-bullying. These ideas included conferences at school to invite other schools to talk about it, program speakers to come in to discuss how to get awareness out. Last year, in April, CHS raised $1400 with the anti-bullying walk led by Ms. Bettinelli. April 28, 2013 is the date for the walk this year. Ms. Bettinelli presented a check to Dr. Tiano in the amount of money raised, $1400. Dr. Tiano thanked and commended her, speaking of how she was the unanimous choice to attend the rally last
week. He said that the proceeds will be used towards the District Pride Committee and will be put towards good use.

Michael Kowlri, a resident of Chelmsford discussed the presentation from Ms. Russo last year “Queen Bees and Cliques”. He spoke of what a great presentation it was, and recommended that it be repeated this year. Dr. Tiano said that Ms. Russo is not assistant principal in Groton, but that the committee is working on programming now and will try to do this presentation. Mr. Kowlri spoke of how many people attended it last year, and that it really was broadcast through the community and received very well.

Michelle Caputi-Starkweather from Dracut addressed the committee. They are moving to Chelmsford, their children are registered at the CPS district already. She wanted to express her happiness and enthusiasm with the school system in Chelmsford. She said her children are so much happier, and she spoke of how nice everyone, including students, has been towards her daughters. She also spoke of how nice the hot lunch is for her children, and that the equipment they are able to use at recess is also very good.

Laura Roy from 9 Tremont Road addressed the committee. She has a child in kindergarten at Harrington school. She expressed her concern with how the AM/PM sessions were chosen. Dr. Tiano said it was a collective decision, with the kindergarten teachers and the response from parents from the survey that went out last year. 70% of the parents that responded to the survey opted to not switch halfway through the year. Dr. Rodriguez said there were many concerns from parents as well as teachers that the switch was hindering academics. Keeping the children in the same session as a routine is very helpful. Ms. Roy discussed how the PM kindergartners are 9 days behind the AM session. The committee noted that there will be delayed openings through the year that will reduce this difference. Dr. Rodriguez said that she is confident that the students will meet the skills required; and there will be assessments and benchmarks to test that. They are exceeding the mandate for the number of hours taught. Dr. Rodriguez said they will be reviewing the data mid-year to ensure that PM kindergartners are keeping the pace. The first assessment review is in January and she will report back to the committee on what she is seeing. Right now there is no indication that PM session is behind. No change will be made to the school calendar. There will be another parent survey at the end of the year for more feedback. Ms. Roy expressed her disappointment that her child is missing out on field trips that the AM kindergartners are attending. Mr. Rigney suggested that the talk to the PTO about that and Dr. Tiano will also bring this topic up at his principals meeting.

Ms. Roy also expressed her disappointment with the bussing. There was no information as to where her child will be picked up. Dr. Tiano said that this communication is through the school and principals. Ms. Roy asked if Pam Rigoli could get help to ensure more effective communication. Ms. McWilliams said that basically everyone at the administrator’s office pitches in with bus passes at the beginning of the year. Ms. McWilliams also spoke of how principals at the schools work with the transportation agency to make sure kindergartners are picked up properly. She also noted that compared to last year, there were not as many complaints, and they thought they were doing better.

Sue Dandaraw from Old Stage Road had a question on full day kindergarten. She was wondering if there is any potential of it starting next year. Dr. Tiano said there is a committee evaluating it; they are doing a space analysis right now, as well as reviewing the financial impact. The next part will be to review what other districts are doing and work with the elementary school principals. The goal is by next year to launch a pilot program. They do not know if it will be free of charge or at cost, the target is late June to have the decision.
Meghan Hunter from 347 Boston Road discussed her start of the year experience with her kindergartner. She had never received the parent survey that went out last year, and she had registered her child in January. Dr. Rodriguez said the survey was sent out through a data management system, but for some parents it went to their spam mail folder. 383 responded to the survey. 51.8% of the responses were from incoming parents. The survey was sent on March 16, 2012. Ms. Hunter even said that the Chelmsford Public Library librarian was surprised, as now the PM students could no longer do some of the programs they had done in the past. Ms. Hunter also said she had emailed Dr. Tiano and his secretary, but never heard back. However, on a positive note, the principal at South Row had gotten back to her right away. Ms. Hunter spoke of how she wants more for her kindergartner’s experience. Dr. Tiano and the committee said they really appreciated her input.

The public and committee discussed the pilot kindergarten more. Dr. Tiano said if we have space and availability to go full day they are hopeful to get Chapter 70 funding to offer it free of charge. However, since it is a pilot the parents may have to pay for it. This is not known at this time. He said that in 3 years they can concretely get the full day kindergarten program done, and that next year they are hopeful to have a pilot program.

**Adjournment:**

Ms. Askenburg recognized Chelmsford Selectman Pat Wojtak, for her attendance at the school committee’s meetings.

**Mr. Rigney motioned for the Chelmsford School Committee to adjourn the Public Input Session School Committee meeting of October 23, 2012 at 9 p.m. Ms. Thoren seconded. Motion carries. Unanimous 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Karin Lamson