

**GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE****REGULAR MEETING MINUTES****WEDNESDAY, JULY 9, 2014****Russell Elementary Building  
7:30 P.M.****(A PORTION OF THIS MEETING MAY BE HELD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION)****I. OPENING OF MEETING**BLANDFORDMichele Crane  
Terri GarfieldCHESTER

Shirley Winer

HUNTINGTONRon Damon  
William Hathaway  
Jeff WyandMIDDLEFIELD

Noreen Suriner

MONTGOMERYAnne Marie Buikus  
Sandra HaasRUSSELLRuth Kennedy  
Mary Ann LaurieWORTHINGTONSue Levreault  
Gretchen EliasonSECRETARY

Stacy Stewart

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIONDr. David B. Hopson, Superintendent  
Stephanie Fisk, Business & FinanceADMINISTRATIVE COUNCILJoanne Blocker, Director of Academics  
Wendy Long, District Grant Writer  
Alice Taverna, Pupil Services DirectorSTUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

OTHERS: \_\_\_\_\_

**7:35 p.m. II. PUBLIC INPUT FOR ITEMS NOT LISTED ON AGENDA**

- Mrs. McVeigh has several comments on the last meeting: About the statement made teachers have tenure, administrators do not. Tenure is no longer used for staff. Said, professional administrators have more power to terminate whether teachers have three years or ten years of experience
- Regarding the superintendent's evaluation, Mrs. McVeigh went back to survey sent out to town officials. There was a score where numbers were used to come up with detailed commentary. The rating was 2.99 and proficient was 3.0, in comparison the overall score from town officials was 2.4. In the future they should use the same rating for both. When you talked about the superintendent's evaluation discussion, several talked about the base, she doesn't see anything in the evaluation that allowed and there was nothing in writing. She feels we should reconsider the vote or PARCC. Special education students are not taking PARCC. How is it in the March/April, the Superintendent's Corner articles were so against it. On the educational plan – may need to close Chester, this committee should consider a superintendency union. She read a great article from Christine Lynch. Hampshire regional is an example. The central office expenses are in upwards of \$700,000. Mrs. McVeigh thanked Mrs. Eliason for her leadership.
- Mrs. Eliason said in terms of the superintendent's evaluation she likes the idea about the point scoring. She was trying to show everyone's comments and scores. We do have more work to do as a committee there are instructions we are not following yet. There should be comments for every score not marked proficient. We need to think more about the process and look into it. We didn't share the results from the town officials survey with the entire committee because our legal counsel was concerned it was an anonymous survey.
- Mrs. McVeigh said it is input from the public. The instructions we're pretty explicit. If you need to have specific commentary on low scores, you should have it on exemplary scores too.
- Mrs. Winer said the town survey the responses were very disappointing – not very many responded.
- Mrs. McVeigh said there were some that were signed.

- Mrs. Winer said you can't say it is a representative.
- Mrs. Hague has been coming to a lot of school committee meetings. And supt. Evaluations, reading the evaluation of the superintendent – 100 needing interventions would receive them and that 80 would be successful. School committee asked Dr. Hopson and he refused to talk to his people to see if they were on track to meet the goal. In the evaluation, he didn't meet the goal. Not meeting the goal is unacceptable; if he followed through he would not talk to his people.
- Mrs. Winer asked if it was true we didn't meet the goal.
- Dr. Hopson said he did not meet the goal. He was refusing to ask them to make a report during the beginning
- Mrs. Hague is concerned about Worthington leaving; she is concerned with the children left at Gateway once Worthington leaves. It will difficult to come up with the extra. Financially the school committee needs to be more concerned with the 900 remaining students. This school committee needs to take a stand. Their job is to protect our students. We are stronger together than breaking apart.
- Mrs. Eliason said the committee made a motion. It adopted an official position opposing the withdrawal.

### III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

### IV. CONSENT ITEMS 6/25/14

### V. REORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE

#### A. Chairperson

*Mrs. Winer made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to nominate Mrs. Crane as Chair.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 7 Nays 6 Abstain Absent*

Mrs. Laurie nominated Mrs. Buikus and she declined.

Mrs. Eliason – voted no for Mrs. Crane and yes for Ms. Laurie

Mrs. Kennedy – voted no for Mrs. Crane

Mrs. Winer – voted yes for Mrs. Crane

Mrs. Garfield – voted yes for Mrs. Crane

Mrs. Crane – voted yes for Mrs. Crane

Mr. Damon – voted yes for Mrs. Crane

Mr. Wyand – voted yes for Mrs. Crane

Mr. Hathaway – voted no for Mrs. Crane

Ms. Laurie – voted yes for Mrs. Crane

Ms. Suriner – voted yes for Mrs. Crane

Mrs. Levreault – voted no for Mrs. Crane

Mrs. Haas – voted no for Mrs. Crane

Mrs. Buikus – voted no for Mrs. Crane

#### B. Vice-Chairperson

Mrs. Winer nominated Mr. Wyand and he declined

*Mrs. Eliason made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to nominate Mrs. Otterback as Vice Chair.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays Abstain 3 Absent 1*

Mrs. Laurie nominated Mrs. Buikus and she declined.

Mrs. Eliason – voted yes for Mrs. Otterback

Mrs. Kennedy – voted yes for Mrs. Otterback

Mrs. Winer – voted yes for Mrs. Otterback

Mrs. Garfield – voted yes for Mrs. Otterback

Mrs. Crane – voted yes for Mrs. Otterback

Mrs. Buikus – voted yes for Mrs. Otterback

Mrs. Haas – voted yes for Mrs. Otterback

Mrs. Levreault – voted yes for Mrs. Otterback

Ms. Suriner – voted abstain for Mrs. Otterback

Mr. Damon – voted abstain for Mrs. Otterback

Mr. Wyand – voted abstain for Mrs. Otterback

Ms. Laurie – voted yes for Mrs. Otterback

Mr. Hathaway – voted yes for Mrs. Kennedy

### **C. Secretary (Stacy Stewart)**

*Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Ms. Suriner to nominate Stacy Stewart as Secretary.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 6 Nays 3 Abstain 4 Absent*

### **D. District Treasurer (Deborah Kuhn)**

*Mrs. Levreault made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to nominate Deborah Kuhn as District Treasurer.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain 3 Absent*

### **E. Legislative Contact**

*Mr. Damon made a motion second by Mrs. Winer to nominate Mrs. Kennedy as the Legislative Contact.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent*

### **F. Counsel for the Committee (Dupere Law Office)**

*Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to nominate Dupere Law Offices as Counsel for the Committee.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays 1 Abstain 1 Absent*

### **G. Negotiator for the Committee (Dupere Law Office)**

*Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Winer to nominate Dupere Law Offices as Negotiator for the Committee.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays 1 Abstain 2 Absent*

**H. Sick Bank Committee (2 members): Michele, Ron, Jeff Alt.**

**I. Negotiations Committee: Ron, Shirley, Ruth**

**J. Superintendent's Evaluation Committee: Michele, Sarah, Shirley, Ruth, Terri**

**K. Policy Committee: Ron, Ruth, Jeff**

**L. Warrant Signing Committee: Michele Alt., Shirley, Ann- Marie, Ron, Ruth, Jeff**

**M. Finance Committee: Jeff, Ruth, Michele**

- Mrs. Eliason explained exoficio. We never came to a resolution as to if you are a voting member.

## **VI. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS**

### **A. Model UN Conference At Gateway – Casey Pease**

- Casey Pease, Ursula Barth, Tyler Kornacki, Brian Lak, Dominic Zobal, and Nick Vooyo.
- Casey said the Model UN is a simulation of the United Nations general assembly. Their roles are as ambassadors from countries. Educational Benefits: Issues going on in the world, current events, research, debate, parliamentary procedures, public speaking.
- The club was set up the club in the fall of 2013 and consists of 18 members. They are hoping to increase membership to 25 to 30. They have members from all seven towns too. They have gathered nine articles and made them available online for all 18 members. They cover social, political, and economical issues.
- The Japanese and Chinese articles are important because they would like to hold a conference later in the next school year. They want to discuss East Asia with China and Japan, and how they are becoming more important. They are hoping to get 60 to 70 others to come attend the conference. They want other schools to know that we are more than just a small school and there are things that make us distinct.
- They want to hold a novice Model UN conference which would be a little more laid back to give people an idea of how a conference works, and to get more people interested and get their numbers up. They are hoping to have it the beginning to middle of October.
- In addition there are conferences, Worcester, Great Barrington, Eagle Monk in Boston, and UMASS conference. This past year they attended three conferences.
- Mrs. Levreault asked since it is a novice program will it be just students from Gateway or other schools too?
- Casey said they hope to have Gateway students and other local surrounding schools participate.
- Mr. Vooyo said they spoke with Frontier and Amherst and they are both interested.
- Mrs. Eliason asked what the resources they need in planning this conference are.
- Casey said they are able to handle a lot of it by themselves. Main thing is putting things together, and making the necessary purchases. They would just need the facilities, rooms and such and volunteer faculty. Monetarily they have been doing their own fundraising. They need permission to host it at the school.
- Mrs. Winer asked about the fee.
- Casey said each delegate will pay a fee to go. That's what other schools have done. People will either commute or stay in a local hotel.
- Mr. Vooyo said it is kind of up to the school to figure out what they want to do. Lunch or dinner will be included and there is usually a bake sale to help with funding.
- Casey said that at some schools this is an actual class rather than just a club.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked as far as places to stay have they thought host families.
- Casey said that wasn't something they've considered.
- Mrs. Eliason asked if we have money in the budget, to make sure we are paying security staff.
- Dr. Hopson said we don't have money set aside in the budget for security staff.
- Ms. Fisk said we generally use building use revolving funds for those types of events.
- Mrs. Eliason said school committee hasn't approved this.
- Dr. Hopson said if the funds weren't available through the revolving account, we could do a transfer.
- Mrs. Eliason asked them when they needed approval as the committee has a two meeting rule.
- Mrs. McVeigh suggested since there are international students we should consider our local resources and she was would be willing to help.

## **VII. COMMUNICATIONS**

### **A. Student Representative**

- Casey Pease thanked the school committee for allowing him to fundraise for his leadership conference, he is leaving on Sunday.

### **B. School Committee**

- Mrs. Kennedy put together something and read it to the committee. Expressing concerns she has with the actions of the committee.
- Mrs. Levreault said Monday Worthington held a special town meeting to vote on the withdrawal question. 221 registered voters attended and it was in favor of the withdrawal 185 to 36. It was standing room only. It is concerning we don't do enough research before we vote. EAC report, parental survey, the town of Worthington did exactly what they said they were going to do. 81% of the parents said they would choose out if we closed Worthington. She doesn't think the input from all was taken into consideration. We need to look at all the numbers. She talked about real estate figures. She spoke to a woman who said when she bought her house if she had known there was no public education, she shouldn't have moved here. She is disappointed that the school committee voted to give a raise to the superintendent who lost her town.
- Mrs. Suriner has heard lots of other conversations. This same issue is coming up in central and southern Berkshire. Particularly with the little towns. It is such a complex issue; she is on school committee to learn more. Have we brought in the state, are going to look at how we are going to educate students as we move forward? Middlefield travels to Chester and now they might have to travel to Littleville. The primary issue is how we are going to educate our kids. There are a lot of families home schooling.
- Mrs. Winer said Western Mass has a lot in common with Ohio, Indiana, Nebraska, etc. Farmers are having their children bused long distances for an education because of closing schools. We have declining populations and incomes. Our legislators have said Gateway doesn't need all five elementary schools to educate their children.
- Mrs. Eliason said each elementary doesn't cost 1.5 million. She has concerns about the contract extension.

**C. Chairperson-** None

**D. Superintendent** – Central Office Update (Enc.) - None

**E. Business Manager** – None

**F. Administration**

- Mrs. Long said we are one of 6 districts in the state who sort of won \$25,000 for and innovations grant.

**VIII. AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTING**

**A. Superintendent's Evaluation**

- Will meet prior to the next school committee meeting.

**B. Finance Subcommittee**

- Mrs. Kennedy said they met tonight, but there is no budget yet, so there was no vote.

**C. Legislative Liaison**

- Nothing new right now.

**D. Policy Subcommittee**

- Nothing to report

**E. School Committee Goals Subcommittee**

**F. Community Curriculum Committee**

- Mr. Mason will send an update to any new members.

**7:45 - IX. OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS**

**A. Refinancing**

**a. Recommendation that in order to reduce interest costs on outstanding debt, the District is authorized to issue bonds or notes for the purposes of refunding all or any portion of its \$9,000,000 General Obligation Bonds, dated February 1, 2005 including, if any, the payment of any premium and accrued interest associated therewith, and all other costs incidental and related thereto, under and pursuant to Chapter 44, Section 21A of the Massachusetts General Laws, or any other enabling authority.**

*Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to approve the recommendation that in order to reduce interest costs on outstanding debt, the District is authorized to issue bonds or notes for the purposes of refunding all or any portion of its \$9,000,000 General Obligation Bonds, dated February 1, 2005 including, if any, the*

*payment of any premium and accrued interest associated therewith, and all other costs incidental and related thereto, under and pursuant to Chapter 44, Section 21A of the Massachusetts General Laws, or any other enabling authority.*

- Mrs. Eliason said the first will give us the ability to start refinancing when we get closer. The second allows us to start paperwork with the state, they have a bond rating. She said at the last meeting there were concerns these changes have been seen by our council as well.

*Ms. Suriner made an amendment seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to change the wording approved by our legal counsel. (changing all or any to any remaining portion)*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays Abstain 2 Absent*

*Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to approve the recommendation that in order to reduce interest costs on outstanding debt, the District is authorized to issue bonds or notes for the purposes of refunding any remaining portion of its \$9,000,000 General Obligation Bonds, dated February 1, 2005 including, if any, the payment of any premium and accrued interest associated therewith, and all other costs incidental and related thereto, under and pursuant to Chapter 44, Section 21A of the Massachusetts General Laws, or any other enabling authority.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays Abstain 2 Absent*

**b. Recommendation that the District Treasurer, or any other officer of the district, is authorized to file an application with the appropriate officials of The Commonwealth of Massachusetts (the “Commonwealth”) to qualify under Chapter 44A of the General Laws any and all refunding bonds of the District authorized pursuant to this vote, and to provide such information and execute such documents as such officials of the Commonwealth may require in connection therewith.**

*Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to approve the recommendation that the District Treasurer, or any other officer of the district, is authorized to file an application with the appropriate officials of The Commonwealth of Massachusetts (the “Commonwealth”) to qualify under Chapter 44A of the General Laws any and all refunding bonds of the District authorized pursuant to this vote, and to provide such information and execute such documents as such officials of the Commonwealth may require in connection therewith.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays Abstain 2 Absent*

## **B. School Committee Annual Report**

- Mrs. Eliason addressed the goals she pretty much just gave the numbers. The idea was just to have a report to send out to the towns.

*Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Winer to approve and send out to the towns the school committee annual report.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain 3 Absent*

## **C. Worthington Withdrawal**

Gateway Educational Plan

- Mrs. Crane said we had a discussion about what the state wanted us to do and give the direction for the superintendent.

*Ms. Suriner made a motion seconded by Mr. Wyand to approve the Education Plan.*

- Mrs. Levreault asked if closing Chester was still in there.
- Dr. Hopson said yes, you didn’t vote to take it out.
- Mrs. Winer said it was put in as a possibility not a recommendation. How much longer can we afford to do what we’ve been doing with one less town?

*Mrs. Kennedy made an amendment seconded by Ms. Suriner to take closing Chester out.*

- Mrs. Eliason supports the motion. She thinks if we are serious about doing it, it is the wrong way to let Chester and also the wrong way to address it with DESE.
- Mr. Wyand disagrees. It is the shot across the bow that Worthington has been talking about. DESE needs to be aware for the rest of our students. If Worthington withdrawals and we don't have enough money to fund education, where does that leave us?
- Mrs. Winer said what if we change it to read further closing of other schools.
- Mrs. Kennedy said as far as DESE knowing they know. She is speaking personally. They are aware of the withdrawal.
- Dr. Hopson said it isn't there to signify closing of Chester. It is just to say where we are going to save \$630,000 that the state needs to hold the six towns harmless.
- Ms. Laurie asked if we could make it more general so we are not singling out any one school.
- Mrs. Buikus said it is already in there.
- Mr. Wyand asked what about the bathroom situation.
- Dr. Hopson said you would have to do renovations if we moved preschool to the Complex.
- Mr. Wyand requested a friendly amendment to keep it in there without singling out any one school.
- Ms. Laurie asked why we would even put any of that in there.
- Dr. Hopson said the state is going to figure it out.

***Mrs. Kennedy made an amendment seconded by Ms. Suriner the motion and take closing Chester out.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays 4 Abstain Absent***

- Ms. Laurie had a question about the tuition agreement mentioned in the ed plan.
- Dr. Hopson said the state suggested we ask Worthington to enter into a tuition agreement.
- Mrs. Buikus said school choice up to \$6,000 and anything higher is tuition.
- Mrs. McVeigh is wondering about the paragraph regarding a tuition plan. If she remembers correctly we declined a tuition agreement with Worthington. Why would we do it when the state suggested it?
- Dr. Hopson said we didn't get a request that was legal. We were not the only ones who didn't respond, not because we were not interested, but because the proposal was not legal.
- Mrs. Eliason said she did receive the information and relayed that gateway would not respond at a GTAC meeting.

***Ms. Suriner made a motion seconded by Mr. Wyand to approve the Education Plan.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 7 Nays 4 Abstain Abstain 2 Absent***

#### **D. FY 15 Budget**

- Dr. Hopson said we could ask the DESE to extend the 30 days to 45 days for presenting a budget and have a special meeting next week or the week after.

***Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to recommend we ask DESE to extend the 30 days to 45 days for presenting a budget and have a special meeting next week or the week after.***

- Ms. Fisk said last year this came up. You approved the budget and when we got the budget, as soon as the regional transportation comes in to amend the assessment letters.
- Mrs. Eliason said part of the issue last year is the assessments were in the budget and we approved the budget and then the assessment letters were different. One of the things Christine Lynch said was that the budget doesn't need to include assessments. We could approve a bottom line. The treasure has seven days to certify the amounts. If the governor doesn't sign the budget in the timeframe, then we have a problem.

Mr. Damon withdrew his motion

***Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to approve the budget as presented by Dr. Hopson sending out assessment letters based on final cherry sheet figures. (we have 7 days )***

***Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to extend the meeting to 10:15 p.m.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays 2 Abstain 1 Absent***

- Mrs. McVeigh said given the fact that finance committee members have not been able to access the website the materials have not been made available to townspeople on the website.
- Mrs. Eliason apologized for sending the information late.
- Mrs. Buikus asked if we will be sending budget version 2.0 with the assessment letters.
- Ms. Fisk said yes.

***Mrs. Eliason made an amendment seconded by Mrs. Buikus to send out letters according to the regional agreement.***

- Dr. Hopson said it bases the assessments on student population and not the statutory rate. It requires all seven towns to vote yes every year.
- Mrs. Eliason said the idea is that is what we agreed upon according to the regional agreement.

***Mrs. Eliason made an amendment seconded by Mrs. Buikus to send out letters according to the regional agreement.***

***Motion Failed (VOTE) Yeas 4 Nays 9 Abstain Absent***

***Mr. Wyand called the question seconded by Ms. Laurie.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 12 Nays 1 Abstain Absent***

***Mr. Damon made a motion a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to approve budget as presented by Dr. Hopson sending out assessment letters based on final cherry sheet figures. (we have 7 days )***

***Motion Failed (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays 2 Abstain 1 Absent***

- Ms. Fisk said we need to either hold a special meeting or Dr. Hopson will send out same budget as before.

***Mrs. Levreault made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to extend the meeting to 10:30 p.m.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays 2 Abstain Absent***

- Mr. Wyand said he read we are on a 1/12 budget based on the request for fiscal 15.

Mr. Hathaway left the meeting

- Dr. Hopson said yes, if you don't vote on version 2 version 1.2 goes back out. If you vote version 2 the same dollar amount goes out, but the line items just change.
- Mrs. Eliason asked if there was any point in reconsidering the vote, and would Mrs. Kennedy vote differently.
- Ms. Fisk said if you send out the same assessments and budget it is a waste of money, if you base it on the cherry sheets it changes the line items.

***Mrs. Levreault made a motion seconded by Mr. Damon to reconsider voting version 2.0 with assessments to go out based on the final cherry sheet figures.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 12 Nays Abstain Absent 1***

***Mr. Damon made a motion a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to approve budget as presented by Dr. Hopson sending out assessment letters based on final cherry sheet figures. (we have 7 days )***

- Mrs. Eliason asked if there are any specific changes she would like made.
- Mrs. Kennedy doesn't want to vote on a seven day deadline if we can't meet it.
- Ms. Fisk said you are not voting the seven days, you are not voting on the budget.
- Mrs. Buikus said if he veto's it it doesn't matter it doesn't change anything we need.
- Mr. Damon said if we don't pass the budget we will send out the same budget which penalizes the students who need it.

*Mr. Damon made a motion a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to approve budget as presented by Dr. Hopson sending out assessment letters based on final cherry sheet figures. (we have 7 days )*

*Motion Fails (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays 1 Abstain Absent 1*

Mr. Damon left the meeting

#### **X. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS**

**A. District Safety Plan Review**- Leave under new business or presentations for next meeting.

**B. Model UN Conference At Gateway**- No Action Required

**C. Changing School Committee Meeting Start Time From 7:30 to 7:00 p.m.** – Leave under new business for next meeting.

**D. Vote to approve a delegate for the November 2014 MASC/MASS Joint Conference**

*Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to waive the two-meeting rule to vote Mrs. Kennedy as a delegate to register for the MASC Joint Conference.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 8 Nays Abstain 3 Absent 2*

*Mrs. Winer made a motion seconded by Ms. Suriner to appoint Ruth Kennedy as a delegate for the MASC Joint Conference*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain 1 Absent 2*

#### **XI. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

##### **Future Agenda Items**

#### **XII. INFORMATION**

##### **Information**

##### **Warrants**

AP# 1105 \$ 124,595.58

PR# 26 \$ 377,961.92

PR# 26.2 \$881,098.82

#### **XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None**

**XIX. ADJOURNMENT** *Ms. Suriner made a motion seconded by Mr. Wyand to adjourn at 10:30 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted,  
Stacy L. Stewart,  
School Committee Secretary