

**GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2014**

**Worthington Town Hall  
7:30 P.M.**

**(A PORTION OF THIS MEETING MAY BE HELD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION)**

**I. OPENING OF MEETING**

BLANDFORD  
Michele Crane  
Terri Garfield

CHESTER  
Shirley Winer  
Martha Otterback

HUNTINGTON  
Ron Damon  
Jeff Wyand

MIDDLEFIELD  
Sarah Foley  
Noreen Suriner

MONTGOMERY  
Anne Marie Buikus

RUSSELL  
Ruth Kennedy  
Mary Ann Laurie

WORTHINGTON  
Sue Levreault  
Gretchen Eliason

SECRETARY  
Stacy Stewart

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION  
Dr. David B. Hopson, Superintendent  
Stephanie Fisk, Business & Finance

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL  
Joanne Blocker, Director of Academics  
Wendy Long, District Grant Writer

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

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

**7:35 p.m. II. PUBLIC INPUT FOR ITEMS NOT LISTED ON AGENDA (3 Minute Limit)**

- Mrs. Buikus read a short statement thanking Mrs. Eliason for her tenure as chair of the school committee and for attending GTAC and other town meetings.
- Public Input: Mrs. Crane announced she wanted to keep public comments to a three minute limit.
- Mr. Mason as the GTAC read a proposal to set up an ongoing working relationship with the school committee, so we can meet the challenge of the reorganization hearing. They are looking for guidance from the local community and the school committee. GTAC is interested in working with the school committee collaboratively- a collective team effort to succeed as a district. Some members have been attending the GTAC meetings. There are a number of problems. They are asking that we please discuss this proposal and consider it. They really want to work with us. The next GTAC meeting is Saturday September 13.
- Mrs. Winer asked if they have a list of concerns they can share with us. So they can understand the scope. Mr. Mason would be happy to share it.
- Mrs. Hague understands why you want to limit, but there is a lot to discuss. She would like to see people not get cut off.
- Alex Lak said his son is a senior at Gateway. He believes we should consider adding a stats course at the high school level.
- Mr. Mason is speaking on behalf of Brian Dodge, who is trying to set up a radio program involving Gateway students.
- Dr. Hopson suggested that he contacts the principal in the high school.
- Mrs. McVeigh would like to have the minutes published on a timely basis. Also the school committee information needs to be updated. Mr. Wyand and Mrs. Winer’s terms have expired.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked if the students will be taking PARCC once or twice. DESE says they will be tested twice.
- Dr. Hopson said they will be tested twice.

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### III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Brennan Foley said sports have started.

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### IV. CONSENT ITEMS 6/25/14, 7/9/14 (Enc.)

*Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Ms. Suriner to accept the minutes of 6/25/14 and 7/11/14 subject to corrections.*

- Mrs. Kennedy said she can't get the documents.
- Mrs. Eliason said it might be a browser issue and people might want contact technology.
- Dr. Hopson said if you can't get them just let Stacy know.

*Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Ms. Suriner to accept the minutes of 6/25/14 and 7/11/14 subject to corrections.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 8 Nays Abstain 5 Absent*

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### V. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS

#### A. District Safety Plan Review

- Dr. Hopson gave a brief overview of the District Safety Plan. The focus is on student safety and student support. Gateway's plan and changes are based on input from local and state police. It is managed from all levels from a shelter in place, to simple things like weather instances (ex a fire drill during a lightning storm). We do table top drills where students are not involved to drills where students and staff are involved right up to evacuations. We have built community relationships. Things happen at both the school level and the district level. We have first and second shift security staff. We have visitor sign-in. Joyce Hanousek is in charge of safety, along with Dr. Hopson, Mr. Wing (facilities director), Ms. Fisk, local fire and police, and John Syomoto from the state police stop team. We also have observers from other schools. Plans are updated annually and safety manuals are in the offices. We've done some recent improvements in the past year based on past drills. Privacy films for example have been put on the Chester library windows and doors. We can manually close off parts of the buildings automatically and we will continue to improve communications. We have lettered all the doors and windows in the buildings (another school inexpensively did the printing). Gateway's plan is the basis for a lot of other districts plans. Dr. Hopson and Joyce will do 10 regional trainings over the next two years. They have also presented in West Springfield Schools. It is an ongoing process.
- Mrs. Kennedy said since the water problem the Russell chief of police is a little upset. She is responsible for the kids in Russell. She would like to have other chiefs involved. She didn't hear anything about parent contact.
- Dr. Hopson said after every drill we do notify parents with the auto dialer. Mrs. Long always reminds parents that in a real emergency they should not come to the school.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if is there anything posted in the schools about how parents will be notified. This would be so they know we have this covered.
- Dr. Hopson said that was a good idea. He suggested she also remind people to update their information so we have the most up-to-date- contact information in case of an emergency.
- Ms. Laurie asked when Dr. Hopson presents for others schools is that a source of income for the district.
- Dr. Hopson said they can't get paid for that. What we do is ask if they would give a donation to the Gateway Education Foundation in the amount it would cost them for a presenter. That has never happened.
- Mrs. Eliason asked if it is the same system we use to notify parents when there is no school.
- Mrs. Long said yes, but when it is an emergency, we can call all the numbers the parents have listed. She will be able text people in the future. We also try to time it so it is a convenient time for each level.

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### VI. COMMUNICATIONS

#### A. Student Representative – None

#### B. School Committee

- Mrs. Buikus said she would like to have the meeting notification earlier. They didn't get it until Monday night. She also asked Dr. Hopson not to blindside the committee.
- Mrs. Crane said her goal is to have school committee packets go back to being sent out on Friday, that way people have time to look at them and anyone who is having trouble receiving or printing them has time to get help or a printed copy from Mrs. Stewart.
- Dr. Hopson asked for what he did to blindside school committee.
- Mrs. Buikus said Dr. Hopson made a statement about having trouble with staffing in a Superintendent's Corner. She asked if we had a full staff yet.
- Dr. Hopson said yes, except for the second shift security position.
- Ms. Laurie asked about the Chester members of our committee.
- Mrs. Crane said we have two Chester members. We are down one member in Chester and down one in Russell. Towns can appoint members at any time.
- Mr. Damon said the filling of a vacancy is done by the select board and any remaining school committee members from that town.
- Mrs. Kennedy spent Monday with Senator Humason. He would like to come and do a presentation to our school committee to help arrange trips and tours of the state house. To teach children how to do what we do in school committee.
- Mrs. Kennedy also had a chance to talk to him about the confusion with the Worthington withdrawal to see if something can be done to do the financial part before the educational part. He will work with the DESE. He said it should come from the school committee not him.
- Mrs. Levreault really enjoyed the article about boys' state. She thought there must be a girls' state. The American Legion funds for boys and auxiliary funds for girls. A great idea to have the boys and girls work together. We don't have civics classes. She would like to put it on the agenda for discussion. We should contact the American legion we need to have one boy and one girl or maybe alternate years.
- Mr. Wyand dropped his son off in downtown Boston to start his new endeavor and he doesn't doubt his ability to concur. John asked him to pass on a thank you to the school committee for allowing him to be heard over the past few meetings. Mr. Wyand is trying to convince his daughter to come to meetings. Girls' state was a topic he would like brought up as well. His daughter is interested. His son was a peer and will continue to follow the program and looks forward to be involved with it again this year. He spoke with Laurie Belhumer, who is associated with the American legion in Belchertown and she said they have sent girls before.
- Mrs. Kennedy is a legion member and an auxiliary member. She has been involved in both boys' and girls' state in the past.
- Mrs. Foley asked what it costs to send them.
- Mrs. Kennedy said it pays for the room and board and the basics, materials etc. Most members are volunteers.
- Mrs. Otterbeck thanked Mrs. Eliason for nominating her and also those who voted for her.
- Ms. Suriner said Mrs. Kennedy goes to Boston a lot for legislative activities. She is also going to the 4 day conference on the Cape. Is there a way to reimburse her?
- Mrs. Eliason said the Worthington finance committee asks them how much they need for travel, but they have never put in for it. People who are on this committee spend a lot of time traveling.
- Dr. Hopson said we haven't to this point. We've only paid for the conference, but school committee could change policy.

### C. Chairperson

- Mrs. Crane handed out contact sheets and also announced that Mrs. Stewart has new MGL books if you want please see her.
- Mrs. Crane went to the opening teacher day it was great. It was very positive.
- Self evaluation –Mrs. Crane said Mrs. Stewart will send out a school committee self evaluation document. She would like everyone to look at it between now and the next meeting and be ready to give feedback - do you like it don't like it. She will put it on the agenda next time. She thinks it is a pretty good document but she wants everyone's input.
- Policy – Mrs. Crane included the public participation policy with the packet. This is one we already have in place. She just wanted people to be aware of what it is. Comments have been getting beyond a reasonable time and the members don't feel they get enough time. The best way would be for all of us to be prepared to speak. It is not unreasonable. She wants to share the time and have comments in the correct time of the meeting. She wants to make this one of her goals.
- Mrs. Kennedy would like to have us see it and have policy look at it as well.

- Ms. Laurie asked if we could have this new business emailed to us ahead of time.
- Mrs. Crane said it was in the packet.
- Mrs. Crane wants to use it for consistency not because she doesn't want here people

#### **D. Superintendent – Central Office Update (Enc.)**

- Dr. Hopson said the paraprofessionals ratified their contract as soon as he gets a copy he will bring it for a vote.
- The teachers agreed to use Baseline Edge for teacher evaluations.
- Opening day was yesterday, and there was a lot of positive feedback having the chair there

#### **E. Business Manager**

- Ms. Fisk thanked the maintenance and custodial staff. They did an incredible job in the short amount of time they had this summer.

#### **F. Administration - None**

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### **VII. COMMITTEE REPORTING**

#### **A. Superintendent's Evaluation**

- Superintendent's Evaluation - Approved Dr. Hopson's goals. There is another meeting scheduled for September 10.

#### **B. Finance Subcommittee**

- Mrs. Crane said the finance subcommittee currently only has Mr. Wyand and Mrs. Kennedy. We can't have a subcommittee with only two people. The finance subcommittee has not been a constant subcommittee-sometimes there is one and sometimes there isn't. When we created it 3 years ago it focused on Chapter 70 and the budget primer. We need to decide if it will continue as it is. During the last budget season we had a workshop type meeting with several town officials that seemed to be a productive event – should we do this instead of having a subcommittee every month. We could schedule more than just one once we have a budget.
- Mrs. Winer said she has been on other finance subcommittees. The people who came in recently wanted to do more and promote the budget; how do we continue to do that if we don't have a finance committee.
- Mrs. Crane said one of Dr. Hopson's goals is on the budget and how we are selling it to the communities? We need to work more as a team.
- Pandora spoke with Dr. Hopson about budget and she feels he has alienated her town. She asked him to come to her town and talk about the budget at the annual town meeting. He didn't, and now the school committee is going to do it. She feels that is his job.
- Mrs. Laurie said it might help if we can get involved in creating the budget.
- Dr. Hopson said when you see the goals you'll understand it. One of his suggestions is the he and the school committee members from each town meet with each town. Meeting with the 50 people on the town meeting day isn't the right day; he is taking her suggestion by going to the towns.
- Put this on the agenda for next.
- Mrs. Kennedy is against what we are proposing. The subcommittee is invaluable if we can tweak the budget with a smaller group it is better.
- Mrs. Crane suggested everyone think about the mission and if want to be on it or not. There is an existing charter which will be included in the next packet.
- Ms. Suriner volunteered to be on the committee.

#### **C. Legislative Liaison**

- Mrs. Kennedy said the state house is going to keep us informed.

#### **D. Policy Subcommittee – None**

#### **E. School Committee Goals Subcommittee**

- The self-evaluation will be in the next agenda.

#### **F. Community Curriculum Committee**

- Committee Curriculum Committee –Mr. Mason said they will hopefully be reactivating the committee for this fall. He will be releasing an article about workshops and is looking for suggestions from the committee members as well and Ms. Fisk. He would also like to integrate with the adult education program.

- Ms. Fisk said we have about 13 different programs. There will be a syllabus that will go out after everything is final. We don't have any duplicate courses. The flyer will go in local papers, on the website, and as an insert in elementary school folders. This will be ready for the open house.
- Mr. Mason said the other part in the mix will be the southern hill town adult education program.
- Mr. Wyand asked if there is a self-defense course. We should look into it. It would be beneficial.

## VIII. OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

### A. Worthington Withdrawal

- Dr. Hopson said the educational plan went into the commissioner on a timely basis. He believes Worthington has submitted theirs too. The sixty days will be up October 8 or 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Mrs. Buikus has been in contact with Dan Jacques and he gave her a letter. She read the end of the letter. He is asking us to consider his proposal. (the letter was handed out)
- Mrs. McVeigh said at the last GTAC meeting there was discussion about DESE being conflicted about their roles and responsibilities in this process. It was suggested the school committee and administrators engage the DESE. The needs conference should happen before the hearing. There is weight in the school committee and administration writing to the legislators. The legislators need to drive this they understand the intent of the legislation. The legislation seems to be backwards. Before the commissioner of education makes a decision the needs conference should be conducted.
- Ms. Suriner supports her. They are going to set precedence, and they are not sure what to do. They haven't been to the school.
- Ms. Fisk said Mr. Wulfson was at the school.
- Ms. Suriner said we have a lot of senators and representatives who should be here. We should be quite clear of what we expect.
- Mrs. Laurie asked if we want to come up a time to set this up.
- Dr. Hopson said can get clarification from the legislators. School committee and administration are seeking information for clarification about how they propose enacting the legislation and share that with the towns and the DESE and then invite everyone to determine what the best thing to do is.
- Ms. Suriner asked if we can do that in one day.
- Dr. Hopson said we need to get clarification first; here is the process, and direction. Then share it with DESE. This is the first time DESE has done this. They are grappling with the same thing we are, what is the intent and the process.
- Mrs. Eliason said the legislation is clear, but the schedule is just not to Mr. Jacques' liking.

*Ms. Laurie made a motion seconded by Ms. Suriner for the administration to initiate the process with our legislators as to whether DESE or the school should initiate the needs conference. (clarify what is happening next and how needs the conference is going to happen)*

- Mrs. Levreault said we are all talking about voting on a needs conference – you had the needs conference when we closed schools. The EAC committee looked at the needs of the district. It would have been better to listen to what Worthington wanted to do. EAC never considered what would happen if Worthington left. The rules are clear the needs conference is just not happening when they want.

*Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mr. Wyand to waive the two- meeting rule.*

- Mrs. Levreault said the two meeting rule is in place, so when something comes up it gives people a chance to think about it and be involved. If they are talking taking action we shouldn't suspend the two meeting rule, we should discuss it tonight and take action at next meeting.
- Mrs. McVeigh Remind this committee this committee that in the past committee to write letters.
- Mr. Wyand feels that this falls under the Worthington withdrawal. If the Worthington people were concerned they should be here.

*Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mr. Wyand to waive the two- meeting rule.*

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

- Mrs. Kennedy asked who we are sending this letter too.
- Mrs. Crane said it might be more effective to send it to those who represent our towns.
- Mrs. Winer asked if they are each giving an opinion, or a group opinion.

- Dr. Hopson said traditionally they get together, and send a letter they have all signed. Anything that goes to our legislature also gets cc'd to the chair of the house and senate.

*Ms. Laurie made a motion seconded by Ms. Suriner for the administration to initiate the process with our legislators as to whether DESE or the school should initiate the needs conference.(clarify what is happening next and how needs the conference is going to happen)*

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

- It was agreed that everyone should see the letter before it goes out.
- Send the letter and in the letter ask them to attend a meeting and then from there ask DESE to come out. Part of the letter is that there is a timeframe.
- Mrs. Buikus asked if we can ask them to meet before the commissioner's signature deadline.
- Mr. Mason said GTAC and Jacobs ladder has been working to try for a legislative forum on October 17 or October 27. These are dates they might find convenient.
- Mrs. Winer said a legislative meeting with all these people is productive.
- Mrs. McVeigh hopes we can convince them to meet with this committee before the October 6 deadline.

#### **B. FY 15 Budget Update**

- We are off the 1/12 budget, revised assessment letters have to go out to Blandford, Russell, and Chester. The rest of the towns paid on the 1.2 budget.

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

#### **A. Changing School Committee Meeting Start Time From 7:30 to 7:00 p.m.**

- Mrs. Winer said it makes sense to get stuff done early, but it might not be realistic.
- Mrs. Suriner suggested trying 7:00 as a trial.
- Dr. Hopson said you might want to wait a couple of meetings and see how it goes.

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

#### **Future Agenda Items**

### **XI. INFORMATION**

#### **Information**

Superintendent's Corner June 27, 2014  
 Gateway awards to underclassmen  
 Laughter, talent marks 8<sup>th</sup> grade transition  
 Veteran delivers lesson in rights and responsibilities  
 Superintendent's Corner June 20, 2014  
 Chester, practices evacuation  
 Words get all dressed up in Littleville's annual parade!  
 Foley selected for citizenship conference  
 Middle School Effort Awards  
 Jr. High Effort Awards  
 Gateway delegates make their mark at Boys' State  
 Superintendent's Corner July 10, 2014  
 Gateway Class of 2014 DVD's  
 Superintendent's Corner July 21, 2014  
 Schools reopen August 28  
 Upcoming School Committee meetings  
 Day care, custody transportation forms  
 Superintendent's Corner August 11, 2014  
 New at Gateway this year  
 Fall sports tryouts  
 Superintendent's Corner August 18, 2014

**Warrants**

AP# 1105 \$ 124,595.58

PR# 26 \$ 377,961.92

PR# 26.2 \$881,098.82

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**XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None**

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**XIII. ADJOURNMENT** Mrs. Levreault made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to adjourn at 9:20 p.m.

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Respectfully Submitted,  
Stacy L. Stewart  
School Committee Secretary