

**GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2013**

**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  
Jim Kronholm

CHESTER  
Scott Warner  
Shirley Winer  
Martha Otterbeck

HUNTINGTON  
Ron Damon  
William Hathaway  
Jeff Wyand

MIDDLEFIELD  
Sarah Foley  
Brian Miller

MONTGOMERY  
Anne Marie Buikus

RUSSELL  
Ellen Hirtle  
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  
Alice Taverna, Pupil Services Director

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

**II. PUBLIC INPUT FOR ITEMS NOT LISTED ON AGENDA - None**

**III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT - None**

**IV. CONSENT ITEMS**

*Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mr. Damon to approve the minutes of 7/24/13.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain 5 Absent 1*

**V. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS**

**A. FY '13 Foundation Annual Report (Enc.)**

- Mrs. Winer said she has received little feedback from school committee. She encourages everyone to look at it and give suggestions and make comments. They have been working with banks. Mrs. Long has been looking for grants. There was a glass project which was requested to be funded partially by the foundation that ended up receiving \$600 in voluntary donations. Not everything gets done and some things are already provided by the school. They've received many applications.
- Mrs. Foley asked if they could apply through cultural councils.
- Dr. Hopson said yes, the foundation can.
- Mrs. Eliason said there were two statements; one for the Shipman Memorial Fund and one for the Gateway Education Foundation.
- Dr. Hopson said the Shipman Memorial Fund is strictly to fund and update the performing arts center.

**VI. COMMUNICATIONS**

- A. Student Representative - None**
- B. School Committee - None**

**C. Chairperson – Legislative Hearing Notice (Enc.)**

- Mrs. Eliason reminded everyone to fill out disclosure forms if needed. The ethics commission says you should if you have a child in the system and you are communicating with teachers. If you or a family member are a member of the MTA you may want to fill out a form as well.
- Opinion from legal counsel – do assessments in the budget have to match the assessment letters send from the District treasurer. Mrs. Eliason has emailed Russ Dupere because it says the school committee apportions the budget. She will have an update hopefully at the next meeting.
- Charting The Course is September 21 at Lee elementary school. It is a legal requirement we set it as a goal. She hopes everyone who needs to, will attend.
- Legislative hearing scheduled in September for the home rule petition.

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

- Hampshire Regional is supporting Worthington’s home rule petition. MASS and MASC won’t take a position because the school committee has not taken a position. He suggested they should take a position as a school committee. Mrs. Kennedy has contacted the state to try and have the hearing moved here to Western Mass.
- Mrs. Kennedy got a hold of Steve Kulik and Ben Downing’s office. They sent her to the Senate to speak with Sonia Diaz. It looks like Sonia is extremely open to moving it out here. It isn’t done all the time, but it can be done. They want to make sure we know that if we can’t get it changed that they appreciate letters as well. They will take everything into consideration. This is going to be the only hearing.

**E. Business Manager**

- Maintenance is almost ready for school to open. They have a few odds and ends to firm up.

**F. Administration - None****VII. AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTING****A. Superintendent’s Evaluation Subcommittee**

- Mrs. Levreault said they had their first meeting tonight. They voted on goals for the year and discussed a calendar for meetings and information for first management meeting.

**B. Finance Subcommittee**

- Mrs. Kennedy said they held a 15 minute meeting prior to GTAC to discuss budget and moving forward. She said we may need schedule another meeting before our next one. We have till September 10 to come up with a budget – Chapter 71, section 16. Special finance subcommittee meetings or a special school committee meeting
- Ms. Fisk said Mass general law Chapter 71 16 b and ½, says if we vote on the 10<sup>th</sup> the 45 days starts from there.
- Mrs. Eliason feels we should see how the meeting goes tonight before we schedule a special meeting.

**C. Policy Subcommittee**

- Needs to set a date.

**D. School Committee Goals Subcommittee**

1. Updated School Committee Goals (Enc.)

**VIII. OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS****A. FY ’14 Budget Version 4.0 (Enc’s.)**

- The budget and the potential cut list was included in your packet.

***Mrs. Levreault made a motion seconded by Mrs. Crane to approve budget version 4.0.***

- Mrs. Eliason appreciates the administration coming up with the list of reductions. She took things off the cut list because school committee wants students to continue having extracurricular activities. Also, current employees and new hires have certain expectations. Gymnastics, Skiing, main complex custodian, junior high and middle school team leaders , middle school intramurals- fall and spring, paraprofessional , paraprofessional unemployment, GHS Math teacher, GHS Math teacher health insurance, Littleville classroom teacher, Littleville classroom teacher health insurance. She said this totals about \$133,000 if

you add it to the \$19,000 in reductions between version 3.1 and 4 there is about \$150,000 in savings. She did this to spark conversation.

- Mrs. Foley asked for clarification; are you taking them off list or cutting them?
- Mrs. Eliason is taking them off the list of cuts.
- Mrs. Winer doesn't think we should be picking and choosing.
- Mrs. Eliason said the school committee can and should set priorities in the budget.
- Dr. Hopson said as a point of order you should make a motion to consider changes to the version 4.0.

***Mrs. Buikus made a motion seconded by Mr. Wyand to consider a subset of recommended reductions.***

- Mrs. Crane does not want to get into a discussion pulling apart what the administrators have put together. We should be talking about assessments. She doesn't think we should cut anymore.
- Mr. Warner said that out of the \$300,000 in the proposed list you're proposing to cut it by \$130,000.
- Dr. Hopson was asked for a prioritized cut list in case school committee was going to make cuts. He would not cut the budget because these will affect students.
- Mr. Warner asked if there was an objective to cut \$325,000.
- Dr. Hopson said three towns voted the budget down.
- Mr. Warner said this \$300,000 is what Dr. Hopson and administrators came up with from the budget.

Martha arrived 8:02

- Mr. Kronholm feels uncomfortable cutting these positions. If we are determined to cut, let's cut \$100,000 and let the administrators decide what should be cut.
- Mrs. Hirtle is scared to cut anymore out of the budget. She would hate to see the kids loose out.
- Mrs. Levreault said we just had three towns that voted no on the budget. If you look at page 10, in FY 10, we were down. This is the first time our budget has gone up in 4 years. She doesn't think we should be cutting anymore. If we want to do the best we can for education we should stick with this and take the \$1,500 off for software. We need to endorse education at Gateway.
- Mrs. Eliason said we have a 4<sup>th</sup> quarter report showing balances from last year of about \$850,000. We are allowed to keep up to 5% of the budget. If there is excess then we give it back to the towns. Her position is it is not necessary to collect that money if we are going to give it back. She doesn't think the cushion should be that large.
- Mrs. Laurie said the grand totals are on page 25 of the budget..
- Ms. Fisk said that is where the E & D comes from.
- Mrs. Foley feels that as a school committee we have to keep these opportunities for the students. We have a responsibility to the students in our district.
- Mrs. Laurie said there is a 19 % increase in assistant principal position.
- Ms. Fisk said it is a new position the person leaving had accrued vacation time we had to pay.
- Mrs. Laurie said Special Education seems to have a higher increase in salary.
- Ms. Fisk said this budget has staffing changes, sometimes we hire someone with more experience, and also their salary line might change depending on their movement in the district.
- Mrs. Laurie said the business manager was increased.
- Ms. Fisk said there were three positions that were level funded.
- Mrs. Laurie asked about the grounds keeper
- Ms. Fisk said custodial pay is based on merit pay.
- Mrs. Hirtle feels we are getting off topic.
- Mr. Wyand is strongly opposed to cutting the high school math teacher, especially looking at MCAS. Can we replace it with something else? How was this chosen to be on the list of cuts to begin with especially after the situation we had last year.
- Dr. Hopson said administrators thought about if we have to cut, what is the least impact on students. As you can see it is way down on the list. Every item on here impacts students in some way. Math is on here because of the number of Math verses English classes. As you reduce a Math teacher, you will probably cut course offerings. Kids could take it online.
- Mr. Wyand said with our Math MCAS history, what about cutting gym instead.
- Dr. Hopson said right now you have large P.E. classes
- Mrs. Crane asked what is the difference between 3.0 and 4.0 in the assessments to the towns.
- Ms. Fisk said it went up \$6,499. The Cherry sheet came out higher and transportation reimbursement came out lower. The budget went down but the assessments went up.
- Mrs. Laurie asked if we could we put something from drama back in. If this means they won't be putting on any plays, it is such a small amount.

- John Wyand said we only have one play per year and they do have quite a bit of student interaction. It would be very difficult for him not having a play especially in his senior year. They start in January and the production is in May.

***Mrs. Laurie made an amendment seconded by Mr. Wyand to add back in high school drama (2,750.00) and scenery arts advisory.***

- Mr. Warner asked if we could vote on 4.0. and see if it passes and then go from there.
- Pandora Hague said we should go over the list you want to stay.

***Mrs. Laurie made an amendment seconded by Mr. Wyand to add back in high school drama (2,750.00) and scenery arts advisory.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain 3 Absent***

- Mr. Damon said these recommendations were made at our request. The administration doesn't want this. If we eliminate the things that were not filled, it will be hard getting them back in.

***Mrs. Crane made a motion seconded by Mrs. Hirtle to call the question.***

***Motion Failed (VOTE) Yeas 8 Nays 6 Abstain 2 Absent***

- Mrs. Laurie asked about the Littleville classroom teacher, are we hiring a teacher to reduce the class size.
- Dr. Hopson said all the positions are filled if you cut that position you will increase the class size. We no longer have coaches, so they need time to mentor each other.
- Mrs. Hirtle said these cuts are cutting staff, when you cut staff you are hurting students, your opportunities at the high school go down and you are going to increase school choice. You are hurting the education of our students. So many students go home to empty homes, if we can keep them here for intramurals it is huge.
- Mrs. Eliason said intramurals are being taken off the list in this current amendment.
- Mr. Damon said if we cut the positions we have hired are we required to pay unemployment.
- Dr. Hopson said the amendment is not cutting teachers, it is cutting extracurricular advisory positions. In 2003 they were all cut, and it has been very difficult getting these back.
- Mrs. Levreault said we have to be very careful looking at this list. Just because we are being asked to cut doesn't mean we should. Sometimes we need to do what is best for our students. If we don't cut drama how do we cut Jazz? If we cut these things we open ourselves up to school choice. Our school choice numbers have gone up. We need to offer as much or close to the surrounding schools. How many kids are affected if we cut distance learning? We are looking at ten students who are taking AP Classes. We should stand firm with our budget.
- Ms. Taverna said people are speaking eloquently about what needs to stay. If you are going to vote for this budget, you need to stand up on town floor, even if people are angry. There is no sense of voting for a budget if you are not going to support it.
- Mrs. Hirtle said we need to stand behind our budget, our students, and what we stand for. There are still staff cuts in there.
- Mrs. Levreault said the advisory positions that are not filled, why aren't they filled.
- Dr. Hopson said they may not have been filled because there wasn't enough student interest. The younger staff have to get their masters in order to get their professional license and may have children. Most positions are filled internal.
- Mr. Kronholm said if we vote version 4.0 then we cut \$325,000,
- Dr. Hopson said a vote for the amendment would take out everything, but what is in the amendment.
- Mr. Kronholm said if we vote down the amendment and then vote version 4 we are basically at the same .
- Ms. Fisk said the last part the sail bus is really tied to the teacher reduction.

***Mrs. Kennedy made an amendment seconded by Mrs. Eliason to strike the sail bus (take it off the list of reductions).***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 12 Nays Abstain 4 Absent***

***Mrs. Laurie made an amendment seconded by Mrs. Levreault to keep the keep the part- time health teacher.***

- Dr. Hopson said this is a retired teacher who only comes in and makes the difference between what she and make as a teacher and her retirement.

***Mrs. Laurie made an amendment seconded by Mrs. Levreault to keep the keep the part- time health teacher.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain 3 Absent***

***Mrs. Crane made an amendment seconded by Mrs. Hirtle to restore middle, junior high and high library services, Chester library and Littleville library services and the two Jazz advisor positions (\$9,410)***

- Mrs. Buikus we are not taking anything away, we are level funding, but she would put the Jazz back in.
- Mrs. Crane said she would never want to see ms, Jr. High and High library services cut. The middle and Jr. High Jazz position affects students and a salary. We are playing Monte Hall and we are making a deal.
- Mrs. Levreault said if we are going to have drama we need a choreographer.
- Mrs. Laurie ask what are the library services.
- Dr. Hopson said supplies, services, electronic magazines, etc., all of which have gone up.
- Mr. McDonald said why not just cut half the E & D.
- Dr. Hopson said we don't have \$650,000 to reduce the budget.
- Mr. McDonald said we have a line item for it.
- Ms. Fisk said there is \$800,000., you spend \$650 to reduce assessments so the reality is there is \$150,000 left.
- Mrs. Eliason agrees with Mrs. Laurie and with Mrs. Levreault.

***Mrs. Crane made an amendment seconded by Mrs. Hirtle to restore middle, Jr. High and High library services, Chester library and Littleville library services and the two Jazz advisor positions (\$9,410)***

***Motion Failed (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays 4 Abstain 1 Absent***

***Mrs. Crane made an amendment seconded by Mrs. Winer to keep the Middle School and Junior High Jazz advisor positions. (2,106.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays 2 Abstain 1 Absent***

***Mr. Damon made an amendment seconded by Mr. Wyand to keep everything with the exception of instructional software, (1,500) (Makes 4.0 20,000 lower than 3.1)***

***Motion Failed (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays 6 Abstain Absent***

- John Wyand said the final cut Pro-software is used daily. It was difficult to get in the first place because it is expensive. I Pad applications are constantly being updated in the lower classes. The district administration server is a single sign in. All of these are very important.
- Dr. Hopson would recommend cutting instructional software, middle, junior high, and high school peer mediation advisor- hopefully grant money will cover those – makes assessments essentially the same as 3.0, with a reduction of about \$6,000.

***Mrs. Hirtle made an amendment seconded by Mr. Warner Mr. Warner to cut GHS Instructional Software, Middle School Peer Mediation Advisor, Junior High School Peer Mediation Advisor, and High School Peer Mediation, and keep everything else.***

***Motion Failed (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays 6 Abstain Absent***

***Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mr. Wyand reconsider the previous motion***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays 5 Abstain Absent***

- Dr. Hopson said Mrs. Hirtle's motion returns the assessments to the towns the same as version 3.0.
- Mrs. Hirtle is asking why people have
- Mrs. Laurie asked what the deadline is.

- Mrs. Eliason said December 1 is the deadline.
- Mrs. Hirtle's motion makes \$56,143 in reductions
- A man from Russell said three are 15 houses in for sale in Russell. People cannot afford heat and electricity. The people in Russell are hurting.
- Mrs. Hirtle we cannot operate a school system without money.
- Mrs. McVeigh said this school committee should actively request to meet with the select board and finance committee's who have voted this down and find out why. You should actively solicit. It is just a suggestion.
- Mr. Warner asked for the members that have been voting against the budget to explain why they are not supporting the budget.
- Mrs. Laurie said the people she talks to want to see it reduced. They want to know why we need 16 million dollar budget. It's too high, and she would like us to make a good faith effort.
- Mrs. Eliason said every year we have hundreds of thousands of dollars we don't spend. She personally hates rebates.
- Mrs. Buikus said we've had three towns vote it down twice because they can't afford it.
- Dr. Hopson said Worthington's assessment is lower than it was last year and Chester has said they can afford it. Free cash in towns is the same as E & D.
- Mrs. Crane doesn't want to sit here feeling bad rooting for the kids. That is what our job is on this board. The education of our children is towns' future.
- Mr. Kronholm agrees with Mrs. Crane. He cares about the kids. As a home owner who is going to buy our hoses if we leave the school system in shambles.
- Mrs. Winer said everything we are asking them to cut here is of opinion. We don't know the ramifications it will have.

*Mrs. Hirtle made an amendment seconded by Mr. Warner Mr. Warner to cut GHS Instructional Software, Middle School Peer Mediation Advisor, Junior High School Peer Mediation Advisor, and High School Peer Mediation, and keep everything else.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 12 Nays 4 Abstain Absent*

*Mrs. Buikus made a motion seconded by Mr. Wyand to consider subset of recommended reductions - GHS Instructional Software, Middle School Peer Mediation Advisor, Junior High School Peer Mediation Advisor, and High School Peer Mediation.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 12 Nays 3 Abstain Absent 1*

*Mrs. Levreault made a motion seconded by Mrs. Crane to approve budget version 4.0. (with a reduction of \$6,143).*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 12 Nays 3 Abstain Absent 1*

- Ms. Fisk clarified that school committee knows the assessment page will change.
- Mrs. Eliason agreed

## **B. Approval of Tentative Supervision/Evaluation Agreement**

- Dr. Hopson said this is the agreement the teachers and administration worked on together. They took the model plan from the state and made minor adjustments. If you pass this tonight it puts it in the hands of the teachers to vote on.
- Mrs. Eliason asked for an explanation of the process.
- Dr. Hopson said 10 teachers and 6 administrators worked together as a committee to come this document. This will affect the evaluation load on administrator if the teachers agree this is what we will use, if not, we will continue to use the one we use currently until we can agree.
- Mrs. Winer made a motion seconded by Mrs. Crane to approve the supervision and evaluation document presented to the school committee.
- Mrs. Eliason disclosed that she has an immediate family member who is a part of Mass Teachers' Association at the college level.
- Mrs. Hirtle and Mrs. Foley also disclosed they are members of the Mass Teachers' Association.

*Mrs. Winer made a motion seconded by Mrs. Crane to approve the supervision and evaluation document presented to the school committee.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 14 Nays Abstain 1 Absent 1*

**8:15 - IX. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS**  
**9:00 p.m. A.**

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

**Future Agenda Items**

September 11 - Finance Subcommittee Benchmark Study

September 25 -School Choice Presentation – Wendy Long

**XI. INFORMATION**

**Information**

Middle School Term 4 Effort Awards

Foundation holds Annual Meeting

**Warrants**

AP# 1006 \$28,805.49

AP# 1008 \$96,154.69

PR# 26 \$452,177.96

PR# 26.1 \$5,368.79

PR# 01 \$92,036.64

PR# 02 \$91,314.52

PR# 03 \$94,666.84

**9:00-10 p.m. XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**  
**or earlier**

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

*Mrs. Levreault made a motion seconded by Mrs. Laurie to adjourn at 9:45 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Stacy L. Stewart,

School Committee Secretary