

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2014

**Middlefield 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 Otterbeck

HUNTINGTON
Ron Damon
Jeff Wyand

MIDDLEFIELD
Sarah Foley

MONTGOMERY
Anne Marie Buikus
Sandra Haas

RUSSELL
Ruth Kennedy

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)

- Tamerin from Middlefield is curious about bus changes. She asked if the routes were cut down to reduce expenses.
- Ms. Fisk said yes they have been doing that since school started. They count the students on the buses. They reduced one prior to school starting and are looking at reducing another.
- Tamerin how many buses there were for Middlefield?
- Ms. Fisk they had twenty- two and will probably be down to twentybusses for the district. It depends on the tiers. You have to be able to cut both of them to save money.

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Brennan Foley said school has started since last time they met. There are no officers yet. Elections were held today. He ran for student council, he is just awaiting the results of the elections.

IV. CONSENT ITEMS 8/27/14(Enc.)

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Ms. Suriner to approve the minutes of 8/27/14 with corrections.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays 2 Abstain Absent

V. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS

A. First Semester Field Trips

- Dr. Hopson spoke about the Broadway Play in New York City the music department and the Washington DC music competition for the music department. These both need school committee approve because they are out of state.
- These can be moved to the next agenda for a vote.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Student Representative

- Brennan Foley said the girls were winning when he left the game today. The boys won on Monday and Cross Country did very well at their first meet.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked if it is possible to update the athletic schedule.
- Mrs. Long suggested looking on the high school website, as it is not longer posted on high school sports .net.
- Mrs. Eliason had been looking for notice for girls' soccer tryouts and had trouble finding out when they were. She was able to find out, but it was the day after.
- Mrs. Long said she did a press release and it was posted on the high school website under athletics.
- Mrs. Crane said typically things are on the website.

B. School Committee

- Mrs. Kennedy would like to see each member to get a MGL book. She would also like everyone to have copies of the school policies. It is big and cumbersome but it is important. She would like to see a school committee organization chart. She said, as the chair person you are not necessarily the chair of the subcommittee, you are an exofiscio member. She is hoping that everyone will go to the charting the course. She would like to see us a little more educated for the meetings.
- Mrs. Kennedy wants everyone to have a hard copy of the policy book.
- Dr. Hopson asked how many school committee members wanted a hard copy.
- Mrs. Eliason suggested having discs for everyone.
- Mrs. McVeigh said not all of the policies follow the appendix listed on the website.
- Mrs. Crane said we will look into it.
- Mrs. Buikus thought last time she checked Dr. Hopson was administration not school committee, as stated in a recent news article.
- Mrs. Crane took responsibility for that, she misspoke to the reporter and should have been more clear.
- Mrs. Kennedy would like to see someone appointed to do school committee communications. There are things that come out before we even get a hold of them. Mrs. Kennedy would like to do the superintendent's/school committee article like in the past.

C. Chairperson

- Mrs. Crane handed out an updated contact list for everyone as well as a listing of subcommittee membership. She is going to the charting the course along with Mrs. Garfield and Ms. Suriner.

D. Superintendent – Central Office Update (Enc.)

- Everything is on the agenda.

E. Business Manager

- Ms. Fisk said we had an elementary run that did not pick up elementary students for Chester. It is the first time it has ever happened. They did rectify the problem right away. Adult education will start in October. She is passing around the draft pamphlet of offerings. Classes will run Monday through Thursday. This will go in red folders, it will be on the website, and there will be a press release. The 4th quarter financial statement will come in the next packet.

F. Administration

- Mrs. Long handed out a copy of the Gateway Education Foundation Annual Report.
- Mrs. Blocker said the school year got off to a great start. New teachers were matched up with their mentors.
- Mrs. Eliason asked for a list of the new staff and what they do. She couldn't see it as part of the press release.
- Mrs. Long said if you clicked on the picture, the press release was there.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTING

A. Superintendent's Evaluation

- The Superintendent's Evaluation subcommittee will hold their first management meeting in November. They are working on their schedule and getting ready for the November management meeting.

B. Finance Subcommittee

- On the agenda

C. Legislative Liaison

- No report at this time.

D. Policy Subcommittee

- No Report at this time.

E. School Committee Goals Subcommittee

- No report at this time

F. Community Curriculum Committee

- No report at this time

VIII. OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS**A. Ratification of Paraprofessional Contract (Enc.)**

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mr. Wyand to ratify the Paraprofessional contract.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent

B. Worthington Withdrawal

- Mrs. Crane handed out a copy of the letter that was sent out last week.
- Dr. Hopson has not received a response yet. Generally, they all get together and respond as a group.
- Mrs. Levreault and Mrs. Buikus asked who the letter was sent to.
- Mrs. Crane said all the legislators who represent the seven towns; the list was handed out.

IX. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS**A. Line Item Transfers (Enc.)**

- Ms. Fisk said most are from the contract negotiations. They take care of 90% of the transfers.
- Mr. Wyand said it looks like the paraprofessional contract settlement decreased by \$ 65,000.
- Ms. Fisk said if you look at all of the lines, there are increases in some. Paraprofessionals shift with the student or needs of the student.
- Mrs. Eliason asked about the .5 preschool teacher. Is that the class that Ms. Taverna talked about?
- Dr. Hopson said yes. There may be a possibility for an afternoon preschool. Ms. Taverna anticipates 5 more students.
- Ms. Fisk said with that addition, there will be additional busing.
- Mrs. Levreault asked if that would be in Chester, and if there would be role model slots.
- Dr. Hopson said yes.
- Ms. Suriner asked how do we learn about that, families moving in or school choice.
- Dr. Hopson said it is not school choice. We don't have to take school choice if we don't have room
- Mr. Wyand asked how much it would cost.
- Ms. Fisk said about \$68,000
- Mrs. Levreault asked if the students were from all towns.
- Dr. Hopson didn't know.
- Mrs. McVeigh said they have their first meeting next week. Are the preschool students involved in infant and toddler programs? Either there are parents who didn't notify anyone or she questions the planning on the special education director. Because most of them should be in the infant and toddler program. She would suggest the special education director meet with the infant and toddler programs.
- Mrs. Crane said Ms. Taverna can't always know when a parent is going to call for early intervention.
- Dr. Hopson said when she puts the original budget together, she includes the infant and toddler students and as she mentioned we don't always know about the students until they get to kindergarten screening. He doesn't think these were anticipated.

- Mrs. Kennedy said the majority of the kids were coming from Russell during their presentation. She would like to know if these kids are being bused up to Chester.
- Dr. Hopson said yes, except for the ones who need full day who go to Littleville.
- Mr. Wyand asked for a reminder about the net metering line item.
- Ms. Fisk said Nexamp came in and did a presentation. They were looking at a piece of property in Hadley it didn't happen before the SREX change over. We are holding right now for the next set of rates.
- Mr. Wyand said so it is costing us \$10,000 more in electricity.
- Ms. Fisk said yes, but hopefully that will change.
- Ms. Fisk said both guys the guy from Nexamp and Eric Weiss from Hampshire County have left.
- Mrs. Kennedy said heating oil has been going down why is our cost going up.
- Ms. Fisk said it was very low when she budgeted. It has gone up since that time.
- Move to old business for a vote.

B. Finance Committee Discussion (Enc.)

- Mrs. Crane said we started a discussion at the last meeting.
- Dr. Hopson touched on the time line because some people felt they didn't have enough time. At the next school committee meeting he and Ms. Fisk will do a budget history presentation. Then the administrators will meet with he and Ms. Fisk. There will be an audit presentation on November 12, December/January school committee will get the line item budget and review the preliminary budget. Then the house budget comes out and we do a preliminary budget based on October numbers which will change for March numbers. Budget adoption is March 11. March through June allows us to reflect and change as needed. We can't really condense it more. There is a lot going on. Ms. Fisk continues to try to make changes keeping everything up to date.
- Mrs. Eliason said last year the finance subcommittee had a two hour long meeting with the town finance committee members. One of their comments was that that process was happening after the budget was set. Their desire is to be involved earlier on in the process. She thinks it's the same at the public hearing. If the school committee is going to undertake a capital plan we need to make sure the towns are on board. Maybe we can do it earlier in the process.
- Mrs. Crane asked for her thought on a realistic month.
- Mrs. Eliason said February
- Mrs. Kennedy said January 14 and 28 is the preliminary school committee review. She doesn't want to give up the finance committee; it is important for the towns to know there is a subcommittee for the towns to meet with. There is not enough time for the whole committee to meet.
- Mrs. Crane said this committee has done it both ways. It is the pleasure of the committee. It might be good to have a motion on the table.
- Mrs. Winer said her question about the finance committee is, when does the school committee get a chance to do this analysis. The rest of the committee needs to understand the budget as well. She misses having those discussions in session.
- Mrs. Buikus suggested having a subcommittee meeting that was an open meeting prior to the school committee meeting. We could we hold it from 6:30 to 7:30.
- Ms. Fisk said the subcommittee generally met on the second meeting of the month. There is a lot of redundancy from subcommittee to the full committee. If we had the meetings start at 7 and from 7-7:30 we could cover budget prior to every meeting (December 10, January 14, January 28, February 25) That way questions come up as a whole committee and everyone is on the same page. We have had a lot of new faces in the past few years. She met with Mrs. Kennedy, Mr. Wyand, Ms. Laurie, and Mrs. Hirtle individually. She thinks that we could cover a lot of ground.
- Mrs. Winer asked what would be the job of the subcommittee.
- Ms. Fisk said we would pilot this for a year without the finance subcommittee.
- Ms. Suriner said she would expect the finance committee would be part of building the budget. Do school committee members help put the budget together.
- Mrs. Buikus said that doesn't happen.
- Mrs. Winer said that is not what we do.
- Dr. Hopson asked at what level do you want school committee involved; the teacher, department, central office, or the LTM level.
- Ms. Suriner said for herself if she starts with the details it would help her understand and be supportive. It would be a commitment to be there to help.
- Mrs. Crane said this time line helps. We also get department updates at school committee meetings.
- Ms. Suriner said a lot of those people that are making those decisions are not here.

- Mrs. McVeigh would hope most of those meetings are documented well enough, so those who can't be present can understand what went on. She would be disappointed in the finance subcommittee if they didn't understand the year to date budget. She hopes they are having discussions with line items prior to bringing them here. She knows in the past they have done presentations on Chapter 70 funds; the mechanics, and forecasting. They should have an understanding of the budget at least every three months. She doesn't think the whole committee has the time to do that.
- Mrs. Winer doesn't think the finance committee has the time either. School committee is not an adjunct to the school, it is a governing board.
- Mrs. Eliason said the subcommittee was doing all those things Mrs. McVeigh. She disagrees with Mrs. Winer. The budget is important for school committee and members should be part of the budget process.
- Mrs. Winer doesn't mean we can't have influence. We just don't have the time to understand at the level of building principals.
- Mrs. Kennedy has been on the committee and it has been a busy committee, so it is easier understood and can be brought to towns' people. She doesn't want us to give up the finance committee. We are dealing with money given by taxpayers. It is our job. That is what we are elected to do.
- Dr. Hopson thinks she and Mrs. Eliason are arguing for the whole committee to be part of the process. He agrees with Ms. Fisk. The reason why it went away years ago is because it got repetitive. If you provide additional time, you get all members to understand the budget.
- Mrs. Buikus said the subcommittee did get everything at the same time as everyone else. They still were not involved in putting the budget together.
- Mrs. Crane said this item has to move to old business. Think about what we've talked about so we can make a decision at the next meeting.
- Mr. Wyand asked if the committee could get a copy of Ms. Fisk's proposal for the next meeting.
- Mrs. Eliason said the Ms. Fisk's proposal and the subcommittee are not necessarily mutually exclusive.
- Mrs. Kennedy said if the finance subcommittee is not important why would we have the rest of the subcommittees.

C. Committee Self Evaluation Discussion (emailed 9/2/14)

- Mrs. Crane asked the committee to look at this to see if they thought it was appropriate. MASC recommends we use this one the first time and to use the same one for several years. Does anyone have any comments on the evaluation? She is hoping to do this in October.
- Mrs. Winer said it is important that we do this.

D. Building Representative Volunteers

- Mrs. Crane said the committee developed a program where a member could be the representative for a specific school. It would allow school committee would have a little more exposure, report to school committee or just to participate. People should email or contact Mrs. Crane if they'd like to be a representative. The principals and Mrs. Blocker would love to have a one.
- Mrs. Winer asked how much time it would take. It is nice to know what is going on in the building and classrooms. It gives you a chance to meet the teachers and see what the students are doing. Mrs. Long is always telling us about events, she sees a lot of people at sporting events.

E. Boys' and Girls' State Discussion

- Mrs. Levreault emailed Mr. Finnie. There was funding for girls' state and there isn't now. If there was funding there is nothing that would prevent them from going.
- Mrs. Kennedy said it is the legion that funds the boys. The auxiliary hasn't been able to raise enough money to send girls.
- Mrs. Levreault said Mr. Finnie said the school district acts as the facilitator. The boys' is from the legion and the girls' comes from the women's auxiliary. She brought it up because last year we sent to boys and no girls. She googled boys' state and girls' state and explained their purposes. If the legion was receiving Title IX federal funds they would need to do both. As a school committee we should talk to the legion and if there is no funding for girls is it fair to send the boys.
- Mrs. Long said the high school did get involved in the title IX women athlete's programs. This program was for girls only. There isn't one for boys.
- Mrs. Levreault said one of the challenges in the hill towns is to groom people to live in society. We need to make things available to boys and girls. As a district we don't recognize students for as much as we should especially when they are doing good things for town government. For example, we recognize the boys on volunteer fire departments, but boys and girls generally are not recognized for babysitting on annual town meeting day so parents can participate.. As a school committee we should contact the legion and the

auxiliary, and if they don't have money for both we should see if they would send one boy and one girl instead of two boys.

- Mrs. Garfield said you may want to check with Mr. Finnie on the interest.

Mr. Damon left

- Dr. Hopson asked if she was saying if they don't sponsor girls and boys we will turn it down for the boys.
- Mrs. Otterbeck agrees and it makes her crazy. She agrees with Mrs. Levreault in that we should explore the legion and the auxiliary. The other part is to make sure community involvement is instilled in students. We should be able to write a letter and ask how the process works and look for resources. She doesn't feel comfortable pulling the trigger and getting out if they don't fund both.
- Mrs. Levreault asked if the American Legion in Russell is for us.
- Mrs. Kennedy said there is one in Blandford and Westfield. The fundraising comes from the auxiliary or the legion. We could go to one of the other auxiliaries to see if they would support the girls.
- Mrs. Otterbeck said we should write a letter and get more information.
- Mr. Wyand said the program expired and we should inspire it and get it back. They are two separate programs
- Mr. Wyand talked to the director of the boys' state program. He said they could find money somewhere in the program.
- Mrs. Crane confirmed that Mrs. Levreault will get some more information and report back to the committee.

F. School Committee Reimbursement/Payments for Travel Discussion (Enc.)

- Mrs. Kennedy referenced MGL 40:5, 44:58, and 71:52 which all pertain the three school committee policies.
- Dr. Hopson said if as a school committee you say we need to allocate \$ you can do that.
- Mrs. Suriner asked how much is budgeted and what it is spent on.
- Ms. Fisk said she wasn't sure how much was budgeted. It is spent on MASC membership, charting the course, the joint conference, name plates, books etc.
- Dr. Hopson your policies are your policies 99% come from MASC and 1% comes from DESE. An example would be the fingerprinting. The law says it has to be done and the policy says how it is going to be done.

G. Proposed Budget Timeline (Enc.)

- Discussed in finance subcommittee discussion.

H. School Committee/Superintendent Goals (Enc.)

- Mrs. Eliason said it looks like the superintendent has two goals and the rest are for school committee.
- Dr. Hopson said no the superintendent has three goals and the goals address what happens; the multiple steps to use to measure student growth for example. They are trying to create a rubric for the whole district. NEASC will require a way to measure 21st century skills.
- Mrs. Eliason said the first goal and the second goal look like his but the third goal looks like it is for school committee.
- Dr. Hopson said school climate comes from the top.
- Mrs. Eliason is not disagreeing with the objectives; she just thinks this is not the right place for this.
- Dr. Hopson said only two are required. We could take out the third.
- Mr. Wyand agrees he doesn't disagree with the context he would like to take it out of there. The 45 day is a school committee goal not a Dr. Hopson goal.
- Dr. Hopson it is a goal for the school committee a few years ago we needed to see what would happen if we didn't vote a budget in the 45 days.
- Mr. Wyand is saying if school committee doesn't adopt the budget in the 45 days, then it makes Dr. Hopson look bad.
- Dr. Hopson said yes, that is correct. That is okay; we should be working as a team.
- Mrs. Winer said that is an example of why we should be working together.
- Dr. Hopson said there are things out there that need to be done and we need to do them together.
- Mrs. Levreault is concerned there weren't some really specific measurements. We had one goal that we didn't make last year. It was the intervention goal. What did we learn from last year? There is no specific number attached here that is measurable.
- Dr. Hopson said you either have an agreement with the teachers association or you don't. If you check off every goal, you are probably setting your goals to low. We have a new president for the teachers' state

association that is dead set against DDM's and the evaluation. She wants a moratorium stating we won't evaluate for the next here years.

- Mrs. Eliason said we had talked about DDM's for a number of years, we found it hard to evaluate. It is hard to understand. It kind of speaks to Mrs. Levreault's question. How are we going to know what is being done. Are we going to see a presentation or something by May?
- Dr. Hopson you will either have an agreement or not. We sent in the list of DDM's the teachers association agreed to it, and the state approved it with no waivers.
- Mrs. Winer would like a presentation to see how DDM's work.
- Dr. Hopson said the state process started about two and one half years ago.

X. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Future Agenda Items

XI. INFORMATION

Information

Schools Closed for Labor Day

Wellness Center hours increase for fall

Fees may be paid online

Online student grades available to Gateway parents

Superintendent's Corner August 25, 2014

Superintendent's Corner August 27, 2014

Smooth opening day for Gateway schools

Gateway teacher selected to score AP exams

September early release day

Warrants

AP# 1001 \$566,867.69	PR# 1 \$91,171.66
AP# 1005 \$112,633.90	PR# 2 \$96,971.33
AP# 1109 \$98,004.56	PR# 3 \$101,863.13
AP# 1110 \$54.61	PR# 4 \$89,794.53
AP# 1111 \$33,495.47	PR# 5 \$463,302.22
AP# 1006 \$19,902.64	
AP# 1007 \$101,629.36	
AP# 1010 \$83,861.54	
AP# 1014 \$131,009.30	
AP# 1016 \$27,699.30	
AP# 1018 \$3.15	

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

XIII. ADJOURNMENT: *Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Ms. Suriner to adjourn at 9:37 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Stacy L Stewart

School Committee Secretary