

**GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2013**

**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  
Jim Kronholm

CHESTER  
Shirley Winer  
Martha Otterbeck

HUNTINGTON  
Ron Damon  
Jeff Wyand

MIDDLEFIELD  
Sarah Foley

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  
Amy Fouracre, Chs, Lit, MS Assistant Principal  
Joanne Blocker, Director of Academics  
Megan Coburn, Chs, Lit, MS Principal  
Wendy Long, District Grant Writer  
Alice Taverna, Pupil Services Director

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

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

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

Ms. Eliason opened the meeting with a tribute to Brian Miller along with a moment of silence.

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**III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT - None**

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**IV. CONSENT ITEMS 8/21/13 (Enc.)**

*Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Laurie to approve the minutes of 8/21/13 with corrections.*

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

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**V. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS**

**A. Field Trips**

- Field trips – Mark Twain House with Rod Kleeber, Jerri Beaugard’s Broadway show in May, and Cyndi Jenson’s annual Bodies exhibit trip. Move to old business.

**B. Finance Subcommittee Benchmark Study**

- Mrs. Eliason gave a PowerPoint presentation that compared Gateway to other K-12 regional school districts within 300 students of our last enrollment. Not looking for anything specific. Demographics, financial, performance data, etc.
- Started looking at enrollment.
- Mrs. Winer asked why some go down a little and we go down a lot.
- Mrs. Eliason said she thinks some districts have the ability to poach students per say.

- Mrs. Foley asked how this relates to the population of the towns.
- Mrs. Crane asked if there was a state average of enrollment drops.
- Mrs. Winer asked why the special education has gone down.
- Ms. Taverna said we are much better at doing our jobs.
- Mrs. Foley said in her own job they were given a 5 page document of salaries of the surrounding districts and we are page number 5.
- Dr. Hopson said as older teachers leave newer teachers come in and are on a lower step.
- Dr. Hopson said regarding the per pupil dollar figures, in some schools that only have one city or town they often share expenses with the city or town.
- Ms. Fisk said administrative functions are the 1000 account. Instructional leadership is anything to do with a principal's office or an administrative office. That is how we report it.
- Mrs. Eliason said student performance is for the entire district not by school or grade. SAT math scores are much higher than MCAS in Math.
- Dr. Hopson said MCAS is taken grade 3-10 and PSTAT is only 10<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Mrs. Eliason said we should take the 10<sup>th</sup> grade MCAS and compare them to the SAT's.
- Dr. Hopson said the graduation cohort is 4 years and sometimes students have to come back to finish over the summer.
- Mrs. Long said we've had a real increase in students going to a two year college prior to going into a 4 year college.
- Mr. Wyand asked if it costs extra to send the kids to a vocational school.
- Mrs. Eliason said yes the towns pay that bill directly.
- Mr. Wyand said trades are a good way to make a living.
- Mrs. Eliason said the towns pay for both tuition and transportation.
- Dr. Hopson said it costs between \$14,000 and \$16,000 per student and transportation an additional cost.
- Mrs. Eliason said the finance subcommittee and GTAC have decided to look at transportation reimbursement. Three of our 4 towns have not received any reimbursement. It is because they didn't report the forms you have to report on schedule 1 and 7. You have to report on both or you don't receive the reimbursement.
- Ms. Fisk said there is a tab check at the end that notifies you if you are missing something.

### C. DEP Consent Order

- Dr. Hopson said we've been working with DEP on the well for about 10 years. Noreen and Bernie St. Martin and Brian Wing. DEP has not been pushing us because they thought grant money would come. When we had the flood, DEP decided something should happen. We have three options: 1 put a new well on the hill; 2 hook up to Huntington water; 3 work with DEP to keep the well where it is, the well head needs to be raised above flood level. We have fit it into extraordinary maintenance over the next few years. It needs to come up about three feet above its current location. We think this is the best way to go. It is also the least expensive.
- Mr. Wing said the first thing we need to do is provide safe access. Phase one is to install a bulk head for about \$4,100. Phase 2 is to eliminate the hatch about \$15,000. There is a small amount of work to seal the cap which can be done in house (\$500.) Doing those satisfies DEP in more than one of the issues. Phase 3 is the tank and it is a fragile. The tank is what buffers so you don't get pulsating water.
- Bernie, we should be able to eliminate the tank at Gateway and put in small ones at the school. To keep it pressurized.
- Mr. Wing said a second option would be to go to a frequency pump.
- Mrs. Laurie asked if this has to do with the quality of the water.
- Bernie said no, Gateway won an award for having the best tasting water.
- Bernie said you want to go as long as you can without chlorinating your water.
- Dr. Hopson said the concern is that if there was a flood there is a possibility that water could get into the tank.
- Mrs. Eliason asked if when we had the water issue it was a mechanical problem.
- Dr. Hopson said no, it was the pipe that broke.
- Bernie said the earthquake is what caused the pipe to break and the water to be sucked back in.
- Mrs. Eliason said it was a physical pipe problem.
- Mr. Wyand asked if DEP is on board with the timeline because this is pretty stringent. This document will be revised.
- Dr. Hopson said yes, and it will be revised.
- Mrs. Kennedy is concerned about the chemical injection.

- Mr. Wing said that was done and taken care of a couple years ago with DEP.

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## VI. COMMUNICATIONS

### A. Student Representative

- John Wyand said Senior Class elections will take place next week. Right now their only complaint is about having to be in school during finals at the end of the years.

### B. School Committee

- Mrs. Buikus asked for copies of individual contracts for all administrators.
- Mrs. Kennedy signed up at Stop and Shop to get into the A+ program. Another one is rewards for schools –you sign up for it online. If you shop somewhere you will be donating to the schools.
- Mrs. Eliason asked to have the information sent to the PTO's via to the principals.

### C. Chairperson

Advisory Memo FY14 School District Budgets (Enc.)

Budget process (reg sch dist) (1-11-13 (Enc.))

Russell Dupere email correspondence (Enc.)

- Mrs. Eliason had asked for a legal opinion from Dupere Law Offices. She read the actual question. The concern is about the budget assessments not matching the assessment letters. It was a lawyerly answer because there was not a direct answer. She read the advisory section. Do we want to look into it more, refer it to the policy subcommittee, or let it go?
- Mrs. Kennedy said she spoke with Ms. Fisk and she helped her understand it.
- Ms. Fisk said you actually did the same thing when you voted in Worthington.
- Mrs. Eliason said after you meet and the budget and the assessments need to match.
- Dr. Hopson said the crux of the problem is that it took a week to put the budget up on the website.
- Ms. Fisk said you approve the budget, not the assessment figures.
- Mrs. Eliason said 41.05 states the budget shall specify the total amounts to be assessed to the members for the support of the budget.
- Ms. Fisk said that CMR 603 41.05 was overridden by the directive because of the state figures.
- Mrs. Eliason said the disconnect is between what the advisory said and what Ms. Lynch said.
- Ms. Fisk said one of the smart things to do is to talk to GTAC and our legislators about the fact that they really leave regional school districts in a bad position when they don't have minimum numbers.

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

- Hope to fill one technology position next week. The new technology director resigned as of Friday. We are not filling that position right now.
- Mr. Wyand said that salary came from the school choice account, what happens with that money if we don't fill it.
- Dr. Hopson said it stays in school choice.

### E. Business Manager – None

### F. Administration - None

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## VII. AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTING

### A. Superintendent's Evaluation Subcommittee

- The committee met tonight. Our first management meeting regarding the questions that were drafted by the subcommittee which Dr. Hopson answered and discussion was had.

### B. Finance Subcommittee

- Meet at 6:30 p.m. prior to the next meeting in Blandford.

### C. Policy Subcommittee

- The committee met yesterday. They expect to meet again in the future, potentially once a month maybe more often. Discussion was had on updating the budget. Changes in state laws due to gender identification need to be updated in our policies.

### D. School Committee Goals Subcommittee - None

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## VIII. OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

### A. FY '14 Budget (Version 4.0) Update

#### Line Item Transfer – Tutoring

- Littleville went from level II to III and we need to reallocate money. We hired a teacher for less money and saved about \$10,000 and would like to set that aside for tutoring. The transfer doesn't change the bottom line of the budget, but gives us an opportunity for more tutoring. Mrs. Blocker said that partly due to attendance, tutoring in the fall is more attended in the fall than in the spring.
- Mrs. Levreault asked what kind of tutoring we are talking about.
- Mrs. Blocker said it will be before and after school and target the place that needs the most to start with. Positions will be posted and most likely our teaching staff will fill the positions.
- Mrs. Laurie said Littleville didn't do so well.
- Dr. Hopson said we moved more out of warning and more into advanced. We showed growth but didn't show growth greater than the state average. MCAS is set up so 50% of schools fail every year.
- Mrs. Blocker said Chester and middle school receive more tutoring because of title I, but because Littleville is now level III, we need to include them.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if there was any thought into transportation for students who need tutoring.
- Mrs. Blocker said currently parents pick and drop off their kids.
- Mrs. Kennedy is concerned about the kids whose parents can't pick them up.

*Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Crane to suspend the two-meeting rule to vote to transfer funds.*

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

*Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to approve the line item transfer for tutoring.*

- Mr. Wyand asked what the \$10,000 gets us.
- Ms. Fisk said it services about 41 students at Littleville, for 10 hours each; Junior High 1 math and 1 ELA teacher for 1 hour a day for 8 weeks. \$7,000 for Littleville and \$3,000 for junior high.

*Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to approve the line item transfer for tutoring.*

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

### B. Potential School Calendar Change – April Vacation

- Mrs. Eliason said that anyone who has potential items they'd like to discuss should free to do so. They should just contact her.
- Mrs. Eliason said she emailed Mrs. Stewart about changing Potential Calendar change to new business action items.
- Mrs. Crane thought it could be considered old business because we have already voted on the calendar.
- A phone survey was done and 68 % of parents have not made or paid for their vacation
- Mrs. Levreault's concern is if we go ahead with the change, what about the people that put money down on vacation. Maybe we should get a legal opinion.
- Dr. Hopson said as long as those parents provide information that they've purchased their vacations already we would excuse them. The issue is here because of the teachers not families.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked for a further explanation.
- Dr. Hopson said the teachers association approves the calendar before you do. In August a teacher noticed their vacation was different than their child's. According to Mrs. Estelle 100% of teachers voted to reconsider.
- Mr. Damon would be in favor of making the change as long as administration is sympathetic toward the families who have already made plans.
- Mrs. Laurie asked how many teachers does it affect.
- Dr. Hopson said about 80.
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*Mrs. Crane made a motion seconded by Mr. Damon to move April vacation one week later.*

- Mrs. Levreault asked how many teachers are affected by this in terms of vacation planning.

- Dr. Hopson said teachers don't plan vacations on April vacation because we use April for snow day make up if we go over our allotted days.
- Mrs. Long said because we are doing this we will probably lose April vacation due to snow.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked about the parents who have already made daycare plans for April vacation change.
- Dr. Hopson said you have an overwhelming majority of parents who have not made plans yet.

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

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

*Mrs. Crane made a motion seconded by Mr. Damon to move April vacation one week later.*

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

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

### **A. Student Performance Goals**

- Mrs. Eliason said we amended goals so it wasn't just academic and included others such as participation in the arts, sports, etc. Members can feel free to send her suggestions.
- Dr. Hopson said administration is working on this now – 21st century rubric, which also meets NEASC and could be used as district determined measures. We have to have district determined measures approved by the state by January of this year. We are looking to address the whole child. (teachers are still negotiating their evaluation document) We are looking into how we create district determined measure that teachers are already using and beef it up to meet all of our needs. Some of the other measures that Mrs. Eliason mentioned might be worthwhile. We did get the afterschool grant and now for junior high. Are we meeting the needs of the students? We have standardized test scores; we have district determined measures, now we need to find ways to determine the other areas.
- Mrs. Eliason said with the DDM's there are going to be a lot of them. It is too much to include in school committee goals. She is looking for a few we can report to the public. It is a bit easier to say this many students participated in sports.
- Mrs. Winer feels they should be more general and work on it as a committee when we know more.
- Mrs. Eliason said we need to find a focus area.
- Dr. Hopson said to look at the non determined measures and focus on extracurricular activities, skills, opportunities, etc.

### **B. Worthington Withdrawal/Special Legislation**

- Mrs. Eliason gave a brief history starting with the closing of Worthington and ending with the home rule petition.
- Mrs. Eliason gave her personal statement about how she is disappointed to be speaking about this topic. Gateway would not respond to a tuition agreement. She believes the estimates are poor \$790,000 is the newest estimate. More reasonable estimate came from Ms. Fisk at \$400,000. She believes we collect more funds than we should.
- Ms. Fisk said she is the one who drafted all numbers given out, not Dr. Hopson. The difficulty in assessing what is going to cost is your presuming students are going to go to Hampshire, she is thinking they will stay here. The only cost she knows is what Worthington contributes, school choice and charter, and transportation.
- Dr. Hopson's intent is for school committee to make a decision. If he is going to go and potentially testify, what is your stance? Hampshire Regional is taking a stand and all six of our towns are taking a stand. He can't represent you if you don't take a stand. He can only represent what he thinks.
- Mrs. Winer said you are saying we should write a letter, assuming we can agree.
- Mrs. Kennedy said we did vote to allow them to withdraw. She doesn't think it is appropriate. It is the towns' people who voted.
- Dr. Hopson said you did have to vote per the regional agreement. By not taking a stand you are taking a stand. As your first amendment right, you can make your opinion known.
- Mrs. Eliason said some of us are elected and some are appointed.
- Mrs. Levreault said you have already taken a stand when we had the closing hearing. Worthington said they would leave, and school committee said go. This estimate should have been given out that night. 37.24%

go to gateway the other 64 % go somewhere else. If you go ahead and vote something then you are hypocrites. Did anyone ever bring up the innovation school?

- Dr. Hopson said he met with the consultant, and said he would work with them and no one ever came back.
- Mrs. Otterbeck asked what vote.
- Mrs. Eliason asked does this committee want to choose to take a position?
- Mrs. Otterbeck said there are several of us who were not here for the closing of schools.
- Mrs. Eliason said in 2009 this committee started closing procedures.
- Mrs. Otterbeck applauds Worthington for fighting and standing up for their school.

*Mr. Wyand made a motion seconded by Mrs. Crane to suspend the two-meeting rule to vote on a position.*

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

- Mr. Kronholm wants the number one goal to be to meet the needs of the students and give them the best education possible and then work with the superintendent.
- Mrs. Crane asked if people have heard what their select board and finance committees have said.
- Mr. Wyand spoke to Mr. McVeigh of Huntington who has sent a letter.
- Mrs. Winer said Chester has too.
- Mrs. Kennedy said Russell is going.
- Mrs. Winer encouraged school committee members who are not attending, to write letters.
- Mr. Damon asked if he goes to that meeting is it against the rules to say I am a member of the school committee and his opinion.
- Dr. Hopson said that would be acceptable.

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

### **Future Agenda Items**

September 25 -School Choice Presentation – Wendy Long

## **XI. INFORMATION**

### **Information**

Superintendent's Corner August 19, 2013

Bus Schedules posted

Superintendent's Corner August 26, 2013

PSATs on October 16

Gateway Regional School District Wins National Award

Superintendent's Corner August 30, 2013

September School Committee Meetings

Early Release Day September 17

Gateway welcomes new staff!

'Gator Grins' continue to grow

Happy Birthday to Gateway! Alumni invited to celebrate

### **Warrants**

AP# 1013 \$46,550.24

PR# 26 \$452,177.96

AP# 1015 \$67,997.61

PR# 26.1 \$5,368.79

AP# 1016 \$2,637.00

PR# 01 \$92,036.64

PR# 02 \$91,314.52

PR# 03 \$94,666.84

## **XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

## **XIII. ADJOURNMENT *Mrs. Levreault made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to adjourn at 10:00 p.m.***

Respectfully Submitted,

Stacy L Stewart

School Committee Secretary