

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2014

**Gateway Library
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

HUNTINGTON
Ron Damon
Jeff Wyand

MIDDLEFIELD
Sarah Foley
Noreen Suriner

MONTGOMERY
Anne Marie Buikus
Sandra Haas

RUSSELL
Ruth Kennedy
Mary Ann Laurie

WORTHINGTON
Sue Levreault

SECRETARY
Stacy Stewart

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

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

Megan Coburn, Chs,Lit,Ms Principal
Jason Finnie, High/Jr. High Principal
Amy Fouracre, Chs,Lit, Ms Assistant Principal
Wendy Long, District Grant Writer
Anthony Sabonis, High/Jr. High Assistant Principal
Alice Taverna, Pupil Services Director

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

OTHERS: _____

7:35 p.m. II. PUBLIC INPUT FOR ITEMS NOT LISTED ON AGENDA (3 Minute Limit) – None

- Mrs. Crane reminded everyone to stick to the three minute rule, so we can use our time efficiently as we have a lot to discuss.

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Hosting a food Drive from 11/12-11/21
- On 11/17/14 the following things are going on: Blood Drive, Red & White Spirit Day, and the School Store is opening.
- The half day before Thanksgiving, there will be a College Fair along with College and Military Spirit day.
- Student Council has picked the design for Reindeer Games Shirts which go on sale 11/19/14 for \$13.00. Each class gets a set of two different colors.
- Kyle Bessete was the only Cross Country Runner to make it to states.
- The Boys' Soccer team lost to Hopkins
- The Girls' Soccer team plays Lee tonight
- Students are in favor of lowering parking fees.

IV. CONSENT ITEMS 10/8/14, 10/22/14 (Enc.)

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to approve the minutes of 10/8/14

Motion Failed (VOTE) Yeas 6 Nays Abstain 6 Absent

- 10/22/14 minutes will be moved to the next meeting with the updated version.
- Move both sets of minutes to the next meeting.

V. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS

A. FY 14 Audit Report – Stan Kulas (2 Enc.)

- Mr. Kulas said Gateway is the first school committee he meets with. We have a business manager who closes the books quickly and efficiently.
- Page 4-1 is the balance sheet. It's a snapshot in time. On June 30, 2014 the fund balance was \$1,157,149. It leaves just around \$600,000 in E & D which is about 3.6% of the FY 15's budget. School choice is \$660,000. If everything falls the way you budget, the fund balance will only \$600,000. Auditors like to see as little E & D used as possible to fund operations. They like to see a cushion for emergencies.
- He is also required to be a mandated reporter for the federal government. Page 7-6 and 7-7 is a schedule of federal awards. Page 7-7 has total expenditures just under a million in federal grants- \$972,977. The majority was in two programs; Sped Cluster and Teaching American History.
- The last thing is the management letter which contains observations and recommendations. The only thing is an FYI informative situation development. In fiscal year 16 starting as early as December 26, 2014 the federal government will have revamped its circulars. The district should make sure they are still in compliance. Time and effort reporting –making sure people who are working on federal grants are actually working on them. The prior year's credit memos for yearbook vendor invoices has been cleared up. Finally GASB 68 deals with pension disclosures. Similar to what we do for OPEB – pension for teachers and non teachers will require actuarial reports.
- Mrs. McVeigh said next year the footnotes that start on 518 Hampshire County health employee retiree system – will be considerably expanded. Dr. Hopson had mentioned that that liability was about 11 million. Dr. Hopson said that was for the total group; ours is less. Hampshire County is working on breaking it down by school.
- Mr. Kulas complimented Ms. Fisk and her staff for doing a great job.

B. Well Presentation – Gary Swanson (Enc.)

- Dr. Hopson asked Gary Swanson to be here to answer any questions.
- Dr. Hopson said we entered into a consent order with DEP. Mr. Swanson looked at this and is suggesting a 5th piece to replace some of the old pipe all the way to the new well. It will save us in electrical costs and water flow. We are within the cost of drilling the well, but the total cost with everything else is just under \$200,000. We are moving forward. Mr. Swanson has suggested putting in a water flow meter so we know just how much we need. We have money in extraordinary maintenance, and we will have to put money in the budget next year to finish things up.
- Mrs. Buikus asked if we are we going to do it as a capital expense like the telephone update.
- Ms. Fisk said we would have to do it as a capital expense if we pay for it from the budget. We are applying for foundation reserve money for this.
- Mrs. Winer asked for an explanation of foundation reserve.
- Ms. Fisk said it's a series of money we can apply for from DESE to help offset costs.
- Ms. Laurie said looking at capital plan it says in the plan it was \$50,000, now it's almost \$200,000. Why is there such a big difference, when the town water was about the same?
- Mr. Wing said those figures were clearly based on where we can tie in, excavation and running the pipe. There was a lot of uncertainty on the town's side as to whether they could supply us with enough pressure. Under the road is the four foot main that comes from Littleville road and goes to cobble mountain. There is a no dig section, so coming down the road is not an option. Another potential was Bromley Road which would cross wetlands. This was learned in the design study.
- Mr. Swanson said we were fortunate to find the old well records from 1962. What looked like a standard 8 inch well, turned out to be a packed well. When we did our updating we replaced the 4-inch piping with 6 inch. There is only about three feet that still needs to be replaced. The ideal situation is what we had 50 years ago (the big tank), because it takes the surges. DEP has taken the big tank away from us. We now have to use small hydromatic tanks.
- Mr. Damon referred to a spool piece in the current well; what is the cost of that.
- Mr. Swanson said in order to not to have to test it on a regular basis we have to take it out of service, so we put two flanges on the end. That way if we have an issue with the new one we can tie into the old one. We are planning to turn it into an irrigation well; non-potable water supply. The cost is only the flanges.
- Mrs. Suriner asked why they aren't allowing us to use the old well.

- Mr. Swanson said it's 50 years old, we've already had a well rehab. The weak link is the screen. That screen is deteriorated and no one can put a time limit on when it's going to go. They aren't taking the well.
- Mrs. Winer asked where the well head is above the 100 year flood plain.
- Mr. Swanson said it doesn't look like DEP had updated things out here. They are taking the elevation of the road way as being the 100 year flood plain.
- Mr. Wyand is concerned about when they do revise the flood plain, what guarantee do we have that we won't have to raise it again.
- Mr. Swanson said we could give it another foot. That that was a very good idea.
- Mrs. Kennedy said the flood plain maps have been revised and they should be in the town halls, Russell has theirs and it has been approved. She asked if it has gone out the bid.
- Ms. Fisk said it has to go out to bid.
- Mrs. Kennedy has been looking into this. It was closer to the mountain and now is back out in the open.
- Mr. Swanson said one of the problems bringing well back toward the water is you don't have good ledge, or packed material. We have to pump about 150 gallons. Where it is now is good water bearing material.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if we can we get a comparison and a good look at what we are voting on. She knows there is enough water pressure for Huntington to supply us with what we need.
- Ms. Laurie asked if the new placement will interfere with the athletics field.
- Mr. Wing said only temporarily.
- Mr. Damon is concerned with the wellhead being above ground.
- Mr. Swanson is going to cap it and once the well is in we will protect it by placing concrete and/or steele bollards around it.
- Mrs. McVeigh said you might want to check the easement costs; the land by the Country Store is owned by the town of Huntington.

B. Title and Curriculum Questions – None

C. Review of One-Man/One-Vote Amendments (Enc.)

- Mrs. Crane said we need to address that we are not compliant and we need to show we are trying to become compliant. The amount of members each town has is not compliant with the populations in our towns.
- Mrs. Kennedy said we are compliant if we were not compliant the. We are in compliance with electing our school committees, if you look at what is being pushed you will see it is for forming a new school committee. One man one vote didn't come about because of school committees. She tried to give us the information and we didn't want to listen, the lawyer was brought in to listen to her.
- Dr. Hopson said that DESE said we have to do this.
- Mrs. Kennedy said DESE is not the law; they know nothing.
- Dr. Hopson said if you look at the history which he briefly went over in a PowerPoint, we need to be apportioned according to the each town's population within 5%.
- Mrs. Winer said district wide is kind of like the Senate, and the other is like the House.
- Mrs. Kennedy is asking Mrs. Crane to have our attorney to look into it. It's Chapter 39 or 40, so people can see we are compliant.
- Mr. Damon said we won't stand a chance if we don't narrow it down to one. He sees so much dissention; he doesn't think they can sell this.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked what was the purpose of bringing this up now?
- Dr. Hopson said unless something changes Worthington is going to be out of the district. DESE is talking about the district at the needs conference. As a school committee we can vote for what we want, so he will continue to do what they are asking.
- Mrs. McVeigh said DESE isn't even concerned about the ramifications on education due to the withdrawal. We have bigger issues than this, this year, rather than our school committee being compliant. If we weren't compliant the attorney would let us know. The administration and the school committee need to start pushing back. We have to make some important decisions within the next 60 days. She would rather have us come up with talking points for the needs conference.
- Mr. Wyand said they are recommending this not mandating this. He doesn't see it as being a top priority.

VI. BUDGET

A. FY '16 Budget

- The school committee approved an education plan which doesn't change the configuration of the schools. Does school committee want us to put together a budget according to that plan, without the loss of \$600,000 or do we want to show DESE what would happen if we cut \$600-800,000. We are currently developing one based on educational needs of kids. You can get a good look at what that looks like. We are looking at 9C cuts. The state budget is \$30-40million off. The state failed to factor in the state income tax decrease. They are not taking money from rainy day funds right now.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked how do we work on a budget to bring to our towns; one with and one without.
- Ms. Fisk asked Mrs. Kennedy who she spoke with.
- Mrs. Winer said wouldn't it be instructional to DESE.
- Dr. Hopson said it is now November 12, we can put together a regular budget.
- Ms. Fisk said principals' and directors' budgets are due on Friday.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked how soon the subcommittee could have the budget.
- Ms. Fisk said December 10.
- Mrs. McVeigh said you could always stress it a little bit for the needs conference
- Ms. Fisk said Roger Hatch is working on the updated chapter 70 figures. Worthington has also gone from mid 30's to 57 in school choice.
- Mrs. Suriner asked if we know what our costs are for NCLB; could we get that in the future.
- Dr. Hopson said we could give you a rough estimate.
- Mrs. Suriner also asked how the increase in our electricity is going to impact the budget.
- Ms. Laurie asked if we have any more on the solar options.
- Ms. Fisk said we are meeting with one of the gentlemen we met with originally.
- Mr. Wyand asked if we had the additional cost of the students going out yet.
- Ms. Fisk said we don't have sped increments yet. These are just numbers we have gotten from the schools.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS

A. School Committee

- Mrs. Buikus asked for a copy of the letter from DESE, she didn't see it. She also asked for all administrative contracts to be sent to school committee.
- Mrs. Kennedy thanked the committee for sending her to the joint MASC/MASS conference. She gave a brief overview of the resolutions that did and didn't pass. She would like to give a short presentation on one or two sessions at each meeting. She has answers to the questions people asked. Please call her.

B. Chairperson

- Mrs. Crane is collecting money for the yearbook ad. She mentioned who had paid and asked all others to pay their share as soon as they could. She also reminded everyone that the picture will be taken at the next meeting; December 10.

C. Superintendent – Central Office Update (Enc.)

- Dan Jacques has expressed interest in being at the table. – November 24 is the first negotiations session for the teachers.

D. Business Manager - None

- Bus Contract (2 Enc.)

E. Administration - None

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTING

A. Superintendent's Evaluation

- Met tonight management meeting, next they will include the questions and answers for the next meeting.

B. Finance Subcommittee - None

C. Legislative Liaison – None

D. Policy Subcommittee – None

E. School Committee Goals Subcommittee - None**F. Community Curriculum Committee**

- Said they have not met, but he wants to meet with Ms. Fisk and Mr. Finnie.

IX. OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS**A. Worthington Withdrawal - Potential Litigation**

- Mrs. Crane asked for a motion to go into executive session for the purpose of potential litigation to return to open session.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked why it would be in executive session.
- Dr. Hopson said for discussing strategy.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked if the lawsuit can be discussed in open session.
- Dr. Hopson said yes.
- Attorney Dupere said the lawsuit is filed by Ruth Kennedy, against the district chair, superintendent, Town of Worthington, House, Senate, DESE, and the Governor. It sounds like she is looking for an injunction.
- Mrs. Kennedy said the legislature didn't put a deadline on it. We haven't discussed who has to pay what; it's a lot to deal with before the end of next month. The way it was legislated under home rule; Mass General Law and the Constitution, the home rule is designed for municipalities. It should only affect one town; it has nothing to do with schools. DOR says it has nothing to do with schools, only your town charter. This was sent to lawyers who told the governor not to sign it. Mrs. Kennedy said everyone she spoke with at the MASS/MASC joint conference was very supportive except for one person who then backed down.
- Mrs. Fisk asked who it was.
- Mrs. Kennedy agreed it was Jay Sullivan when Ms. Fisk said his name.
- Mrs. McVeigh said you mentioned there is no timeline in the legislation and the Worthington people are saying approvals need to be attained by December 31. Can someone look into this?
- Her other questions according to the legislation –Did Gateway tell DESE that the town of Worthington is withdrawing from the district. Worthington can't say they are actually leaving the district until all the towns have voted. (all five of the school committees) She feels we are being forced into a timeline.
- Attorney Dupere said June 6 is when it was enacted. Mass General law 41.03 references the December 31 deadline.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked Dr. Hopson to please share the approval for the Worthington educational plan and their leaving the district contingent on getting all five school committee approvals.
- Dr. Hopson said that the town of Huntington's potential lawsuit.
- Attorney Dupere said with the timing of this lets say Worthington doesn't get all votes by December 31; is that what is going to stop this from moving forward, maybe not.
- Ed Renauld from Huntington is concerned that school committee didn't talk about the needs conference. They were hoping the school committee would prepare talking points.
- Dr. Hopson said that 90% of what the DESE is going to look at the school committee has already answered. The key is what will happen if we have to cut, but what is the impact on the towns. A lot of the work was preliminarily done in the plan.
- Mr. Mason said that Pignatelli will be attending GTAC on the November 29. He is dealing with similar issues in Lenox and Lee.

Mrs. Winer made a motion seconded by Mr. Damon to go into executive session for the purpose of potential litigation to return to open session.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain 2 Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Noreen, Jeff, Terri, Shirley, Sarah, Ron, Mary Ann, Anne-Marie, Sandi, Michele

Abstain: Sue, Ruth

Returned to Open Session

Mrs. Suriner made a motion seconded by Mrs. Winer to request Attorney Lampke to come and explain the lawsuit and their angle and at a special meeting next week.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays Abstain Absent 1

Mr. Damon left at 10:13 p.m.

- All Remaining Business will be moved to the next regular scheduled meetin

- B. Superintendent's Goals**
- C. School Committee Self-Evaluation**
- D. Boys' and Girls' State Discussion**

X. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

- A. Parking Fees** – Motion: Mrs. Laurie made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to reduce the student parking to a flat fee of \$25 per semester to start the beginning of the next school year.
- B. PARCC Presentation**
- C. Winter Bussing (Enc.)**
- D. NSPRA** – National “Public Schools That Work” Initiative and Resolution (Enc.)

XI. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Future Agenda Items

XII. INFORMATION

Information

November School Committee meetings
 Superintendent's Corner November 3, 2014
 Jr. High holds “Mix it Up” Day
 7 Vocalists selected for Honor Choir
 School committee reviews school supplies, parking fees
 Gateway's MUN Turns One
 Superintendent's Corner October 27, 2014
 Professional development day at Gateway
 13 Gateway students accepted to college in October
 Fall Parent Teacher Conferences
 November Calendar highlights
 Gateway Students Mobilize to Support Democracy
 Volunteer information online
 Superintendent's Corner October 17, 2014
 Save the date for Annual Brunch and Concert
 Jr. High students view and hear history first-hand

Warrants

AP#1031 \$116,224.14	PR# 8 \$368,134.88
AP#1036 \$48.19	PR# 9 \$385,324.15

9:00-10 p.m. XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

or earlier

- A. Union Negotiations
- B. Potential Litigation

Mrs. Winer made a motion seconded by Mr. Damon to go into executive session for the purpose of potential litigation to return to open session.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain 2 Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Noreen, Jeff, Terri, Shirley, Sarah, Ron, Mary Ann, Anne-Marie, Sandi, Michele

Abstain: Sue, Ruth

XIV. ADJOURNMENT - Mrs. Suriner made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to adjourn at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacy L Stewart,
School Committee Secretary