

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2013

**Library
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
Jeff Wyand

MIDDLEFIELD
Sarah Foley

MONTGOMERY
Anne Marie Buikus
Sandra Haas

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

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

- A.
- B.

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

IV. CONSENT ITEMS

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Crane to accept the minutes of 10/23/13.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays Abstain 4 Absent

V. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS

A. FY '13 Auditors Report – Stan Kulas

- Stan went over schedule 4-1. The balance sheet shows your net worth. The fund balance is the difference between assets and liabilities. The operating fund is just over 1.4 million. \$650,000 is set aside to help fund the subsequent year’s budget. At the end of fiscal 13 we have \$753,000 in E&D. He also looks to see if there are deficits in other funds. You can keep up to 5% of the previous year’s budget in E & D.
- Schedule 4, 6-5,6 Income statement – look at circuit breaker – 200,000 in circuit breaker. It can only be used for special education things. Page 6-6 is a listing of federal, state and other grants. You can see the last piece of AARA money (educational job grants). This was not a supplemental grant. Now it needs to be paid out of the general fund.
- As the auditor of the district he is a mandated reporter for the federal government. They have no idea how much money they give you. Look on page 7-6, 7. The third column in from the right is Federal program costs. There is a \$407,000 special education cluster. Gateway is in compliance with the rules and regulations for federal grants.

- For current year's comments there is a credit memo for a vendor- prior to the invoice being paid, it is good practice to have the advisor look at the credit memo – make sure what the vendor said was the actual credit. Take the extra step to make sure the vendor can give a detailed memo of what the credit is made up of.
- Prior year's comments– bringing in documentation of proof of attendance at conferences. The other was standards regarding retirement boards – The districts need to get the information from the state- The information needs to be qualified. This becomes effective in fiscal 15.
- Mrs. Eliason asked what kinds of documents he reviews and what he does with staff.
- Mr. Kulas starts by looking at controls in place. Who does a purchase order, who signs the checks, etc. He makes sure there is a purchase order, an invoice, and payment is approved. He looks to see that school committee is signing off on warrants. On the revenue side, we ask the state to give us a detailed report of all the money the state gives to the school and make sure it ties out. (on income statement side) On Cash side, he makes sure reconciliations are done in a timely manner. He tests the items on the reconciliation. For receivables he looks to see when the cash came in. Makes sure there is a proper cut off. Looks at disbursements.
- Mrs. Eliason asked if he looks at every voucher.
- Mr. Kulas said he pulls vouchers statistically.
- Mrs. Eliason asked if Mr. Kulas looked at revolving accounts when doing reconciliations..
- Mr. Kulas said every bank account is looked at. He makes sure the bank statements reconcile to the records.
- Mrs. Eliason said exhibit C on 4-1 shows the fund balance and amount assigned to reduce subsequent years and the current E & D.
- Mr. Kulas said when the state certifies E & D they are looking at the \$753,834. The state may certify it slightly lower or higher. The state has a 60-day window. The \$650,000 that is what was set aside for the next year. The auditor likes to see the money set aside as low as possible. Whenever you use E & D to finance next year's operation you have to remember that is a limited resource. Usually in economic times like these you want to use as little as possible.
- Mrs. Eliason said there \$650,000and \$753,834, so the \$650,000 is not coming out of the \$753,834.
- Mr. Kulas said absolutely not. It is what is left over. Your opening fund balance for fiscal 15 will only be \$753,834.
- Mrs. Eliason asked if you can use some of the \$750,000 by school committee vote.
- Mr. Kulas said yes, you could use some of it, based on fiscal 12. If you wanted to use an extra \$150,000 you have to follow the rules and regulations. You would have to notify the towns.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked about athletic fund revenues. Does the \$37,000 during the fiscal relate to fees, tickets and booster club.
- Ms. Fisk said not the booster club, they have their own. She thinks to only payment we receive is for building use.
- Mrs. McVeigh said on 5-12 reconciling items there is about \$695,000. She asked if he is starting with the bank balance and working back.
- Mr. Kulas said yes.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked about school choice revolving.
- Ms. Fisk said one is incoming and one is outgoing school choice and charter. School tuition revolving and school tuition. School tuition is gone by the wayside. School choice revolving is used for technology right now. It is about \$200,000 a year.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked why the fund balance is greater than what you received.
- Mr. Kulas said there is no fund balance cap in school choice, it can accumulate over the years.
- Mrs. Eliason said on 2-7 can you remind us district capital assets comparison between 2013 and 2012. Can you remind us of capital purchase last year.
- Mr. Kulas believes one of those was the phone upgrades. He also noted 5-13 in foot note C there is a beginning balance, additions and ending balance.
- Mr. Wyand asked if the student accounts are they in the audit.
- Mr. Kulas said on 6-11. While he doesn't have the detail fiduciary funds, they are audited every year.
- Ms. Fisk said we have a second audit in the summer on student activity. It is broken down then.
- Dr. Hopson said when classes graduate the treasure and the president take control of that fund for reunions etc.
- Mr. Kulas thanked Ms. Fisk and her staff for all their help very few schools have an audit dated for September.

B. Pupil Services Update

- Mrs. Winer asked if 504 is different than IEP.
- Ms. Taverna said yes 504 is the rehabilitation act IEP is special education.
- Mrs. Foley asked if we have services with LLD at the elementary level.
- Ms. Taverna said not really. Special education directors from other towns are asking about tuitioning into the high school level program. It has not filtered down to the lower levels.
- Mrs. Foley asked what some of the accommodations were.
- Ms. Taverna said both got reading for reading comprehension.
- Mrs. Winer asked about differentiating instruction.
- Ms. Taverna said it is just universal design and good teaching strategies. Strategies for kids who have special needs are almost the same as those for English language learners, etc.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked how is this going to tie into the new health care issues.
- Ms. Taverna said it has no effect at all.
- Mrs. Otterbeck asked what the dropout rate is.
- Ms. Taverna said just a couple of kids skews the numbers because we are so small.
- Mrs. Otterbeck asked about homeless.
- Ms. Taverna said we have about 3 or 4 each year. Most of our students dropping out have significant difficulties.
- Mrs. Otterbeck asked about the role of substance abuse and if we address that.
- Ms. Taverna said we utilize the nurse, school adjustment counselors, and the school based health center. We have a lot of kids who are cutters, and have school phobias.
- Mrs. Winer asked if we do anything with medication.
- Ms. Taverna said some kids should be on medication, but the kids don't want to take it.
- Mrs. Crane asked if school phobia is a new phenomenon
- Ms. Taverna said we are all in the same boat. We are trying to provide supports for things we don't even know about.

D. Superintendent's Evaluation Survey Presentation

- Mrs. Levreault said last year was the first time we did an evaluation in the fall. This packet is to help us with the evaluation process. The superintendent evaluation committee put together the packet. On Friday the actual survey will go up on the internet. You can go to the computer or put them in paper.
- The survey must be completed in one sitting. You cannot start the survey and finish it later. It will time out. You will have from Friday until December 5th to complete the survey.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked if it is just the school committee or can others participate.
- Mrs. Levreault said the superintendent evaluation committee usually selects a focus group. This would happen at the end of the year.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked if there are ideas of upward evaluation and are the goals going to be weighted.
- Dr. Hopson said the state is not moving in that direction. The state sees multiple achievements.
- Mrs. Laurie asked if she can go into the school and talk to teachers and administrators about is how he interacts and supports them.
- Dr. Hopson said yes.
- Mrs. Levreault said Gateway has always done more in evaluation than the state has ever mandated.
- Mrs. Eliason said you are welcome to gather more evidence. Typically the chair and co chair meet with the administrative team individually. Part of doing one in October is to get you started thinking about what you need to see before the end of the year.
- Mrs. Foley thinks there is a lot of the evidence is included in the packet.
- Mrs. Kennedy said if you can't find documents, Dr. Hopson will provide them for you. Just ask him.
- Dr. Hopson said because you interview the administrators you are ahead of the game. You won't find teachers evaluating the superintendent because in most schools the superintendent doesn't interact with the teachers.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Student Representative

- John Wyand said Chris Parker started in technology and the help desk. Both the girls' and boys' Soccer teams did well. Seniors are ahead in spirit points.

B. School Committee

- Mrs. Otterbeck said it was good to see the community support at the tournament soccer games.

- Mrs. Winer spoke about the 50th anniversary of Gateway. There is an all class reunion on November 30th at Tekoa. It was put together by teachers on the staff here at Gateway. Money has to be in by November 20th. They are working on a DJ. Mrs. Long created a Face book page.
- Mrs. Kennedy attended the joint conference on the Cape and thanked school committee for allowing her to go. She arrived on Wednesday and started working. They attend a session each hour. There are about 6 six sessions per hour to choose from. She met with school committee members, superintendents, police officers, etc. She asked one of the officers about the iris scan and he looked at her kind of funny. He said it was for executives, people who fly. It is not for kids. There were three really good speakers, one spoke about Gettysburg and leadership. Another talked about leadership and standing up for what is right. She has two bags here full of stuff. She met with the representative who held the hearing on Worthington. She would like to take a little bit of time at each meeting to discuss the things she's learned. Everyone will be getting a bag. She will give everyone copies of what they voted on. They also spent a lot of time on unfunded mandates.
- Mr. Warner read a letter. This is an idea and an initiative he has shared with the select board and Dr. Hopson.
- Mr. Kronholm feels this approach is dangerous to the kids, we should come up with a budget that is best for the kids and do the best we can.
- Mr. Warner said this initiative would replicate what this committee thought was best for the kids this year. What it does address is the revenue. We should have some consideration for where those funds are coming from.
- Mr. Kronholm said there is one other variable. Suppose twenty kids move into Middlefield that will skew their budget significantly.
- Mr. Warner said this doesn't address that but he will work on it. There is no legal obligation. We need to look at it and see if it is valuable.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if he has looked into how this will affect the regional agreement. Will it fit? Financing is included in the regional agreement.
- Mr. Warner said this has been a discussion at the town level in Chester. We are looking to arrive at something that makes sense for Chester. They will share it with the committee and the other towns.
- Mr. Damon said the problem with a level funded budget for any institution is if the costs of education increase or major changes in funding occur, what protects the district.
- Mr. Warner said there is circuit breaker. If it comes back with a 2 or 3 % increase, the town and the district would split the cost. Then both the town and the district would both have to do something like households do all the time.

C. Chairperson

- We've received an invitation to run an ad in the yearbook. It is a \$10 voluntary contribution. It also includes a photo of the committee.
- A reminder all new members need to take the school committee training within a year. All veteran members should take it every eight years. Also, every member needs to take the ethics training.

D. Superintendent – Central Office Update (Enc.)

- On the agenda

E. Business Manager

- Ms. Fisk gave an update on assessment checks. She is still missing Blandford's and the balance from Chester.

F. Administration

- Mrs. Long spoke about the 50th anniversary button designed by Sue Levreault. They are \$5 and allow you several discounts throughout the year; available at student store, security, or Wendy's office.
- The Tom Bergeron quintet will be at the school all day on Monday, November 18 and a free concert at night.
- The Penny social is a week from Friday on November 22.
- Littleville is holding their annual craft fair on the 23rd. Annual college week is the week before thanksgiving. Tuesday night is the paying for college workshop. Alumni College fair is the half day on Wednesday before the break. The Wednesday after Thanksgiving is the annual senior citizen concert and brunch. Please RSVP to Mrs. Long or your town representative. The second annual Valley Gives day is 12/12/13. They are hoping to raise \$10,000 this year. They are asking for 12 dollars on 12/12.
- Mrs. Laurie asked if the classes can sell stuff at the student store.

- Mrs. Long said the store is run by student council.

VII. AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTING

A. Superintendent's Evaluation Subcommittee

- Met tonight. Reminder to start surveys on Friday.

B. Finance Subcommittee

- Their next meeting is December 18th. We do have a budget, Chester voted yes.

C. Policy Subcommittee

- Dr. Hopson has prepared some language. Thursday, November 21 at 4:30 is the next scheduled meeting.

D. School Committee Goals Subcommittee

- Student Performance Goals
- They met tonight and had very good discussion. They will meet again next month.

Mrs. Levreault made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to extend the meeting from 10:00 to 10:30.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays 6 Abstain Absent

Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to go into executive session at or before 10:15 p.m. for the purpose of negotiations update not to return to open session.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent 2 (ROLL CALL VOTE)

Yeas: Ruth, Sarah, Scott, Jim, Sandra, Sue, Shirley, Anne-Marie, Ron, Jeff, Martha, Michele, Gretchen

Absent: Mary Anne, Ellen

VIII. OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. FY '14 Budget (Version 5.0) Update

- The budget passed.
- Mrs. Levreault feels when we start the new budget process, we should have one with Worthington in the district and one without Worthington in the district.
- Mrs. Kennedy is hoping to have a budget before the December 18 finance meeting.
- Dr. Hopson said we won't have a budget before December 18th.

B. Supervision/Evaluation Update

- Dr. Hopson said teachers have passed their edited version. It should be on the next agenda to look at.

C. School Committee Goals

- Mr. Kronholm would like to add two sentences the goals of the school committee. One is to provide the best possible education to the children in the district. The other is the school committee will function as a unit with the superintendent to implement educational policies. He believes if your goal for being on school is to lower taxes then you shouldn't be on the school committee.

Mr. Kronholm made a motion seconded by Mrs. Winer to add the proposed amendments to the school committee goals.

- Mrs. Eliason said there is nothing in those statements that she disagrees with. The goals were made to be specific and measurable so we left out broad goals.
- Mrs. Winer seconded the motion because they should be in there as broad goals. We have been though times when she felt like those goals were lost.
- Mrs. Kennedy said those are good, but they shouldn't go under our goals. Polices state we are for the best education. She has a problem with the second one because no one can vote to take away her first amendment right.
- Mrs. Winer said we could say we always endeavor to work as a unit.
- Mrs. Foley said on the first goal – you can't state enough the importance of the education and that it is very valuable.

Mrs. Winer made an amendment seconded by Mr. Wyand to split the vote.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent

Mr. Kronholm made a motion seconded by Mrs. Winer to add goal #1 “to provide the best possible education to the children in the district” to school committee goals.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent

Mr. Kronholm made a motion seconded by Mrs. Winer to add goal #2 the school committee will function as a unit with the superintendent to implement educational policies”.

Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to postpone discussion on goal # 2 the school committee will function as a unit with the superintendent to implement educational policies”.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent

IX. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

X. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Future Agenda Items

High School Update – TBD

XI. INFORMATION

Information

Superintendent’s Corner November 4, 2013

November School Committee Meeting

November Calendar

17th Annual Craft Fair Looking For Vendors

Gateway hosts presentation on college financing – Part of annual “College Awareness Week” at the school

Free Jazz Concert at Gateway

Superintendent’s Corner October 28th 2013

55+? Save the date for annual brunch and concert

Early Release Day November 5

Items sought for choirs’ Penny Social

All Class Reunion November 30

Superintendent’ Corner October 21, 2013

Gateway Continues safety practice – Parents deemed critical to successful outcomes

Gateway school safety hotline

Bergeron Quintet at Gateway November 18

Superintendent’s Corner October 9, 2013

Superintendent’s Corner October 7, 2013

Warrants

AP# 1034 \$76,989.72 PR# 09 \$378,865.74

AP# 1038 \$24,305.64 PR# 10 \$368,080.20

AP# 1039 \$31.31

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to go into executive session at or before 10:15 p.m. for the purpose of negotiations update not to return to open session.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent 2 (ROLL CALL VOTE)

Yeas: Ruth, Sarah, Scott, Jim, Sandra, Sue, Shirley, Anne-Marie, Ron, Jeff, Martha, Michele, Gretchen
Absent: Mary Anne, Ellen

XIII. ADJOURNMENT *Mrs. Levreault made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to adjourn 10:22 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacy L. Stewart
School Committee Secretary