

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2014

**Gateway Library
7:00 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
William Hathaway
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
Joanne Blocker, Director of Academics
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: _____

7:05 p.m. II. PUBLIC INPUT FOR ITEMS NOT LISTED ON AGENDA (3 Minute Limit)

- Mrs. Crane opened the meeting.
- Ms. Laurie and Peter Francis are recording the meeting.
- Mr. Mason of GTAC complemented those who spoke at DESE Conference. Pioneer Valley Planning Commission will support us under the Delta Funds as requested by the six towns and GTAC for a facilitated organizational needs process as opposed to dog and pony show on December 3rd by the DESE. He invited everyone to GTAC.
- Mrs. Winer asked what it means that we will get professional help.
- Mr. Mason said it is generally used to pay for staff and planning. To facility a thorough review of our needs for rebuilding a sustainable school system. PVCPC will get and administer the funds and it is our responsibility to use them appropriately. Josh Garcia is one of the staff who will be drafting a preliminary proposal.

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Brennan Foley said the freshman sold coffee as a fundraiser and they are collecting class dues. Sophomores are selling poinsettias and class dues are due in January. The junior class sold pies and made a lot of money. NHS collected money for toys for tots; student council is prepping for reindeer games. Dec 20 at 7: 00 is As Schools Match Wits. The School climate group is teaching 8th grade about healthy relationships. Seniors are cataloguing what kids owe and looking at senior trips. A College fair will be held on Monday, and it's Class spirit week. The display case competition will happened on the 23rd. Student councils will be doing the judging. The Holiday Concert is tomorrow night.

IV. CONSENT ITEMS 10/8/14, 10/22/14, 11/12/14, (3Enc's.)

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to approve the minutes of 10/8/14.

Motion Failed (VOTE) Yeas 5 Nays Abstain 7 Absent

Mrs. Levreault made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to approve the minutes of 10/22/2014

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 7 Nays Abstain 5 Absent

Mrs. Crane explained that if people had specific simple corrections, members can just email Stacy. This is something we decided.

Mrs. Suriner made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to approve the minutes of 11/12/14.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays Abstain 3 Absent

Mrs. Winer made a motion seconded by Mrs. Suriner to go into executive session at or before 9:00 p.m. for the purpose of union negotiations, potential litigation, and meeting minutes approval not to return to open session.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays Abstain 1 Absent 1 (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Noreen, Jeff, Terri, Sue, Shirley, Sarah, Bill, Anne-Marie, Sandra, Mary Anne, Michele

Abstain: Ruth (recues)

Absent: Martha

V. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS

A. Pupil Services Update – move to the next meeting

VI. BUDGET

A. FY '16 Budget

- Budget Presentation – Ms. Fisk gave a PowerPoint.
- Mrs. Otterbeck arrived: 7:34 p.m.
- Custodial contract runs through next year.
- Mrs. Laurie asked if there were two or three technology staff.
- Ms. Fisk said there are three and two of them are funded by the revolving account.
- Mrs. Laurie said isn't school choice revolving account earmarked for instruction, so how does that work.
- Ms. Fisk said they are the two who go through the school and work with teachers.
- Mrs. McVeigh said there are a number of sources of funds; she suggests that we have a full budget that includes all sources of funds. How much it costs to educate a child in the district, what you are charging the towns, and what you are taking from other funds. She just attended a budgeting workshop at Franklin Tech sponsored by Hampshire Council of Governments. She would like to see line items, where then are funded from with a total.
- Ms. Laurie would like to see every general ledger account.
- Ms. Fisk said that is a line item budget; that is what you get.
- Ms. Fisk handed out the line item budget for FY 16. This is a snapshot as of today. There are still a lot of things we are working on, the bond, Worthington withdrawal, bus contracts, copier leases, got insurance today, hmo plan 2% ppo 3.5%. Oil is at a good rate, and we can lock in as of January 2. We will have a better idea of electricity rates in January. It shouldn't be as high as 37%
- Mrs. Winer asked what is happening with solar.
- Ms. Fisk met with Todd Bard, he has all our information and will get back to us after the beginning of the year.
- Ms. Fisk said the first budget will come out in January.
- Dr. Hopson said this is going to change as information comes in. This usually happens at the end of January, but with the new governor the house 1 budget probably won't come in till February.
- Mrs. Buikus asked if this is level services.
- Dr. Hopson said yes, it is based on administrator recommendations.
- Mrs. Suriner for the FY 16 budget right now is requesting working column.

- Ms. Fisk said as of right now Worthington is in the district. Two school committees from Hampshire have not voted yet.
- Dr. Hopson said the towns might vote down the budget until we get some hard numbers.
- Mrs. Suriner said we have to be proactive.
- Mrs. Kennedy said the two school committees are not meeting till after January, so as of now Worthington is still in the district.
- Mr. Wyand said the biggest change would be the bussing.
- Ms. Fisk said school choice is a big piece.
- Mrs. Levreault said if Worthington does get out is the school committee going to approach them about sending a bus to the town line to pick up kids who want to school choice.
- Ms. Fisk said you don't get reimbursed for transporting school choice students. It is also going to depend on the class sizes and if all schools choice.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked that administration and school committee pursue the avenue to stop having to pay MSBA. She doesn't want to wait. She doesn't want to pay the \$328,000 when this school committee could be looking for ways to stop it.

B. FY 15 9C Cuts

- Dr. Hopson said the governor did cut regional transportation 18 million. For us it cut our reimbursement by \$241,000. Governor Baker was on NPR this morning. He has met with the Senate president, but not discussed the budget deficit. There is a 50 million deficit now. Ms. Fisk has looked at other potential things. There have been no cuts from the nurse leader grant. The last time regional was cut it was restored in April. Governor Baker is not raising taxes and fees or cutting local aid and has to make up more. There is a slim chance to get reimbursement reinstated. He received a request to send a letter to Governor Patrick to restore the 18 million. Dave will send the letter. Mass Association of Regional Schools is trying to get a legal opinion that you can't cut unless Chapter 70 was cut, and chapter 70 wasn't cut. Representative Kocot was the only legislator who did not sign the letter. Senator Brewer who is retired was the big push for that. Dr. Hopson shared the loss with school committee in October. In addition to \$250,000 we now have another \$241,000. We first looked at things that have the least impact on students, reduce mentoring, continue the freeze, not doing security upgrades, not upgrading interactive boards. Next step to look at things that have some impact – cut hours and days for secretaries, paraprofessionals not attending early release and half days, administrators took 6 and 7 furlough days. Still short between \$40,000 and 70,000. We gave the option to the teachers association to take a furlough day on parent teacher conference day. After 3 weeks, we have provided information the GTA is looking at. They have put off the vote until after the holiday. Because it hits midyear, we looked at which teaching positions to cut. 6.5 teaching positions. Its half year and you have to pay unemployment. Those letters went out today via principals. They are dry and state only legal requirements. January 23 is when the lay off would start. If there is a furlough, we will call back those letters. The other part is that the secretaries, custodians, and non union would take a furlough.
- Mrs. Buikus asked what grades.
- Dr. Hopson said high school math, sped, health (part time), middle school/junior high guidance, and 3 elementary teachers.
- Mr. Wyand asked if we can find some money in our budget so these people don't have to lose these jobs. Signed a 5,000 invoice for the well. He knows that is testing. Could we apply for a hardship.
- Dr. Hopson said you have a consent order.
- Mr. Wyand said yes, but things have changed.
- Dr. Hopson said at this point this is just like 2004. We had to lay off 38 staff, right now not including the \$600,000 loss for Worthington leaving plus the loss of \$241,000 we are looking at a potential million dollar increase to the towns. Legally we could go back to the 7 towns and ask to use E & D. We will have \$241,000 less to help the towns next year.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if we prepared, these teacher have a right to a hearing.
- Dave under chapter 71 section 41 for the purposes of budgetary reductions, and staff that does not have professional status has no legal rights to object.
- Mrs. Otterbeck said at the needs conference she was very impressed with a number of the teachers can we get feedback from the union. What is your position
- Mr. Duggan asked if she was asking how they feel. It is their position they wish there was another way to make up the shortfall other than a reduction in force. They are in the process of investigating if a furlough is in their best interest. They needed more information to make an informed decision. No one wants to see their colleges lose their jobs, or have it impact students. A one day furlough is significant portion of their

salary increase, they have bills to pay. The executive board has been in contact with Dr. Hopson discussing the proposal and a couple different scenarios. This is the first time he has had to deal with a furlough. They want to make an educated decision.

- Kayla Brady said she lost her job today; she has two children at home a five month old and a two year old. She doesn't see how her position being cut is going to be beneficial. She would like to see the funds get cut elsewhere. She might not be able to collect unemployment if the union votes against it.
- Renee Boylan said we are talking about something immediate. In the grander scheme of things what are we doing to make sure this doesn't continue. She wants to be reassured her vote is going to make a difference.
- Dr. Hopson said none of the administrators want to see any cuts, this is nothing the district has done; but the state. We can't make any predictions in what is going to happen in the future. This is a short term problem and furlough is a short term solution. Paraprofessionals lost pay, administrators, lost pay, secretaries, have lost pay, The offer of 1 day furlough to teachers has to do with equity.
- Mrs. Buikus said we sit around here and say we are going to do something for the children. Cutting one administrative position will save 7 teachers. There is an administrative position that could be cut that would save.
- Mrs. Levreault said we could use the sick bank, could we have people contribute sick days. There might be people who are willing to donate days.
- Dr. Hopson explained that it doesn't work that way.
- Mrs. Buikus asked why are you forcing the teachers to give up a day. The proper way is to find the money somewhere else.
- Ms. Laurie believes in the bottom up. She is disturbed they have been negotiating this for three weeks and school committee is just finding out today. She thinks the school committee should be more involved. We should get together as a negotiating committee. Mrs. Buikus and Mrs. Levreault have very good ideas.
- Mr. Wyand had asked for numbers for getting for getting across How about the stipend positions for athletics. We could ask people to do it and not take the stipend money.
- Jess Rida said all they asked for was for more time.
- Dr. Hopson said people asked to know ahead so they know not to spend more money on the holiday and they want to be able to put their resumes together.
- Mrs. McVeigh said as a taxpayer, she is discouraged and disappointed that to fill a void you are cutting 6 percent of your teaching staff. The communities have asked you to take a good look at the budget. You are cutting almost 7% and going to PARCC. This is unacceptable. How many administrative staff do you need, can you outsource. How much is in school choice fund? Over \$500,000. She knows you might not want to spend it but, she would rather have you spend \$200,000 and cut one administrator. This solution is just causing interruptions in teaching staff and teaching. There are other solutions. She is also disappointed we waited till tonight to notify school committee.
- Dr. Hopson doesn't disagree. His thinking was to have everyone give up something, so no one had to be laid off. If everyone gave up something not a single person had to be laid off in the district. He asked them to give up a day.
- Ms. Laurie said the teachers are hands on and we give them more credit.
- Mrs. Kennedy said she has dealt with threats and intimidation; the same tactics are being used on the teachers for passing the budget. The threats have to stop. Let's work together. She is not afraid to stand up for the teachers. The school committee is going to take the heat and lose the towns' trust. We need to start working together.
- Mr. Wyand completely disagrees with cutting high school math.
- Dr. Hopson does not decide which teachers go. The administrators sit down and decide what is going to have the least impact. There are classes that have only a few students. We need to look at a lot of things.
- Mrs. Suriner said they are also talking about a process. They were blindsided.
- Mrs. Winer asked what is the role of school committee in this and if we are going to get blamed for this.
- Dr. Hopson said school committee sets the budget; he can work things as long as it is within the budget. How can you tell the other groups the teachers are more important?
- Ms. Laurie said the teachers are more important.
- Mrs. Suriner would like it to be less adversarial; she wants more time before these types of decisions are made. She knows it's none of our faults. We are talking about the life of this district. We should fight together rather than with each.
- Mr. Duggan said there may have been teachers who are willing to give up furloughs, which is natural. There were quite a few teachers who had questions they couldn't answer. There were some who weren't in favor. There are people who feel pressured. Even giving the notices is going to influence people
- Mrs. Crane asked if the union has a timeline.

- Mr. Duggan said they asked for information, they will get it by the end of the week, they will analyze the information and when they get back from the break to do this.
- Mr. Wyand asked when the cuts would take effect.
- Dr. Hopson said January 23, so it gives the association time.
- Mrs. Winer said there is a system in place to work on this.
- Mrs. Kennedy is asking for more information on what is going on. We are responsible for this in the end.
- Moved Everything else to the next agenda
- Went into executive session.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. School Committee
- B. Chairperson
- C. Superintendent – Central Office Update (Enc.)
- D. Business Manager
- E. Administration

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTING

- A. Superintendent's Evaluation
- B. Finance Subcommittee
- C. Legislative Liaison
- D. Policy Subcommittee
- E. School Committee Goals Subcommittee
- F. Community Curriculum Committee

7:45 - IX. OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

- A. Worthington Withdrawal (Enc.)
- B. Superintendent's Goals
- C. School Committee Self-Evaluation
- D. Boys' and Girls' State Discussion

8:15 - X. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

9:00 p.m.

- 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
- D. NSPRA – National “Public Schools That Work” Initiative and Resolution (Enc.)
- E. Review of One-Man/One-Vote Amendments
- F. MARS 9C Effects Regional Transportation

XI. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Future Agenda Items

XII. INFORMATION

Information

- Superintendent's Corner November 7, 2014
- November early release day
- Five attend UMASS 'Women in Engineering' day
- Penny Social November 21
- Gateway hosts presentation on college financing
- Blood drive at Gateway November 17
- Law now requires fingerprinting of all school staff
- Please RSVP for Sr. Citizens event at Gateway
- Superintendent's Corner November 17, 2014
- Gateway closes for Thanksgiving
- Public invited to attend, speak at DESE Needs Conference
- College week at Gateway
- Gateway Education Foundation to take part in “Valley Gives”

New blog on Gateway Website
 Annual Holiday Bazaar at Littleville
 Gateway girls earn high marks in robotics
 Gateway Blood Drive saved up to 144 lives
 'Many Hands' would help Education Foundation
 Pancake Supper December 5
 Class of 2017 Poinsettia Sale
 First term honor roll for high school
 Superintendent's Corner November 21, 2014

Warrants

AP#1035	\$26,807.47	PR# 10	\$369,326.45
AP#1036	\$217,903.88	PR# 11	\$386,399.71
AP#1040	\$119,494.18		

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

Mrs. Winer made a motion seconded by Mrs. Suriner to go into executive session at or before 9:00 p.m. for the purpose of union negotiations, potential litigation, and meeting minutes approval not to return to open session.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays Abstain 1 Absent 1 (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Noreen, Jeff, Terri, Sue, Shirley, Sarah, Bill, Anne-Marie, Sandra, Mary Anne, Michele

Abstain: Ruth (recues)

Absent: Martha

- A. Union Negotiations
- B. Potential Litigation
- C. Minutes Approval : 12/11/13, 3/26/14, 4/9/14, 5/14/14, 6/11/14, 10/22/14 (6 Enc.'s)

XIV. ADJOURNMENT Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Winer to adjourn at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
 Stacy L Stewart,
 School Committee Secretary