

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES****WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2014****Library
7:30 P.M.****(A PORTION OF THIS MEETING MAY BE HELD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION)****I. OPENING OF MEETING**BLANDFORD
Michele CraneCHESTER
Shirley Winer
Martha OtterbeckHUNTINGTON
Ron Damon
William Hathaway
Jeff WyandMIDDLEFIELD
Sarah FoleyMONTGOMERY
Anne Marie Buikus
Sandra HaasRUSSELL
Ruth Kennedy
Mary Ann Laurie
Mary AnnWORTHINGTON
Sue Levreault
Gretchen EliasonSECRETARY
Stacy StewartCENTRAL ADMINISTRATION
Dr. David B. Hopson, Superintendent
Stephanie Fisk, Business & FinanceADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL
Amy Fouracre, Chs, Lit, MS Assistant Principal
Joanne Blocker, Director of Academics
Megan Coburn, Chs, Lit, MS Principal
Jason Finnie, High, Jr. High School Principal
Wendy Long, District Grant Writer
Anthony Sabonis, High/Jr. High Assistant Principal
Alice Taverna, Pupil Services DirectorSTUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

OTHERS: Russell Dupere

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

- Pandora Hague said the Russell town meeting was this past Monday night. She spoke to Dr. Hopson at a previous meeting asking him to come to the Russell Town meeting selling the budget, creating a good report with the community. She would like him to talk about the good things happening at Gateway. That didn't happen. The DESE did a review in 2012 and one of the things they said is the school committee and superintendent should advocate for the school system and cultivate a relationship between the towns and the schools. She doesn't feel it is being done. She feels Dr. Hopson should be going to the towns to sell the budget and get the community involved. The school committee should direct Dr. Hopson to hold a meeting in the towns and draw them back in.
- Mrs. Eliason thanked Mrs. Hague her for her comments. We should think about it and see if we want to have meetings in the towns.

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Brennan Foley updated us on spirit week in the high school. Each class is competing for spirit points. Matching Monday, Tie-dye Tuesday, Wild West Wednesday, Tropical Thursday, and Freedom Friday were the themes for the week.

IV. CONSENT ITEMS 4/9/14 (Enc.)*Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to accept the minutes of 4/9/14.**Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain 4 Absent*

V. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS

A. Model UN

- Casey Pease from Worthington. He and Cori Bisbie founded the Gateway version of Model UN. It is student run and they debate with other schools. It helps students get involved with current events. They have 15 members. They will be giving a presentation to the Education Foundation later on this month as a thank you for supporting their trip to Boston.

B. Casey Pease's DC Trip

- Casey was nominated to go to the Junior Statesman Program in DC. Students go to Georgetown and take an AP level class. They will also be going to the capital, white house, and Congress. Model UN teaches you to be a better citizen in your community. Casey is requesting to fundraise by directly soliciting to the staff and community to help fund his attendance in the program. Mr. Brown would like to send an email out the staff letting.
- Dr. Hopson read a letter to the committee from Mr. Brown. Funds could be donated through the internet. A link could be put on the website and Mrs. Long could do a breaking news article.
- Mrs. Winer thinks it's a great idea. She asked if there is another source of funding.
- Casey said there are many sponsors of the program. They are offered in other Ivy League schools. He has to have all the funding paid by June in order to go.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked if there could be a link for the general public.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Student Representative

- John Wyand spoke about spirit week. The sophomores are having a Zumba fundraiser. The senior class Disney trip is next week with Dr. Hopson and their advisors. Other upcoming activities are the Sports Banquet, Shipman Memorial Concert, Senior Banquet and of course Graduation.

B. School Committee

- Mrs. Crane introduced Terri Garfield the new Blandford Representative.
- School Committee introduced themselves.
- Mrs. Laurie stated she finished conflict of interest exam.
- Mrs. Buikus said they held an information meeting in Montgomery on May 3 and they had about sixteen people attend.
- Mrs. Levreault said Worthington members had an open house and they also had about sixteen people attend.

C. Chairperson

- Mrs. Eliason went to the NHS induction ceremony. She congratulated those who were honored. As a reminder, there is a Charting the Course training in Lee in September. If you haven't done that, please sign up. Let Stacy know and she will register anyone interested. The reception for retirees and award winners will be held May 28 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Mrs. Kennedy will coordinate drinks and snacks. It will be held in the courtyard or foyer if the weather doesn't cooperate. Mrs. Eliason also asked all the subcommittee chairs put a packet together of some of the work the subcommittees do. It would be nice for new members.

D. Superintendent – Central Office Update (Enc.)

- The high school did very well on the PARCC trial run. We are discussing as a leadership team if we should do another practice in grades 3-8. If we do they won't take MCAS only PARCC. We have to make a decision by June.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if PARCC is ready.
- Dr. Hopson said he thinks that this is the next step in their piloting program. It is the collection from DESE to decide if they will move forward with it. If the state moves forward, at least we will have had some experience.
- Mr. Wyand asked if there would be an advantage if we went to PARCC, but also is there a disadvantage if they don't go with PARCC.
- Dr. Hopson said even if the state stays with MCAS they will have to rewrite it to go with the new Common Core.
- Mrs. Levreault asked about the John and Abigail Adams Scholarships
- Dr. Hopson said it only affects lower levels.

E. Business Manager - None**F. Administration**

- Mrs. Coburn said they kicked off their mini courses at Chester and Littleville. The afterschool program is running a talent show. Also the fourth graders will have four days where they can go to the middle school afterschool program. This will help with transitioning.
- Mr. Finnie said there is an open forum for scheduling tomorrow night. He will give some proposed changes, and others still have to go through an approval program. A letter will be going home summarizing how starting with the class 2016, the science test counts for the John and Abigail Adams scholarship.

VII. AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTING**A. Superintendent's Evaluation Subcommittee**

- Mrs. Levreault said the subcommittee is at the point where they will be doing the end of the year evaluation report. Dr. Hopson will update his goals and they will do their survey. The goal is to get one hundred percent participation this year.

B. Finance Subcommittee – None**C. Legislative Liaison**

- Mrs. Kennedy said Governor has signed the Worthington withdrawal. There is still a question if it is 30 days or 60 days before it goes into law.

D. Policy Subcommittee

- Mr. Damon said they met Tuesday. Some of the items will be taken care of under new business.

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

- The committee was formed and consists of parents, students, school committee, Mr. Finnie and Mr. Sabonis. They are getting some good suggestions, mostly by email. Mr. Mason met with Mr. Finnie to talk about how to integrate their work with the school system, and others such as town governments, business associations, etc.
- Mr. Finnie said it will help with the transition that will take place with 21st century skills and school to career. The timing is good. It will help to get more job experience, job shadowing, etc.
- Mr. Mason said he will be arranging a meeting with Ms. Fisk to discuss how it will integrate with her adult education program. They do need a name for the committee and are looking for suggestions, from the committee and community.
- Mrs. Winer asked about what Ms. Fisk sent out and how it will work with the grant from UMASS and get the community to be more involved. How will instructors get paid?
- Dr. Hopson said the form allows for all of that.
- Mrs. Laurie asked if it will generate funds for the district.
- Dr. Hopson said it will be self funding.

7:45 - VIII. OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS**A. Worthington Withdrawal (Enc.)**

- Mrs. Eliason said she understands people are concerned with what comes next. It is being developed through this process. Our attorney is here tonight to help us. One of the questions that came up is if the legislation would require all remaining towns to sign a new agreement and if they didn't would it dissolve the district.
- Mr. Wyand asked when we would expect a decision from Worthington.
- Mrs. Eliason said they have to submit plans to DESE 60 days after the bill becomes law. Sometime after that they are approved by DESE. There is no deadline for DESE's approval.
- Mr. Wyand said so the decision would be made upon DESE approval of the package.
- Mrs. McVeigh said in the presentation that was given in Huntington, there were specific timelines. The Governor signed it on the 7th it doesn't become law for 60-90 days, then you have 60 days to have your educational plan to DESE, both Worthington and Gateway, and then DESE has 60 days to approve it. It

could be 180 days if DESE waits the full 60 days. There are town officials concerned about the agreement. They would like to get a timeline. Members of GTAC have recommended the school committee and administration have conversations with town officials. The towns want to be involved in the reorganization and in the needs conference. We need to define what needs to be done and when it needs to be done. Talking points should go out to residents of the towns. The residents are concerned about the \$600,000 that will be split between them. That is a 6 to 7 percent increase. Chester is financially concerned they are already at over \$20 per thousand and proposition 2 ½ brings them to \$25.

- Mrs. Eliason said the schedule is a good idea. This is the first time we've discussed this.
- Mrs. Kennedy said the only thing that is definite is that the governor has signed it. There is a waiting period before it is enacted. She has two sets of opinions whether it is 60 or 90 days. Then Worthington has 60 days to request a withdrawal and school committee will vote and send it in. It will be done by Massachusetts General Law.
- Mrs. Laurie appreciates the work of the GTAC. She would like to be emailed with information.
- Mrs. Winer asked what a needs conference consists of and what is the role?
- Attorney Dupree said there is a regulation and it was intended for an expansion. It is an important process so the stakeholders have input about the district, not Worthington. Russell agreed with what Mrs. McVeigh said about the timeframe. This act allows them to get out if they want to. It comes down to whether Worthington will be able to educate students.
- Mrs. Crane said we had specific language about what Worthington has to pay for. Outside of that what would we need to look at? If we look at all the days in between, that brings us to January and it impacts our budget.
- Mr. Damon asked if the regional agreement needs to be redrawn.
- Attorney Dupree said the act doesn't affect the rest of the agreement at all.
- Mrs. Eliason said section 2 covers the separation costs, capital costs, etc. They will have to pay Worthington's cost by population. They won't have a cost until March of next year because that is when the census is done.
- Attorney Dupere said section 2 does deal with the financial aspects, but if you can come to a formal agreement (nail down what the agreement means) as to what costs need to be paid, it would help things along.
- Mrs. Laurie said at the very soonest, the withdrawal would be next July. She asked if the student's who are enrolled in school could finish their education here.
- Dr. Hopson said yes.
- Mrs. McVeigh said before this committee discusses what needs to be paid, the committee should discuss it with their town officials. The towns want Worthington to pay their share of OPEB. It's an obligation. It wasn't agreed upon. (retiree health care)
- Mr. Wyand asked if Worthington can leave anytime.
- Attorney Dupere said there is no language that addresses what happens if the 60 day timeframe is missed.
- Mrs. Kennedy said Worthington may withdraw anytime. There is no date on it. It is very up in the air.
- Mrs. Eliason said it is unlikely that Worthington would not decide for years.
- Mrs. Foley asked about school choice and special education costs. Where does that come from?
- Ms. Taverna said there are five students that have significant needs. If the families wanted them to come here there would have to be a tuition agreement. If they are out of district it then becomes Worthington's issue. There is a move in law, which states the previous district is responsible for the rest of the year until the budget is settled. The change would occur the following year.
- Mrs. Eliason asked if the committee would like to discuss timeline.
- Mrs. Kennedy said we can't do anything yet until the law is enacted. We don't do anything until Worthington officially withdraws. She wants to create a subcommittee.
- Mrs. Eliason agrees with the enactment, but she is not sure she agrees with not starting until Worthington withdraws.
- Mrs. Crane disagrees with Mrs. Kennedy. She feels we could be working on things. She is uncomfortable having a subcommittee handle this. She would like to have the important stuff discussed around this table.
- Attorney Dupere said you don't wait till you have 60 days left to start the plan. He would ask Ms. Fisk and Dr. Hopson to come up with a plan and then the committee discusses and approves. You should start doing it now.
- Mrs. Blocker concurs with Attorney Dupree. We have a lot of issues to address.
- Mrs. Eliason asked if Dr. Hopson could draft something.
- Dr. Hopson asked if school committee was looking for something similar, for something different, or are you looking to address the \$600,000 loss?

- Pandora Hague said they talked at GTAC a little bit. Dr. Hopson said it would be the same. The towns are worrisome about that.
- Mr. Wyand asked if the educational plan is somewhat bound to the teachers contract.
- Dr. Hopson said one of the reasons the teachers wanted a one year contract was so they could see what Worthington was doing.
- Mrs. Crane asked about section 48 hold harmless with the remaining communities – What does that mean and will the state help us with this.
- Attorney Dupere said there are feel good phrases. There is nothing in there that says the state will fund anything. There is nothing binding the state to anything.
- Mrs. Eliason agrees.
- Mrs. McVeigh said we are always at the mercy of the legislature. There are many questions in this legislation. It says Worthington may unilaterally withdrawal. Once they do decide to leave, the educational plans need to be submitted.
- Attorney Dupere said they can unilaterally withdrawal providing the commissioner approves the town and the district educational plans. They have to have the plans in within 60 days in order for this to happen. If that doesn't happen then sentence one doesn't apply.
- Mr. Mason said in light of all the questions and uncertainty, GTAC has drafted questions for DESE. He would ask school committee to get together with GTAC to send the questions. Force them to make some decisions.
- Pandora Hague said Worthington and Gateway have to submit their plans. Section 4 says upon written notification from Worthington for their withdrawal.
- Attorney Dupere said the next trigger is the enactment, then 60 days to get plans submitted, and then 60 days for commissioner to respond.
- Mr. Wyand said what if the commissioner says no, then what happens.
- Attorney Dupere said the withdrawal doesn't happen this time.
- Mrs. Laurie said we might want to decide what that plan will look like, and if it absorbs the \$600,000 or not.
- Dr. Hopson said even if Chester had to absorb the cost, it would be less than they paid seven years ago. They have been increasing their town expenditures instead of school expenditures.
- Mr. Damon asked if DESE has the power to negate the legislature.
- Mrs. McVeigh requested a public forum to discuss this. What the issues are and how we are going to address them.
- The chairperson ended discussion even though people still had comments.
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B. Maintenance/Capital Improvement Plan (Enc.)

Mrs. Crane made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to approve the Maintenance and Capital Improvement Plan.

- Dr. Hopson said he met with DEP about the replacement of the well. We have approval to put a well within 50 feet of the original well. We will drill a new one and put the old one on reserved. The entire process will take about three years.
- Mrs. Buikus asked if there are any prices and are we trying to get a consultant on site.
- Dr. Hopson said it could be between \$75-150,000.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if we are discussing hooking into the town.
- Dr. Hopson said it would be a couple hundred thousand to hook up to town water from Littleville.
- Mrs. Eliason asked if it would make sense to borrow for the boilers and roof project so the towns could debt exclude it would it. It would change the numbers.
- Dr. Hopson said yes, because you would do it all at once instead of over a number of years. All seven towns would have to vote to approve it.
- Mrs. Eliason said by approving this tonight the school committee would be including these figures in the budget.
- Dr. Hopson would suggest you talk to the towns to see what they wanted to do.
- Mrs. Eliason asked if the plan for 2016 is to pay for the entire well.
- Dr. Hopson said he would come back to school committee under extraordinary maintenance in 2014 and continue to be funded over a period of years.
- Mrs. Eliason said a sticking point for her is the number for 2016. There are going to be other issues that year. Is it a definite or can it be changed.

- Dr. Hopson said it may be offset by bussing, these are just estimates.
- Mr. Wyand asked if we should put this off until we know what Worthington is doing.
- Dr. Hopson said this is just the plan; you still have to approve the funding every year.
- Mrs. Laurie is employed by the bus company Lecrenski who currently holds the bus contract for the district's bussing.

Mrs. Crane made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to approve the Maintenance and Capital Improvement Plan.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays 1 Abstain 2 Absent

C. Approval of School Choice for the 2014-2015 School Year

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Crane to approve school Choice for the 2014-2015 school year.

- Mrs. McVeigh said if we vote for it, we are still responsible for the kids who are here if we vote no next year.
- Dr. Hopson said yes.

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Crane to approve school Choice for the 2014-2015 school year.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 14 Nays Abstain Absent

D. Negotiations Update

Mrs. Crane made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to go into executive session for the purpose of union and non-union negotiations at or before 10:00 p.m.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 14 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Jeff, Michele, Sarah, Shirley, Martha, Anne-Marie, Mary Ann, Ron, Sue, Sandy, Ruth, Bill, Gretchen
Abstain: Terri

- Dr. Hopson said paraprofessionals will be ready to negotiate after next week.

IX. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to suspend the two-meeting rule to vote on A, B, C, F, J.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 14 Nays Abstain Absent

A. Approval of Trip to Costa Rica – April Vacation 2015

Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to approve the Trip to Costa Rica over April Vacation 2015.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 14 Nays Abstain Absent

B. Casey Pease's DC Trip

Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Crane to approve the direct solicitation of staff and the community for Mr. Pease's DC trip.

- Mrs. Levreault said teachers nominate students all the time, if we let one do this, do we have to let them all.
- Mr. Wyand asked why we would deny a student. His son was invited to the people to people group trip. He wishes they had done the same. He doesn't know why we would deny any student.

Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Crane to approve the direct solicitation of staff and the community for Mr. Pease's DC trip.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 14 Nays Abstain Absent

C. Vocational Deadline (Koby Ouimette)

- Dr. Hopson said the Superintendent of Smith Voke accepted Koby free of charge for the remainder of this year. Chester has also put money aside for tuition and transportation.

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Crane to wave the policy.

- Mrs. Levreault asked why Voke took him.
- Dr. Hopson said for the same reason as everyone else. They are looking for money and to increase their population.
- Mrs. Levreault asked why we deal with this if it's the town's responsibility.
- Dr. Hopson said we are involved because the superintendent still approves vocational applications.
- Mrs. Levreault said we've worked hard to advertise the deadline, what about the others we have said no to.
- Mr. Damon said we are doing Chester a favor if we deny it.

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Crane to wave the policy.

Motion Failed (VOTE) Yeas 1 Nays 13 Abstain Absent

D. Disc Golf Course Signage

- Dr. Hopson said the course is up. They want to get signs, so the public knows it is there. This will require policy waivers.
- Mrs. Kennedy said to check into town by laws about what type of signs can be put up.

E. School Committee Re-organizational Policy

- Mrs. Eliason said the committee voted during the open meeting law violation discussion that we would move forward not voting by secret ballot. Open Meeting Law says you can't vote by secret ballot in open session.
- Mrs. Kennedy would like to see the Massachusetts General Law and any Federal Law. Open meeting law says you cannot vote in secret for policy. It doesn't apply to reorganization.
- Mrs. Eliason believes it is a blanket statement in Open Meeting Law.
- Attorney Dupere said the regional agreement says it is by ballot. The AG's office said the ballot is okay as long as the name of the person voting and the vote they took is on the ballot. When you vote for an official it can be secret ballot, but not for someone who is already a public official.
- Mr. Wyand said you would write down who you voted for as well as your name and then it would be recorded.
- Mrs. Eliason said we voted as a committee to do the reorganization without secret ballot. Our policy has to be consistent with the vote.
- Attorney Dupere said if you decide to change that vote, you have to let the Ag's office know.

F. SAFIS Policy

- Dr. Hopson said we have fingerprint ID employees now. Everyone we hired this year has to have them done by August. All existing employees by the end of next year. Starting with the new school year all new hires will need it done before we hire them.
- Mr. Damon said we don't have a choice.
- Mrs. Laurie confirmed that it is the burden of the person not the district.
- Attorney Dupere said there is a hardship provision.

Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Laurie to approve the SAFIS Policy.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 14 Nays Abstain Absent

G. Field Trip Policy

- Dr. Hopson said the blue is what we originally changed, purple is input from others.

H. Remote Participation in School Committee Meetings (Enc.)

- Mrs. Eliason said Mr. Jacques is the select board representative and has accepted a work assignment in Indiana. We need to decide if the school committee would allow remote participation. All votes would need to be roll call votes. We would we need to accomplish the remote connection, so it may affect our decision on our own calendar in terms of traveling. All participants would need to be clearly audible. We are not required to allow it. If we don't approve it Mr. Jacques may resign and have someone else take that position.
- Mr. Wyand said it may not be available all the time, there may be limitations.

I. Review of Recent Changes to Selected Laws (Enc.)

- Goal Complete – no new changes

J. FY 15 School Calendar (Enc.)

Mrs. Levreault made a motion seconded by Mrs. Crane to approve the FY 15 School Calendar.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 14 Nays Abstain Absent

K. FY 15 School Committee Schedule (Enc.)**L. Recommendation to Approve the Second Option Year of Transportation Contract**

- It saves us money compared to what other contracts that are coming in at.
- Mrs. Laurie disclosed that she is employed by the Transportation Company hired by the district.

X. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**Future Agenda Items**

National School Lunch – May 28

XI. INFORMATION**Information**

Sports Banquet tickets on sale
 Save the dates for Shipman, GatorRoo concerts
 Superintendent's Corner May 2, 2014
 Fifteen Gateway Juniors inducted into NHS
 Middle school Effort Awards
 May School Committee Meetings
 Reminder on Kindergarten and Preschool screenings
 JRHS Effort Award Breakfast
 Superintendent's Corner April 25, 2014
 Paradis-Burnett Heads to Chicago for Chance at \$50,000
 Gateway Nature Trail Work Day
 Third term honor roll for high school
 Gateway MUNs trip to Boston
 Littleville plants tree, remembers Champiney
 High school concert May 8
 Gateway to celebrate Poetry
 Night of a Million Books: Young Men and Fire
 Superintendent's Corner April 17, 2014
 Early College Awareness workshops for freshmen, sophomores
 Superintendent's Corner April 11, 2014
 Gateway juniors attend National College Fair
 Littleville Students 'Read to Achieve' with Springfield Armor
 Gateway Announces Kindergarten Screenings
 Gateway Athletic Booster Club seeks 'Hall of Fame' nominations
 Autism specialist explains it all
 Superintendent's Corner April 4, 2014

Warrants

AP# 1077 \$78,180.02	PR# 20 \$367,754.38
AP# 1082 \$31.64	PR# 21 \$378,399.66
AP# 1083 \$119,020.10	PR# 22 \$337,806.15
AP# 1085 \$161,092.98	
AP# 1087 \$157,905.01	
AP# 1090 \$37,876.20	
AP# 1092 \$38.80	

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

or earlier

9/25/13, 11/13/13, 12/11/13, 1/8/14, 1/22/14, 3/12/14, 3/26/14, 4/9/14 (Enc's.)

XIII. ADJOURNMENT Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to adjourn at 10:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacy L Stewart,
School Committee Secretary