

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2016

**Room 214/216 Jr. High
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
Diane Dunn

HUNTINGTON
William Hathaway
Jeff Wyand

MIDDLEFIELD
Sarah Foley

MONTGOMERY
Anne-Marie Buikus
Madelyn Austin

RUSSELL
Ruth Kennedy
Tara Balboni
Heather Morgan

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
Sara Laing, 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 (3 Minute Limit)

- Mrs. Crane opened the meeting at 7:01 p.m.
- Mrs. Buikus and Mrs. Austin are recording the meeting.

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Brennan Foley said the semi formal is Friday at Tucker’s and 65 people going. Band students selected for the honor band at UMass February 1 are I. Delaney, C. Tweed, A. Auclair, M. Bang, and B. Foley. They will play in three ensembles. They are playing with other students from around New England. Blessing bag collections finished last week 100 bags were packaged. Chester and Littleville were rock stars. Paper boxes with lotion and stuff that didn’t fit in bags will be delivered separate. Brennan is delivering them tomorrow. Mid-terms are next week.

IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS - None

V. BUDGET

A. FY ’16 Budget Update

- DESE Letter
- Mrs. Buikus wanted to talk about hiring the consultant and the steps we have to go through. Is there a possibility to have them here in time to help with the FY ’17 Budget?

- Dr. Hopson said he has drafted a RFP that was sent to DESE last week to make sure we are on task. Once they say it is okay he will give it to school committee to make any tweaks, and then it will go out. March is the deadline for proposals, then they will be weighted and a contract awarded. The intermediate report will be due in the fall and the final in December. You can't expect the consultant to come in and have them do a report in a couple weeks and get community input.
- Mrs. Kennedy said she understands the towns go have to go through the process, but if the towns go through and vote the budget down, DESE will help us out.
- Mrs. Buikus asked how long DESE will be involved; through the fiscal year or the towns pass a budget? She also said GTAC has talked about looking into combining with other school districts. Are we going to do that as a committee?
- Dr. Hopson spoke with Smith Vocational and other regional school districts last week. Nick Young has done extensive studies and every study in West Virginia and Maine has shown it costs more than not regionalizing. Lee and Lenox have been looking into it for a long time. The district should look at it and it is part of the RFP. If school committee took a vote to do that tonight, it would be a couple of years before it happened. A lot needs to happen, including changes to the Regional agreement.
- Mrs. Winer said we tried to make some scheduling changes years ago and DESE shot us down.
- Mrs. Buikus said we could keep Gateway as it is and share the Business Manager and Superintendent.
- Dr. Hopson said you have to have other school districts who want to regionalize. Lee and Lenox had two superintendents that were interims and they couldn't come up with an agreement. Timing is good, with shrinking enrollments. Some of the high schools are getting small. We may need to find new ways of instruction. We are not the only ones facing fiscal concerns. Amherst is looking at making cuts again this year.

B. FY '17 Budget

- Ms. Fisk said have a teacher retiring in December, so we are saving 1/2 a teacher salary. We had a custodian who opted to retire. Oil prices have gone down and we have locked in at \$1.31. This makes a reduction total \$426,000 from this year's budget. Substitute accounts have been tweaked. Ms. Fisk handed out the census as of January 1. Huntington and Middlefield have increased everyone else has decreased. She went over the differences in percentages. She also went over the students from last year to this year.
- Mrs. Crane asked about the change in the custodial salary line.
- Ms. Fisk said it is the change with the middle school will go up and
- Mrs. Crane asked about improvement of fixed assets.
- Ms. Fisk said it is the well improvements and it won't be in the budget next year.
- Mrs. Winer asked what is going on with the well.
- Dr. Hopson said they are close. It will need to be flushed with chlorine; it had to be approved by DEP. It took so long because the well equipment broke and had to be fixed. The cement cover is on. We will be on the new well as soon as we can get the chlorine test
- Mrs. Kennedy asked why the teaching expenses went up 900%
- Ms. Fisk said that is the ELL line.
- Ms. Taverna said we are being audited this year. One of the things the ESL teacher and she anticipate is having a curriculum, so that is what they included and the amount is about \$3,000. It is what we anticipate is coming.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked about the increase in school choice.
- Ms. Fisk said that is driven by Worthington.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked when you will have an anticipated E & D on the revenue side. The towns have asked the school committee to attend the task force meeting.
- Ms. Fisk said when we checked with Hampshire County for the GASB report it wasn't ready. That was the last thing we were waiting for.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked if we can ask for a draft; OPEB is just a footnote.
- Mrs. Winer asked who from DESE is coming to the task force meeting.
- Mrs. McVeigh invited Christine Lynch.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked about middle school supplies.
- Ms. Fisk said the junior high line item reduced and middle school increased. It is Dibels testing in the middle school.
- Mrs. Foley said there is 0 in budget for athletic trainer and field trips.
- Ms. Fisk said it comes from athletic revolving.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if we heard anything from DESE on the first line items.

- Ms. Fisk said we also sent this one today, but we haven't heard anything.
- Mrs. Kennedy said the figures we are working on school committee hasn't vote d on the configurations and the figures. She still hasn't gotten her answers this is unacceptable for her to work with compared to what you used to give them.
- Ms. Fisk said this is the same line item she has always handed out.
- Mrs. Crane you can always ask a question you have in an email.
- Mrs. Kennedy said this is not acceptable; this is not a complete budget.
- Ms. Fisk said you will have the revenue side next week.
- Mrs. Kennedy said there is no audit report; it is just a top figure.
- Mrs. Winer said it is possible for anyone to make an appointment with Ms. Fisk and go over it.
- Mrs. Kennedy said every school committee in this state, gets a booklet with all the information; we shouldn't have to beg for information.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEM

A. 2nd Semester Field Trips

- 8th Grade High Meadows
- Band Trip to Broadway Show

Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Winer to approve the following two field trips: 8th Grade High Meadows and Band trip to Broadway Show.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain 2 Absent 1 (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Madelyn, Anne-Marie, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Bill, Ruth, Heather, Shirley, Michele

Abstain: Tara, Jeff

Absent: Martha

B. Policies

- DJE: Bidding Requirements
- DJA: Purchasing Authority
- EBC: Emergency Plans

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to approve the following policies; DJE, DJA, and EBC.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain 2 Absent 1 (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Anne-Marie, Diane, Sara, Terri, Ruth, Heather, Shirley, Michele

Abstain: Bill, Jeff

Absent: Martha

C. Towns' Unfunded Mandates Request

- **Resource Officer**
 - Mrs. Kennedy is still looking for the information she wants.
- **Mitigation Money**
 - Dr. Hopson said Attorney Dupere sent it to Attorney Lampke and he has not heard from Attorney Lampke yet. There were some advantages and disadvantages. Russell is not comfortable moving forward yet.
- **Consultant**
 - The letter with the wording was included in the packet.

Mrs. Buikus made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to send a letter the consultant requirement be considered an unfunded mandate.

- Mr. Wyand had concerns with the language -

Mrs. Buikus made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to postpone.

- Mr. Wyand didn't agree with eliminate the audit/consultant. We should explain our position. The funding said it should be funded or should be eliminated.
- Dr. Hopson said that is the thing, if it is deemed unfunded then you don't have to do.
- Mrs. Buikus said if Suzanne Bump finds it unfunded, then we will probably already have done it.
- Dr. Hopson agreed with Mrs. Buikus. He said you are asking Suzanne Bump to overrule DESE. He would think it is not an unfunded mandate.
- Mrs. Winer said Mr. Wyand's point is well taken.
- Mrs. Kennedy said and unfunded mandate – two basis are and having DESE say we need to hire and unfunded mandate. Worthington leaving is based on a law.
- Mrs. Buikus asked what about the mitigation money. If it is an unfunded mandate, what happens?
- Dr. Hopson we would ask for a certain amount of money such as OPEB and retirement for leaving and owing that money since they have been in the district for the last 50 years.

Mr. Wyand made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to postpone indefinitely pursuing the consultant requirement as an unfunded mandate.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Anne-Marie, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Bill, Ruth, Heather, Martha, Shirley, Jeff, Michele

D. Regional Agreement Amendment

- **Dates for Billing/Percentages for Assessments**
- **One Man One Vote**
- Mrs. Crane said we were waiting to hear from Middlefield and Chester.
- Mrs. Foley said finance is not a definite yes or no, but it is on their next agenda.
- Mrs. Dunn said Chester says it is fine, but there is nothing in writing.
- Dr. Hopson said he found a proposed amendment from February 24, 1993 from GTAC to move to quarterly, due on the 1st with a 15 day grace period, with interest if not paid on time. The major issue for Gateway is one man one vote. DESE won't allow any changes to the Regional Agreement until we fix that. If there are any amendments towns want to make. One suggestion Ms. Fisk had was to look at OPEB and retirement. We could vote or put it on the agenda for the next time.
- Mrs. Kennedy said we can't add any amendments until Worthington is taken out of the agreement. It has got to be changed to reflect a 6-town agreement and there is still a lawsuit. We can't do anything to the agreement until everything is cleared up.
- Dr. Hopson agrees with Mrs. Kennedy. We only have potential changes until the lawsuit is settled.
- Mrs. McVeigh would think you could draft language and get it out to the towns and get feedback from the towns. You would then have an idea of which ones will pass and which ones will not.
- Dr. Hopson said assuming DESE will probably not approve any changes until we resolve 1 man 1 vote. If we draft OPEB, 1 man 1 vote, and assessment dates, at least we are moving forward.
- Mrs. Kennedy thinks sending it to the towns is a good idea. As a committee we shouldn't vote on it right now.
- Mrs. Crane said we have already voted one man one vote. At the last meeting we voted the senate format.
- Mrs. Kennedy thinks we should send all five options to the towns.
- Dr. Hopson said we could send a cover letter with all the options, explaining the two most used. In the end this committee makes the decision on which one to send officially to the towns to vote on.
- Mrs. Winer said there wasn't ever a deadline before.
- Mr. Wyand said the towns could vote on this pending the outcome of the lawsuit. That way we aren't losing all this time.
- Dr. Hopson said it is a nice way to look at it, but he doesn't think it will legally work.
- Mrs. Buikus said if it doesn't go this year it won't be for another two years.
- Dr. Hopson said we will get language for OPEB, retirement, and one man one vote, from Attorney Dupere and Lampke, and DESE.
- Mrs. Buikus asked how soon the towns need this.
- Mr. Wyand thinks 60 days.
- Dr. Hopson thinks the 10th of March.
- Mrs. Winer said if you use the Representative option of weighted voting, the small towns will have less of a vote, if you go with the Senate version it is just two from each town.

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to go into executive session at or before 8:30 p.m. for the purpose of union negotiations not to return to open session.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Anne-Marie, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Bill, Ruth, Heather, Martha, Shirley, Jeff, Michele

VII. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS - None

VIII. CONSENT ITEMS 1/6/16

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to approve the minutes of 1/6/16 with corrections.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain 3 Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Madelyn, Anne-Marie, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Ruth, Heather, Martha, Shirley, Michele

Abstain: Tara, Bill, Jeff

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

A. School Committee - None

B. Chairperson – Survey Update

- Mrs. Crane reminded everyone to turn in their survey.

C. Superintendent

Central Office Update

- Dr. Hopson said the 2025 dinner is February 2 and the snow date February 4. Dinner at 6 and festivities at 6:30. The next GTAC meeting is February 11.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if the school committee is going to go through this first.
- Dr. Hopson said 2025 is a way to get more information with a set of questions. This piece is not based on survey results. School Committee should go and have input. The first session is by school and the second session will be by topic. Administrators will be recorders of other buildings, not their own. Supper and childcare is included.

D. Business Manager - None

E. Administration - None

X. COMMITTEE REPORTING

A. Superintendent's Evaluation

- They have a management meeting scheduled before the next school committee meeting.

B. Legislative Liaison – None

C. Policy Subcommittee

- Met tonight. More policies to come for next packet.

D. Building Liaisons

- Mrs. Foley said the ski team is off to a good start. They have some new blood this year.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Future Agenda Items

XII. INFORMATION

Information

Appeal may send second Gateway girl to Girls State 2016

Recycled used in holiday decor

'Satisfaction and sausage' used in sixth grade gathering

Superintendent's Corner December 23, 2015
 Save the Date for "Gateway 2025"
 January Calendar
 Littleville 'goes to the dogs' January 20
 "Lowering the Volume-Part 2" Parent Workshop
 Superintendent's Corner January 4, 2016
 SERVSAFE Recertification training reminder
 Sign up now for Gateway e-communications!
 Education Foundation Board to meet
 Gateway School-Based Health Center seeks new provider
 Superintendent's Corner January 11, 2016
 2016 Vocational School application process for Gateway Students
 Five Gateway musicians tapped for Western Mass music festivals
 Atlantic Brass Quintet at Gateway

Warrant

AP#1049	\$104,380.31	PR# 013	\$357,515.61
AP# 1051	\$148,482.81	PR#357,925.27	
AP# 1052	\$53.84		

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. Union Negotiations
- B. Litigation

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to go into executive session at or before 8:30 p.m. for the purpose of union negotiations not to return to open session.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Anne-Marie, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Bill, Ruth, Heather, Martha, Shirley, Jeff, Michele

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to adjourn at 8:21p.m.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Anne-Marie, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Bill, Ruth, Heather, Martha, Shirley, Jeff, Michele

Respectfully Submitted,
 Stacy L Stewart,
 School Committee Secretary