

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2017

Middle School 112/114

7:00 P.M.

All visitors attending the school committee meeting should sign in at the security booth.

(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
Jeff Wyand

MIDDLEFIELD
Sarah Foley

MONTGOMERY
Anne-Marie Buikus
Madelyn Austin

RUSSELL
Tara Balboni
Lyndsey Papillon

SECRETARY
Stacy Stewart

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

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL
Megan Coburn, Chs,Lit Principal
Jason Finnie, High/Middle Principal
Wendy Long, District Grant Writer

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

OTHERS: _____

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

7:05 p.m. II. PUBLIC INPUT (3 Minute Limit) - None

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Anna Pless said students started the Valentine’s Day flower and card sale. Her sister is in the play, and those kids have been working real hard. This year’s performance is “Into the Woods.” Gator gear spirit day was last Friday. Girls’ basketball made playoffs and the ski team is going to individuals. There have been a lot of snow days lately, but they have been making up the work.

IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS

A. MARS Report

- Mrs. Crane said school committee received the MARS Report at the last meeting.
- School committee and the three consultants introduced themselves - Steve Hemman, Malcolm Reid and Jay Barry.
- Steve Hemman said there were seven consultants and 8 reports in the project. Anyone who created a report has worked or is working in those positions.
- Steve Hemman gave a brief overview before turning the presentation over to Mack Reid.
- Mrs. Papillon said she read the recommendations a few times regarding the demands on the principals and losing a curriculum director. Is part of the recommendation that teachers would evaluate themselves?

- Mack Reid said it is easy to write a recommendation to reinstate a curriculum director. Your core mission is about teaching and learning. There isn't someone there to enhance that program. It is easier to write than to implement. Could there be stipends for teachers to work in the summer to develop curriculum and professional development - summer and/or during the year, not evaluation.
- Steve Hemman said you may also be able to share a curriculum director with another district.
- Mrs. Buikus said at one time we were trying to get students to stay in the district. We wanted to add vocational program offerings, but we didn't look into it because there was already another school around us offering it.
- Steve Hemman said you could offer business or technology as electives. It would only be competing if you were offering a Chapter 70 program. Every district is having school choice issues right now. It is not what it was designed for. Now it is more of a revenue source. The towns have part-time people. How can we work together to help them. Maybe students could help with training in the town they live in. Every town has capital expenditures. List the six towns and what they need and look at how you can plan. Maybe there is someone at the department of revenue who can help.
- Mrs. Winer said we didn't drop our curriculum and technology directors because we wanted to. There was a lot of pressure.
- Steve Hemman said you have downloaded a lot of responsibility to your principals. That's why we suggest looking at sharing. DESE needs to look at helping districts.
- Mr. Wyand asked if they visited the closed elementary schools
- Mack Reid said yes he did. He went to Blandford and Russell.
- Mr. Wyand said that is important.
- Mrs. Buikus said she thinks the Westfield schools said Russell is better than any of the schools in Westfield.
- Mrs. Austin said we wanted to change it, but we can't until we settle our business with Worthington.
- Steve Hemman said he is well aware of that. Worthington has been taken out and the assessment process and the district is not constitutionally correct.
- Mrs. Foley asked if they think it is a situation where other schools might look at Gateway as an example.
- Steve Hemman said yes he also believes that DESE has a little bit of egg on their face and might not take it so lightly.
- Mrs. Foley asked given the extra responsibilities, if principal positions become vacant, do you think it would be harder to fill.
- Steve Hemman said absolutely. As an applicant you look into what the current position is doing. He would rather spend time working with parents, students, etc.
- Mrs. Crane thanked them and that we appreciate all the work they did for us.

V. BUDGET

A. FY '18 Budget – Revenue

- Ms. Fisk said these are the revenue numbers based on the house budget. We make changes as they come. It looks like about 70% for regional transportation, but hopefully it will go up. Student increase is \$20 per student and it is the lowest it has been. It is usually \$25. Russell and Huntington are taking on the biggest increases. We are looking at statutory verses regional agreements and a five year rolling average. Their combined increase by the regional agreement would be about \$700,000. We put together the rolling average based on the census over the last five years.
- Mrs. Crane asked what the bottom line % increase was.
- Ms. Fisk said the oval assessments are up 2.71% from the final FY '17 assessments.
- Dr. Hopson said statutory is what they are currently based on. For Blandford it is \$1,537,761. Then it shows the difference between and the percentage. The rolling average is used in above minimum and minimum. It will be a larger increase for Russell and Huntington.
- Dr. Hopson said over five to ten years it might help every town. Everything other than statutory requires approval by every town every year.
- Mrs. McVeigh said it is less volatile. She said Andy Montanaro wanted to see this. For some of the small towns those volatile increases hurt them. She thanked Ms. Fisk and Dr. Hopson for putting this together.
- Dr. Hopson said we could go back three years to see what it would look like.
- Mrs. Foley asked who decides what method is used.
- Dr. Hopson said, historically, as a school committee you would vote one way or another. He doesn't know if there is a way to bring both ways. If school committee is interested he would bring that to legal counsel.
- Mrs. McVeigh said there are potential other legislative changes we should be aware of. Rural Communities is trying to push legislation forward. We could use this group to propose the kind of legislation that helps

us. Baker wants to know where best practices are getting in the way of rural schools. He will share this information with the group.

- Ms. Fisk said as soon as we have updated revenue figures she will update those.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked if she thinks transportation will come in at \$627,000.
- Ms. Fisk thinks it will be okay based on our ridership.
- Mr. Wyand asked why homeless is zero.
- Ms. Fisk said we have no homeless right now, so we won't get reimbursement.

7:45 VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEM

A. MARS Report

- Mrs. Crane said we should agree as a group as to how we move forward.
- Dr. Hopson said you could formally vote to accept the report, and then we can implement the recommendations. Some of them are already in the budget. Café director – we are looking to see if we can share that. We can accept it tonight. They have pulled from many places.
- Mrs. McVeigh said the towns have applied for a grant for an IT director for the six towns for a year. There is quite a difference between the towns' economics. They feel confident by some of the comments that the state wants to roll it out as a model.
- Mr. Wyand asked about the vocational costs and why the towns pay for it, the towns feel like they need help with it.
- Dr. Hopson said we used to run and pay for vocational.
- Ms. Fisk said Pat Carlino from Chester coordinates it now.
- Dr. Hopson said when we did it we had to follow the rules, all students have to be picked up within a mile and a half, etc. When the towns take care of it there is more flexibility.
- Ms. Fisk said when we turned it over to the towns we were able to cut ten busses.
- Mrs. McVeigh believes they are looking for the coordinator to help them with routes.

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to approve the MARS Reports.

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Anne-Marie, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Jeff, Michele.

B. FY '17 Budget Transfers

- Ms. Fisk said in addition to the transfer list included in the packet, the one thing that Mr. Brown would like to change is change HMS Periodicals/News/InforTrac from \$352 to \$321.

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to approve the Budget Transfers with Mr. Brown's Change.

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Anne-Marie, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Jeff, Michele.

C. School Committee Goals Update (Enc.)

- Mrs. Crane said to email her if there are things that members do with their towns and she will update the information.

8:00 - VII. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

8:30 p.m.

A. Policies: Minutes and EEA (Student Transportation Services), EEAA (Walkers and Riders), EEAE (School Bus Safety Program), EEAJ (Motor Vehicle Idling on School Grounds), EEBE (Instruction to Bidders), EFC (Free and Reduced Price Food Services), GCE (Substitute Employment) (Enc.)

- Mrs. Crane said we accidentally omitted the guidebook on the agenda, so we will include it in the next packet.
- Ms. Fisk said one of the policies is being eliminated.
- Mr. Wyand suggested that on the one we want to eliminate we put it was superseded by the new policy.
- Ms. Fisk said part of it is in different policies. It is also included in the transportation bid.

B. FY 17 Winter Grant Opportunities (link in Central Office Update)

- Move to old business for next meeting.

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to go into executive session at or before 8:45 p.m. for the purpose of union negotiations – Paraprofessionals and Superintendent Contact Extension to return to open session.

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Anne-Marie, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Jeff, Michele

VIII. CONSENT ITEMS 1/25/17 (Enc.)

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to approve the minutes of 1/25/17.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays Abstain 2 Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Michele

Abstain: Anne-Marie, Jeff

IX. COMMUNICATIONS**A. School Committee**

- Mrs. Foley said she talked to her selectperson and she is meeting with the finance committee to develop the budget as soon as they give her a date.

B. Chairperson

- Mrs. Crane said that Mrs. Balboni had volunteered to be added to the warrant signing committee.

C. Superintendent - None

Central Office Update (Enc.)

D. Business Manager

FY '16 Student Activity Audit (Enc.)

- Ms. Fisk said the student activity audit was in the packet. The part that Mrs. Winer was referring to was about warrant signers checking the entire main warrant instead of just signing.
- Mrs. Winer said she used to look at everything but doesn't anymore.
- Ms. Fisk said the recommendation is to assure the money that students are collecting is safe.

E. Administration

- Mrs. Long said the Foundation had a meeting Monday and approved seven new applications for classroom projects. It should be in Friday's Country Journal and in this week's breaking news.
- Boy's Basketball, Girl's Basketball and the ski team will be holding their senior nights next week.
- Mrs. Coburn said she collaborated with Ever Source selling light bulbs where the district received 100 % of the profit to fund the stem program. They made \$2,700 and are purchasing more robotics kits. Also blizzard bags are amazing and they have 95 to 96% completion rates. Teachers are great at taking suggestions from parents.
- Mrs. Papillon is very impressed the teachers are really prepared.

X. COMMITTEE REPORTING**A. Superintendent's Evaluation**

- They held a management meeting today. They are meeting again in April.

B. Legislative Liaison - None**C. Policy Subcommittee**

- Policy waiting to schedule the next meeting and will do so when administration has policies ready.

D. Building Liaisons - None

- Went into executive session at 8:45 p.m.
- Returned to open session at 8:55 p.m.

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to extend the superintendent's contract by three years including no raise for the additional three years of the contract, be paid a stipend as technology director for the 4 years, five additional vacation days for each of the last 3 years of the contract and move money from his 403B line item to his salary line item.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays 1 Abstain 1 Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Michele

Nays: Anne- Marie

Abstain: Jeff

XI. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Future Agenda Items

XII. INFORMATION

Information

February School Committee meeting

Senior Nights for winter athletes quickly approach

Superintendent's Corner January 28, 2017

Warrant6

AP#1054 \$71,910.06

PR# 16 \$346,586.71

8:35-9 p.m. XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

or earlier

- A. Union Negotiations – Paraprofessionals
- B. Superintendent Contract Extension (Enc.)
- C. Litigation: Kennedy, et al. v. Commonwealth of Massachusetts, et al. - No.:HSCV2014-00210

XIX. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to adjourn at 9:00 p.m.

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Anne-Marie, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Jeff, Michele

Respectfully Submitted,

Stacy L Stewart

School Committee Secretary