

**GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 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

CHESTER  
Shirley Winer  
Martha Otterbeck  
Diane Dunn

HUNTINGTON  
Ron Damon  
Jeff Wyand

MIDDLEFIELD  
Sarah Foley

MONTGOMERY  
Madelyn Austin

RUSSELL  
Tara Balboni  
Lyndsey Papillon

SECRETARY  
Stacy Stewart

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

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL  
Wendy Long, District Grant Writer

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

OTHERS: \_\_\_\_\_

Mrs. Crane opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.  
The reporter and Mrs. Austin are recording the meeting.

**7:05 p.m. II. PUBLIC INPUT (3 Minute Limit)**

- Carl Petrucci is a wellness center member. His interest is to see if there is any way to get funding for the wellness center. It is an important public asset. He also feels it should be called the fitness center.
- Ms. Fisk said since we've started the wellness center has lost memberships. It is different to count this year, since we've stopped taking membership money for past June. Last year about 101. The declining revenue and self-sustaining revenue. We have stretched it to fund athletic time by dipping into the revolving account. You can only stretch it so far. We've advertised with coupons, water bottle giveaways, and membership raffles. We have to take a good look at whether we can continue.
- Mrs. Balboni asked what the decline is from.
- Carl thinks it is the change in hours.
- Ms. Fisk said we've reduced the hours to keep it self-sustaining.
- Mrs. Foley asked what is competing with it.
- Ms. Fisk said places like Roots.
- Mrs. Crane asked if it is in the budget.
- Ms. Fisk said no.
- Mrs. Balboni asked if it could be used like they do at those 24-hour fitness places.
- Ms. Fisk said that is not a good idea, given the fact that it is attached to the school.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked if we sent flyers to the council on aging.

- Ms. Fisk said no, we send them to the community health centers. We could send them to the council on aging.
- Mrs. Dunn said maybe you could put it out to seniors and offer group sessions, so they can learn how to use the equipment.
- Mr. Wyand asked if we could use money from the budget.
- Ms. Fisk said last year's revenue was \$15,000. It takes more like \$21,000 just to sustain the staff.
- Dr. Hopson said she has taken money from the budget in the past.

### III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Anna Pless said before break we had spirit week. We started it with rain day, then following week mismatch Monday, wacky Wednesday, tourist Tuesday, etc. A group of students went to Costa Rica over break. Mrs. Rivera and Mrs. Robbins went as chaperones. They went to the turtle project. They completed night patrolling shifts. They hope to do a presentation for school committee. They met elementary students, had home stays, got to hang out at the resort and went zip lining. The high school band is going to Philadelphia for a competition/historical trip. High school band concert is May 11<sup>th</sup>. She brought plant sale sheets here.

### IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS

#### A. Strategic Planning

- Dr. Hopson said the presentation was sent out electronically.
- Dr. Hopson briefly went over the presentation, which outlined what is included in the strategic plan and how it incorporates that is going on and what needs to be done in the district. How school committee goals, administrative goals, district improvement plans, 2025 and the MARS report all fit together rather than having everything separate. How do you measure student performance, project based learning, etc. Are there quarterly steps the district can take. Do Superintendent, teacher, staff evaluations, and DDM's all support 21st century skills. Is there integrated instruction across multi-grades, what about project based learning, etc. This summer rather than working on an improvement plan administrators will look at a strategic plan. This way there is one across the district.
- Mrs. Crane needs more time to get through it. She asked what action Dr. Hopson needs from school committee.
- Dr. Hopson said he is looking for how well it flows, or are there ways to make it more understandable. It is hard to measure some things. Are there objectives and steps we can take to measure. We have a capital plan and tech plan, but this would tie it in to show what happens in the first quarter, what happens a year out and in the long term.
- Mrs. Dunn asked if he wanted input or approval.
- Dr. Hopson said right now input, later it will be approved.
- Mrs. Winer said this would also help us with someone from the town to help with budget help.
- Mr. Wyand said you said something about DDM's. It cost a lot of money and time to put in DDM's in.
- Dr. Hopson said the state has changed their mind about collecting DDM's in the evaluation process. They want to use student performance data. They moved it into standard 2. It has to be negotiated with every school that has a union. How teachers are collecting the data is helpful. We are still going to collect them, but not report them to the state.
- Mrs. Otterbeck asked if this is a result of the charter school push.
- Dr. Hopson said he thinks the commissioner wanted a stronger evaluation system. He wants to put student performance in the instruction category.
- This new evaluation system is just overwhelming administratively. You want administrators in the classroom being instructional leaders. The system is an improvement in some ways.

### 7:45 V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEM

#### A. School Committee Calendar/Town Invitation

- Mrs. Crane said this was included in the Central Office Update and asked for a motion.

*Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to approve the School Committee Calendar/Town Invitation.*

- Mrs. Crane said if we choose this we have to work with our selectmen and finance to talk about how we can work together and help the towns understand the school budget – how we can meet each other's needs.

- Mrs. McVeigh asked who will facilitate discussions. School committee members need to understand town finances, and towns' school finances. MARS mentioned in their report and GTAC could facilitate the meetings. We would have a more fluid conversation because you have six town members and school committee members.
- Mrs. Balboni said these are open meetings, so anyone in the town can come.
- Mrs. Papillon thinks this is our reach out to have the towns to facilitate communications.
- Mrs. McVeigh said GTAC thought they could facilitate the meetings.
- Mrs. Crane said MARS said we need to make efforts to make the communication better between the towns and the school. This is a strategy.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked everyone to please read the Epilogue.
- Dr. Hopson said what she is proposing is having something separate from the school committee. It would have nothing to do with the school. It would just have school committee members be on the committee. Mrs. Crane said school committee has had conflicting views on having subcommittees. This was a way to make it work. MARS thinks we should have a hired facilitator run the meeting.
- Dr. Hopson thinks that going over capital planning at GTAC would be a long-term process that helps. All members should know what is going. Blandford is putting \$300,000 in stabilization this year.
- Ms. Fisk said it is important for the whole committee to have an understanding. A question came up at her finance committee. A census question came up. Not everyone knows how minimum contribution is calculated. It came up at GTAC. Why did Middlefield's vocational go to \$90,000. They are up two students. Much like how is the revenue put together.
- Mrs. Winer asked how do we get that to happen.
- Mrs. Crane said this is an opportunity and we need to try. We are all guilty for not communicating with our finance and select boards. We need to give this a try.
- Dr. Hopson said the town representatives need to let us know about the status of the towns.
- Mr. Wyand asked how much time do we slot for these meetings.
- Mrs. Crane needs to give it more thought, but he was thinking from 7-7:30 we would take care of business we need to get done, then use the rest for budget. Starting earlier at 7:00 will help.
- Mrs. Dunn is not sure what Mrs. McVeigh wants.
- Mrs. McVeigh said you don't have focus groups. She was talking about finance groups. Huntington town officials meet on Wednesday nights so having the meeting on Wednesday won't work for them.
- Mrs. Balboni said that makes a lot of sense but the whole idea to have a larger group was because we all wanted to be a part of the process.
- Mrs. Austin said Middlefield and Montgomery only have one member each. They are it.
- Mrs. Winer thinks we will be talking about different topics, would it be helpful to have previous budgets.
- Mrs. Crane said we want the towns to be invited and take this seriously and attend all 4 meetings.
- Mrs. Winer said it has to be planned to be useful.
- Mrs. McVeigh you need to change it from a Wednesday night.
- Dr. Hopson said you are going to have to meet on a Friday night. You are always going to conflict with something.
- Mr. Wyand said if we could start looking at the 5 year rolling average. This would give us a topic.
- Mrs. Austin said Montgomery selectboard meets on Friday night.

***Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to approve the School Committee Calendar/Town Invitation.***

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Jeff, Michele

## **B. Establishment of Student Activity Account – Outdoor Club**

***Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Winer to approve the establishment of a student activity account for the outdoor club.***

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Jeff, Michele

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## VI. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

### A. 2017-2018 School Calendar

- Mrs. Crane said it has already been approve by the GTA.
- Dr. Hopson said he gave them multiple, and the GTA chose this one.
- Move to next agenda for a vote.

### B. Recommendation for approval of FY '17 third quarter transfers

- Ms. Fisk said most are around increased sub costs due to medical costs. We try to anticipate from now to the end. Some is a shift in staffing for paraprofessional moves, savings in electricity, e-rate, regional transportation decrease due to blizzard bags and in transportation due to re-routing

### C. Recommendation regarding special education transportation

- Ms. Fisk would like to postpone special education transportation until the next meeting.

### D. Recommendation to approve School Choice for the 2017-2018 School Year

- Dr. Hopson said this is only for incoming school choice.
- Move to the next agenda for a vote.

*Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Dunn to go into executive session at or before 8:30 p.m. for the purpose of union negotiations - paraprofessionals.*

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Jeff, Michele

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## VII. CONSENT ITEMS 3/22/17 (Enc.)

*Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to approve the minutes of 3/22/17 subject to corrections.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 8 Nays Abstain 2 Absent (Roll Call Vote)*

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Diane, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Jeff, Michele

Abstain: Ron, Sarah

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## VIII. COMMUNICATIONS

### A. School Committee

- Mrs. Balboni has the handy dandy sign up sheet for the retirement function. She will pass it around for volunteers.
- Mrs. Papillon said she and Mrs. Balboni met with their town finance committee last week. They walked away thinking it was a productive meeting. They had questions about approving the budget with a revenue shortfall. They are recommending what they approved last year. She said it is essentially voting down the budget. They talked about the invitations that would be coming out for collaboration.

### B. Chairperson

- Mrs. Crane said the committee was sent a letter from Sean Foley, the president of the booster club. He is asking permission to allow banners to be put up around the fields. These banners would advertise businesses. This would be a way for the booster club to raise money. They may not be able to have the Memorial Day Tournament.
- Mrs. Crane said we have a policy that encourages us not to allow outside advertisements. We would have to consider changing and or waiving the current policy.
- This will on the next agenda.

### C. Superintendent

Central Office Update

- Dr. Hopson said most is on agenda. He did say we are close to agreeing on a shared cafeteria director. Hopefully we will have that in place. He also shared a small rural coalition will be a out of UMAS a small group of superintendents. It might get us more services but won't necessarily save us money.

**D. Business Manager**

FY '17 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Report

- Ms. Fisk said Chester Elementary received a letter from DEP for a Public water award. All of our schools have now.

**E. Administration**

- Wendy Long said Friday night is the spaghetti supper and raffle at Chester Elementary. Next Tuesday is Valley Gives day. The Gateway Education Foundation is participating. The blizzard bags survey for parents closes Monday and the communications survey opens that same day. This is for staff, parents and community member services. An outside company is doing it.

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

- The evaluation committee met tonight. They are planning on doing the full committee survey next month. They will have the links and a paper copy at the next meeting

**B. Legislative Liaison**

- Mrs. Papillon said MASC held their annual Day on the Hill. They were tackling 2018 budget concerns. There is talk about further cuts in the federal budget. It looks like health and human services and education may be hit.
- Mrs. Crane said Dr. Hopson sent out a letter that people can use for supporting regional transportation reimbursement at 100%.

**C. Policy Subcommittee - None****D. Building Liaisons**

- Mrs. Balboni said the middle school band went to New York City. They went to see Beautiful. They also saw a combat fighting workshop.

Went into executive session at 8:15 p.m.

Returned to open session at 8:26 p.m.

*Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to ratify the Paraprofessional Union Contract.*

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Michele  
Jeff Recused himself, as his wife subs.

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

Annual 'CABARET' at Gateway March 30  
1<sup>st</sup> Annual Hilltown Chili Challenge  
Early College Planning night: same date, new time/place  
Gateway's P351 Students lead service project  
Superintendent's Corner March 17, 2017  
Math Family Game Night at Chester ES!  
'Bebop with Aesop' at Gateway April 6  
Good Friday, Spring Break coming up  
High School offering ASVAB Exam  
NHS Induction April 12  
Sports Banquet tickets now available  
'Raising a Reader' free parent workshop at Littleville  
Superintendent's Corner March 24, 2017

Gateway early-release April 25  
 April School Committee meetings  
 Educational Foundation funds two new projects  
 Superintendent's Corner April 3, 1017  
 Pre-schoolers learn health habits  
 Gateway's Grochowski sets eye on future in college gymnastics  
 Parents polled in 'Blizzard Bags'  
 Spaghetti Supper, HUGE Raffle at Chester ES  
 Save the Date for Valley Gives Day  
 Kindergarten Screenings in May  
 Preschool Screening and Registration for the fall on May 23  
 Superintendent's Corner April 7, 2017  
 School turtles teach lessons in pet ownership  
 Spanish teacher crowned 2017 Chili Champion at Gateway  
 Students thank donors, Congressman thanks students

**Warrant6**

AP#1064 \$240,850.30	PR# 20 \$343,966.35
AP#1069 \$79,555.98	PR# 21 \$379,488.75
AP#1074 \$69.68	
AP#1072 \$125,015.39	

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**8:35-9 p.m. XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**  
**or earlier**

*Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Dunn to go into executive session at or before 8:30 p.m. for the purpose of union negotiations - paraprofessionals.*

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Jeff, Michele

- A. Union Negotiations – Paraprofessionals
- B. Litigation: Kennedy, et al. v. Commonwealth of Massachusetts, et al. - No.:HSCV2014-00210

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**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

*Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to adjourn at 8:30 p.m.*

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Jeff, Michele

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Respectfully Submitted,  
 Stacy L Stewart  
 School Committee Secretary