

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

JOINT BUDGET/REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 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
Ron Damon

MIDDLEFIELD

MONTGOMERY
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
Kurt Garivaltis, Pupil Services Director
Deanna LeBlanc, High/Middle Assistant Principal
Wendy Long, District Grant Writer
Darlene Rehor, Elementary Assistant Principal

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

OTHERS: Derrick Mason, John Baldasaro, Wayne Precanico, Dan Jacques, Darlene McVeigh, Jason Fogue, Peter Spotts, Kayla Brady, Andy Myers, Barbara Huntoon, Amy Porter, Bill Levakis, Adaire

- Mrs. Crane opened the meeting at 7:04 p.m.
- Mr. Peter Spotts is recording the meeting.

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

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Audrey Gamble said girls' soccer is in semi-finals versus Lenox. The cross-country team is in post season. Last week students held a spirit day and dressed in costumes. Three musicians are going to district. All three who auditioned got a spot. Two were recommended for all state. Best buddies made ornaments to sell at craft fair. There is another spirit day tomorrow – students wear red, white, and/or blue for spirit points. The food drive goes through next week. There was a multi-band trip to UMASS. Students held a blood drive yesterday that was very successful. The junior class started planning for the prom. The next spirit days are ugly sweater and pajama days. Student council is having a simulator come in. The name of it is distractology. It allows you to see what it's like driving and texting, etc. If you sign up and participate you receive a gas card for \$15 dollars.

IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS - None

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Executive Session/Town Officials

- Dr. Hopson and Mrs. Crane said school committee took a vote at their October 11 meeting, but there needed to be some clarification.
- Dr. Hopson read Attorney Russell Dupere's email which is not in favor of school committee having anyone other than members in executive session. If we chose to do so anyway, he recommended we check with the unions to see if they have any issues with town officials sitting in on executive session for negotiations updates. Dr. Hopson checked with the Association and the MTA representative. They didn't have an issue with the committee deciding who sits in executive session, as long as they were getting updates and not voting. The letter Mrs. Crane drafted was sent to town select boards.
- Mrs. Crane suggested the committee allow a select board member from each town to sit in executive session for teachers union negotiations for a trial this year and see how it goes.
- Dr. Hopson said school committee voted to have one person from each of the six towns.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked if this means you have to rescind the minutes. There was no discussion as to union or non-union, it was just an invitation.
- Dr. Hopson said that was the question that was raised at the last facilitated meeting. School committee needs to decide if they want to reconsider the motion.
- Mrs. Dunn asked if the representative is allowed to share with their select boards.
- Dr. Hopson said no one should share executive session with anyone. The towns wanted to have someone from each town, whether they agreed or not they would know what happened. In terms of non-union negotiations a lot of times they are tied to performance indicators.
- Mrs. McVeigh said according to their attorney, under Section 7 they can call an executive session to update the other select board members.
- Dr. Hopson said if school committee wants to change what they voted they need to reconsider.

Mrs. Winer made a motion seconded by Mr. Damon to reconsider the motion made on October 11 with regards to town officials sitting in on executive session during negotiations.

- Dr. Hopson said to reconsider means you bring up the motion again to amend or change it.
- Mrs. Papillon said we would reconsider to specify collective bargaining, select board member, and only as a trial for this year.

Mrs. Winer made a motion seconded by Mr. Damon to reconsider the motion made on October 11 with regards to town officials sitting in on executive session during negotiations.

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

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

- Mrs. Crane said the attorney was pretty firm about only having the one municipal representative in union negotiations, but we would like to allow one select board member from each town to sit in on union negotiations in executive session, see how it goes and revisit it in a year.
- Wayne Precanico asked why the attorney said he didn't recommend it.
- Mrs. Crane said he doesn't have any other clients who allow it and he may have some concerns about members not talking about what happened.
- Bill Levakis asked if one person happens to get sick, can you have someone sit in.
- Mrs. Crane said when we asked the select boards to appoint one person. We were hoping it would be the same person attending.
- Mrs. Winer said they also need to know what they can and cannot do.
- Dr. Hopson said the intent is to have one select board member from each town. If they can share in executive session then they can update their other select board members.
- Mrs. Garfield confirmed the union was okay with it.
- Dr. Hopson said yes.
- Mrs. Dunn said if half way through this process we decide it's not okay, what happens?

- Dr. Hopson said it is decision of the school committee to determine who can and cannot attend. It's your right. If they grieved it, we would have to deal with it. They would be right to say something if six members had a vote, when the law only stipulates one. At least the union isn't saying no.
- Mrs. Crane said she tried to get some feedback from MASC, but she hasn't heard back from them.
- Mr. Forgue asked if it has been decided the member has to be a select board member.
- Dr. Hopson said it is the law.
- Mrs. Papillon read the previous motion: Mr. Welch made a motion seconded by Mrs. Nazzaro to send an invitation to have the towns choose someone from their town to participate in executive session for negotiations with the goal being the towns hear the information throughout the process. The letter will include the rules for executive session and recommendation that the same person attend each session.
- Dr. Hopson said you can add for collective bargaining negotiations and do this as a trial and reconsider at the end of negotiations.

Mrs. Papillon made an amendment to the motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck that one select board member from each town is welcome to listen to all collective bargaining updates in executive session.

- Mr. Damon doesn't want to offend anyone, but he is concerned that because they are on a committee the other select board members will be curious as to what went on.
- Dr. Hopson repeated what Mrs. McVeigh said. The select board members can talk it about it in their own executive session, that way each member can be kept up to date.
- Mr. Jacques asked for clarification of collective bargaining.

Mrs. Papillon made an amendment to the motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck that one select board member from each town is welcome to listen to all collective bargaining updates in executive session.

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

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

Mrs. Otterbeck made an amendment to the motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to clarify it is a member from the select board of each of the six towns.

- Mrs. Garfield wonders if it should be a specific person who sits in since there is always turn over, etc.
- Dr. Hopson said there isn't as much turn over in select boards. Plus it is not really an issue is if the person is going back to executive session and sharing with the other select board members. They will all be up to date.

Mrs. Otterbeck made an amendment to the motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to clarify it is a member from the select board of each of the six towns.

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

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

- Mrs. Crane said this would be a trial period for the 2017/18 school year or completion of collective bargaining for the teachers association.

Mrs. Dunn made an amendment to the motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield for a trial period for the 2017/2018 school year or completion of collective bargaining for the teachers' association.

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

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

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to approve the motion as amended.

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

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

VI. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A.

7:30 VII. JOINT BUDGET SESSION WITH TOWN OFFICIALS

A. Elementary & High/Middle School Budget Presentations

Elementary

- Dr. Hopson asked if the towns had presentations for the school committee. There were none.
- Mrs. Coburn gave a PowerPoint presentation
- She talked about the STEM program that she asked for a couple of years ago. After one year a significant amount of 5th graders moved from needs improvement to proficient. Our teachers plus the STEM teacher went to a conference this summer at Westfield University for the new science standards which allowed them to do some preplanning for the year. This year so many of our students are coming to us with so many other issues going on in their life that she is focusing on social emotional learning. There has been an increase in the number of students on the autism spectrum, students with disruptive behavior, and students who struggle to follow routine. Social emotional learning is self-awareness, management, decision making, and relationship skills. She showed a table of students that are not responding to interventions. They are utilizing RTI (Response to intervention), Counseling, Behavior plans, DCF Involvement, Social Skills groups and the SAIL Program.
- Mrs. Otterbeck asked how Mrs. Coburn deals with the parents and transportation for the students at Littleville that need to go to the SAIL program in Chester.
- Mrs. Coburn said they've been lucky. There are some kids on an educational plan that are being bused to Chester. Most parents buy in because they see the need for the program.
- Mrs. Coburn said the FY '19 Focus is on Literacy. More staff need to be trained to work with reading interventions. She is not seeing the reading results that we were seeing now that we have three kindergarten classes.
- Mrs. Coburn said, in terms of budget needs, we need to maintain what we have. She also briefly talked about staff turnover.
- Mrs. Balboni asked if there is any parental education that would help the social emotional tragedy.
- Mrs. Coburn said parents will show up for anything that relates to their child. When we hold more educationally based events the attendance is not so good. She has been working with the family center in Huntington hoping to change that.
- Mr. Myers asked if full-day preschool would be a good solution to get kids on track.
- Mrs. Coburn said yes. She is a huge supporter of preschool education. She and Mr. Garivaltis talked to someone about a fee-based program, while we still have an integrated program. Space is an issue too. You have to have kid size toilets, an outdoor area, etc.
- Mr. Levakis asked why is there such turn over on teachers or staff and if she has looked at how it can be prevented. It looks like you spend a lot of time training these teachers and then they leave.
- Mrs. Coburn said we lose staff to retirement and young teachers to higher paying districts like CT because they have no family ties.
- Mr. Precanico offered up the Russell Elementary building.
- Mr. Fogue asked about the baseline for RTI.
- Mrs. Coburn said it is a universal screening tool. As staff they talk about kids that have been red flagged and those that don't make the growth they are looking for. Teachers can refer students for more than just academics. Once the teacher has exhausted the go to the specialist.
- Mr. Fogue asked how much the turnover has impacted student needs. Do teachers lack experience being able to handle certain students?
- Mrs. Coburn said some of our younger teachers are amazing. We currently have a younger teacher who came to us with training. At the elementary they provide a lot of time for common planning, they support each other and draw on each other's strengths. It's part of a long term professional development plan.
- Mr. Fogue said the social emotional tragedy is universal. If we are using it as a reason for less than desirable results, it has to be happening everywhere else. Are we checking with others for their models to see what they are doing better than us.
- Mrs. Coburn said social emotional issues are not really based on standardized testing. She has reached out to others who are performing higher than us. They have different programming and slightly different students.
- Dr. Hopson said it is based on your zip code.

- Mr. Fogue said when you use the term better academic student and citizens, are we basing this solely on these crappy assessments.
- Mrs. Coburn said no we are looking at the whole child. Are they communicating, are they collaborating, etc.
- Mr. Levakis asked if our substitute teachers are trained like the teachers.
- Mrs. Coburn said at the elementary level a number of substitutes are retired teachers. They have been fulfilling our long-term positions for maternity leave etc.

HS/MS

- Mr. Finnie introduced Deanna LeBlanc the new Assistant Principal
- The focus at the middle school for FY '19 is to maintain the middle school teaming model. It provides a mentor relationship with teacher/student, older/ younger students, and small communities of learning. Our current model is small learning communities and flexible interdisciplinary curriculum. They have a project-based learning period and specials are taught by content teachers. Additional opportunities are taught by shared high school teachers. The focus on high school budget is offering a competitive program of studies, maintaining a cycle of reflective practice around core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Another focus point is NEAS & C Accreditation. Jason Briefly described the process.
- Mr. Baldasaro asked what the cost is.
- Mr. Finnie said it is a yearly fee of about \$3,000, then the supplies, copying, etc. The total is between \$15,000-18,000. We are currently getting quotes for hotels. The committee has to have the availability to eat at the hotel.
- Ongoing professional development –New teacher collaboration and adjusting to increasing social emotional needs. 22% of our teachers are new to Gateway. We are transitioning from a district curriculum director to building level facilitation
- Mrs. Winer said comparing the lower and upper school and the social needs; are students being dealt with so there is less trouble in the upper grades or do they just march through.
- Mr. Finnie said that's a good question. Hopefully we will have more information with this being a district-wide initiative. Supports are social emotional caseloads, SAT, counseling, learning lab, socio-emotional disability, ASD social supports. Student assistance teams meet bi-weekly (hs one week, ms the other) so the team meets every week. The group is made up of counselors, adjustment counselors, school based health center, school psychologist, etc.
- Mrs. Winer said by the time a kid gets thought their senior year have they been successful with the interventions.
- Mr. Finnie said we need to look at this more in depth, that's why it's a district initiative. We need to be less reactive and more proactive.
- Mrs. LeBlanc talked about the literacy program.
- Mr. Finnie went over the FY '19 MS/HS Budget needs. Maintain funding for multi-year professional development around socio-emotional learning and inclusive practice, support a 3-5 year literacy plan, and maintain staffing capacity.

B. FY '19 Budget Process and General Budget Discussion

Mrs. Balboni left the meeting.

Mrs. Winer made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to extend the meeting to 9:30 p.m.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 8 Nays Abstain Absent 1 (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Madelyn, Ron, Diane, Terri, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Michele

Absent: Tara

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to go into executive session for the purposes of union negotiations not to return to open session.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 8 Nays Abstain Absent 1 (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Madelyn, Ron, Diane, Terri, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Michele

Absent: Tara

- Went into executive session at 9:05 p.m.

VIII. CONSENT ITEMS 10/25/17 (Enc.)

- Moved the next meeting.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. School Committee
- B. Chairperson
 - Both Blandford and Chester have outstanding assessments due.
- C. Superintendent
 - Central Office Update (Enc.)
- D. Business Manager
- E. Administration

X. COMMITTEE REPORTING

- A. Superintendent's Evaluation
- B. Legislative Liaison
- C. Policy Subcommittee
 - Policy on December 13
- D. Building Liaisons

XI. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Future Agenda Items

XII. INFORMATION

Information

UMASS Multiband field trip – a special guest
 Support for Puerto Rico
 Online registration now open for winter sports
 Bandster Bash Friday night!
 Shift to “4c’s” at Gateway Middle School
 Superintendent’s Corner October 23, 2017
 Seventh annual Red Cross Blood Drive at Gateway
 November calendar highlights
 School Committee Meeting in November
 Gateway athletes become community leaders
 Superintendent’s Corner October 27, 2017

The warrant signing committee had reviewed the following warrants, found them to be in order, and approved them.

Warrants

AP# 1027 \$156,465.64

PR# 009 \$361,122.11

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

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to go into executive session for the purposes of union negotiations not to return to open session.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 8 Nays Abstain Absent 1 (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Madelyn, Ron, Diane, Terri, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Michele
 Absent: Tara

- A. Union Negotiations – Teachers
- B. Non Union Negotiations - Administration

XIX. ADJOURNMENT**Meeting Adjourned at 9:30 p.m.**

Members present are: Martha, Madelyn, Diane, Terri, Shirley, Michele

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacy L Stewart
School Committee Secretary