

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2015

**Room 214/216 Jr. High
7:30 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

HUNTINGTON
Ron Damon
Jeff Wyand

MIDDLEFIELD
Sarah Foley

MONTGOMERY
Anne Marie Buikus

RUSSELL
Ruth Kennedy

WORTHINGTON
Sue Levreault

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
Amy Fouracre, 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: _____

II. PUBLIC INPUT FOR ITEMS NOT LISTED ON AGENDA (3 Minute Limit)

- Mrs. Buikus is recording the meeting.
- Mrs. McVeigh brought a copy of the 10 year strategic Plan from Lenox that was just published. She thinks we should consider putting together a group of people who are interested working with GTAC and meeting with Lenox officials and see what they have done.
- Mrs. Winer asked what she thought would come out of it for us.
- Mrs. McVeigh said to help us formulate a long-range strategic plan.
- Mrs. Winer asked do you know we don't have one.
- Mrs. McVeigh said it is out of date.
- Mrs. Winer asked if she knows it is not up to date
- Mrs. McVeigh thinks it needs to look at the current issues we have today.
- Bob Richards from the Lion's club District 33Y. They perform SPOT vision screening for kids from 6 months on up. They check seven different items. He handed out some flyers. This screening is free. Screening is brought to us and there is a memo of understanding. The state of Louisiana pays them to do the screening. The Lions also have a speech contest and an all-state band. It is \$50 and they work with other kids from throughout the state. They haven't been able to get anyone from Gateway. They also have a peace poster contest. The speech contest is for high school. The district used to participate in these, but no longer does.
- Mrs. Kennedy just went out in the hall and had the exam done in seconds. She thinks we should do this.
- Mrs. Crane and Dr. Hopson thanked them for coming.
- Brennan Foley read a letter about some of his concerns from the last meeting.

- Mrs. Winer asked for a copy.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked what the committee doesn't do in time; they vote on time, it would help her.
- Brennan Foley said there are things on the meeting that carry over and over
- Mrs. Winer asked what he meant by personal agenda.
- Brennan Foley sees people talking outside of the meeting and they are not putting personal things aside.
- Mrs. Kennedy said as far as meeting outside. They are allowed to meet socially as long as 50% of the committee is not there. There are things that they have to follow. 99% of the time it is not against anybody. They are fine as long as they don't 'vote, or don't discuss something that is going to be voted on. Everyone has an agenda, good bad or indifferent. She knows what they have to follow and she is aware of what she can do. She appreciates what he is observing. It is helpful and gives her a point of view she needs.
- Mrs. Crane appreciates the things that he has brought to our attention. We are going to have professional development. Think about there are many of us on the committee, it become a great amount of work. Everyone on the committee has something positive to bring to the table and his reporting.

II. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Brennan Foley said graduation was last Friday. He was impressed by speeches and the seniors. As Schools Match Witts had a successful year and is in the final round. The school climate group is going to 7th grade tomorrow to talk about health relationships. The Junior Prom was held at the Log Cabin two weeks ago was successful. Christian Tweed and Montana Paradise were the king and queen. Last Friday student council talked about elections and next year. SAT's were last sat and ACTs are this weekend. The band is going to Littleville on Monday to do a presentation to get kids interested in band. Middle School had their band concert last night. It went well. Freshmen had MCAS last week. Gator Roo was Saturday. The elementary kids were great; he was impressed. Jr. Class sold cotton candy at Gator Roo. They made money. NHS held elections and results will come out tomorrow. Officers are: Christian Tweed, Gabriela Ramirz-Lyon, Brennan Foley, Lauren Pisani, and Allison Garriepy. Anna Pless participated in Mass Star. She came back pumped and ready to help the school. It is great conference.

IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS

A. 2016 Senior Class Trip to Disney World Florida Request

- The current Jr. Class is looking to go to Disney World next year. They have 9 students who have paid deposits with one more perspective students. Brennan asked to waive the two meeting rule.
- Dr. Hopson asked if they will remain open to other students.
- Mrs. Garriepy said we've started in freshmen years in the past. The new policy is to wait until the junior year and keep it open. They will keep the trip open and purchase tickets in the fall. Students would report back in the fall. She doesn't want to hold the checks all summer. She thought the rule was they had to have about 10 students. It is well chaperoned, on Disney property, and they follow Disney and school guidelines. They plan their own trip, chaperones pay their own way, and we have tax status so we don't have to pay tax.
- Mrs. Winer thought it was too bad that more students don't go.
- Mrs. Garriepy said it isn't just money; some students do bigger and better trips such as a cruise.
- Mrs. Garfield's son regrets not going. He went snowboarding in Oregon instead.
- Mrs. Otterbeck asked how much it costs.
- Mrs. Garriepy said about \$1,200; it includes just about everything while they are there
- Mrs. Otterbeck said it is half the cost of Costa Rica.
- Mr. Wyand 's son went on the trip and he will abstain as his daughter is willing to go.
- Mrs. Foley will abstain as well.
- Mrs. Kennedy thinks she has to abstain too.

Mrs. Winer made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to suspend the two meeting rule to vote on this.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to approve the 2016 senior class to Disney World, Florida.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 8 Nays Abstain 2 Absent

B. National School Lunch Program

- Mrs. McCaul gave what she calls her annual state of the café address. She is in her 14th year. USDA supports the national school lunch and breakfast program. School committee has to vote to participate. If you vote not too we wouldn't receive reimbursement. Average daily participation is rising. Free and reduced is slowly climbing. Chester is at 59%, Littleville is at 45%, and the Gateway complex is at 36%. The district total is 42%. 65% of our students are free and reduced by direct certification. It is real-time now. School districts have to upload student information 3 times a year. All those who have SNAP benefits are automatically included. Last year they threw in a Medicaid and we picked up 20 new students. This includes preschool through grade 12. Once your school is over 50% free or reduced it opens up a lot more programs. Chester qualified for the USDA fresh fruits and veggie program. Money can't be spent on breakfast or lunch; it has to be spent on other programs. She picked half days or early release to set up a fruit dishes in each class. She has also tried fruit plates with foods they have never eaten. Chester is a breakfast champion school. Mrs. McCaul just went to the bid openings. Gateway belongs to the Education Collaborative in Northampton with 20 other districts that bid together on food, paper goods, milk, bread, etc. They are sending 3 managers to the Healthy Cuisine for Kids conference for two days. They still do the farm to school and she still has Outlook farm apples. She is the recipient of a UMASS intern. She will have a graduate student from Labor Day through April for 10 hours a week. It happened to be Jim Hale's (a former teacher) daughter. USDA paid lunch equity; we have to raise the prices of our paid lunches. She has to stay within a certain range and raise prices by 25 cents. Elementary is going from \$2.25 to \$2.50 and high school from \$2.50 to \$2.75. If you don't raise the price the local agency has to make up the difference. Adult lunches are going from \$3 to \$3.50.
- Mrs. McCaul thanked Dr. Hopson and Ms. Fisk for supporting the program for the opportunity to be involved at the state and federal level. There have been so many regulations implemented in the last few years it is overwhelming. She has worked here 30 years and been through 7 superintendents; this is an open door and supportive administration with accountability. She has to set goals in the fall and meet them in June. She invited school committee to stop by for breakfast or lunch. It is not your school food from years past.
 - Mrs. McVeigh asked how many students actually purchase lunches
 - Mrs. McCaul said 60-70% is the daily average.
 - Mrs. Kennedy said Mrs. McCaul is very inviting so go and visit with her she will explain everything.
 - Move to old business.

7:45 - V. OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Approval of 2017 April Vacation Trip to Costa Rica/or Peru (Science & Spanish classes)

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to approve a 2017 April Vacation trip to Peru or Costa Rica.

- Mrs. Kennedy has a problem with such a bad world she is uncomfortable approving this right now. She is concerned with the travel advisories. There are many things they can do in our own country for Spanish and our culture. Her problem is not with the trip.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked if something were to happen what is the school's liability.
- Dr. Hopson said it is the same as if they went to the Mark Twain house in CT. You have to go by insured transportation or go through a travel agency. As long as you followed all the rules in good conscious.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked are we looking into federal travel rules and advisories.
- Mrs. Otterbeck said Costa Rica is not in a war country. It is a third world country; there is no war conflict or dictatorship.
- Dr. Hopson said if they planned the trip and there was a state department advisory, you wouldn't send them. You would get trip insurance.
- Mr. Wyand is wondering how it would work in a crisis or emergency situation; would chaperones be trained. Is there communication with the tour guides? There should be some written protocol .
- Mrs. Crane said it sounded like they had a lot of trust in Eco Teach.
- Mrs. Foley said they presented us materials on Eco Teach and supporting documents; we may have some of the answers to those questions.
- Mrs. McVeigh said Florida is \$1200. Should the school be exploring other trips, going to Appalachia and working with the poor in our own country? How does it work for chaperones?
- Dr. Hopson said chaperones pay. In Florida they take the free payment and split it across the students as savings. For the Costa Rica trip, the two chaperones had their ways paid. For the DC trip the school pays a

stipend that helps offset the cost. With the travel agency they usually have a free leader for every so many students.

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to approve a 2017 April Vacation trip to Peru or Costa Rica.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays Abstain 1 Absent

B. Videotaping Meeting/Minutes Discussion

- Mrs. Buikus said Westfield does theirs by Westfield State University and they do other meetings in the same room. They make a copy and it is uploaded by a company called Vimeo and it costs them \$60 a year. Wachusett regional has a policy. They do not have a cable company. They make multiple copies and send copies to the local towns. The district only has to keep the master copy for one year. She asked if Jon Wyand did graduation again this year like last year. Was it done as a school project?
- Mr. Wyand said wasn't sure. He thinks he edited it and put it in disc form. This year he was hired which is what he announced last week meeting.
- Dr. Hopson said the district paid the time and 4 students
- Mrs. Buikus said Westfield state has a contract to do it. It is done in the town hall; in the chamber. Wachusett has a videographer. They had someone in the school that did it. It was a student or a class.
- Mrs. Kennedy said when she goes to the cape she watches other school committee meetings in her hotel room. Belmont has a policy that newspapers and representatives are welcome to attend and audio or video is permitted. Open meeting law 30.A sections 18-25; specifically section 20.
- Dr. Hopson said if the intent is to officially video tape it, you can put a motion on the table.
- Mrs. Winer asked what would be the reason to do it.
- Mrs. Levreault said on the agenda, one schedule has us going to individual towns, and one doesn't. If we don't travel people will still be able to see it. Wachusett is a large school.

Mrs. Buikus made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy we entertain the possibility of officially videotaping school committee meetings.

- Mrs. Kennedy there is a lot of confusion as to what goes on.
- Dr. Hopson said someone has to do all the work; there is a lot of cost.
- Mrs. Kennedy said it could be community involvement project.
- Dr. Hopson said look how long it has taken us to get a student council student to come here on a regular basis. Especially if there are 4 students here doing it.
- Mr. Wyand said attendance to our meeting is far better than being able to watch the meeting on video.
- Mrs. Levreault said we have tried many different ways to get people to participate. It would be a different say we haven't tried. We could highlight it in the superintendent's corner. We have done press releases and that was successful. The presentations done a few weeks ago would be great for people to see.
- Mrs. Winer said we need to research what is feasible, what is the cost. There are logistics, our inability to pay people and we don't have cable in every town.
- Mrs. Buikus said Vimeo would take care of that.
- Mrs. Kennedy would like to see a small committee formed to look into it and report back.

Mrs. Buikus made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy we entertain the possibility of officially videotaping school committee meetings.

Motion Failed (VOTE) Yeas 5 Nays 5 Abstain Absent

- Mrs. Winer said we could do a trial.
- Mrs. McVeigh said as a town official she is disappointed. It would be a great way to showcase what goes on in the district.
- Mrs. Crane is sorry she is disappointed in us.

C. Worthington Withdrawal

- Mrs. Kennedy said Attorney Lampke answered for the injunction; two or three of the towns are looking into joining but have not voted to change their bylaws. They are named as different kind of defendant. They have 60 -90 days to have their bylaws done.

- Mrs. McVeigh said Blandford has tabled it. Huntington approved it. It was not on Russell's warrant, Montgomery did not approve it and Middlefield did not vote it. She thinks it is on Chester's warrant.
- Ms. Fisk said Gateway and Huntington are the only ones paying the bills right now.
- Mrs. Kennedy said there will be no problem for the other towns to become a different kind of defendant.

D. Recommendation to establish a Regional Transportation Fund

- Ms. Fisk said at a May workshop they talked about how it could be used for excess funds. Transportation is based on state reporting done in September the year before.
- They established that this year. Schools who had their budget set and then had transportation money taken away. The money can stay in the account for one year, then go to E & D. It gives districts some flexibility for accurately budgeting the next year. Next year's budget is based on what we get this year. It is used for excess.

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to authorize the establishment of a Regional Transportation Fund.

- Mrs. McVeigh said it doesn't have to necessarily go to E & D.
- Ms. Fisk after a year.
- Mrs. McVeigh said you can allocate it to transportation; it would also help in years where the state was late.
- Ms. Fisk said we send out figures to the state. It is rare that districts decrease their spending. She is hoping it gives the districts saving money some incentive.
- Mr. Wyand asked is it likely we are going to have money to put in the account.
- Ms. Fisk said not this year. It would give us flexibility if cuts need to be made. It can be used on any transportation.
- Mrs. Foley asked about field trip transportation.
- Ms. Fisk would be hesitant because we wouldn't receive reimbursement.
- Mrs. Winer said for if we purchased our own bus; the driver fuel and insurance.

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to authorize the establishment of a Regional Transportation Fund.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent

E. MASC Arbitration Request (Enc. 5/13)

- MASC wants to establish a collection of decisions by associations. Then they can make recommendations to the arbitrators. This is if someone puts in a grievance, and is not settled and went to arbitration. This way everyone would have the collection.

Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mr. Wyand to support the MASC Arbitration request.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays Abstain 1 Absent

F. FY '16 School Committee Schedule (Enc. 5/13)

Mrs. Winer made a motion seconded by Mr. Damon not to continue traveling for school committee meetings.

- Mrs. Kennedy is torn on this one since we don't get a lot of participation, but even one person can talk to other people, and that is good.
- Mrs. Garfield would like to see us travel; we need to bring it to the towns even if it is one or two.
- Mrs. Winer said it is not nearly as convenient for us, hearing or anything. She has been for it. She feels we get more done in a situation like this.
- Mr. Damon said we have tried it and he hasn't seen any real success. Invariably a time comes when we give up. He is opposed to traveling
- Mrs. Levreault said it is illogical to take away only way to bring school committee to the towns.
- Mrs. Foley we should keep going to the towns if for no other reason than for bringing the meeting there.
- Mrs. Levreault said it is important as school committee members for us to go to other towns and see what they are like; what it is about and looks like.

Mrs. Winer made a motion seconded by Mr. Damon not to continue traveling for school committee meetings.

Motion Failed (VOTE) Yeas 2 Nays 8 Abstain Absent

- Resend the official schedule and it put it on the website.

G. Approval for Superintendent to Attend the ASCD Conference

- Dr. Hopson feels ASBO is too long to be away in mid-October.
- Mrs. Winer for clarification on ASCD.
- Dr. Hopson ASBO has been good for the last few years. ASCD is more about curriculum and teaching in the school.

Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Winer approve the Superintendent attend the ASCD Conference.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent

- Mr. Wyand do we have a cost.
- Dr. Hopson said he doesn't know for sure but it is less than the ASBO Conference.

H. Wired West (Enc. 5/13)

- Dr. Hopson said we had been asked to support wired west as a school committee in the vein of helping educate students.
- Mrs. Winer how would it help; we have pretty good access.
- Dr. Hopson we were approached and it was brought up at GTAC. One of the members was supposed to write the letter and didn't and then approached by 2 members, so we drafted a sample letter. The idea is if you have broadband in all towns, it makes it easier for homework to be sent home. Some towns are not part of wired west. The district supports broadband to help educate students
- Mrs. Buikus said she thought at one point we said as a committee we wouldn't get involved in town politics and that is what his is.
- Dr. Hopson doesn't disagree.

Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Buikus for the purpose of discussion to approve the letter of support for Wired West.

- Mrs. Kennedy said it has to have a stop put to it.
- Mr. Wyand asked what are they asking for and what is our involvement.
- Mrs. Crane said they are looking for a letter of support.
- Mrs. Foley has received a letter in her town by a school committee member in support of it.
- Mrs. Buikus read the last few paragraphs which she had concerns about. She said you can support it as an individual but not as a committee.
- Mrs. Winer said the companies won't do it because there are too few people.
- Mrs. Kennedy said it has already been turned down by two towns.
- Dr. Hopson said Blandford passed it.
- Mr. Wyand said we could send a letter saying we are supportive but it is up to the towns.

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Buikus to move the question.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent

Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Buikus for the purpose of discussion to approve the letter of support for Wired West.

Motion Failed (VOTE) Yeas 1 Nays 9 Abstain Absent

I. Superintendent requests authorization for the District Treasurer or Assistant District Treasurer under provisions of M.G.L., Chapter 71 Section 16 (9) and with the approval of the Chairperson for the Gateway Regional Committee, to incur temporary debt (borrow from time to time) in anticipation of revenue to be

received from any source for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2015. This is for short-term borrowing in case assessments are not received in time, etc.

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to approve the following: Superintendent requests authorization for the District Treasurer or Assistant District Treasurer under provisions of M.G.L., Chapter 71 Section 16 (9) and with the approval of the Chairperson for the Gateway Regional Committee, to incur temporary debt (borrow from time to time) in anticipation of revenue to be received from any source for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2015. This is for short-term borrowing in case assessments are not received in time, etc.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent

VI. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to go into executive session at or before 9:30 p.m. for the purpose of union negotiations, nonunion negotiations, and litigation not to return to open session

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

Yeas: Ruth, Jeff, Terri, Sarah, Shirley, Martha, Ron, Sue, Anne Marie, Michele

A. Recommendation to Establish an OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits) Liability Trust Fund

- Ms. Fisk said for OPEB we have a 14 million obligation right now, we have to establish the trust first. This would be the second one we have to establish. The other would have to be formed when Worthington withdrawals; the money they send us has to be protected. Retiree insurance it for pay as you go money if we did that too. This is just to get it established. She needs to get Russell working on this.
- Mrs. Winer said for the future it allows us to amplify the money.
- Mrs. Buikus asked if it would we draw interest:
- Ms. Fisk said yes; it would be separate just like for Worthington.
- Mr. Wyand said regarding pay as you go, each year when a teacher retires, the money for those benefits is paid out of the budget.
- Ms. Fisk said instead of health insurance coming out of the budget, it could be voted in and it could come from the account.
- Mrs. Buikus said it won't be in the budget.
- Ms. Fisk said no, but it could. Post employee benefits are determined on many factors such as life expectancy, etc. We put money in health insurance for every retiree; it may be when foundation budget comes out.
- Dr. Hopson said we pay out \$300,000 a year. It would go into this account and we would pay it out of there.
- Ms. Fisk said this year Medex went down mid-year. If we took the difference we could put it in this account.
- Mrs. Buikus asked if we could send us some information on how this works.
- Ms. Fisk just needs to get the account set up.
- Mrs. McVeigh said unless you had excess funds, you would have to have it in the budget.
- Ms. Fisk said yes; for awhile.
- Mr. Wyand said it is a line item pay as you go in the budget.
- Ms. Fisk said the best thing to do would be to start putting an extra \$50,000 in each year.
- Move to old business.

B. Annual FY '15 Line Item Transfers

- Ms. Fisk handed them out for a vote at the next meeting. There will be one more added.

C. Committee Professional Development/Team Building – discuss at the next meeting.

VII. CONSENT ITEMS 5/27/15 (Enc.) – move to next meeting

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS - None

- A. School Committee
- B. Chairperson
- C. Superintendent
Central Office Update (Enc.)
- D. Business Manager
- E. Administration

IX. COMMITTEE REPORTING – Move all to next meeting

- A. Superintendent's Evaluation
- B. Finance Subcommittee
- C. Legislative Liaison
- D. Policy Subcommittee
- E. Building Liaisons
- F. Community Curriculum Committee

X. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Future Agenda Items

XI. INFORMATION

Information

Andrew Hawley inducted into Athletic Hall of Fame
 Staff Honored at Gateway
 Spring concert at Gateway
 Last Day of School
 Superintendent's Corner May 29, 1015

Warrant

AP#1090	\$27,350.66	PR# 24	\$402,554.52
AP#1091	\$33,272.29		

**9:00-10 p.m. XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION
or earlier**

- A. Union Negotiations
- B. Non-Union Negotiations
- C. Litigation

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to go into executive session at or before 9:30 p.m. for the purpose of union negotiations, non-union negotiations, and litigation not to return to open session

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

Yeas: Ruth, Jeff, Terri, Sarah, Shirley, Martha, Ron, Sue, Anne Marie, Michele

XIII. ADJOURNMENT Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mr. Damon to adjourn at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted
 Stacy L Stewart
 School Committee Secretary