

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

JOINT BUDGET/REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 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
Melissa Nazzaro

MIDDLEFIELD

Sarah Foley

MONTGOMERY

Madelyn Austin

RUSSELL

Tara Balboni
Paula Hepburn – Not Sworn In
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: _____

- Mrs. Crane opened the meeting at 7:03 p.m.
- Mrs. Crane introduced the new member from Russell, Paula Hepburn. The committee introduced themselves.
- The reporter is recording the meeting.

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

- Mr. Daley asked if there was any follow-up on SBA.
- Dr. Hopson has been in contact with our legislators. He said Representative Kulik is talking with the other legislators. They seem interested.
- Mr. Daley asked if there is a general timeline.
- Dr. Hopson asked if it could be this year. All he has is a back and forth email. At this point it might be a good idea for the towns to contact their legislators.
- Mr. Baldasaro asked if there was an email thread, Dr. Hopson could share.
- Dr. Hopson said it is a group in his email.

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT - None

IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS - None

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. FY'18 Budget

- Mrs. Crane explained how she put the agenda together. We want to get some quick things done first then move to Joint Budget for a half an hour to forty-five minutes and then finish the agenda if time permits. Tonight is a lot of budget. We are starting with FY '18 budget and then moving to FY '19 budget.

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to go into executive session for the purpose of union negotiations: - teachers and legal issues at or before 8:45 p.m. not to return to open session.

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Melissa, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Michele
(Paula is not sworn is so she cannot vote)

- Dr. Hopson said at the last meeting Mrs. Nazzaro asked what potential cuts will be. Anyone who has given us their email received the information. If you didn't get the information, give Dr. Hopson your email address and he will send you and invite to the group so you can get the information as school committee gets it. He said she also asked what we look at before the budget comes to school committee.
- Dr. Hopson gave a PowerPoint presentation.
- Dr. Hopson introduced Mrs. Coburn. She talked about the constant shifting of teachers based on enrollment. Kindergarten was a large class size this year and you can't change Kindergarten teachers due to the certification differences. She discussed not being able to meet contractual obligations if a specials teacher was cut. Core teachers have their prep time when students are in specials. Sharing teachers throughout the district is difficult due to difference in schedules.
- With the increase in kindergarten is that an increase in the populations.
- Mrs. Coburn hasn't seen that at the elementary level.
- Mrs. Balboni asked if incoming school choice increased.
- Mrs. Coburn thinks there is a slight increase.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked how many school choice students are going out.
- Ms. Fisk said we won't know that until October 1.
- Dr. Hopson introduced Mr. Finnie
- Mr. Finnie said at the middle school further elimination of core teachers would make teaming almost impossible. All specials at middle school except multicultural are shared. If we lost core teachers at the high school level, AP and honors classes would be jeopardized.
- Mr. Daley asked about the 5-year trend in the high school voke.
- Mr. Finnie when we went from a five to seven period schedule. We teacher an intro class, which is full. There are forty to fifty kids in that class offered every other day. Welding and metals enrollment has gone up.
- Mr. Daley asked if there is space to expand to attract other students.
- Mr. Finnie said if we were to expand we would have to hire another teacher.
- Mrs. Brady asked if we have a lot of students that school choice out to voke.
- Mr. Finnie said yes, we do have numbers in the teens.
- Mrs. Huntoon asked what the percentage is.
- Mr. Finnie said between 20 and 25%.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked when you say \$200,000 to \$300,000 in out-placement, you do get reimbursed for it.
- Dr. Hopson we pay the first \$46,000 to \$47,000 and receive roughly 50%. It will still cost us \$165,000. We have two students at the elementary level that could be \$200-300,000 each.
- Mr. McVeigh, what happens if you make them choose a track? Does that change the scheduling?
- Mr. Finnie said we have honors in multiple math tracks. AP is a little different. It is about offering a competitive course of studies.
- Mr. McVeigh said when he was in school based on 8th grade placement that was the track you were on.
- Mr. Finnie said a lot has changed with Ed Reform. Certain aspects are illegal. You can't test them and force them in a track.
- Dr. Hopson said the reduction is \$53,856.
- Mrs. Papillon asked if we vote for version 3.0 with the reduction, what does that equal in reductions.
- Ms. Fisk said the biggest changes were from version 2 to 3 was staff insurance.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked to have a copy of this.
- Dr. Hopson said the information was sent out in the group.

- Mrs. Kennedy would like to be added to the group.

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Nazzaro to approve version 3.0 in the amount of \$16,035,958.00

- Mrs. Winer said isn't it possible that the state will set the budget.
- Dr. Hopson said if we don't approve a budget DESE will set it. If the towns don't pass this DESE will not wait till December to set a budget. They understand the towns need to set their tax rates.
- Mrs. Austin said if we don't accept the 3.0 version what is our other choice?
- Dr. Hopson said you could say let's cut another \$80,000 and have a 0% increase.
- Mrs. Austin asked about the other versions.
- Dr. Hopson said it doesn't make sense to go back to the other versions, as we've already made up-to-date changes.
- Mrs. Nazzaro said it is .63 % more than last year. Most municipalities see increases in things that they have no control over. The fact that they have been able to keep it this low says a lot. We would have seen a 1.4 million dollar increase. It's a lot of very fine shaving.
- Mrs. Crane asked if anyone from the towns who voted no, wanted to speak.
- Mrs. Borsig asked what was budget to actual spending.
- Ms. Fisk said we usually save between three and five percent. Last year we saved about \$55,000 in blizzard bags. We saved on special education transportation due to a new vendor. We didn't replace a teacher, and we have been doing electrical light projects. We've gone from 80,000 to 42,000 kilowatts in July and August. We've gone from 1.3 million to 800,000 kilowatts. We will see that grow as we get to November. Net metering should also take place this year.
- Mrs. McVeigh said looking at the FY '18 budget information, we seem to have a structural issue at the high school. We've gone from \$7,800 per pupil in 2014 to \$13,500 per pupil for FY '18. When she ran a similar analysis at the other level, with a 2.5% increase every year, we are not all that far off, but at the high school, it's \$5,000 more per student. How do we resolve that and think about that for the future.
- Mrs. Nazzaro said the junior and senior classes are low. In 2014 those students wouldn't have been part of the high school. The 11th and 12th graders are our tipping point. If we change the structure when a group of parents doesn't have a lot of kids, we are leaving those kids out.
- Mrs. McVeigh said, but we are not seeing that trend. We have a much longer historical trend of decline.
- Mr. Finnie when you reduce at the high school.
- Mrs. McVeigh said we have lost a significant number of students in the high school, but because of current curriculum requirements, track levels, in order to do that the per pupil cost has risen significantly. What are the options going forward if this trend continues/
- Mr. Finnie said there is currently a dip that looks like it will stabilize. The structural solutions are cutting the program of studies and online courses. Only, that is going to result in an exodus of students at more than just the high school. He gets what she is saying, but that is the challenge of a public high school.
- Mrs. McVeigh said fifty years out would we still have a traditional K-12 school district or would we have a regional school K-8 and do something different with the high school.
- Ms. Fisk thinks part of the confusion in the junior high is the 1.3 million went into the other schools.
- Dr. Hopson thinks it is a valid point to look at, just not for the FY '18 budget.
- Mrs. McVeigh said Mrs. Crane asked the towns what they wanted to see.
- Mrs. Otterbeck said the 2025 group was worried about meeting the needs of students.
- Mrs. Balboni said that is one of the things we've talked about as a group, but we are constantly get mired with a six month budget process.
- Mrs. Papillon said we are all here tonight to be part of the FY '19 budget process, but we need to get through FY '18 first.
- Mr. Damon said the budget has \$54,000 in savings. What staff numbers will be different? To what extent do you think we have hurt the students.
- Dr. Hopson said it doesn't change what we are offering. Most of the savings is in staff insurance. It doesn't impact the hiring we need to complete. It doesn't affect the outplacement that will cost more.
- Mrs. Kennedy said the towns can't say what they are going to do because they don't have this yet. They have to work figures and look at different things.

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Nazzaro to approve version 3.0 in the amount of \$16,035,958.00

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Melissa, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Michele
(Paula is not sworn in so she cannot vote)

B. Fall Grant Approval

- Fall Gant List Vote

VI. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. FY '18 Superintendent's Goals

- Make sure you've read them and be ready to vote at the next meeting.

7:30 VII. JOINT BUDGET SESSION WITH TOWN OFFICIALS

A. FY '19 Budget Process and General Budget Discussion

- Mrs. Otterbeck handed out information.
- Dr. Hopson gave a brief power point presentation.
- Mrs. Huntoon asked what usually falls under miscellaneous.
- Ms. Fisk said it could be, for instance we sold our old laptops last year. Or if someone tears up the lawn, their repayment goes in there. It's usually about \$2,500.
- Mrs. McVeigh said when you talk about these fees such as parking, is not included in the total budget.
- Ms. Fisk said the per pupil expenditure at DESE includes all accounts.
- Mr. Eric McVeigh asked if you can you charge for bussing less than 2 miles.
- Dr. Hopson said you cannot charge because we are a regional.
- Mrs. Balboni said we can want to share, but we need to find someone who wants to work with us.
- Dr. Hopson said we are looking at sharing some business manager services, the other school is taking it to their school committee.
- Dr. Hopson said our next joint budget meeting is November 8th. That would be a good time for towns to share.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked when the towns are going to be allowed present our issues.
- Mrs. Nazzaro said at the November meeting.
- Mr. Myers was under the impression we were going to discuss long-range planning at the joint budget process.
- Dr. Hopson said no, the budget discussion would be between the towns and the district. The facilitated discussion suggested by MARS would include long-range planning, capital, and budget.
- Mr. Myers handed out some information on populations –division of local services put this places. 6 towns formed a collaborative. Our population had been level, and then lose population – distribution of population, historical and projected spending, per capita spending vs. population, Gateway student in enrollment, required vs. actual net spending & enrollment.

Mrs. Balboni left the meeting.

- Mr. Myers said there is a meeting on Saturday to consolidate the accounting services in the towns. There are six towns so six of everything.
- Mrs. Garfield asked how proactive are the towns being.
- Mr. Myers said the towns formed a hill towns collaborative and they joined the compact grant. We've only looked at accounting right now. Also, we received a grant for economic development. It's full-time for a year and then the towns will pay for it. Mrs. LeClare met with Mr. Finnie and Mr. Welch about forming an enterprise club. Last year we established an outdoor club.
- Mrs. McVeigh said the towns have been working for years trying to expanding the internet. There are a lot of things the town officials have done to improve the ability for people to move in. We also have Strathmore, but will have to have someone come in.
- Mr. Myers said the lack of high speed internet was one of the reasons we lost young people. He said at the last meeting Dr. Hopson shared statistics. You might get the impression Gateway is on track, but this shows a financial cliff. Let's recognize there is a problem.
- Dr. Hopson thanked them. There is a different approach from Hamden to Hampshire County.
- Mrs. McVeigh said we have the eye of the state and they are willing to invest thousands of dollars. How do we come up with creative solutions, thinking outside the box to find solutions? Massachusetts is 48 in list of 50 fiscal instabilities.
- Mr. Myers said we want more conversation about the loss of student enrollment and how we can change it. Excess capacity, what does it cost and how can we come up with solutions, ideas, sharing, and disparity in

town assessments. Is there way we can work on that. It was suggested to equalizing assessments, but all six towns need to vote in favor.

- Dr. Hopson said he hopes that everyone brings that type of information.

The remainder of the agenda will be taken up at the next meeting.

Went into executive session at 8:54 p.m.

VIII. CONSENT ITEMS 8/23/17 (Enc.)

IX. COMMUNICATIONS –

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

X. COMMITTEE REPORTING

- A. Superintendent's Evaluation
- B. Legislative Liaison
- C. Policy Subcommittee
- D. Building Liaisons
 - Update list of members and who they'd like to meet with.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Future Agenda Items

XII. INFORMATION

Information

Gateway students return August 30
 Chester Elementary students all eligible for free meals at school
 Notice of Destruction of Special Education records
 Superintendent's Corner August 21, 2017
 September Calendar Highlights
 Notice of Destruction of Special Education records
 Superintendent's Corner August 28, 2017
 Gateway unveils their new APP!
 September School Committee Meetings
 Gateway to host educational technology conference
 Superintendent's Corner September 1, 2017
 "What I did on my summer vacation" Gateway senior takes on Indiana
 New staff welcomed to Gateway 'family'

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

Warrants

AP# 1009 \$73,038.51	PR# 004.1 \$5,926.93
AP# 1016 \$1,150.79	PR# 005 \$383,266.68

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

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to go into executive session for the purpose of union negotiations: - teachers and Litigation: Kennedy, et al. v. Commonwealth of Massachusetts, et al. - No.:HSCV2014-00210 at or before 8:45 p.m. not to return to open session.

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Melissa, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Michele
(Paula is not sworn is so she cannot vote)

A. 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 10 Nays Abstain Absent 1 (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Madelyn, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Melissa, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Michele
Absent: Tara
(Paula is not sworn is so she cannot vote)

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacy L Stewart
School Committee Secretary