



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MARCH 26, 2013**

LOCATION: Swift River Elementary School Library
TIME: 7:00 pm

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Dr. Linda Tsoumas, Chair (present); Mr. Eric Weiss, Vice Chair (present); Ms. Clare Popowich, Secretary (present); Ms. Beverly Phaneuf, Member (present); Mr. Richard Fritsch, Member (present)

ADMINISTRATION:

Dr. Judith Houle, Superintendent of Schools (present); Mr. Brian Cameron, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning (present)

BHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES:

Mr. John Lebrun (present); Ms. Sienna Nielsen (present)

VISITORS:

Belchertown Teachers of Excellence: Brendan McCarthy, Kindergarten Teacher at Cold Spring School (present); Karl Quist, Physical Education Teacher, Swift River Elementary School (present); Ryan Butler, Music Teacher, Swift River Elementary School (present); Stephanie Davies, Grade 7 Math Teacher at Jabish Brook Middle School (present); Christine Holesovsky, Spanish Teacher, Belchertown High School (present); and Louise Levy, Science Teacher, Belchertown High School (present)

(See attached sign-in sheet for additional visitors.)

MINUTES

I. Call to order

Dr. Tsoumas called the Regular School Committee meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

II. Special awards and presentations

Dr. Tsoumas stated that it was her honor to represent the School Committee in recognizing the recipients of the Belchertown Teachers of Excellence awards. Each recipient received a certificate for this achievement and flowers presented by both Dr. Tsoumas and Dr. Houle.

A. Belchertown Teachers of Excellence awards

Dr. Houle explained the process of how the recipients are chosen, noting that they were nominated by their peers and selected by their school councils. The Superintendent must then narrow it down to the six finalists. In presenting the awards, Dr. Houle gave a brief summation of the qualities, skills and contributions of each recipient. Awards were presented to the following teachers: Ryan Butler, Karl Quist, Louise Levy, Christine Holesovsky, Stephanie Davies, and Brendan McCarthy. Dr. Houle then stated that Ms. Holesovsky, Ms. Davies, and Mr. McCarthy were also recipients of the Pioneer Valley Teachers of Excellence awards, which are sponsored by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. Recipients will receive these awards on April 25, 2013 in a ceremony at The Log Cabin.

Dr. Tsoumas approved a brief recess so that refreshments could be served to the visitors in celebration of the award recipients.

- III. Update from BHS Student Advisory Council representatives
Mr. Lebrun and Ms. Nielsen reviewed recent and upcoming events at Belchertown High School, in particular noting the success of last Friday's overnight volleyball "lock-in". Ms. Nielsen stated that every team was comprised of members of all classes, which fostered the spirit of working together and promoting the goals of the PeaceBuilders program. The representatives also commented on the well-received BHS concert which was held last week, and the Pops concert which is coming up soon.
- IV. Public comment regarding items on the agenda
None
- V. Approval of minutes
A. March 5, 2013
MOTION: Mr. Weiss moved to approve the March 5, 2013 Regular School Committee meeting minutes, as presented. Ms. Phaneuf seconded the motion.
VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously
- VI. Reports and recommendations of the Superintendent
A. Accounts payables warrant signatures
The accounts payable warrant was presented for signatures by School Committee members.
- B. Field trip request: BHS trip to France, April 19-27, 2014
Ms. Kathleen Bernardin, BHS French teacher, and Ms. Debra Davidsohn, BHS counselor and former French teacher, presented their request for a field trip to France in April, 2014, for students in grade levels 10-12 taking French 3, 4 or 5. The teachers explained that by visiting France, the students will have an enriching and valuable learning experience, and this trip will also be important for the future of the French program at BHS. An itinerary was included in the request and some of the highlights will be visits to Paris, the Loire Valley and Normandy, with an emphasis on understanding the culture, history, architecture and language of the country. During the tours, the students will be using the French language.
Dr. Houle stated that she had reviewed the field trip request and found all the paperwork to be in order according to policy, and she therefore recommends approval by the School Committee of this request.
- MOTION: Mr. Weiss moved to approve the BHS field trip request for a trip to France, April 19-27, 2014, as presented. Ms. Phaneuf seconded the motion.
- DISCUSSION: Mr. Fritsch inquired as to the chaperones planned, and the teachers stated that those individuals (one chaperone per six students) are yet to be determined as the trip is more than a year away. Mr. Fritsch also asked if the U.S. Embassy in Paris will be made aware of their presence in France for the field trip, and the teachers stated that the embassy will be notified, and there was an attachment in that regard in their request.
- VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously
- C. Field trip request: JBMS trip to Washington, DC, April 25-27, 2013
Ms. Stacy Monette, JBMS Assistant Principal, and Ms. Tammy Dennehy, JBMS teacher, presented their request for a field trip to Washington, D.C., April 25-27, 2013 for 8th grade students. They stated that the trip will be filled with many activities, including visits to museums, historical and government attractions, and memorials, including Arlington National Cemetery. To date, 126 students have signed up to attend, with 13 chaperones (including Ms. Karen Schiffer, School Nurse, and Officer

Jason Krol, School Resource Officer) having volunteered their services as well. Dr. Houle stated that she had reviewed the field trip request and found all the paperwork to be in order according to policy, and she therefore recommends approval by the School Committee of this request.

MOTION: Mr. Weiss moved to approve the JBMS field trip request for a trip to Washington, D.C., April 25-27, 2013, as presented. Mr. Fritsch seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

D. Proposed school calendar: 2013-2014

Dr. Houle presented a proposed school calendar for the upcoming school year, noting that it is different from the typical school calendar in the scheduling of the first full professional development day. The proposed calendar will schedule that day on Monday, August 26, 2013 before the beginning of the school year. She explained that this will be useful for teachers to learn the new software program (TeachPoint) before school starts, as well as provide an opportunity to review the new school lockdown protocols. Dr. Houle also noted another change in the calendar, with mid-term reports dates no longer being included since parents can now check the portals for that information.

MOTION: Mr. Weiss moved to approve the proposed 2013-2014 school calendar, as presented. Ms. Phaneuf seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

E. Cost share agreement with Recreation Department for CHCS Pool, FY 2014

Dr. Houle referred to the memorandum included in the meeting correspondence regarding the cost share agreement with the Recreation Department for the CHCS pool in FY 2014, noting that it is the same form used every year. She recommends approval of this agreement by the School Committee. Mr. Weiss commented that the formula for the associated pool costs between the School and Recreation Departments was worked out years ago, and has been successful and satisfactory for both departments.

MOTION: Mr. Weiss moved to approve the "Allocation of Cost associated with CHCS Pool, FY '14" as presented in a memorandum from Mr. Robert Opalenik, Recreation Department Director, dated March 12, 2013. Ms. Phaneuf seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

F. Report on March 15, 2013 Edcamp B-town Professional Development Day

Mr. Cameron presented a PowerPoint report on the first professional development Edcamp held in the school district at BHS from 8:00 a.m. to 3 p.m. on March 15th, and noted that it was very successful and generated much positive feedback from the staff. Edcamp is a concept of free professional development for educators by educators that encourages peer-to-peer sharing of knowledge from a range of content areas and grade levels. Mr. Cameron stated that the day's schedule was divided into three sessions of many varied topics, and these were set up in various locations. Posters for these sessions were displayed throughout the building so that staff could "vote with their feet", meaning individuals could enter a session and then decide to leave to join another session of more interest to them. Mr. Cameron then explained that the day ended in a "smackdown", which provided staff an opportunity to share ideas, tools, and resources within a two-minute time limit allotted per participant. A raffle for small prizes was also held at the end of the day.

Mr. Cameron concluded by saying that surveys would be given out to the teachers for their feedback, as there is a tentative plan to hold another Edcamp for the 2014 spring

professional development day. He and Dr. Houle also thanked the CSSR PTO, the CHCS PTO and the JBMS PTO for their support in helping to sponsor the Edcamp, and Dr. Houle also commended Mr. Cameron for the fine job he did in organizing the event.

VII. Unfinished business

A. FY 2014 budget

Dr. Houle reviewed the summary of changes in the FY14 Level Service Budget, and explained that because of areas of additional need, reductions were taken in other areas of the budget so that these items would be budget-neutral (increases equaling offsets). She then said that at a recent meeting with the Finance Committee, she presented a total LEA budget of \$26,123,284.14. The Finance Committee recommended a school budget of \$25,827,053.00, which resulted in a gap of \$296,231.14 that the school district must figure out how to close. Mr. Weiss suggested that Dr. Houle work with the Senior Leadership Team to create tiered cut packages which can be presented to the town to show exactly what impact closing this gap will have on the school budget. Dr. Houle agreed to meet with the Leadership Team to develop a plan to address potential budget cuts, but she made it very clear that she is not willing to give up approximately \$300,000.00 in educational spending needed to operate the district properly. The school district is addressing simple cost increases in operations, with no new spending, while at the same time absorbing losses in grant funding. Dr. Houle also stated that there are currently 94 mandates on file for K-12 from the DESE, many of which are unfunded or underfunded, and range from nutrition to school safety to special education. She explained that these are 94 different requirements for reports, submission of information and data, and deadlines for other actions mandated by state statute and DESE regulations. While these initiatives all have worth, Dr. Houle feels that the town needs to recognize that many of these mandates are complex and require years of change to systems that were originally designed and funded based on assumptions that pre-date them. The school district is expected to do more with less, and Dr. Houle hopes that the town will support the schools by releasing the necessary funds from the stabilization fund in order to close the \$300,000.00 gap. However, based on the directive of the School Committee, Dr. Houle will present an updated budget proposal at the next meeting on April 9th, in order to move forward to the Joint Meeting with the other town boards on April 23rd. A public hearing on the school budget is scheduled for April 30th.

MOTION: Mr. Weiss moved to recommend that the Superintendent and the Senior Leadership Team prepare an updated budget proposal with defined dollar amounts for tiered budget cuts in the amounts of \$100,000.00, \$200,000.00 and \$300,000.00. Ms. Phaneuf seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

VIII. New business

None

IX. Reports of subcommittees/representative to Collaborative for Educational Services

A. Collaborative for Educational Services (Ms. Phaneuf)

Ms. Phaneuf reported that the CES met in Whately on March 13th, with a good portion of the meeting spent on hearing grievances. Other business included the approval of summer tuitions for SPED students, and a decision was made as to how increases for teachers in the collaborative will be handled. In the past, increases for teachers were figured based on an old formula that no longer works, and so the Board

changed the way that it offers raises to staff based on percentages which will be decided each year. Ms. Phaneuf also reported that the Executive Director Search Committee has met to set up a schedule for interviews for this position.

B. Curriculum & Instruction (Ms. Phaneuf/Ms. Popowich)

None

C. Healthy & Safer Schools Advisory Committee (Ms. Popowich/Ms. Phaneuf)

This subcommittee will meet tomorrow at 2:30 p.m. at Belchertown High School.

D. Jessica's Boundless Playground Committee (Mr. Weiss)

Mr. Weiss reported that this project now has a final design and timeline, and this design is more realistic than the "Cadillac" version which was previously proposed. He noted that the design is still in keeping with the plan to serve individuals with special needs, and the consensus is that this will produce a positive outcome for that group. Mr. Weiss also stated that it will cost approximately \$400,000.00 to develop the site across the street from Chestnut Hill Community School for construction of the playground, and the Playground Committee is currently looking for additional funding sources outside of Belchertown. Mr. Weiss is encouraged by the continued enthusiasm of those involved and the progress that is being made on this project.

E. Personnel & Policy (Ms. Popowich/Dr. Tsoumas)

Ms. Popowich reported that the revised job description for Network Support Specialist was reviewed at a recent meeting, and Dr. Tsoumas stated that it is specifically designed to reflect the requirements of this position. The subcommittee recommends approval by the School Committee of the revised job description for Network Support Specialist.

1. Revised job description: Network Support Specialist

MOTION: The School Committee moved to recommend approval of the revised job description for Network Support Specialist.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

F. Property & Transportation (Mr. Weiss/Mr. Fritsch)

Mr. Weiss reported that in a Property & Transportation Subcommittee meeting held earlier this evening, Mr. Robert Lachance, Director of Buildings and Grounds, presented information on the following two agenda items.

1. Belchertown High School Lighting Improvement Project 2013

a. Proposal from Energy Management Consultants, Inc.

Mr. Lachance reviewed some of the lighting projects that were completed approximately three months ago during Phase I at Belchertown High School (parking lot, building exterior wall packs, etc.). He stated that the next project will involve improvements in auditorium lighting, track lighting, and hallway lighting, noting that the auditorium lighting will have priority and will be a very labor-intensive project. He recommends the turnkey solution for lighting upgrades as provided in a proposal by Energy Management Consultants, Inc., which is a National Grid lighting project. This is a performance contract, and

so there will be no invoice or bid needed. Mr. Lachance also explained that this is a school district project and is in no way tied to the Siemens Performance contract.

MOTION: The School Committee moved to recommend approval of the National Grid lighting improvement project through Energy Management Consultants, Inc., as proposed.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

b. Municipal Program Application form

The National Grid Municipal Program application for this BHS lighting improvement project contract is included in this evening's correspondence and will be signed by Dr. Houle for submission, which had been pending School Committee approval.

2. Update on savings from Performance Contracting efforts

Mr. Lachance reported that the Siemens Energy Performance project is now 90-95% complete, with the measurement and verification process still to take place. Mr. Lachance reported that there have been great savings realized as a result of this contract with Siemens, and he noted in particular that energy consumption has been reduced significantly.

G. Technology Advisory Committee (Mr. Fritsch)

Mr. Fritsch stated that this subcommittee is continuing to study the percentage of technology use by teachers in order that goals are set for planning and productivity. The information that is being gathered will be used to establish benchmarks to check the progress of teachers in their use of technology. Dr. Houle then provided updates in the efforts to increase Internet connectivity in Belchertown. She stated that she has had negotiations with Charter Communications and it has offered the school district a new contract (as the current contract is about to expire) which will essentially provide service at the same price we currently pay, but with an increase of ten times the bandwidth. She noted that at this point in time, this is a better opportunity for the district vs. switching to Mass Broadband. Mr. Cameron reported that he has been taking groups of staff members to visit other districts (Beverly and Burlington, MA) to observe how technology is being used in the classroom. After a future trip to Reading, MA on April 2nd, he will share the information that has been gathered, in the interest of planning ahead for technology use in the classrooms of Belchertown Public Schools.

X. Correspondence

A. Agenda: March 26, 2013

B. Minutes: March 5, 2013

C. Out-of-State Field Trip form and backup: BHS trip to France

D. Out-of-State Field Trip form and backup: JBMS trip to Washington, DC

E. Memorandum from Robert Opalenik regarding cost share agreement for CHCS pool

F. Draft school calendar: 2013-2014

G. Edcamp B-town documents

1. Final schedule

2. Brochure

3. Thank you letters: CSSR PTO, CHCS PTO, JBMS PTO

H. FY 2014 budget

1. Reallocation list
2. Memorandum to Finance Committee
- I. Job description: Network Support Specialist
- J. Belchertown High School Lighting Improvement Project 2013
 1. Proposal from Energy Management Consultants, Inc.
 2. Municipal Program Application form
- K. Update on savings from Performance Contracting efforts
- XI. Vote to enter into Executive Session under M.G.L., c. 30A, §21, Part (3), to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with Unit A, Teachers, Unit B, Secretaries, Unit C, Custodians, Unit D, Food Service Workers, and Unit E, Paraprofessionals as conducting said business in open session would have a detrimental effect on the School Committee's negotiating position. The Committee will not return to open session.

Dr. Tsoumas – yes

Mr. Weiss - yes

Ms. Popowich – yes

Ms. Phaneuf - yes

Mr. Fritsch – yes

The Committee entered into Executive Session at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Kathryn A. Petersen

Kathryn A. Petersen

Non-Confidential Recording Secretary to the School Committee

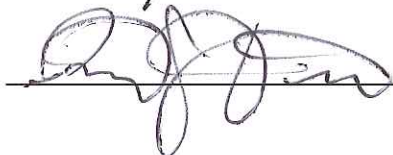
School Committee members' signatures:

 Linda Tsoumas, Chair

 Eric Weiss, Vice Chair

 Clare Popowich, Secretary

 Beverly Phaneuf, Member

 Richard Fritsch, Member

The mission of the Belchertown Public Schools is to ensure that every student meets with success every day. To that end, we pledge to ensure that we have rigorous, standards-based curriculum; instruction designed to meet the needs of diverse learners in every classroom; and access to the global learning community via state-of-the-art technology in schools that are communities of respect and civility for all.

2011-2015 Strategic Plan Goals (adopted by the Belchertown School Committee, 3/1/11):

- Goal #1: To have guaranteed (standards-based and implemented by all), viable (doable and accessible to every student), seamless K-12 curriculum in every content area.
- Goal #2: To have rigorous (standards-based), relevant (grounded in 21st Century skills), differentiated instructional practices with the ability to access the global learning community via technology available to every learner.
- Goal #3: To implement a plan to ensure that our students understand the importance of acceptance, tolerance, and respect supported by all adults in the community.

The Belchertown School Committee conducts its business in open session pursuant to Chapter 30A, Section 21 of the Massachusetts General Laws. The public is welcome to comment only on items on the agenda for this meeting as noted above. If you wish to address the School Committee regarding an item not on the agenda for this meeting, please contact Dr. Judith Houle, Superintendent of Schools, at 413.323.0423 or via email at jhoule@belchertown.org to determine the best way to address your concerns.

BELCHERTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR SESSION
SIGN IN SHEET

DATE: 3-26-13

PLS. PRINT NAME BELOW

Brendan McCarthy

Jennifer Young

Stephanie Davies

Karl Quist

Christine Holesworth

Karen Burns

Tammy Dennehy

Debra Davidohn

Kathy Bernanti

Louise Levy - BHS

Meg Cary Ellis

Talia Levy

Stacy Monette

Robert Kuhn