



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
April 22, 2014**

LOCATION: Chestnut Hill Community School Library – PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF LOCATION
TIME: 6:30 pm – PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF TIME

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Dr. Linda Tsoumas, Chair (present); Ms. Clare Popowich, Vice-Chair (present); Mr. Richard Fritsch, Secretary (present); Ms. Myndi Bogdanovich, Member (not present); Dr. Michael Knapp, Member (present)

ADMINISTRATION: Dr. Judith Houle, Superintendent of Schools (present); Mr. Brian Cameron, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning (present); Ms. Kristi Guzzo, Director of Student Support Services (present); Mr. Robert Lachance, Director of Buildings and Grounds (present); Mr. Scott Karen, Director of Technology (present); Ms. Christine Vigneux, BHS Principal (present); Ms. Paula Fitzgerald, CHCS Principal (present)

BHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES: Mr. Michael DeBarge (present)

VISITORS: William Diehl, Executive Director, Collaborative for Educational Services; Gary Brougham, Town Administrator; Jill Panto, Town Accountant; Members of the Board of Selectmen: Mr. William Barnett, Ms. Brenda Aldrich, Mr. George Archible, Mr. Kenneth Elstein; Members of the Finance Committee: Mr. Paul Silva, Ms. Kate DeCou, Mr. Steve Rose, Ms. Lynne Raymer, Ms. Melissa Hurst; BPD Chief Fran Fox; Mr. Eric Goldscheider, Hampshire Gazette reporter; Mr. Jim Russell, Republican reporter
(See sign-in sheet for additional visitors.)

MINUTES

- I. Call to order
Dr. Tsoumas called the Regular School Committee meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
- II. Special awards and presentations
None
- III. Update from BHS Student Advisory Council representatives
Mr. DeBarge reported on recent and upcoming events at BHS, noting that students are currently enjoying spring break, seniors are making final college selections and preparing for final exams, juniors are touring colleges, spring sports are underway, and all are looking forward to summer.
- IV. Public comment regarding items on the agenda
None

V. Approval of minutes

A. April 15, 2014

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to approve the minutes of the April 15, 2014 Regular School Committee meeting, as presented. Ms. Popowich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously

VI. Reports and recommendations of the Superintendent

A. Collaborative for Educational Services Articles of Agreement

Dr. Tsoumas introduced Mr. William Diehl, newly appointed Executive Director of CES, who was in attendance at this evening's meeting to explain the changes in regulations with regard to collaboratives in the Commonwealth. He presented a brief overview of CES, and discussed the revisions to the Articles of Agreement, which for the most part are the same provisions, but described in more detail for the sake of clarity and transparency, with new sections added to comply with the new regulations. The revised Collaborative Articles of Agreement have been mandated by the state legislature and the DESE, and CES has written the new Articles based on the previous Articles and new legislation. Mr. Diehl asked that the School Committee consider these revisions and vote to approve them, as approval is needed by all 36 member districts in order to be finalized. Mr. Diehl also answered questions with regard to the involvement of CES with the Belchertown Family Center, as well as Mt. Tom Academy, which is part of CES as an alternative high school. Dr. Houle concluded the discussion by noting that she had been part of the search committee for the CES Executive Director, and she was pleased that Mr. Diehl, as the top applicant, had been chosen by the Board of Governors for this position.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve the revised Collaborative for Educational Services Articles of Agreement, as presented. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously

Dr. Tsoumas, as Chair of the Belchertown School Committee, signed the revised Collaborative for Educational Services Articles of Agreement.

B. Cost-share agreement with the Belchertown Recreation Department for CHCS pool

Mr. Dunn stated that the cost-share agreement with the Belchertown Recreation Department for the CHCS pool is presented annually for approval by the School Committee. This agreement reflects amounts based on FY 2013 since that budget cycle has closed with complete financial information available. He also noted that the assessment amount is slightly higher due to an increase in utility costs, and he explained that the charges listed in the memorandum from the Recreation Department are those that will be reimbursed to the Belchertown School Department for associated pool costs.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve the cost-share agreement with the Belchertown Recreation Department for CHCS pool, as presented. Ms. Popowich seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: Dr. Knapp inquired as to how the economics work with regard to the use of the pool, considering that our swim team pays a high hourly rent for its use to the Recreation Department, even though the School Department appears to assume much of the cost already. Dr. Houle explained that the Recreation Department takes care of all maintenance, including personnel and supplies, and she also noted that this has been a longstanding cost-share agreement. Dr. Knapp requested that this motion be tabled until a discussion could be held with Mr. Lachance, who could provide more details about how this agreement has worked in the past and how it benefits the School Department.

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to table the motion to approve the cost-share agreement with the Belchertown Recreation Department for CHCS pool until a more detailed discussion could be held with Mr. Lachance. Mr. Fritsch seconded the motion to table this item, as requested.

VOTE: 3-1-0 (opposed: Dr. Tsoumas)

- C. Job Description: Assistant Superintendent and Director of Student Support Services
Dr. Houle presented a revised job description for Assistant Superintendent and Director of Student Support Services, noting that the basic changes are listed under Qualifications: #5 and #6. These items refer to knowledge of and experience with federal and state statutes and regulations pertaining to special education, Section 504 and related programs, ELL and Title I/IIA, as well as experience with the financial responsibilities of administering and managing special education and other student support services, such as Title I. It was also noted, in response to a query from Dr. Knapp, that this individual, as part of performance responsibilities, will supervise the record-keeping for special education and assigned student support services programs.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve the revised job description for Assistant Superintendent and Director of Student Support Services, as presented. Ms. Popowich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously

The School Committee called for a brief recess to await the arrival of other board members, at which time the meeting reconvened.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to reconsider the previous motion to approve the cost-share agreement with the Belchertown Recreation Department for CHCS pool. Ms. Popowich seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: Dr. Knapp asked Mr. Lachance, who was now in attendance, to explain the efficacy of the cost-share agreement with regard to the CHCS pool. Mr. Lachance stated that this agreement had been used for approximately 10-15 years, and that prior to that period, the School Department was in charge of the pool and would assess fees to the Recreation Department. He said that an

engineering study had been done in the mid 1990's to determine the costs to run the pool, and it was found that this was a more beneficial way to manage its use. He also noted that the school district receives more than \$16,000.00 back from the Recreation Department. Dr. Knapp specifically asked about the total utility cost of \$97,134.00 listed in the agreement, and Mr. Lachance explained that that is the cost based on total building use for CHCS, with the Recreation Department assuming 25% of that utility cost.

VOTE: To approve the cost-share agreement with the Belchertown Recreation Department for CHCS pool, as presented and previously moved.

4-0-0, approved unanimously

VII. Unfinished business

A. FY 2015 budget: Joint discussion town administration, Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee (7:00 pm)

The Select Board and Finance Committee were called to order at 7:02 p.m.

Dr. Houle provided a handout and PowerPoint presentation of a revised FY 2015 budget. She reviewed this update which included the amounts for proposed LEA level service and needs-based budgets and the Finance Committee's target LEA budget, with the resulting gap of \$506,582.00 between the two.

Mr. Silva continued with the PowerPoint presentation and provided the Finance Committee's budget overview, identifying sources of revenue as well as expenses. He included amounts for total estimated revenue, stabilization funds and other available funds, and discussed the mandatory expenditures that are allocated from this total adjusted revenue, which results in an amount of \$37,692,000.00 left to share between the School Department at 70.47% and the town at 29.53%. Mr. Silva stated that it was clear that Belchertown has a revenue problem and must identify ways to increase revenue through new sources in order to meet the budget requests of the various town departments. Mr. Silva also reiterated the Finance Committee's stand on the stabilization fund, stating that it is essentially the town's savings account and should not be used as a "borrowing" source for ongoing operations. Money should only be used from this fund if it can be done with a firm commitment to pay it back.

Dr. Houle reported that percentage increases are equal across the board at 2.7% for town, mandatory expenses, and schools. She then discussed capital needs, and summarized the proposed cuts for closing the gap between the School Department's budget and the target amount proposed by the Finance Committee.

Mr. Brougham reviewed the town's proposed budget, stating that the cuts that were being made were in the areas of needed equipment, repairs, etc., as well as many personnel hourly reductions. He said that he feels that the cuts that the town is being asked to make are beyond practical and not sustainable, and so with that in mind, he asked that the Finance Committee release an additional \$50,000.00 (to the \$400,000.00 already allocated) from the stabilization fund to be shared by the town and school departments. Mr. Brougham also stated that he strongly believes that using money in the stabilization fund is not a loan, but rather constitutes a necessary use of money which has accrued from years of good planning and fiscal responsibility by all the town's departments.

Mr. Elstein commented that he supports the request for \$50,000.00 in additional monies for the town and school departments from the stabilization fund, stating that he is confident that the money will be paid back. He said that we must move forward by operating with two budgets, one which will have to be passed at Town Meeting, and one which may include additional revenue in the future (i.e., property sales and other alternatives for revenue increases).

After further discussion, Mr. Silva stated that while still holding the position of not using the stabilization fund as a source for ongoing operations, the Finance Committee had agreed that it would release an additional \$50,000.00 for a total of \$450,000.00 from the stabilization fund, and will expect that the Select Board commit to finding new sources of increased revenue for the town, as well as planning to pay back this allocated amount as soon as possible.

The School Committee will meet next Tuesday, April 29, 2014 at CHCS Auditorium at 6:30 p.m. to review the budget before the public hearing and vote at 7:00 p.m.

Dr. Houle and the School Committee thanked the Finance Committee for agreeing to the requested increase in funds which will support the reinstatement of one educator position now on the list of proposed cuts.

VIII. Correspondence

- A. Agenda: April 22, 2014
- B. Minutes: April 15, 2014
- C. Collaborative for Educational Services Documents
 - 1. Letter to School Committees
 - 2. Articles of Agreement
- D. Cost-Share Agreement with Belchertown Recreation Department for CHCS pool
- E. Job Description: Assistant Superintendent and Director of Student Support Services
- F. Proposed FY 2015 budget documents
 - 1. Level Service Budget
 - 2. Needs-Based Budget
 - 3. Budget Reductions List

IX. Adjourn

The Select Board and Finance Committee moved to adjourn their respective meetings.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to adjourn the Regular School Committee meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously

Respectfully submitted by,

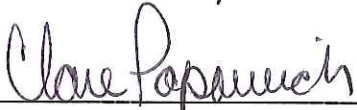


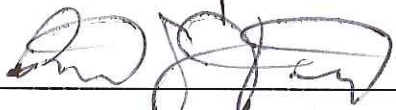
Kathryn A. Petersen

Non-Confidential Recording Secretary to the School Committee

School Committee members' signatures:

 Linda Tsoumas, Chair

 Clare Popowich, Vice Chair

 Richard Fritsch, Secretary

 Michael Knapp, 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 the Superintendent of Schools at 413.323.0423 or via email at superintendent@belchertown.org to determine the best way to address your concerns (see [School Committee Policy BEDH](#)).

DATE: 4-22-14

Paula Fitzgerald	Principal CHCS
Michael DeBorge	Student Rep.
Brenda Methot	Food Service - CHCS
Kathleen Terry	parent
Eric Goldscheider	
William Dichi	Collaborative for ELL Services
Jim Russell	
Christina Visser	Principal
Carolina Aponte	
Kristi A. Guzzo	Director of Student Support Services