



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
June 24, 2014**

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

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS in attendance:** Mr. Richard Fritsch, Chair; Dr. Michael Knapp, Secretary; Ms. Clare Popowich, Member; Ms. Dawn French, Member

**VISITORS:** Mr. Eric Weiss; Ms. Pat Correia; Mr. Ed Weigel; Mr. Eric Goldscheider, Hampshire Gazette reporter

**MINUTES**

*I. Call to order*

Mr. Fritsch called the Regular School Committee meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

*II. Public comment regarding items on the agenda*

Mr. Weiss came as a representative of the playground subcommittee, and to update the School Committee on progress. Planning to order equipment August 1st, and build playground in September, 2014. Funds raised \$300K. Mr. Robert Lachance, Director of Buildings and Grounds, Mr. Steve Williams, DPW Director, the Playground Subcommittee, and the developer have been collaborating on site development and planning. Mr. Keith Terry has done site design work for us with Mr. Sherman Frydryk volunteering.

Challenges: purchase of loam and fill, which is necessary for accessibility (the poured-in rubber needs a firm undersurface). Currently, the site is located near the kickball board at CHCS, but this would require 4 – 5 feet of fill. The Playground Subcommittee is exploring a possible move to the location of the basketball court in order to minimize the ground preparation and fill needed. A move may save \$50K on fill.

There are no plans for the wooden playground, but it will eventually need to be demolished. This will require a Recreation Department/School Department collaboration to deal with it.

Fundraising is run through Ms. Vicki Auffrey's group; money will flow through town – through Schools (501c3) and through town (CPC), which provides a clean money trail for transparency.

Site planning is through school/town. Ms. Patti Thornton is taking the lead with 'asks' from foundations for funding. We will need to be serious about ground breaking in order to convince foundations that we are really moving forward.

Another fundraising program is the 'Be One of 500' Program, and the Playground Subcommittee hopes to raise \$50K this way (500 donors x \$100 each).

The Playground Subcommittee has \$300K, but will need \$450K. Mr. Weiss is optimistic that the remainder of the funding will come in.

The playground will need expenditures to be approved by the School Committee, which should be noted due to summertime schedules.

Sept 13, 2014 has been set for community build start.

Mr. Weigel noted that 50% of money would be needed upfront to order the playground equipment.

Q: Timing of poured rubber? Poured in place rubber is done 4-5 days after rest of installation is done. Poured rubber surface is a significant cost for this project.

Q: Can people continue to buy bricks? Go to [teamjessicaonline.com](http://teamjessicaonline.com). All bricks are in storage with school department.

Q: Future of basketball court? The court could be impacted by this playground. For perspective, it would cost \$10K-\$15K to rebuild the basketball court if necessary.

Q: Whose property slated to be used for the playground? The Recreation Department is 'owner' of the field that lies to the west of the CHCS parking lot. As CHCS is a 'Community School' it is town land surrounding CHCS.

Q: What is the projected completion date? It can be completed by Oct 1, 2014.

Q: Why are the minutes from the meetings of the playground subcommittee not on BPS website? Not sure, but the minutes should be posted. Mr. Weiss will pursue on his end and Mr. Fritsch will pursue on his end.

Q: What about the timing of fair-related fireworks and playground construction? There may be some overlap of this project with the fireworks.

*III. Approval of minutes*

Moved by Ms. Popowich, seconded by Dr. Knapp. Approved 4-0-0.

*IV. Playground Committee Update – Eric Weiss*

Covered under 'public comment' section.

*V. School Committee Training – Pat Correia*

Started at 7:26pm.

Self-evaluation booklets were distributed. (Copies were provided for each member of the Committee, Dr. Gazda, and Mr. Cameron.)

This is an anonymous self-evaluation. Members should fill it in, and then return it to Ms. Correia directly. She will give us feedback later on collated results - strengths/weaknesses and suggested remedies.

Ms. Correia recommends that the Committee should do this every year, until the Committee reaches a good 'happy' steady state.

The scoring mechanism is simple. The items focus on those matters of Committee responsibility. These include: governance and relations to Superintendent/Community; and conduct at Committee meetings.

Ms. Correia gave some overview of the various questions on the self-evaluation and on the topics:

- Members cannot act as a committee of one.
- Members can speak to community, but they cannot represent the 'Committee' as individuals, but can only represent themselves.
- For community input into meetings – provide a clear policy that is available to the public on site.

Timeline: Return by November 1st to Ms. Correia; she will provide results in mid-November to enable future goal setting for the Committee.

Future training: Ms. Correia can come to talk about a SPECIFIC area upon request. It would need 1 – 2 hours. This is best done outside of normal Committee meeting times.

Mr. Fritsch reported on Open Meeting Law (OML) rules from his inquiry to the Attorney General's office: deliberation is the central concern. Deliberation amongst a quorum in any forum would be a problem (e.g., if you are expressing your opinion on an issue in a social media forum, then you could be in violation).

Ms. Correia offered her recommendations: bear in mind to do the public's business in public. You should be concerned with out-of-meeting discussions for two reasons. First, they may violate the OML. Second, they can suppress discussion in a public meeting of the pros/cons of an issue.

Q: Can a member of the Committee express reservations about a prior Committee decision to the public? Ms. Correia urged members to tread carefully. A member has to back the Committee ultimately. Don't beat a dead horse by revisiting old decisions.

VI. *Motion to Adjourn*

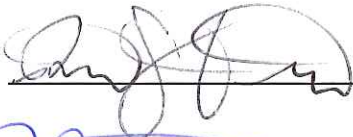
Dr. Knapp moved to adjourn the Regular School Committee meeting at 9:30pm, seconded by Ms. French. Approved 4-0-0.

Respectfully submitted by,

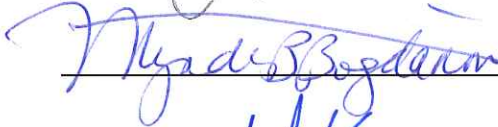
Dr. Michael Knapp,  
School Committee Secretary



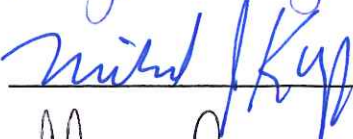
School Committee members' signatures:



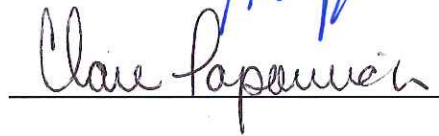
Richard Fritsch, Chair



Myndi Bogdanovich, Vice Chair



Michael Knapp, Secretary



Clare Popowich, Member

\_\_\_\_\_, Dawn French, 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](mailto:superintendent@belchertown.org) to determine the best way to address your concerns (see School Committee Policy BEDH).