



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
March 18, 2014**

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

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

ADMINISTRATION: Dr. Judith Houle, Superintendent of Schools (present); Mr. Brian Cameron, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning (present); Mr. Edward Dunn, Contracted School Business Manager (present); Mr. Ben Admussen, Data Administrator (present); Mr. Scott Karen, Director of Technology (present); Ms. Kristi Guzzo, Director of Student Support Services (present); Mr. Robert Lachance, Director of Buildings and Grounds (present); Ms. Sandra Bremer, CSS Principal (present); Mr. Robert Kuhn, SRE Principal (present); Ms. Paula Fitzgerald, CHCS Principal (present); Mr. Thomas Ruscio, JBMS Principal (present); Ms. Christine Vigneux, BHS Principal (present); Ms. Phyllis Ducomb, School Nurse Leader (present)

BHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES: Mr. Benjamin Stone (present)

VISITORS: Ms. Louise Levy, BHS Teacher; Ms. Melissa Gramuglia, JBMS Teacher; Ms. Rachel Goldenberg, BHS Teacher; Ms. Lori St. Pierre, BHS Teacher; Mr. Ron Aponte, Selectman; Ms. Mona Griffin

MINUTES

- I. Call to order
Ms. Popowich called the Regular School Committee meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- II. Special awards and presentations
Belchertown Teachers of Excellence
Dr. Houle stated that each year the Belchertown Public Schools recognize teachers of excellence. These individuals are nominated by colleagues and selected by their School Councils to receive this recognition. The 2014 Belchertown Teachers of Excellence are: Mr. Ryan Butler, SRE Music Teacher; Ms. Rachel Goldenberg, BHS Science Teacher; Ms. Melissa Gramuglia, JBMS Physical Education Teacher; and Ms. Louise Levy, BHS Science Teacher. Dr. Houle, on behalf of the School Committee, presented the teachers with flowers and a certificate of recognition. She then said that the Pioneer Valley Excellence in Teaching Awards program allows the district to move three candidates forward to be recognized, and she announced that Ms. Goldenberg, Ms. Gramuglia, and Ms. Levy have been named as the recipients of this award. An awards dinner will take place at the Log Cabin on Tuesday, May 6th. Dr. Houle noted that these awards are sponsored by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation and other generous corporate donors, and the district is grateful for their support of educators across the Pioneer Valley. Congratulations were extended to all the recipients.

III. Update from BHS Student Advisory Council representatives

Mr. Stone provided an update on recent and upcoming events at the high school. This Friday, March 21st, the Volleyball Lock-in will take place in the BHS gymnasium from 5:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. Saturday. In addition to volleyball, there will also be a showing of the film "Frozen" at 6:30 p.m. The BHS Band will be marching in the St. Patrick's Day Parade on Sunday, March 23rd. He also noted that MCAS is taking place this week.

IV. Public comment regarding items on the agenda

None

V. Approval of minutes

A. February 25, 2014

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2014 Regular School Committee meeting, as presented. Ms. Popowich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 2-0-2 (abstentions: Mr. Fritsch, Ms. Bogdanovich-did not attend meeting)

VI. Reports and recommendations of the Superintendent

A. Out-of-Country Field Trip: BHS art students to Spain, April 17-25, 2015

Ms. St. Pierre presented her request for an out-of-country field trip by BHS art students to Spain, April 17-25, 2015. This trip will include visits to Barcelona, Madrid and Seville with one chaperone for every six students, and the cost per student is estimated at \$3,649.00. She stated that while the trip is being offered to students taking Spanish and/or art classes, she would like to open it up to all students in grades 10-12. The trip will focus on art, architecture, history, language immersion, and will also encourage photography throughout the site visits.

Mr. Fritsch commented on the price per student, and Ms. St. Pierre explained that the cost is still being negotiated and she hopes that it can be reduced. However, the agency being used, American Council for International Studies (ACIS), does offer many opportunities. Mr. Fritsch also recommended that the group check in with the U.S. diplomatic service while abroad, and Ms. St. Pierre stated that that is already covered by ACIS, as noted in her request. Ms. Popowich asked about transportation not being provided to and from the airport, and Ms. St. Pierre stated that she is hoping to arrange for van transport so that students do not have to find transportation to Logan Airport on their own. Ms. Bogdanovich asked if the students will receive academic credit for the trip, and Ms. St. Pierre affirmed that credit will be given and noted that a lesson plan had been provided in her request.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve the out-of-country field trip request for BHS art students to travel to Spain, April 17-25, 2015, as presented.
Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously

B. Bid for bus transportation services: 2014-2017

Mr. Dunn reported that the Belchertown school district is currently at the end of a 3 year (plus 2 additional years) contract for bus transportation services. A bid went out for these

services and TMS (contracted business management service for our district) looked at multiple districts in order to combine the bid for better pricing (Belchertown, Ware, Hadley). Nine vendors requested bid specifications, but only one returned a completed bid (First Student, Inc.). First Student honored the combined price, which is approximately \$95,000.00 less than the single district price, and this price is guaranteed for three years, which allows for fiscal certainty. Mr. Dunn recommends approval of this combined bid. Dr. Knapp asked if it was known why only one vendor returned a bid, and also what would happen if the district did not accept the one bid that was submitted. While there were no certain answers as to why the other vendors had not shown an interest, Mr. Dunn did explain that if we do not accept First Student's bid this evening, the bid process would have to begin again, and considering the outcome of the first bid, he and Dr. Houle feel that there would be no point in reopening this bid.

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to accept the 3 year bid from First Student, Inc. for bus transportation services for 2014-2017 at a yearly amount of \$1,387,130.00, as presented. Mr. Fritsch seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously

C. FY 2015 budget presentation

Dr. Houle began the presentation of the proposed FY 2015 budget by stating that a level service budget will once again be used as the foundation for the budget process, and this number has been identified based on known expenses for next year (salaries, benefits, fixed costs, etc.) and projected discretionary expenses based on level services from this year. Changes in needs and services for next year were then assessed within that figure. Dr. Houle proceeded to discuss how the proposed budget will be aligned with the District's Strategic Plan and School Improvement Plans, and she reviewed the three strategic goals. She also compared the All Funds and LEA budgets from FY 2014 to FY 2015, which reflected 2.9% and 3.8% increases respectively. Dr. Houle went on to discuss the district's revenue sources (Chapter 70, grants, revolving accounts, and town contribution) and with a printout from the Department of Revenue's website of today's most current cherry sheet, she noted the changes in those numbers from FY 2014 as compared to FY 2015 estimates. Dr. Houle also presented a summary of the student enrollment trends for all grade levels since SY 2002-03 through the present, and she noted that the data reflects varying enrollment decreases beginning in SY 2007-2008. In addition, she outlined School Choice trends and the School Choice proposal for the 2014-2015 school year.

Administrators from each department/building then presented their individual budget proposals for the coming year, beginning with level service changes and followed by their needs-based budget plan, as follows: Dr. Houle, School Committee and Central Office; Mr. Cameron, District Academic Leadership; Mr. Admussen and Mr. Karen, School District Technology; Ms. Vigneux, BHS; Mr. Ruscio, JBMS; Ms. Fitzgerald, CHCS; Mr. Kuhn, SRE; Ms. Bremer, CSS; Ms. Guzzo, Student Support Services; Ms. DuComb, Health/Nurse; Mr. Lachance, Maintenance.

Dr. Houle concluded the FY 2015 budget presentation by discussing how the budget must work within the context of the many demands of new mandates, most of which are unfunded or under-funded (i.e., new nutrition guidelines, early warning indicator system, emergency operations plan, medical emergency response plans, integrated wellness policy, additional requirements for MassCore, educator evaluation system, WIDA, concussion monitoring/reporting, PARCC, gender identity regulations, bullying prevention/intervention, etc.). Dr. Houle stated that no action is needed this evening with regard to the proposed FY 2015 budget, but she requested that the School Committee review it to offer any guidance with regard to potential cuts or changes.

D. School choice seats for the 2014-2015 school year

Dr. Houle stated that according to M.G.L. c. 76, §12B, the school district must declare every year whether it will participate in the School Choice program, and if so, how many seats will be available. These openings must also be advertised. After consideration by the Senior Leadership Team, who felt that these numbers could easily be absorbed into the classrooms, Dr. Houle recommended that 96 seats in grades K-12 be opened for the 2014-2015 school year, as listed in a memorandum included in this evening's correspondence.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve the School Choice seats for the 2014-2015 school year, as presented. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously

COMMENT: Dr. Knapp said that the greater number in School Choice seats being made available for the coming school year is a good decision in order to increase the district's revenue.

E. JBMS After-School Program

Mr. Ruscio stated the JBMS After-School program is now officially closed as there is currently no funding available to continue programming through the remainder of the school year. While he is working with the school district to seek alternative resources to fund this program, Mr. Ruscio has sought input from parents and students with an online survey to address the concerns that will determine the future of the after-school program, and he has been pleased with the overwhelming response and support. At this point in time, Mr. Ruscio is suggesting a short-term solution wherein partial programming, including late bus transportation, is resumed on a restricted basis from March 20, 2014 through May 1, 2014. This programming will include Homework Club and Eighth Hour academic supports (funded through a donation from the JBMS PTO), and the Running Club (funded through a fee-based participation rate of \$10.00 per student). Mr. Ruscio will also continue to develop a full financial proposal, combining school district operational expenses, a fee-based participation system, and necessary donations and fundraisers to resume full programming during the 2014-2015 school year.

MOTION: Ms. Bogdanovich moved to approve the acceptance of donations to run the JBMS After-School academic program, and the participation fee of \$10.00 per student for the JBMS Running Club for a six-week period, as presented. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously

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

A. Collaborative for Educational Services (Ms. Bogdanovich)

None; Ms. Bogdanovich stated that a meeting of the CES had been held last week, but due to inclement weather, she was unable to attend.

B. Curriculum & Instruction (Dr. Tsoumas/Dr. Knapp)

None; a meeting was scheduled on March 25, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.

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

1. Next meeting: March 19, 2014

D. Jessica's Boundless Playground Committee (Dr. Tsoumas)

None; Dr. Tsoumas was not present to report.

E. Personnel & Policy (Ms. Popowich/Ms. Bogdanovich)

1. File IJL-R.1 and IJL-E: Belchertown Public Schools Library Media Procedures and Exhibits

At a meeting of the Personnel & Policy Subcommittee held earlier this evening, Ms. Popowich reported that Dr. Houle reviewed this file of library procedures/administrative regulations. This document is a result of the schools' librarians working together to improve and implement best practices by streamlining policies in the following areas: requesting library media center materials, standardizing library operations throughout the district, and weeding library materials (reevaluating available library information and removing material that is no longer relevant and/or appropriate).

MOTION: Ms. Bogdanovich moved to approve File IJL-R.1 and IJL-E: Belchertown Public Schools Library Media Procedures and Exhibits, as presented. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously

COMMENT: Dr. Knapp inquired if this document constituted a change to current library policy, and Dr. Houle explained that this file was an addendum to current policy.

2. Policy JEBA: Preschool Peer Student Eligibility

At a meeting of the Personnel & Policy Subcommittee held earlier this evening, Ms. Bogdanovich reported that Ms. Guzzo had proposed this policy because to date, nothing had been in place for entrance criteria and screening for preschool peer students. The policy lists these specific criteria which address toilet training requirements, age requirements, and screening requirements.

MOTION: Ms. Bogdanovich moved to approve Policy JEBA: Preschool Peer Student Eligibility, as presented. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously

F. Property & Transportation (Mr. Fritsch/Dr. Knapp)

None; next meeting to be scheduled as needed. Ms. Bogdanovich commented that a meeting may be warranted due to increasing traffic issues/complaints at several of the school buildings during drop-off and pick-up times.

G. School Safety Task Force (Mr. Fritsch)

Dr. Houle stated that with the approval of the Emergency Operations Plan at the February 25th School Committee meeting, the work of this group has now been

completed and the School Committee had voted to disband this task force. Any future issues regarding school safety will be addressed by the Healthy & Safer Schools Subcommittee.

H. Technology Advisory Committee (Mr. Fritsch)

Mr. Fritsch reported that the February 5th meeting of this committee had been cancelled due to snow.

1. Next meeting: April 2, 2014

Mr. Fritsch stated that it is important that this committee continue to move forward on the many technology issues facing the district in order to avoid wasting time and greater future expense.

VIII. New business

Ms. Popowich read an email received from Dr. Tsoumas. Due to a scheduling conflict in the Superintendent candidates' interview timeline, Dr. Tsoumas requested that the School Committee meet either this Friday evening or Saturday morning. All present School Committee members agreed that they would meet in Open Session on Friday, March 21, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. in SRE Library to discuss potentially changing the interview timeline.

IX. Unfinished business

None

X. Correspondence

A. Agenda: March 18, 2014

B. Minutes: February 25, 2014

C. Out-of-Country field trip request: BHS art students to Spain, April 17-25, 2015

D. Bus transportation bid recommendation

E. FY 2015 draft budget

F. Memorandum regarding school choice seats for the 2014-2015 school year

G. Memorandum regarding JBMS After-School Program proposal

H. File IJL-R.1 and IJL-E: Belchertown Public Schools Library Media Procedures and Exhibits

I. Policy JEBA: Preschool Peer Student Eligibility

J. Sample thank-you letter: School Safety Task Force

Dr. Houle noted that the thank-you letter to Mr. Gary Brougham, Town Administrator, included in this evening's correspondence, had been sent to all members of the now-disbanded School Safety Task Force.

XI. Vote to enter into Executive Session under M.G.L., c. 30A, §21, Parts (2) and (3), to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel and to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with Unit A, Teachers, as conducting said business in open session would have a detrimental effect on the School Committee's negotiating position. The Committee will return to open session.

Ms. Popowich – yes

Mr. Fritsch – yes

Ms. Bogdanovich – yes

Dr. Knapp - yes

The School Committee entered into Executive Session at 8:47 p.m.

The Committee returned to Open Session at 9:17 p.m.

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to approve the Memorandum of Agreement with Unit A Teachers to form a Joint Labor Management Committee to discuss the schedule at Jabish Brook Middle School. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve the Team Leader Coordinators Handbook of Benefits, as revised. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to adjourn the Regular School Committee meeting at 9:19 p.m. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

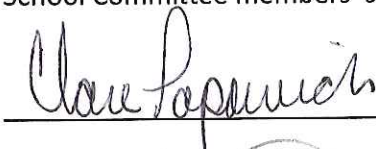
VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously

Respectfully submitted by,

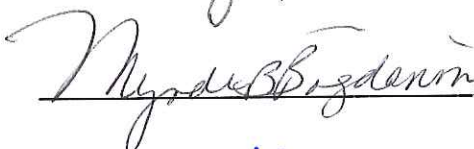



Kathryn A. Petersen
Non-Confidential Recording Secretary to the School Committee

School Committee members' signatures:

 Clare Popowich, Vice Chair

 Richard Fritsch, Secretary

 Myndi Bogdanovich, Member

 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](#)).