



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
March 25, 2014**

LOCATION: Swift River Elementary School Library

TIME: 7:00 pm

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Dr. Linda Tsoumas, Chair (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)

BHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES: (not present)

VISITORS: Mr. Thomas Ruscio, JBMS Principal; Ms. Mona Griffin; Ms. Isabelle Griffin; Ms. Dawn French

MINUTES

I. Call to order

Dr. Tsoumas called the Regular School Committee meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. Special awards and presentations

Lawrence O'Brien, BHS Social Studies Teacher, William Spratt Award for Excellence in Teaching Secondary Social Studies

Dr. Tsoumas stated that Mr. O'Brien was unable to attend this evening's meeting, but she wished to acknowledge him as the recipient of the prestigious William Spratt Award for Excellence in Teaching Secondary Social Studies. This award is presented annually to one educator in the state, and this will take place at the NERC's (Northeast Regional Conference for the Social Studies) awards evening on April 7th at the Sturbridge Host Hotel in Sturbridge, MA. Dr. Houle was invited to attend this ceremony and she is planning to do so. It is anticipated that Mr. O'Brien will come to a future School Committee meeting to be formally recognized by the district.

III. Update from BHS Student Advisory Council representatives

None; Dr. Houle noted that there are two dates coming up designed to promote awareness of important issues to students and families in our district. The first is "Light It Up Blue" on Wednesday, April 2, 2014, and students and staff will be asked to wear blue in commemoration of World Autism Day, which is sponsored by the United Nations as part of Autism Awareness month. The second date is Tuesday, April 15th, which will be celebrated by wearing purple for "Purple Up! For Military Kids" to support students and staff members in Belchertown who have family members serving our country in the military.

- IV. Public comment regarding items on the agenda
None

- V. Approval of minutes

- A. March 18, 2014

MOTION: Ms. Popowich moved to approve the minutes of the March 18, 2014 Regular School Committee meeting, as presented. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-1 (abstention: Dr. Tsoumas)

- VI. Reports and recommendations of the Superintendent

- A. Out-of-State Field Trips: JBMS Students to Washington, DC and CT Science Museum
Dr. Houle asked for a motion to table the out-of-state field trip request by JBMS students to Washington, DC, as more details still need to be worked out for this trip.

MOTION: Ms. Popowich moved to table the out-of-state field trip request by JBMS students to Washington, DC, as requested. Mr. Fritsch seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

Mr. Ruscio presented his request for an out-of-state field trip by JBMS students to the CT Science Museum in Hartford, CT on May 1, 2014. He stated that this trip will include all students in Grade 7, and will be offered to 8th grade students who will possibly not be traveling to Washington, DC during the same time period. The cost to students will be \$15.00 each, and that fee will be subsidized for those students who cannot afford it. Scheduled activities will take place at JBMS for those 8th graders who do not participate in this trip. Dr. Houle stated that she has reviewed this out-of-state field trip request and found it to be fully compliant with all safety and liability requirements as required by school policy, and she recommends approval of this trip by the School Committee.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve the out-of-state field trip to the CT Science Museum by JBMS students on May 1, 2014, as presented. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

- B. Warrant Articles for Annual Town Meeting

Dr. Houle requested that this agenda item be discussed under *Item IX. A. Unfinished Business: FY 2015 budget*, as it directly applies to the budget issues being presented.

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

- A. Collaborative for Educational Services (Ms. Bogdanovich)

None; Ms. Bogdanovich will forward the notes from the last meeting of the CES when they become available.

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

1. Report from March 25, 2014 meeting

At a Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee meeting held earlier this evening, Dr. Tsoumas stated that Mr. Cameron had provided updates on both the Edcamp professional development day held on March 14, 2014, and progress on the new math curriculum and its implementation. Mr. Cameron reviewed those updates for the School Committee, noting that Edcamp had once again been a great success, and that BHS is currently piloting new math resources and working on finalizing the curriculum guide for Honors Math 9. Mr. Cameron also asked that the PTOs be recognized for providing lunch during the professional development day and he expressed his appreciation for their service. Dr. Houle then recapped her discussion of the STEM program and the plans to research it further as an opportunity to revamp science courses and offer more technology-based learning at JBMS and BHS. Site visits are being planned to see this program as it is implemented in other schools, as well as a tour of the UMass Team Based Learning Classrooms, which will be scheduled in the near future.

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

1. Report from March 20, 2014 meeting

Mr. Cameron reported that the group discussed the Emergency Operations Plan, and he stated that a few members are currently working on putting together a prototype of the emergency kit which will eventually be placed in all school buildings, and which he will present at a future School Committee meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled on May 15, 2014.

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

Dr. Tsoumas reported that this project is moving forward at a rapid pace, with engineers and contractors having recently met to discuss the start of work on the playground's foundation. There has also been discussion of in-kind services being offered from various local businesses and community members, with a potential of beginning to build on the site in early to mid-July. Dr. Tsoumas stated that the committee is moving out of its silent fund-raising phase, and she noted that the CPC will ask for \$40,000.00 at the Annual Town Meeting to be used toward the playground construction. There will also be more information provided in the near future as to the status of the "bricks" which were purchased in a past fund-raising effort. The Playground Committee will meet again tomorrow evening.

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

None

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

None

G. Technology Advisory Committee (Mr. Fritsch)

1. Next meeting: April 2, 2014

VIII. New business

None

IX. Unfinished business

A. FY 2015 budget

Dr. Houle stated that at the last meeting of the School Committee, a great deal of information had been provided on the budget, and she would like to review that information this evening with the hope of bringing more clarification to it. To that end, Dr. Houle distributed handouts which constituted a recap from the March 18, 2014 budget discussion, as well as an "Income Expense Summary Sheet" which the Town Accountant's office had provided, and she then reviewed the content of these documents in detail. Dr. Houle concluded by asking the School Committee members for their input as to how to proceed with the budget in light of the figures she had presented, and she stated that she could not "in good conscience" recommend any cuts to this budget, preferring to go to Town Meeting with the budget "as is". She said that there will be a joint meeting with the School Committee, Select Board and Finance Committee on April 22nd to discuss the budget, but a final budget number will have to be settled on for the public hearing on April 29th where a vote will be taken. After much discussion, the School Committee agreed with Dr. Houle's recommendation that no cuts be made to this budget as presented, as it would be preferable to go to Town Meeting prepared to make the argument for this decision. In addition, the School Committee, based on the needs-based budget summary, decided to include requests for both an additional reading teacher and school psychologist, as well as a fourth team leader in Student Support Services. Dr. Tsoumas also emphasized the importance of the JBMS After-School Program which has lost its funding, and that it might also be worthy of consideration in the budget. Discussion then revolved around defining the in-kind services that the school district provides to the town at no cost, which would be billable services if provided to out-of-district groups. Dr. Houle said that she would bring this to Mr. Robert Lachance, Director of Buildings and Grounds, so that he could work on an estimate of such costs that the town is saving at the expense of the school district. Dr. Houle then referred to *Item VI.B. Warrant Articles for Annual Town Meeting* which had been postponed from earlier in the agenda. She reviewed the warrant articles which are being proposed for submission at Town Meeting and discussion ensued around three issues, followed by votes for their inclusion in the warrant.

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to approve the use of a revolving fund for the transportation of pupils in grades 7 through 12 with such expenditure not to exceed \$150,000.00 and to put this item on the warrant for Town Meeting, as presented. Ms. Popowich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

COMMENT: Dr. Knapp asked if this motion is how bus use is authorized, and Dr. Houle explained that this is how the district is authorized to spend the money from a revolving account for bus use.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve a request for the Town to raise and appropriate or appropriate from available funds in the treasury a sum of money to be used to replace a failed boiler at Belchertown High School, and to put this item on the warrant for Town Meeting, as presented. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

COMMENT: Ms. Popowich asked why the boiler had already failed in a building that was only 14 years old, and Dr. Houle explained that at the time, the district had chosen the vendor with the lowest bid specifications.

MOTION: Ms. Popowich moved to approve a request for the Town to raise and appropriate or appropriate from available funds in the treasury a sum of money for the purpose of upgrading and replacing failing technology hardware and infrastructure in the Belchertown Public Schools, and to put this item on the warrant for Town Meeting, as presented. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

B. Superintendent search

Dr. Tsoumas asked for a motion to table this agenda item, as it will be discussed at the March 31, 2014 School Committee meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to table this agenda item for discussion at the March 31, 2014 School Committee meeting. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

X. Correspondence

A. Agenda: March 25, 2014

B. Minutes: March 18, 2014

C. Out-of-State field trip requests: JBMS students to Washington, DC and CT Science Museum

D. Proposed Warrant Articles for Town Meeting

1. Transportation

2. Capital requests

XI. Adjourn

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to adjourn the Regular School Committee meeting at 8:40 p.m. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

Respectfully submitted by,



Kathryn A. Petersen

Non-Confidential Recording Secretary to the School Committee

School Committee members' signatures:

Linda Tsoumas, Linda Tsoumas, Chair

Clare Popowich, Clare Popowich, Vice Chair

Richard Fritsch, Richard Fritsch, Secretary

Myndi Bogdanovich, Myndi Bogdanovich, Member

Michael Knapp, 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](#)).

BELCHERTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR SESSION
SIGN IN SHEET

DATE: 3-25-14

PLS. PRINT NAME BELOW

Mona Griffin

Isabelle Griffin

Thomas K. Rocco

Dawn French