



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
April 15, 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); Ms. Christine Vigneux, BHS Principal (present); Mr. Thomas Ruscio, JBMS Principal (present); Ms. Paula Fitzgerald, CHCS Principal (present)

VISITORS: Mr. Paul Silva, Finance Committee Chair; Ms. Brenda Aldrich, Selectmen Liaison to School Committee
(See attached sign-in sheet for additional visitors.)

MINUTES

- I. Call to order
Dr. Tsoumas called the Regular School Committee meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- II. Public comment regarding items on the agenda
Ms. Diahann Wimmer asked how the hiring of a BCBA and Ms. Kristi Guzzo's resignation as Director of Student Support Services would financially impact the district, and would there be parental/public input allowed in the selections of individuals for these positions. Dr. Tsoumas and Dr. Houle explained that these questions pre-empted the budget discussion slated later in the agenda, and that they would likely be answered in the budget updates/revisions that will be addressed.
- III. Approval of minutes
 - A. April 8, 2014
MOTION: Ms. Popowich moved to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2014 Regular School Committee meeting, as presented. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.
VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously
- IV. Discussion/Action Items
 - A. School year calendar, 2014-2015
Dr. Houle presented a draft calendar for the 2014-2015 school year, noting that all required items have been listed (i.e., vacations, professional days, open houses, first/last days of school, etc.). She also stated that the first professional

development day has been scheduled on voting day, so that students would not be in attendance at the high school (polling site) on that day, which would allow for more parking and less traffic issues.

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

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

COMMENT: Dr. Knapp commented that it was a good decision to plan the professional day on voting day for the reason stated.

B. Belchertown Public Schools/Ware Public Schools Bus Transportation Contract with First Student, 2015-2017

Dr. Houle stated that the contract with First Student for bus transportation was included in this evening's correspondence. This was a multi-district bid (Belchertown and Ware) prepared by our contracted business management service (TMS) and this bid has been approved by the School Committee. Dr. Houle said that the contract must be signed this evening by the School Committee, and then signed by Ware, in order to be executed.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved that the School Committee sign the Belchertown Public Schools/Ware Public Schools Bus Transportation Contract with First Student for 2015-2017, as presented. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

COMMENT: Dr. Knapp asked if, in the interest of student safety, there are cameras on the buses, and Dr. Houle explained that there will now be two cameras on each bus, in front and back, whereas there previously had been only one camera at the front of each bus. Mr. Fritsch asked if there would be training for bus drivers with regard to student safety, and Dr. Houle stated that such training has been ongoing for several years. Dr. Knapp then asked for clarification with regard to the annual fee of \$1,387,130.00 presented in the contract, and Dr. Houle explained that the price will remain consistent, even with potential fuel increases, as stipulated in the contract. She also noted that although the contract reflects a 17% increase in cost for bus transportation, the previous contract was based on a five-year old agreement.

C. FY 2015 budget update

Dr. Tsoumas invited Mr. Silva to join the Committee for discussion of the FY 2015 budget. Dr. Houle reported that she and Dr. Tsoumas had attended the Finance Committee meeting last Thursday evening, and she discussed the large gap (\$703,848.00) that exists between the school district's current proposed LEA budget (combining both level service and needs-based budgets) and the target LEA budget which the Finance Committee has proposed for the district. Dr. Houle then reviewed the total capital needs, and summarized the proposed cuts which totaled \$628,848.00, leaving \$75,000.00 in cuts remaining to close the gap.

Discussion then ensued among the School Committee members, Dr. Houle and Mr. Silva with regard to the cuts being proposed and their impact on the school district, as well as the current available revenue. Mr. Silva reviewed the mandatory expenditures the town must cover (Pathfinder, pension and insurance, interest and debt), and explained that funds must be allocated fairly to all town departments as well as the school district. He also noted that although there is an adequate amount in the stabilization fund, it should not be used for current ongoing operations, and by keeping the fund at a good level, the town is ensured a higher bond rating which saves money in interest. In conclusion, it was agreed that both the town and school district must work with a very limited amount of resources in the coming fiscal year. Dr. Houle noted that the School Committee will conduct a joint meeting with the Select Board and Finance Committee next Tuesday, April 22, 2014 at CHCS Library, and a public hearing will be held on Tuesday, April 29th where a vote will be taken on the budget figure to present at Town Meeting.

Dr. Tsoumas thanked the Senior Leadership Team for their work in coming forth with the proposed cuts on such short notice, while considering the operations of the schools, and minimizing impacts on students.

V. Correspondence

B. Agenda: April 15, 2014

C. Minutes: April 8, 2014

D. School year calendar, 2014-2015

E. Belchertown Public Schools/Ware Public Schools Bus Transportation Contract with First Student, 2015-2017

VI. 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.

Dr. Tsoumas - yes

Ms. Popowich – yes

Mr. Fritsch – yes

Ms. Bogdanovich – yes

Dr. Knapp – yes

The School Committee entered into Executive Session at 8:13 p.m.

The Committee returned to Open Session at 9:01 p.m. After a brief recess to allow the public to return, the meeting resumed at 9:04 p.m.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve the MOA regarding the Extended School Year Program Coordinator stipend, as presented, subject to approval by the Association. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

MOTION: Ms. Popowich moved to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to reorganize central office administration and move the Assistant Superintendent position to the Department of Student Support Services and to leave the curriculum position vacant, effective July 1, 2014. Mr. Fritsch seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: Dr. Knapp commented that this reorganization would save the district \$90,000.00 as part of an overall budget reduction necessary for the FY 2015 budget. Ms. Bogdanovich commented for the record that she believed the appointment of the Assistant Superintendent and Director of Student Support Services should go through a process that allows for parent input into the decision.

VOTE: 4-1-0 (dissenting vote: Ms. Bogdanovich)

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

Respectfully submitted by,

Kathryn A. Petersen

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, 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: 4-15-14

PLS. PRINT NAME BELOW

Diana Wimmer

Paul Silva

BB ADRIAN

Tom Laughner

Paula C. Baker

Sheryl Cook

Dawn M Both

Cindy Mancuso

Hella Hutchinson

Kelly McLoughlin

Bonnie Bird

Christina Aponte

Dawn French

Thomas K Rusco

Mona Griffin

Cheryl Verna