



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
April 29, 2014**

LOCATION: Chestnut Hill Community School Auditorium – PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF LOCATION

TIME: 6:30 pm – PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF TIME
7:00 pm – PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED FY2015 BPS BUDGET

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. 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. Phyllis DuComb, Nurse Leader (present); Ms. Christine Vigneux, BHS Principal (present); Mr. Thomas Ruscio, JBMS Principal (present); Ms. Paula Fitzgerald, CHCS Principal (present); Mr. Robert Kuhn, SRE Principal (present); Ms. Sandra Bremer, CSS Principal (present)

BHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES: (not present)

VISITORS: Mr. Gary Brougham, Town Administrator; Mr. Paul Silva, Chair, Ms. Kate DeCou, Ms. Melissa Hurst, Belchertown Finance Committee; Mr. William Barnett, Chair, Select Board; Ms. Brenda Aldrich, Selectmen Liaison to School Committee; Ms. Aimee Henderson, Sentinel editor (See sign-in sheet for additional visitors.)

MINUTES

- I. Call to order
Dr. Tsoumas called the Regular School Committee meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.
- II. Unfinished business
 - A. Review of the proposed FY 2015 budget with the School Committee, with revisions from the joint meeting with the Finance Committee and Selectmen on April 22, 2014
Dr. Houle presented an overview to the School Committee members of the budget changes which had been made since the last meeting, and discussed how the public hearing would proceed. She also reviewed the budget voting protocol that will be followed due to a specific conflict of interest that a School Committee member has because of a family member working in the district.

A 15 minute recess was then held, at the end of which Dr. Houle made the public assembly announcement with regard to safety laws and emergency exit information.

Dr. Tsoumas reconvened the School Committee meeting at 7:00 p.m.

III. Public comment regarding items on the agenda: 7:00 pm

A. Public presentation of the proposed FY 2015 budget and public hearing

Dr. Houle began the budget discussion with a PowerPoint presentation of a revised FY 2015 budget. She reviewed the strategic plan goals, budget assumptions, student enrollment trends, and she provided a proposed FY 2015 budget summary, as well as summaries of grants and revolving funds.

Mr. Silva pre-empted his remarks by noting that the Finance Committee had been called to order at 7:00 p.m. due to the presence of other board members, and stated that they would adjourn at the conclusion of the budget discussion and vote.

Mr. Silva continued with the PowerPoint presentation and provided the Finance Committee's FY 2015 town 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, and he also reviewed a budget history with data on the 3-year spending trend from FY 2012 to the present. 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. However, he 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. Dr. Houle addressed the revenue problem as well, and the implications it has for the FY 2015 budget. She reviewed School Choice trends, and noted that additional School Choice seats have been opened to students across all grade levels. She discussed capital needs, and the need for technology upgrades in the district, and she then presented the school district's changes to the FY 2015 proposed budget. (The handout provided to coincide with the PowerPoint presentation did not reflect the additional reduction of a custodian, as noted by Dr. Knapp, but that correction was made in the actual presentation.) Dr. Houle concluded the budget discussion by reviewing the many challenges that the school district faces with increasing demands (i.e., DESE mandates for reports/data and initiatives in curriculum/instruction/assessments, as well as new health and safety initiatives), and the budgetary implications that follow from these requirements, many of which are unfunded or underfunded.

At this time, Dr. Tsoumas opened the meeting for public comment.

Several community members offered comments and/or asked questions with regard to various topics, to which Dr. Houle responded, as follows: the value of reinstating the freshmen sports program (Mr. Douglas Daponde, Dean of Students/Athletic Director, is working with the Belchertown Orioles Athletic Association to find a way to bring back this program, and parental feedback is encouraged); is there data to support the efficacy of the mandates required of the district and is there input allowed by districts on these decisions (many individuals, including a group of Superintendents, have expressed their concerns to the MA DOE with regard to the mandates, but it appears to fall on "deaf ears"); can a projection of School Choice revenue be used in the current budget proposal and how is such revenue allocated (revenue cannot be counted in the budget until it is actualized, and the School

Committee will consider what to with any revenue at that time); will the technology teacher position be refilled (the industrial arts position is being reconfigured and a teacher for the STEM program will be hired); can textbook fees be assessed to parents to offset the budget deficit (public schools in MA do not charge for textbooks, as legally, resources cannot be denied to those who may be unable to afford them); will the hiring of a BCBA reduce the need for contracted services (this position will balance the services, while being cost-effective in keeping students in-district).

Dr. Houle concluded the budget discussion by thanking the Finance Committee, Select Board, the Town Administrator, and the School Committee for their input to the budget process and for their efforts to make the best decisions for students, providing the maximum services possible with limited revenue.

IV. Reports and recommendations of the Superintendent

A. Recommendation for approval of the FY 2015 budget

Dr. Houle read a statement with regard to FY 2015 budget vote protocol prior to the vote taking place, due to one member having a specific conflict of interest with a family member who works in the district. Therefore, one line item will require a vote where the affected member will not participate in the discussion or vote on the line item that would cause the conflict of interest, based on the Massachusetts State Ethics Commission Advisory #05-03.

Dr. Tsoumas excused herself from the meeting and Ms. Popowich took over as Chair and entertained a motion for the following vote.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve Department 081, Special Education High School, Line Item 812310-51110, Full Time Salary & Wage: \$380,120.00.

Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

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

Dr. Tsoumas returned to the meeting and resumed as Chair.

1. All funds budget

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to approve the FY 2015 All Funds Budget: \$28,466,938.86. Mr. Fritsch seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

2. Local budget

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve the FY 2015 LEA Budget for presentation at the Annual Town Meeting: \$26,598,175.00. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

V. Approval of minutes

A. April 22, 2014

MOTION: Ms. Popowich moved to approve the minutes of the April 22, 2014 Regular School Committee meeting, as presented. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-1 (abstention: Ms. Bogdanovich)

VI. New business

A. Interim Superintendent

Dr. Tsoumas distributed two handouts to the School Committee members which Ms. Patricia Correia, M.A.S.C. consultant, had provided (a revised accelerated timeline for the Superintendent search, and a set of questions to be posed to the candidates for the position of interim Superintendent). She stated that the School Committee will meet on Monday, May 5, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. (to review resumes prior to the arrival of candidates) and Tuesday, May 6, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. at SRE Library for the purpose of conducting interviews of candidates for the interim Superintendent position.

VII. Correspondence

A. Agenda: April 29, 2014

B. Minutes: April 22, 2014

C. Proposed FY 2015 budget documents

VIII. Adjourn

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to adjourn the Regular School Committee meeting at 8:30 p.m. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

Dr. Tsoumas thanked the members of the public for their attendance at this evening's meeting, as their interest and input were greatly appreciated by the School Committee.

Respectfully submitted by,


Kathryn A. Petersen

Kathryn A. Petersen

Non-Confidential Recording Secretary to the School Committee

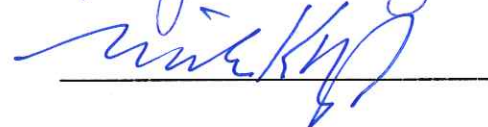
School Committee members' signatures:

 Linda Tsoumas, Chair

 Clare Popowich, Vice Chair

 Richard Fritsch, Secretary

 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](#)).

BELCHERTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR SESSION
SIGN IN SHEET

DATE: 4-29-14

PLS. PRINT NAME BELOW

Ed Boscher

Melissa Hurst

David Vacchi

Kristi Guzzo

Jessica Verrochi

Mona Griffin

B & Alencu

N. Beaudette

Dawn French

Loree Hamparinn

Brenda Methot

Laurie Rocheteau

Phyllis DeComf

Paula Fitzgerald

S. Bremner

ROBERT LACHANCE

Scott Kanan

David Robinson

Robert Kuhn

BILL BARNETT

Christ Vignone

B. Kerue

Tam Langhner

Kate DeCun

Craig Bertsch