



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
May 13, 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); Dr. Robert Gazda, incoming Interim Superintendent (present); Mr. Edward Dunn, Contracted School Business Manager (present); Mr. Thomas Ruscio, JBMS Principal (present); Ms. Christine Vigneux, BHS Principal (present)

BHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES: (not present)

VISITORS: Ms. Lyndsay Boysen, BHS Band Director; Ms. Susan Comstock, BHS Music Teacher; Mr. Eric Weiss, former School Committee Chair
(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.
At this time, Dr. Tsoumas introduced and welcomed Dr. Gazda to this evening's meeting.
- II. Special awards and presentations
Belchertown High School Music Department recognition of achievements at the Heritage Music Festival in Chicago, IL
Dr. Houle, Ms. Boysen, and Ms. Comstock discussed the recent trip to the Heritage Music Festival in Chicago, noting the numerous awards that the BHS Music Department received there, including the overall band award for "Best Comprehensive Music Program". Dr. Houle recognized those students present who had participated in this trip, congratulating them on their music performances, as well as their exemplary conduct, for which they were commended throughout the trip. She also thanked the parents who chaperoned, and offered kudos to Ms. Boysen and Ms. Comstock who did an outstanding job with the BHS Music Department's presentation. Dr. Tsoumas congratulated the students as "wonderful ambassadors" for Belchertown. Dr. Houle concluded by thanking Ms. Boysen for her dedication to the students of the Belchertown Public Schools, and adding that sadly, Ms. Boysen will not be returning to BHS next fall since she has accepted a position at UNH. At this time, Ms. Popowich and Dr. Houle presented Dr. Tsoumas with a gift of a Les Campbell framed print in honor of her years of service on the School Committee, as this will be her last meeting before the Town Election when her replacement on the Board will be selected. Ms. Popowich expressed her gratitude to Dr. Tsoumas for her leadership and

dedication to the Belchertown school district and for all that she has learned in the five years she has served with the Chair. Dr. Tsoumas said that it had been her honor to serve on the School Committee, and she thanked the members for the gift, as well as their support. Mr. Weiss, as the former School Committee Chair, also addressed Dr. Tsoumas and stated that he had attended this evening's meeting to recognize her for all that she has contributed in service to the town and school district.

- III. Update from BHS Student Advisory Council representatives
None

- IV. Public comment regarding items on the agenda
None

- V. Approval of minutes

A. April 29, 2014

MOTION: Ms. Popowich moved to approve the minutes of the April 29, 2014 Regular School Committee meeting, as presented. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

- VI. Reports and recommendations of the Superintendent

A. Out-of-State Field Trip

1. BHS Class of 2014 trip to High Meadows, Granby, CT

Dr. Houle presented the out-of-state field trip request for the BHS Class of 2014 trip to High Meadows in Granby, CT on May 23, 2014. She stated that this is the traditional end-of-year senior trip. As of last Friday, 150-190 students are planning to attend and 15-20 chaperones, including parents, teachers and administrators, will be attending as well. 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: Dr. Knapp moved to approve the BHS Class of 2014 trip to High Meadows, Granby, CT on May 23, 2014, as presented. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

DISCUSSION: Dr. Knapp inquired about the fee per student and Dr. Houle explained that the \$45 fee will be supplemented by funds in the class treasury which have accrued from various fundraisers held by seniors throughout the year.

B. FY 2014 budget transfers

Mr. Dunn presented a list of budget transfers for FY 2014 which cover the period of January, 2014 through last Friday. He noted that some transfers are higher than others (i.e., electrical issues forced an increase in that line item), but decreases were also reflected in areas such as low unemployment compensation. Dr. Knapp inquired as to

two line items being included for electricity, and Mr. Dunn explained that it was listed as such because there were two separate occurrences that needed to be addressed. Dr. Knapp also asked why there were two line items for paraprofessionals, and again, it involved two separate instances involving staff requirements for 1-1 aides for students beginning in Pre-K. Ms. Bogdanovich questioned the significant increase in SPED costs, and Mr. Dunn explained that it is due to legal fees and is dependent upon the level of litigious activity by parents who may be dissatisfied with decisions made for their children by this department. Dr. Houle added that while these numbers fluctuate from year to year, this line item increase is not atypical for SPED's legal services, and she noted that it also includes fees for mediation services.

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to approve the FY 2014 budget transfers in the aggregated amount of \$272,332.26, as presented. Ms. Popowich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

- C. Audit report: Scanlon & Associates End-of-Year Pupil and Financial Report for FY 2012
Dr. Houle referred to the audit report provided in this evening's correspondence and commented that this is the shortest report, consisting of only one item, that she has seen during her tenure here. Mr. Dunn stated that this error in reporting will be corrected by the stipulated deadline. Dr. Houle noted that this report constitutes an end-of-year accounting procedure required by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This item was informational only and does not require any action by the School Committee.

- D. Declassification of Executive Session Minutes
Dr. Houle stated that she and Dr. Tsoumas have reviewed a list of Executive Sessions held, and any changes therein, and have verified them as signed and approved as valid minutes. Therefore, these sessions can now be declassified and approved as such according to state guidelines. Dr. Houle also explained that these documents will be stamped "declassified" and housed in Central Office for availability to the public. She noted that Executive Session minutes are typically reviewed in bulk for this purpose once or twice a year.

MOTION: Ms. Bogdanovich moved to approve the declassification of Executive Session minutes, as presented. Mr. Fritsch seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

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

A. Collaborative for Educational Services (Ms. Bogdanovich)

Ms. Bogdanovich stated that the CES will meet tomorrow evening.

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

1. Honors Math Curriculum: grades 8 and 9

At a Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee meeting held earlier this evening, Mr. Cameron reported that Mr. Kyle Landrio and Ms. Debra Pratt had discussed the creation of the Honors Math Curriculum in grades 8 and 9, and they reviewed the

proposed curriculum guidelines. The math teachers also answered questions by the Subcommittee members with regard to content, sequencing of math courses from grades 8 through 12, where geometry will fit into this sequence, and how the STEM program will be integrated into this curriculum.

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to approve the Honors Math Curriculum:
grades 8 and 9, as presented. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

2. Instructional Resource request: Math 9

At a Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee meeting held earlier this evening, Mr. Cameron reported that Mr. Landrio had presented a proposal to purchase a new math textbook which will encompass all course levels of Math 9. Reasons for the selection of this instructional resource, *Algebra I* (and *Algebra I Student Companion*), were discussed, citing its alignment with Common Core, components for differentiated instruction, technology integration into instruction, etc. This text will be supplemented with geometry resources which Mr. Landrio already has in place. The proposed text was piloted for four weeks, and has been reviewed and recommended by both levels of Instructional Leadership Teams.

Dr. Tsoumas explained that any proposal for a new textbook must have two readings by the School Committee before a vote for approval can be rendered, and this evening's presentation will constitute the first reading. This item will be addressed again at the next School Committee meeting as a second reading, at which time the Board can move forward with approval of the text and its purchase.

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

1. Next meeting: May 15, 2014

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

1. Report from recent meetings

Dr. Tsoumas reported that significant progress has been made on this project, with the official groundbreaking having taken place last evening. She stated that this event was well-attended, and included a poetry reading and comments by School Committee members. New fundraising activities are being launched, and preparation of the site will commence shortly. The next meeting of this committee will take place next week and schedules for the next steps will be determined. There is a tentative plan for the build to take place on the second weekend in September, and Dr. Tsoumas said that it is hoped that the playground will be completed by September 13th, Jessica Martins' birthday.

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: June 4, 2014

VIII. New business

None

IX. Unfinished business

None

X. Correspondence

A. Agenda: May 13, 2014

B. Minutes: April 29, 2014

C. Out-of-State field trip request

1. Class of 2014 trip to High Meadow, Granby, CT

D. Audit report: Scanlon & Associates: End-of-Year Pupil and Financial report for FY 2013

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 (Interim Superintendent) 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 7:38 p.m.

The Committee returned to Open Session at 8:15 p.m.

MOTION: Ms. Popowich moved to approve the contract for Dr. Robert Gazda as the Interim Superintendent of Schools from July 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014.

Mr. Fritsch seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to adjourn the Regular School Committee meeting at 8:16 p.m.

Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

Respectfully submitted by,

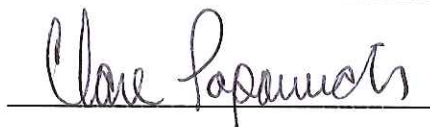
Kathryn A. Petersen

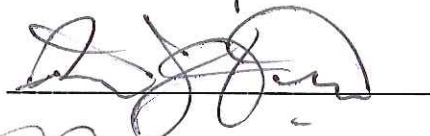
Kathryn A. Petersen

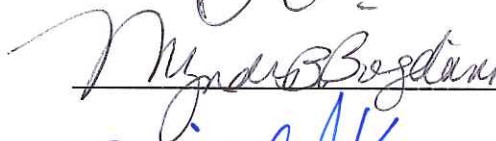
Non-Confidential Recording Secretary to the School Committee

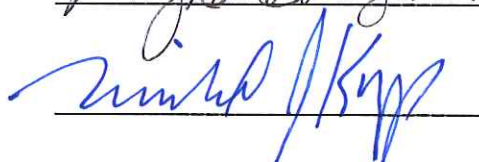
School Committee members' signatures:

_____, Linda Tsoumas, 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: 5-13-14

PLS. PRINT NAME BELOW

Christina Aponle

LAURIE SIEA

Colleen Barry

Jen Ollari Barry

Tom Barry

Paul McGrath

Maureen Silva

Jayce O'Leary

Dawn French

Lyndsay Bonjer

She Cens-bok

Shawn Lindsay

Katie O'Leary

Christine Vigoreux