



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
August 20, 2013**

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); Mr. Edward Dunn, Contracted School Business Manager (present-arrived 7:30 p.m.); Mr. Robert Lachance, Director of Buildings and Grounds (present); Mr. Scott Karen, Director of Technology (present); Mr. Ben Admussen, Data Administrator (present); Mr. Thomas Ruscio, JBMS Principal (present); Mr. Michael Lavelle, CHCS Assistant Principal (present)

BHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES: (not present)

VISITORS: Mr. Gary Brougham, Town Administrator; Ms. Brenda Aldrich, Selectmen Liaison to School Committee; Mr. Christopher Higgins; Ms. Kate Higgins-Shea; Mr. Scott Poulin
(See sign-in sheet for additional visitors.)

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

Dr. Houle addressed the School Committee, reading a letter which stated her intention to not seek a successor agreement or extension of her current agreement as Superintendent of the Belchertown Public Schools past June 30, 2014. This notification was required by September 1, 2013 as stipulated in her current contract. Dr. Houle stated that the goals set for her when she was hired as Superintendent in 2009, specifically in the areas of curriculum and technology, have been accomplished and the district's strategic plan is well on its way to full completion, ahead of its scheduled expiration date of June, 2015. Dr. Houle also stated that the mandated implementation of the Educator Evaluation System has taken place in line with the state's plan, and further enhancements will be ongoing. In addition, she noted that there have been accomplishments during her tenure in the way of a bullying intervention and prevention policy, as well as upgrades to our safety and security systems and student information systems. In conclusion, Dr. Houle said that she had recently been presented with career opportunities which she wishes to explore, and she expressed her gratitude for having been given the opportunity to serve the Belchertown Public School district and its students.

- III. Update from BHS Student Advisory Council representatives
None

- IV. Public comment regarding items on the agenda
None

- V. Approval of minutes

A. July 23, 2013

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve the minutes of the July 23, 2013 Regular School Committee meeting, as presented. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

- VI. Reports and recommendations of the Superintendent

- A. Acceptance of donation from the Higgins family Coach's Challenge Golf Tournament
Mr. Christopher Higgins and Ms. Kate Higgins-Shea presented their donation of \$7,000.00 in proceeds from the Coach's Challenge Golf Tournament, which they had sponsored as a fundraiser in memory of Ms. Marilyn Higgins, a long-time teacher and coach in the Belchertown Public Schools. Dr. Houle referred to the memorandum included in this evening's correspondence, which lists the family's requests for the disbursement of these funds. These include donations to the Belchertown High School athletics program, as well as a scholarship fund which will be designated for one male and one female athlete who meet certain criteria. Dr. Houle recommended that the School Committee accept this generous donation in compliance with the family's wishes.

The Superintendent and School Committee members expressed their gratitude for this gift to the students of Belchertown in memory of a beloved former colleague.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to accept the donation from the Higgins family Coach's Challenge Golf Tournament, as presented. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

- B. Acceptance of donation from Country Bank for the JBMS after-school program
Mr. Ruscio presented his request for acceptance by the School Committee of a \$15,000.00 donation from Country Bank for the Jabish Brook Middle School After-School Program. As noted in his letter to Dr. Houle, which is included in this evening's correspondence, Mr. Ruscio stated that this is the final year that Country Bank will be providing this financial support, after ten years of donations totaling nearly \$175,000.00. In that regard, Mr. Ruscio also requested that the School Committee recognize Country Bank for its financial commitment to our middle school students. He concluded by stating that he plans to continue running this after-school program through ongoing fundraisers.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to accept the donation of \$15,000.00 from Country Bank for the JBMS After-School Program, as presented. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

DISCUSSION: Mr. Fritsch commended both Mr. Ruscio and Country Bank for their support and commitment to the JBMS After-School Program, and the School Committee extended its thanks to them.

Dr. Tsoumas asked how the School Committee could best express its appreciation to Country Bank, and Dr. Houle suggested that the "Friend of Education Award", for which a recipient has not yet been chosen this year, be presented to Country Bank for Savings, and that this nomination for the award could be put on the September 10th School Committee meeting's agenda. Dr. Tsoumas then asked Dr. Houle to invite representatives from the bank to be present at that meeting, and Dr. Houle will do so.

C. Quote for Athletic Trainer services for the 2013-2014 school year

Dr. Houle presented quotes from three companies to provide athletic training services/coverage to the Belchertown High School Athletic Department for the 2013-2014 school year. She then recommended that the district enter into a contract with Attain Therapy & Fitness, as the low bidder and current provider of these services.

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to approve Attain Therapy & Fitness as the provider of Athletic Trainer services to the Belchertown High School Athletic Department for the 2013-2014 school year in the amount of \$20,685.66, as presented. Mr. Fritsch seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

COMMENT: Ms. Popowich noted the importance of the athletic department having athletic training services, and added that prior to Dr. Houle's appointment as Superintendent, there were no such services at the high school.

D. Update on EEE status and athletic schedule revisions

Dr. Houle referred to the Public Health Fact Sheet from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) that was provided in this evening's correspondence, and discussed the current threat of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in our town, noting that Belchertown is in the epi-center of the threat and has been categorized as being in a "critical" status. Therefore, all after-school activities have been rescheduled to take place before dusk. In doing so, the district is in compliance with DPH recommendations. Dr. Houle also stated that all fall events will remain scheduled before dusk as it is unpredictable when the first hard frost will occur, which will kill the mosquitoes and eliminate the threat.

An updated list of Fall 2013 Belchertown High School Athletic Department EEE Threat Schedule Changes, as prepared by Mr. Robert Marchewka, Athletic Director/Dean of Students, is included in this evening's correspondence.

- E. Notification of intent to hire a Special Education Department Chair at Belchertown High School per M.G.L. c. 71, §67
Dr. Houle presented a notification of intent to hire Ms. Joanna McNeill as Special Education Department Chair at Belchertown High School. No action is needed by the School Committee as this is only a notification as required per M.G.L. c. 71, §67.
- F. Crossing guard hourly rates for the 2013-2014 school year
Dr. Houle stated that the Belchertown school district currently employs two crossing guards, one at Cold Spring School and one at the intersection of State Street and the driveway of Chestnut Hill Community School. Their current rate of pay is \$13.98 per hour, with the last increase having been awarded to them in 2011. Dr. Houle recommends that their hourly rate be increased to \$14.25.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to raise the rate of pay for crossing guards to \$14.25 per hour, as recommended. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion. Dr. Knapp then offered a friendly amendment to direct the Superintendent to raise the hourly rate for crossing guards to \$14.50 per hour based on 1% to 2% COLA rates. Mr. Fritsch seconded the motion, as amended.

VOTE ON THE AMENDMENT: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

VOTE ON THE MOTION AS AMENDED: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

G. Payroll Warrant Signatures

Ms. Popowich was given payroll warrant emergency forms to sign to be used as needed by the Business Office. Dr. Tsoumas noted that when accounts payable warrants are due for signatures at the time of scheduled School Committee meetings, the warrants will be brought to the meetings for members to sign there as a convenience.

VII. Unfinished business

A. Update on FY 2014 budget

1. Dr. Houle referred to two documents included in this evening's correspondence: the FY 2013 Cherry Sheet estimate with comparison to the FY 2014 House Final Budget Proposal, and an email correspondence from Mr. Roger Hatch, School Finance Administrator, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Dr. Houle explained that the House Final Budget Proposal reflects a gap (deficit) of \$99,540.00 when compared with the total FY 2013 Cherry Sheet Estimate. These figures reflect what the school district based its budget planning on versus what actually came out of the state budget.

Dr. Houle then discussed the email correspondence from Mr. Hatch, which was a notification that an audit from his department revealed that Belchertown had been erroneously charged school choice tuition amounts in FY 2013 for a number of students from the Pelham school district. An adjustment in the amount of \$115,641.00 will be made in the remaining local aid distributions during FY 2014. This reimbursement will be coming back to the town budget and will be used to cover the gap in the cherry sheet as detailed above, and the cherry sheet will be

revised to reflect this adjustment.

Mr. Fritsch asked if reports are sent from the state to notify us about students coming in or going out of the school district. Mr. Admussen explained that we have all necessary information on incoming students to our district since they have to be registered in the Belchertown Public Schools. However, we do not always have full reports from the state on Belchertown students attending school out-of-district, which is how this error occurred, and Mr. Dunn will be in contact with Mr. Hatch to find a way to ensure that this type of error does not happen again. In addition, Mr. Admussen is in the process of auditing records from the past ten years, and if any similar errors are discovered when reviewing prior years, he will contact the state for resolution.

B. District Strategic Plan revisions

Dr. Houle reported that the Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee had met on July 30th and reviewed the District Strategic Plan, with proposed revisions that she had made to the plan. The first was a change to Strategy 1.g. on Goal #2 to indicate the work of the community partners group in providing academic and social-emotional supports to students and families in need. A related change was also presented for Strategy 2.b. on Goal #3. After some discussion of the new Educator Evaluation System and the need for District-Determined Measures (DDMs), the Committee requested additions to a proposed objective for Strategy 3.h. on Goal #2, as follows: it was requested that the Data Administrator be listed as a person responsible on Strategy 3.h., that the addition of the specific assessments in the pilot be added to timeline item 3.h., and that two other timeline items be added: 3.h.1. to reflect the installation and implementation of the Schools Interoperability Framework by June 2014, and 3.h.2., that a baseline data set be gathered by June 2015 in accordance with the state's rollout of the impact on student learning data gathering process.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to accept the revisions to the District Strategic Plan, as presented. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

C. Superintendent's goals for 2013-2014

Dr. Houle reported that the Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee had met on July 30th and reviewed the Superintendent's Goals for 2013-2014. It was requested that she add some detail to Key Action 1 of the Student Learning SMART Goal to indicate which areas would be assessed in the DDMs pilot. It was also requested that she add, as evidence, data from the state discipline report as a measure of effectiveness of community engagement in the *PeaceBuilders* program. These adjustments to the draft goals are reflected in the revised document of the Superintendent's Goals included in this evening's correspondence.

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to accept the Superintendent's Final Goals for 2013-2014, as presented. Mr. Fritsch seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

D. Superintendent's contract

Dr. Tsoumas stated that the Superintendent's contract had been negotiated with the Superintendent in a previous meeting of Executive Session, with a one-year extension through June 30, 2015 being approved. Negotiations of Dr. Houle's contract also included a compensation package of three items: 1.5% increase in salary, \$1,500.00 performance bonus, and a \$5,000.00 contribution to her 401K annuity.

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to ratify the Superintendent's compensation package, as presented. Mr. Fritsch seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

DISCUSSION: Ms. Popowich expressed her disappointment that the approved one-year extension is not being sought by the Superintendent, and that she feels Dr. Houle has been treated very poorly.

Dr. Tsoumas stated that the School Committee will take Dr. Houle's letter of non-renewal of her contract with the Belchertown Public Schools under advisement.

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to direct the Chair to sign the amended contract. Mr. Fritsch seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

VIII. New business

A. Request to allow for a freshman girls' volleyball team

Mr. Scott Poulin, Belchertown Varsity Girls' Volleyball Coach, presented his request to have the Freshmen Girls' Volleyball team reinstated. This team, along with all freshmen sports offerings, was replaced with an intramural program as part of the FY 2014 budget. Mr. Poulin stated that 23 freshmen girls had signed up for Freshmen Volleyball, and that funding could come from the participants' user fees. He also offered to donate his time as coach of the team.

Dr. Houle sought legal advice from the district's law firm regarding this offer, and the response received from Ms. Melissa Murray reflected concerns that Dr. Houle shared. Dr. Tsoumas discussed some of the problems that the acceptance of this offer would present (i.e., equity issues involving the elimination of all other freshmen athletic teams as well as the exclusivity of being an all girls' team, insurance and liability issues that the district would be responsible for and/or subject to because the team would be operating as a Belchertown High School sports team, Title IX compliance issues with regard to future funding of this team as the current presented funding source is not guaranteed). Mr. Poulin was understanding of these concerns, and said that he at least wanted the discussion started so that this subject could possibly be revisited in the future. Dr. Houle suggested that Mr. Poulin approach the Belchertown Orioles Athletic Association and/or the Recreation Department to see if either organization could support a team since it is not in the school district's budget. Dr. Tsoumas suggested that Mr. Poulin could also contact Mr. Ruscio with regard to its inclusion in the JBMS After-School Program. The Superintendent and School Committee commended Mr. Poulin for his enthusiastic support of this team and encouraged him to come back in the future in the event that funding again becomes available.

- B. Timelines for agendas and correspondence items for School Committee meetings
Ms. Bogdanovich presented her request for a change in the timelines for the availability of School Committee meeting agendas and correspondence to School Committee members, as the current schedule is not convenient for her private business hours. The current timeline has provided for agendas being posted by the Thursday prior to a Tuesday School Committee meeting, with all necessary accompanying documents being forwarded to members by that Friday. As Ms. Bogdanovich works on weekends, she stated that she does not have adequate time to thoroughly read all documents before the Tuesday meeting. She proposed that agendas be sent one week before on the Tuesday preceding the meeting, allowing for the possibility of revisions before Thursday's required posting, and documents forwarded by the Thursday prior to the meeting. Dr. Houle noted that she cannot prepare documents until the agenda is approved, and this timeline will be challenging with all the other duties she handles on a daily basis. However, she stated that she would be in compliance with the motion if approved.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved that the timelines for availability to School Committee members of agendas and correspondence items for School Committee meetings be revised so that the agendas are sent on the Tuesday of the week preceding a meeting, and all correspondence items are sent on the Thursday preceding a meeting. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

COMMENT: Ms. Popowich and Dr. Knapp noted that they had had no problem with the current timeline being used to forward School Committee agendas and correspondence items.

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

A. Collaborative for Educational Services (Ms. Bogdanovich)

Ms. Bogdanovich stated that the collaborative will meet next Wednesday, August 28th, to provide training for new members.

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

Dr. Tsoumas stated that this evening's proposal for the approval of the Field Geology textbook constitutes the second reading.

1. Field Geology textbook: second reading and vote

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to accept the recommendation and purchase of Field Geology textbooks in the amount of \$615.00, as presented. Mr. Fritsch seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

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

Ms. Popowich stated that this committee will meet in September. Dr. Houle noted that the supplies for the Pinwheels for Peace project have been received.

- D. Jessica's Boundless Playground Committee (Dr. Tsoumas)
Dr. Tsoumas stated that the public unveiling of a sign identifying the future site of the playground will take place tomorrow evening at 6:00 p.m. on the CHCS grounds, and a tentative date for groundbreaking will be announced. Dr. Houle added that there has been a lot of momentum for fundraising to bring this project to fruition.
- E. Personnel & Policy (Ms. Popowich/Ms. Bogdanovich)
Dr. Houle stated that a meeting of this subcommittee should be scheduled in September to discuss two items: to draft a job description for a new SPED position (Transition Specialist) at Belchertown High School, and the placement of students in advanced courses at Jabish Brook Middle School and Belchertown High School. It was agreed that the Personnel & Policy Subcommittee will meet prior to the next Regular School Committee meeting on September 10th at 6:15 p.m.
- F. Property & Transportation (Mr. Fritsch/Dr. Knapp)
Mr. Fritsch stated that there are no meetings of this subcommittee currently scheduled. Mr. Lachance stated that discussion of the Tadgell building site will be on the agenda when the next meeting is planned.
- G. School Safety Task Force (Mr. Fritsch)
Mr. Fritsch stated that progress is being made on a model for this project.
- H. Technology Advisory Committee (Mr. Fritsch)
Mr. Fritsch stated that this committee will meet in early September.
- X. Correspondence
 - A. Agenda: August 20, 2013
 - B. Minutes: July 23, 2013
 - C. Memorandum regarding donation from the Higgins family Coach's Challenge Golf Tournament
 - D. Memorandum from Mr. Ruscio regarding donation from Country Bank for JBMS after-school program
 - E. EEE status documents
 - 1. Department of Public Health Advisory document
 - 2. Revised athletic schedule
 - F. Memorandum regarding crossing guards' hourly rate
 - G. Athletic trainer quote items
 - 1. Procurement form
 - 2. Letters and quotes from Attain Therapy + Fitness, NovaCare Rehabilitation, and Precision Athletic Training,
 - H. FY 2014 budget items
 - 1. Updated Cherry Sheet from final budget
 - 2. Email correspondence from Roger Hatch, School Finance Administrator, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

- I. Proposed revisions to the District Strategic Plan
 - J. Proposed revisions to the Superintendent's Goals for 2013-2014
 - K. Legal advisory regarding Freshmen Girls' Volleyball
 - L. Field Geology textbook Instructional Resource Form
- XI. Vote to enter into Executive Session under M.G.L., c. 30A, §21, Part (3), to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with Unit A, Teachers; Unit B, Secretaries; Unit C, Custodians; Unit D, Food Service Workers; and Unit E, Paraprofessionals; 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 Committee entered into Executive Session at 8:03 p.m.

The Committee returned to Open Session at 9:11 p.m.

MOTION: Ms. Popowich moved to ratify the contract MOA for Unit C: Custodians.

Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously (Ms. Bogdanovich left during Executive Session.)

All members present signed the Memorandum of Agreement.

XII. Adjournment:

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to adjourn the Regular School Committee meeting at 9:13 p.m. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously

Respectfully submitted by,

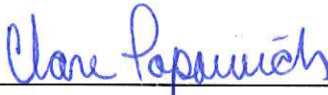


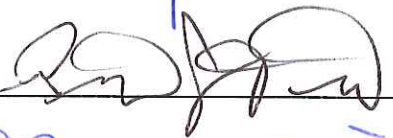
Kathryn A. Petersen

Non-Confidential Recording Secretary to the School Committee

School Committee members' signatures:

, 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: 8-20-13

PLS. PRINT NAME BELOW

Michael Lavelle

Adrian Macdonald

Grace Alarcon

Dana Funnell

Scott Poulin

Keith D. Pali

Phyllis Fritsch

~~Phyllis Fritsch~~

Yvette Devito

Cheryl Ehas

~~Cheryl Ehas~~

Nick Anlin

Karl & Cathy Hammond

Mindie Richter

Dawn French

L. D.

M. Hogen

Dennis Mastaglio

CH Hogen

K Hogen-Shea

BELCHERTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR SESSION
SIGN IN SHEET

DATE: 8-20-13

PLS. PRINT NAME BELOW

Angela DiVico

Ben Admusser

Joanne Booselin

Scott Kuear

IQ (Thomas J. Howell)

Gena Mangiatelli (Daily Hampshire Gazette)

Mona Griffin

Amanda Sakled

Nela Ulan