



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
October 22, 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. Ben Admussen, Data Administrator (not present)

**BHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES:** Mr. Michael DeBarge (present); Ms. Sienna Nielsen (present)

**VISITORS:** Members of the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee (Mr. William Barnett, Mr. Kenneth Elstein, Mr. George Archibie, Mr. Ronald Aponte, Ms. Brenda Aldrich, Mr. Paul Silva, Mr. Steven Rose, Mr. Kyle Vincent, Ms. Lynne Raymer); Mr. Gary Brougham, Town Administrator; Ms. Pat Correia, MASC Field Director; Ms. Claire Nauman; Ms. Amanda Saklad

**MINUTES**

I. Call to order

Dr. Tsoumas called the Regular School Committee meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Silva called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Barnett called the Select Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Special awards and presentations

A. Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents Excellence Award

Dr. Houle introduced Ms. Claire Nauman and presented her with the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents Excellence Award, in recognition of her high academic achievement, as well as her athletic participation, community involvement, and many other extra-curricular activities. Dr. Houle also noted that Ms. Nauman is in the top 10% of her class and a recipient of the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship. Ms. Nauman graciously accepted this prestigious award and Dr. Tsoumas congratulated her on behalf of the School Committee for her outstanding achievements in many areas.

III. Public comment regarding items on the agenda

None

*At this time, Dr. Tsoumas introduced Ms. Sienna Nielsen and Mr. Michael DeBarge, representatives from the BHS Student Advisory Council.*

## IV. Approval of minutes

## A. October 8, 2013

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve the minutes of the October 8, 2013 Regular School Committee meeting, as presented. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

## V. Reports and Recommendations of the Superintendent

## A. Accounts payable warrant

The accounts payable warrant was not available for this evening's meeting, and Dr. Houle advised the School Committee members to go to the Business Office to sign the warrant.

## B. Unit E contract for signatures

Dr. Houle stated that she and the BTA had reviewed the Unit E contract, noting that it contains the changes that were voted on and approved by the School Committee, and she gave the contract to the Committee members for their signatures. She also stated that the Teacher Contract was close to completion and will be brought to the School Committee for signatures in the near future.

## VI. New business

## A. FY 2014 budget: joint conversation with Finance Committee, Selectmen, and town officials

Dr. Houle discussed the error that had been discovered over the summer in the School Choice count reported by the Pelham School district. It was initially believed that this would result in approximately \$115,000.00 owed to us in FY 2014 for overpayment of FY 2013 assessments. However, in a follow-up conducted by Ms. Jill Panto, Town Accountant, it was discovered that further corrections had been made after the August update, and the adjustments reflected additional charges to Belchertown for students attending schools in other districts. The bottom line is \$2,334.00 owed by Belchertown in School Choice Assessments, rather than the anticipated overpayment of \$115,000.00 being returned to the town. This amount must be added to the previous budget discrepancy, and the estimated budgetary deficit now totals \$88,869.00.

Dr. Houle suggested one possible solution, in that there had been a significant increase in Medicaid revenues last year which were over the estimates that drove the budgets for last year and this year. This could potentially mitigate against the budget gap by nearly \$61,000.00.

MOTION: Ms. Popowich moved to readjust the budget estimates due to anticipated increased revenue from Medicaid, as recommended. Mr. Fritsch seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously



Mr. Brougham, representing the Town Accountant who was unable to attend this evening's meeting, discussed the need for a balanced budget in order to set the tax rate, and the potential for budget cuts to make up the deficit. He also noted that at this time, the amount of free cash is unknown. Mr. Brougham stated that a special town meeting will need to be called in order to make any budget cuts that are needed for accounting purposes, and he would like that to be scheduled on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, with a tax classification hearing scheduled on November 25<sup>th</sup>. The three groups then discussed the estimated budgetary deficit, and possible solutions for closing this gap, including budget cuts and/or the use of free cash. Dr. Houle expressed her feeling that free cash is designed to be used in such a situation, as this was a one-time mistake. It was also asked if there would be the customary 70/30 split between the school district and town for both budget cuts and the use of free cash, once that figure is provided. There was a consensus of agreement by the three boards and no votes were needed.

*This portion of the meeting with the School Committee, Finance Committee, and Board of Selectmen adjourned at 7:32 p.m.*

At this time, Dr. Tsoumas asked the representatives from the BHS Student Advisory Council if they had any questions, comments or BHS updates to report. Ms. Nielsen asked what role the Advisory Council would play, and if there were plans for more meetings with them. Dr. Houle recommended that the representatives discuss these questions with Ms. Christine Vigneux, BHS Principal, and she assured Ms. Nielsen that meetings will be scheduled with the representatives, Dr. Houle, and Ms. Bogdanovich, School Committee liaison to the Student Advisory Council. In conclusion, Ms. Nielsen reported that Spirit Week had just been held at BHS and the Powder Puff football game will take place this coming weekend.

VII. Unfinished business

A. Superintendent search process (scheduled for 8:00 pm)

Ms. Correia discussed the recent focus groups (including parents, community members, senior citizens, students, town hall employees) which were held as part of the Superintendent search process, and noted that to date, they had been sparsely attended. She also reviewed the schedule for upcoming meetings of these focus groups (including administrators, teachers, Central Office personnel, custodians, other staff members, Board of Selectmen, as well as again being open to parents and community members). Ms. Correia then reported on the Superintendent Criteria Survey, which is posted on the school district's website, and stated that to date, 134 people have taken this survey.

Ms. Correia presented a revised Belchertown Superintendent Search Timeline for approval by the School Committee, and this schedule was discussed to ensure that all were in agreement in order to move forward with the search process. A time of 6:30 p.m. was added for the December 17, 2013 meeting, and all School Committee members agreed to this change and the remaining revised schedule as presented.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve the revised Belchertown Superintendent Search Timeline, as amended. Ms. Popowich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

Discussion then ensued with regard to the formation of the screening committee for the superintendent search. It was decided that a press release will be posted in the Sentinel at the beginning of November, requesting that applications (letters of interest) from individuals who wish to be considered should be submitted to Central Office by a published deadline of November 20, 2013. The screening committee will consist of three parents, two administrators, three teachers, two community members, one Select Board member (if interested), two School Committee members, and two non-teaching staff members. Applicants in each category will be chosen by lottery.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve the configuration of the Superintendent Search Screening Committee, as presented. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

VIII. Correspondence

- A. Agenda: October 22, 2013
- B. Minutes: October 8, 2013
- C. Contracts for signatures: to be hand-carried in
- D. Accounts payable warrant: to be hand-carried in

IX. Adjourn

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to adjourn the Regular School Committee meeting at 8:42 p.m. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

Respectfully submitted by,

*Kathryn A. Petersen*


Kathryn A. Petersen

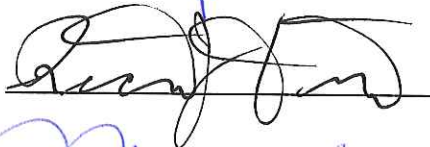
Non-Confidential Recording Secretary to the School Committee

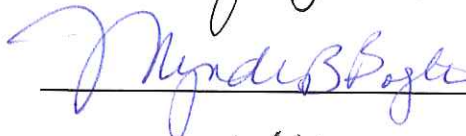


School Committee members' signatures:

 , 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto: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: 10-22-13

PLS. PRINT NAME BELOW

Brida Aichele

BONALD APONTE

Paul Silva

Anarch Sabbel

PAT Correia