



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
December 10, 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); Ms. Christine Vigneux, BHS Principal (present); Mr. Douglas Daponde, Dean of Students/Athletic Director (present)

**BHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES:** Mr. Michael DeBarge (present)

**VISITORS:** Mr. David Monroe, BHS Teacher; Ms. Lyndsay Boysen, BHS Teacher; Mr. Anthony Almeida, BHS Boys' Varsity Soccer Coach; Mr. Zachary Siano, BHS Boys' JV Soccer Coach; BHS boys' soccer team members; Ms. Mona Griffin

### **MINUTES**

I. Call to order

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

II. Special awards and presentations

A. BHS Boys' Soccer Team: State Championship

Dr. Tsoumas welcomed the BHS boys' soccer team to the School Committee meeting and congratulated them on their outstanding achievement in winning the State Division III championship. Dr. Houle acknowledged the coaching staff, including Mr. Tony Almeida, Varsity Coach, Mr. Zach Siano, JV Coach, as well as volunteer coaches. She and Mr. Daponde then presented certificates of recognition to the team members and a group photograph was taken. On a final note, Dr. Houle thanked the team for their performance on and off the field in representing BHS and the Belchertown Public Schools. She noted that in addition to their athletic abilities, the team has worked hard academically and she congratulated the players for their respect of their opponents and great sportsmanship.

III. Update from BHS Student Advisory Council representatives

Mr. DeBarge began by acknowledging the championship soccer team and noted how proud BHS students were of these athletes in light of this great accomplishment. He then discussed the Virtual High School program, stating that it was positively received by the students and there has been great interest shown in participating in the program, with much competition for the available spots.

- IV. Public comment regarding items on the agenda  
None

- V. Approval of minutes

- A. November 26, 2013

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to approve the minutes of the November 26, 2013 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 to CT Science Center, *Bodies Revealed* and *Last Reef 3D* exhibit, Hartford, CT: BHS Anatomy and Physiology Students

Mr. Monroe presented his request for an out-of-state field trip to the CT Science Center in Hartford, CT on December 12, 2013. The purpose of this trip is for BHS Anatomy and Physiology students to view the *Bodies Revealed* and *Last Reef 3D* exhibit, as well as other exhibits in the museum. Bus transportation will be provided by First Student. 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: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve the out-of-state field trip by the BHS Anatomy and Physiology students to the CT Science Center, *Bodies Revealed* and *Last Reef 3D* exhibit, in Hartford, CT on December 12, 2013, as presented. Ms. Popowich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

COMMENT: Dr. Knapp inquired as to the number of students attending this event, and Mr. Monroe replied that 41 students will attend along with four chaperones.

- B. Out-of-State/Overnight Field trip to the Heritage Festival in Chicago, IL: BHS Music Department

Ms. Boysen presented her request for an out-of-state/overnight field trip to the Heritage Festival in Chicago, IL by the BHS Music Department, April 29-May 4, 2014. She stated that this is an event that is planned every other year and is a very rewarding cultural experience, involving visits to the symphony, several museums, etc., as well as participation in musical competitions at the festival. Music students in grades 9-12 who participate in Concert Band, Symphony Band, Percussion Ensemble, Wind Ensemble, Women's Choir and Mixed Choir will be eligible to attend. Students will fund the cost of the trip, with fundraising opportunities being made available monthly. Bus transportation will be provided by Centerline Transportation Services. Dr. Houle stated that she has reviewed this out-of-



state/overnight 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: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve the out-of-state/overnight field trip by the BHS Music Department to the Heritage Festival in Chicago, IL, April 29-May 4, 2014, as presented. Ms. Popowich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

COMMENT: Dr. Knapp inquired as to the number of students attending this event, and Ms. Boysen replied that 173 students will attend along with the requisite number of chaperones.

C. Update on Emergency Operations Plan

Dr. Houle noted that this Saturday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, marks the tragic anniversary of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting. She then read a piece that she had written for a vigil held the weekend after that shooting at the Belchertown United Church of Christ. Dr. Houle stated that although much has been done to enhance security, there is more work to be done, and in that regard, the School Safety Task Force was created. This group consists of 30-40 community members with various resources, and has been working over the past few months on an Emergency Operations Plan to address safety issues on a variety of fronts, such as physical violence, medical issues, protection and prevention, etc. A template from FEMA's emergency plan is being adapted to create our district's plan and the draft of this plan will be reviewed at the next Task Force meeting on December 18<sup>th</sup>, with a goal of presenting the completed plan for consideration by the School Committee on February 11, 2014. Dr. Houle recommended that this February School Committee meeting be held at the BHS Auditorium in order to allow for public comment with regard to the Emergency Operations Plan, stating that some parts of the plan will be public and some will not. Open meeting laws do allow for the non-public parts of the plan to be deliberated during Executive Session, which will be held in an alternate location at the high school that evening. It was also noted that the plan will be reviewed by legal counsel, and those items which will be redacted will be decided by law enforcement authorities.

Dr. Houle then discussed the second quarter *Coffee & Conversation with the Superintendent* gatherings which will focus on plans for student safety, as well as a revised Bullying Prevention/Intervention Plan. A gathering for parents and guardians of elementary students will be held in the CHCS Library on January 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm. A session for parents and guardians of students at JBMS and BHS will be held on January 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm in the BHS library.

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

A. Collaborative for Educational Services (Ms. Bogdanovich)

1. Report from the October and November meetings

Ms. Bogdanovich reported on the meeting of the Collaborative held on November 13<sup>th</sup> and she said that no meeting was held in October. She stated that Ms. Joan Schuman, Executive Director, announced that there is a new draft

of the Articles of Agreement, but the DESE has not yet formally approved it. Once approved, the new articles will be presented to each School Committee member for sign-off and approval. Most of the meeting was spent in a review of the annual audit, which showed that the Collaborative had ended the year in the black and with no findings. Ms. Bogdanovich also reported that there was an update on the Executive Director search, indicating that 69 applications had been received, 13 of which were forwarded to the screening committee by the search consultant. The screening committee then chose eight candidates with whom interviews were conducted by the search consultant and transcripts were given to the screening committee. Final candidates are being brought forward to the Board at a special meeting next month. The current Executive Director's contract was extended in order to finalize the choice for the new Executive Director within 2 months (or more if needed and agreeable to Ms. Schuman). Lastly, Ms. Bogdanovich reported that the Collaborative is no longer seeking the Virtual School application, but will move ahead with supplementary courses which students in member districts, as well as DYS and Mount Tom students, can take. There will be another update next month on consideration for applying for an actual charter.

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

None

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

None

1. Next meeting: December 11, 2013

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

1. Report from the December 4, 2013 meeting

Dr. Tsoumas stated that this committee met last week, after some meetings had been postponed pending the availability of the consultant, O'Brien & Sons. Discussion was held regarding site preparation, design, etc. and the next meeting will involve setting dates for a timeline, with tentative plans for summer construction and an opening in fall 2014. Dr. Tsoumas also noted that Team Jessica has held several successful fundraisers, with more being planned, and the Playground Committee has decided to apply for an additional CPA grant for \$100,000.00. The next meeting of the Playground Committee has not yet been scheduled.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to authorize Dr. Houle to sign the CPA grant application on the school district's behalf. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously



E. Personnel & Policy (Ms. Popowich/Ms. Bogdanovich)

1. Report from the December 10, 2013 meeting

At a Personnel & Policy Subcommittee meeting held earlier this evening, Ms. Bogdanovich requested a discussion of Policy BCA: School Committee Code of Ethics as it relates to the appointment and/or removal of School Committee members from a subcommittee, noting that currently such action is solely a designated duty of the Chair. Ms. Bogdanovich asked that consideration be given to changing that policy so that any such appointment and/or removal from a subcommittee be brought to the full School Committee for a decision and vote. The policy document that was included in this evening's correspondence differed from that which Ms. Bogdanovich printed from the BPS website, and so this agenda item was tabled pending further research by Dr. Houle in order to reconcile the correct document as it goes back to the reorganization of the School Committee, and thereby avoid any conflict in current policy. A Personnel & Policy Subcommittee meeting will be scheduled to discuss this agenda item when that information becomes available.

F. Property & Transportation (Mr. Fritsch/Dr. Knapp)

None; no date has been set for a future meeting.

G. School Safety Task Force (Mr. Fritsch)

The business of this Task Force was discussed earlier this evening. See notes under Item VI. C., Update on Emergency Operations Plan.

1. Next meeting: December 18, 2013 at 3:30 pm

H. Technology Advisory Committee (Mr. Fritsch)

1. Report from the December 4, 2013 meeting

Mr. Fritsch stated that a discussion was held about providing information to students with regard to locations that offer Internet access, such as libraries, businesses with Wi-Fi, etc. The Advisory Committee also discussed the use of technology by SPED students, as well as providing help for teachers in using technology to teach these students. Mr. Fritsch then referred to the survey which had previously been used for Professional Development edcamp offerings, and stated that most felt it was too lengthy, and so the group is working on a more concise survey for future use. There is also a plan to set up IT Open Houses at the schools so that teachers can be provided with one-on-one technical support during their free time. Mr. Cameron then discussed an upcoming trip to a conference at HCC that some of the Instructional Technologists will attend, with a focus on how teachers can use technology within the classroom to enhance instruction, and with the intent to bring that information back to help teachers in our district. The technologists plan to attend additional similar conferences in the future. The committee meets quarterly and the next meeting will be scheduled in approximately two months.

- VIII. New business  
None
- IX. Unfinished business  
None
- X. Correspondence  
A. Agenda: December 10, 2013  
B. Minutes: November 26, 2013  
C. Out-of-state and Overnight field trip requests  
1. Out-of-State Field trip to CT Science Center, *Bodies Revealed* and *Last Reef 3D* exhibit, Hartford, CT: BHS Anatomy and Physiology Students  
2. Out-of-State/Overnight Field trip to the Heritage Festival in Chicago, IL: BHS Music Department  
D. Policy BCA: School Committee Code of Ethics
- 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 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 School Committee entered into Executive Session at 7:43 p.m.

The Committee returned to Open Session at 7:55 p.m.

MOTION: Ms. Popowich moved to approve the Memorandum of Agreement with Unit E: Paraprofessionals regarding paraprofessional stipends, as presented. Mr. Fritsch seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

MOTION: Ms. Popowich moved to adjourn the Regular School Committee meeting at 7:57 p.m. Mr. Fritsch 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, Secretary

Myndi Bogdanovich, 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 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](#)).