

**GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

The Gateway Regional School District will provide an exemplary education that challenges all students in an instructional setting appropriate to their needs.

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 2021**

VIA Zoom

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/71907007000?pwd=alVaT2NrRWdlMzNaRnBqWTFrT2M3QT09>

Meeting ID: 719 0700 7000

Passcode: 4fz616

**7:00 P.M.**

**(A PORTION OF THIS MEETING MAY BE HELD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION)**

**I. OPENING OF MEETING**

<u>BLANDFORD</u>	<u>CHESTER</u>	<u>HUNTINGTON</u>	<u>MIDDLEFIELD</u>
Michele Crane	Jason Forgue	David Lubbers	
Terri Garfield		Melissa Nazzaro	
		Edward Renauld	

<u>MONTGOMERY</u>	<u>RUSSELL</u>	<u>SECRETARY</u>
Madelyn Austin	Tara Balboni	Stacy Stewart
	Sarah Page	
	Lyndsey Papillon	

<u>CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION</u>	<u>ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL</u>
Dr. David B. Hopson, Superintendent	Martha Clark, High/Middle AP
Stephanie Fisk, Asst. Superintendent	Megan Coburn, Chs,Lit Principal
	Jason Finnie, Middle/High Principal
<u>STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES</u>	Kurt Garivaltis, Pupil Services Director
Brian Forgue	Deanna LeBlanc, Curriculum Director
	Darlene Rehor, Elementary AP

OTHERS: Shelbi Macri, Kerrie Morivic, Matt Bonenfant, Elizabeth Hamaoui, Jim Duggen, J. Jasiewicz, Linda Hyjek, Amy Thornton, Mona Thieme, Bill Brown, Val Zeh, Chris Parker, Ruth Harper, Ann Fisk, Kristina, Mia Smith,

## **II. PUBLIC INPUT FOR ITEMS NOT LISTED ON AGENDA (3 Minute Limit) - None**

### **III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT**

- Brian Forgue said things are going alright. The vibe in school is good. Seniors were able to eat outside, for the first time in the courtyard. Basketball is in full swing. Practices will take place next week. Students are in the middle of a spirit week. Juniors are ahead, but seniors hope to change that. America Monday, Tropical Tuesday, Western Wednesday, Tie dye Thursday, and Sports Friday. Ms. Simpson had the biggest cowboy hat.

### **IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITION**

#### **A. FY '20 Audit Report**

- John Jasiewicz from Melanson Heath is reviewing the FY '20 Audit report. This is their 5th year auditing Gateway. He will go over the nature and purpose of financial audit and the responsibilities as auditors of Gateway. The auditor's responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statements and to provide a plan and perform reasonable assurance they are free of error. They audit in accordance with governmental audit standards. They test internal controls and test balances that they are materially accurate. They are the district's financial statements, they just prepare them. They establish a connection of internal controls, identifying the district follows laws. Management is responsible and the financials are given to us. It does not relieve management of its responsibility. Management is doing a very nice job and fulfilling all of those responsibilities. Under the rules of the governmental accounting standards F5 components, the audit opinion is the only part that is theirs. The rest is the districts and provided to the auditors in compliance with the governmental accounting standards. If anyone has the financials he is on page 12 general fund and fund balance. E & D is what gets certified. \$715,000 is 4.3% of the annual operating budget. Assigned fund balance of \$400,000 is encumbrance and reserve for expenditure. Committed fund balance a little over \$400,000 reserve for abscesses fund the district maintains. Page 10 net pension and net OPEB liability. Pension districts share in unfunded liability insurance. It decreased a little over a half million. The district's share decreased slightly, and the retirement system was better funded. OPEB Liability is the largest with over 22 million in retiree costs. Calculated by an actuarial firm. Every so often they adjust the mortality tables. Some of those changes drove the increase. The district has started to fund OPEB liability at \$145,000 a slight increase from the prior year. There was no management letter. This would be where they relay any issues or non-compliance. There were a few in FY '19 which they followed up on and the changes were made. If anyone has any questions later they can let Ms. Fisk know and she can get in touch with him.

- Mr. Lubbers said John did a nice job explaining it.
- Mrs. Crane gave kudos to the business office and staff. Having no findings in the audit is fantastic.

**V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS**

**A. FY '22 Budget**

- Ms. Fisk said the 3rd quarter numbers are in and we haven't spent what we budgeted for in transportation. Using the alternate method she would like to reduce the assessments to a 0% average increase. She would be using more E & D. We have been fortunate to reap the benefits of covid relief funding for cleaning.
- Ms. Papillon said she understands staff have left and the district has been remote, do we need to replace them?
- Ms. Fisk said they are in the budget and we are doing interviews. They are taking place from now through the end of the year. They are replacing all but one she thinks. It may be a different job title. They will be in the budget.
- Ms. Fisk said normally she wouldn't recommend this because of the fiscal cliff, but with the ESSER funding, we should be able to fund it with all the social emotional support.
- Mr. Forgue thought we couldn't use it for anything already budgeted. He is fine, did we leave enough leeway to handle the programs we want.
- Ms. Fisk said we have a partial adjustment counselor funded through a grant. If we use ESSER we will be able to do that as well. They are trying to extend ESSER-III funding through 2025, which would help with a decline of revenue as we progress through the years. This is this year's funds. We will still be able to put money in OPEB. This will help the towns in a tough year, and approve the alternate assessments.

***Mr. Lubbers made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to approve the revised alternate assessments with an 0% average.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)***

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Jason, Terri, David, Melissa, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Ed, Michele

- Mr. Forgue asked if there was anything that the administration requested that wasn't approved. That we didn't work in.
- Ms. Fisk said no. The difference between a full athletic schedule to a league schedule. Athletics has blown all the schedules out of the water.
- Ms. Fisk said new assessment letters will go out tomorrow.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS**

**A. Recommendation to Participate in School Choice for the FY '22 School Year**

- Move to Old Business

## B. Approval of FY '22 Student Activity Accounts

- Move to Old Business

## C. Spring Sports

- Mr. Bonenfant just received documentation from MIAA that EEA is approving wrestling to competitive level III. He has no idea what that means right now. Baseball and softball have been approved. Preseason starts April 26. Ten games are scheduled for both. They are placed in more traditional leagues. They are keeping the same regulations - not playing a team in the red or if there is a positivity rate of 5% or higher. Same if we go remote for covid. We are trying to fill both varsity and junior varsity. Currently there are 18 for softball and 12 for baseball. He is working on ways to handle it if we don't have enough for both varsity and junior varsity. Two teams can fit on a bus. MIAA has allowed for a spring tournament. It is an optional opt in tournament. The end date is July 3, but there is a push to end June 30. The EEA has taken away the restriction amount for spectators. They have gone to household units will need to be 6 feet apart. Need to make sure people are masked and socially distanced. Modifications are social distancing. Only the pitcher and catcher can be in the dugout. They have to bring their own personal belongings. Looking for disinfectant for helmets if needed. They've added two extra balls per game. All in all they are outdoors. They are going to be our safest sports. There has been no transmission related to athletics so far.
- Mr. Lubbers asked doesn't it offer an opportunity to create a new venue for having students videotaping the games. They can learn skills about communication, so all of us can see the game and still be safe.
- Mr. Bonenfant would have to check with technology and make sure students are not on a do not photograph or record on the website. It is a good idea and several schools have done it.
- Mrs. Crane asked if this means wrestling is a possibility.
- Mr. Bonenfant said Yes, it would be dual meets at this point but they don't know what the modifications are at this point.
- Ms. Fisk said the board of health would have to approve wrestling.

***Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mr. Renauld to suspend the two-meeting rule to vote on spring sports.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)***

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Jason, Terri, David, Melissa, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Ed, Michele

***Mr. Renauld made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to approve spring sports - Baseball and Softball.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)***

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Jason, Terri, David, Melissa, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Ed, Michele

#### **D. School Committee FY '22 Meeting Schedule**

- Move to Old Business

***Mrs. Garfield made a motion seconded by Mr. Renauld to go into executive session at or before 8:00 p.m. for the purpose of negotiations: Union (GEA), Non-Union and Administrative, to return to open session.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)***

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Jason, Terri, David, Melissa, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Ed, Michele

#### **VII. CONSENT ITEMS 3/10/2021 (Enc.)**

***Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to approve the minutes of 3/10/2021***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays Abstain 1 Absent (Roll Call Vote)***

Yeas: Tara, Jason, Terri, David, Melissa, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Ed, Michele,

Abstain: Madelyn

#### **VIII. COMMUNICATIONS**

##### **A. School Committee**

- Mrs. Balboni said there has been a huge thing in Westfield about delivering bottled water. Why was it so easy for us and why are Westfield schools asking parents to donate bottled water?
- Ms. Fisk said we are very creative.
- Mrs. Balboni feels they are fighting the wrong battle.
- Ms. Fisk said some of it was covid relief. We bought water bottles for kids and brought in the fillers. It is a choice. We would have had to shut down all the fountains if we didn't do that.
- Mrs. Balboni commend us for being forward thinking.

##### **B. Chairperson - Remaining meeting Schedule - In-person/remote**

- Dr. Hopson thinks we should stay remote rather than have a handful in and run the microphone and camera like we did for the interviews. Even then there were still a handful of members who were remote.
- Mr. Lubbers said he has never met any of us in person. He is a pretty good cook and puts on a nice barbeque. He would like to meet us all in person.
- Mrs. Garfield thinks it is going to be hard to say goodbye online. She would like to have at least one in the same spot.

- Mrs. Papillon agrees with Mrs. Garfield. We could do something like the year we were in Middlefield.
- Dr. Hopson said you would have to broadcast the meeting. You would have to be six feet apart. We would have to include remote options. You could hold May remotely and revisit June based upon Covid restrictions and revisit

**C. Superintendent - None**

**D. Assistant Superintendent**

- Ms. Fisk said at the next meeting they will receive the 3rd quarter report and any transfers.

**E. Administration**

- Mrs. Coburn said it is nice to have all of the kids back. The teachers are saying this feels so good. They had a logistical nightmare with parent pick up. She gave Central office staff a thank you for running cars through the back parking lot. It was a collaborative effort.
- Mr. Finnie gave a thank you to the staff, it was an adjustment and went well. Students have done an outstanding job as well.

**F. Town - None**

**IX. COMMITTEE REPORTING**

- A. Superintendent Search - None
- B. Legislative Liaison - None
- C. Policy Subcommittee - None
- D. Building Liaisons - None

**X. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

**Future Agenda Items**

Entered into executive session at 7:57 p.m. - Kristen Smidy was present.  
Returned to open session at 8:48 p.m.

***Ms. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Page to accept the Superintendent's Contract between the District and Ms. Smidy.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays 1 Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)***

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Terri, David, Melissa, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Ed, Michele  
Nays: Jason

**XI. INFORMATION**

**Information**

The warrant signing committee had reviewed the following warrants, found them to be in order, and approved them.

**Warrants**

AP#1062 \$112,071.35	PR#19 \$376,236.57
AP#1065 \$150,209.60	PR#20 \$366,301.07
AP#1069 \$92,665.21	PR#21 \$384,474.71

**XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

***Mrs. Garfield made a motion seconded by Mr. Renauld to go into executive session at or before 8:00 p.m. for the purpose of negotiations: Union (GEA) Non-Union and Administrative, to return to open session.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)***

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Jason, Terri, David, Melissa, Sarah P., Ed, Michele

**A. Negotiations: Union (GEA), Administration, Non-Union**

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT at 9 p.m. unless extended by majority vote.**

***Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Page to adjourn at 8:53 p.m.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)***

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Jason, Terri, David, Melissa, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Ed, Michele

Respectfully Submitted,  
Stacy L Stewart  
School Committee Secretary