

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

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

All visitors attending the school committee meeting should sign in at the security booth.

JOINT BUDGET/REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2020

Middle School 112/114

7:00 P.M.

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

I. OPENING OF MEETING

BLANDFORD

Michele Crane
Terri Garfield

CHESTER

Martha Otterbeck 7:44
Shirley Winer

HUNTINGTON

Melissa Nazzaro

MIDDLEFIELD

Sarah Foley

MONTGOMERY

Madelyn Austin

RUSSELL

Tara Balboni
Sarah Page
Lyndsey Papillon

SECRETARY

Stacy Stewart

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

Dr. David B. Hopson, Superintendent
Stephanie Fisk, Business & Finance

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

Megan Coburn, Chs,Lit Principal
Jason Finnie, Middle/High Principal
Kurt Garivaltis, Pupil Services Director
Deanna LeBlanc, Curriculum Director

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

OTHERS: Andy Myers, Bill Brown, Ruth Harper, Peter Spotts, Mike LaFleur, Jim Duggan

- Mrs. Crane opened the meeting at 7:02 p.m.
- Mr. Spotts is recording the meeting

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

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT - None

IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITION

A. Athletic Fee Survey and Recommendations

- Ms. Fisk reviewed fees in western MA. The recommendation is to move fees from \$132 to \$150, from \$100 for reduced lunch to \$110 and from \$66 for free lunch to \$75. The cap would stay the same. We would also be raising fees by \$1 for admission to events. This would increase revenue by \$6,500.

- Mrs. Foley asked if there is a way to offset the cost to students.
- Ms. Fisk said you could absorb it in the budget, and it would be about \$80,000. The revolving account covers a ton of the fees. The revolving account has been decreasing every year. We haven't increased fees since FY '11 or 12.
- Dr. Hopson said we are running a deficit in athletics. If you eliminate either and spend out of your revolving funds it wouldn't last long.
- Mr. Myers would like to make a case for not increasing fees. They have been working on enrollment in the high school. There was a gain from last year. If we raise them it is not an encouraging factor. Ten of the school systems have zero fees. Hampshire is \$90, Waconnah is \$105, and Westfield/voke is \$125. Gateway is at the top of the list. He suggests getting the community involved taking donations to cover athletic fees. At the very least he would like to table this.
- Ms. Fisk said this is not a vote so it wouldn't have to be tabled.

B. FY '21 Athletic Team Recommendations

- Mr. Finnie said our ski team participation is dwindling. We just don't have enough students. A lot of the cost is taken on by the student. Only high school would be able to participate in a co-op with other schools as we would have to match their structure.
- Mrs. Foley asked how many students currently participate.
- Dr. Hopson said right now 3.
- Mr. Finnie said we would like to be part of another team.
- Ms. Fisk asked if he had talked about a waiver for other students.
- Mr. Finnie said we would be able to request a waiver for the current high school students.
- Mrs. Foley asked how many we need to continue.
- Mr. Finnie said they aren't looking for a specific number.
- Dr. Hopson said we want to have the options for kids but how do we pay for them. \$5,000 is a lot for a student to participate. We could wipe out user fees but he likes the idea Mr. Myers has to get donations. It is a balance school committee needs to look at.
- Ms. Fisk said each co-op is good for 2 years. Smith voke has the most students participating, which is why they are looking into it.
- Mr. Finnie said if you are joining another school only the grades they have can participate. The host school pays more, coaches, transportation, etc.
- Mrs. Foley said so a high schooler can participate, but not the middle school.
- Mrs. Page is torn because there are some younger students coming up who are really excited.
- Mr. Finnie said Cheerleading is basically a squad that hasn't been highly competitive or traveling. They would transition from a team to a spirit squad and eliminate the user fee. It would be run it like a club.
- Mrs. Papillon said it was brought forward by the current coach so she doesn't feel like we would be losing any opportunities.
- Ms. Fisk said this is one they will watch closely ss MIAA is pushing to make it a sport. She thinks it's a more equity in the gym for practices issue.
- Mrs. Papillon said if that were to move forward, are there any immediate benefits such as new uniforms.
- Dr. Hopson said this isn't going to get them a whole lot more.
- Ms. Fisk said every year a team or two gets a new uniforms. They are on a replacement schedule.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. FY' 20 Second Quarter Transfers

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to approve the FY '20 2nd quarter transfers.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 8 Nays Abstain 1 Absent 1 (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Sarah F., Terri, Melissa, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Michele

Abstain: Shirley

Absent: Martha

7:30 VI. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. FY '21 School Calendar Adoption

- Dr. Hopson said this is the calendar the GEA has chosen.

- Mr. Duggan said the vote was pretty close, not unanimous.
- Mrs. Crane pointed out there is only one school committee meeting per month.
- Mrs. Nazzaro asked about the March meetings.
- Dr. Hopson said we didn't change anything during budget time.
- Move to Old business.

B. Motion to award the five-year (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2025) regional transportation and athletic transportation contract to Dufour Escorted Tours, Inc.

- Ms. Fisk said the motion on the agenda is not the one we will be taking tonight. She said the motion will be to reject the Dufour Bid. They were non-responsive. We have to look at Lecrenski Bros.' bid to see if they are responsive. Dufour was the low bidder, but they were non-responsive, so we are rejecting the bid.

Mrs. Nazzaro made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to reject the Dufour Escorted Tours, Inc. bid for being non-responsive.

- Attorney John McLaughlin from Green Miles Lipton, LLP, representing Lecrenski Bros., Inc. spoke. He is in support of the motion that is being made. There were two bidders for the 5-year contract. Both needed to be responsible and responsive to your bid. One of the items is if there was any litigation or pending litigation. David Lecrenski simply went online and found a civil complaint where kids in North Adams were left on a Dufour bus for an hour while a bus driver went and had breakfast. Dufour is involved in litigation; it was one of their drivers. He is not accusing them of intentionally answering wrong. You are required to answer them truthfully. You have to be both responsive and responsible and the lowest bid. He is asking you to reject the bid and look at Lecrenski Bros.
- Mrs. Nazzaro asked if we have spoken with Attorney Dupere and is he in agreement that answering no, makes them non responsive and non responsible.
- Dr. Hopson said if they had said yes and given reasons why, it would have been okay. So we are recommending you reject this and then we will look at the Lecrenski Bros. bid.

Mrs. Papillon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to waive the two-meeting rule to vote on rejecting Dufour Escorted Tours' bid.

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Sarah F., Terri, Melissa, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Shirley, Michele
Absent: Martha

Mrs. Nazzaro made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to reject the Dufour Escorted Tours, Inc. bid for being non-responsive.

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Sarah F., Terri, Melissa, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Shirley, Michele
Absent: Martha

- Ms. Fisk said the next step is to check with legal counsel to look at the Lecrenski Bros. bid. If legal counsel finds is responsive we will go with them. If not, we will go out to bid again.

C. Recommendation to authorize the Superintendent of Gateway Regional School District to enter into a Memorandum(s) of Understanding ("MOU") with the Department of Children and Families, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in order to obtain Federal Title IV-E reimbursement(s) for foster care transportation and to provide that payments for such foster care transportation under such MOU(s) may be made from such reimbursement(s) as a result of foster care transportation being provided without appropriation of said reimbursement(s), pursuant to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 44, Section 70.

- Allows us the get reimbursement for homeless transportation.

Mrs. Otterbeck arrived at 7:44 p.m.

VII. JOINT BUDGET SESSION WITH TOWN OFFICIALS

A. FY '21 Budget – Line Item Budget – How do we move forward

- Dr. Hopson said we had been asked how we could get the cost down for the towns. Some was the bus bid. Kudos to high/middle staff and Director of Curriculum to help the middle school get more ELA and Math and save by not replacing a retiring staff member. We are looking a 2% increase to the towns. It's even better than 2.5%. The real question is whether we vote the alternative or statutory method in March.
- Ms. Fisk said from Jan 1 to 31 Blandford, Montgomery, and Russell went up a little. That will change in March.
- Mr. Myers said it would be helpful for the towns to plan ahead using the alternative method.
- Dr. Hopson said we may reach out to the town select boards to see what they want. Hopefully they will all be at the hearing.
- Mrs. Crane reminded everyone that our next meeting is the budget hearing.
- Dr. Hopson said there has been discussion about municipal growth. He went over the municipal growth for each town and all had some growth.

VIII. CONSENT ITEMS 1/22/2020 (Enc)

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to approve the minutes of 1/22/2020.

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Sarah F., Terri, Melissa, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Michele

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

A. School Committee

- Mrs. Papillon asked if we received any correspondence from Russell or Montgomery.
- Mrs. Crane said no.
- Dr. Hopson said Jay Barry spoke with the admin and she said it was mailed.
Mrs. Nazzaro said it was the 100th day of school. Her son Anthony dressed as a one hundred year old man.

B. Chairperson – School Committee Ethics Follow-up, Yearbook Ad

- Mrs. Crane reminded everyone to complete their ethics training. Almost everyone has paid for the yearbook ad.

C. Superintendent

Central Office Update (Enc.)

- Dr. Hopson said our targeted review will take place the Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday after vacation. The three areas are curriculum, assessment and instruction and student supports. He will send out information with the meetings. School committee is scheduled to meet February 26 from 4-5 and 5-6. The chair and vice chair can't be in the same meeting. Mrs. Crane, Mrs. Foley, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mrs. Austin, and Mrs. Garfield can go from 4-5 on the 26th.

D. Business Manager – None

E. Administration – None

F. Town - None

X. COMMITTEE REPORTING

A. Superintendent's Evaluation –Next Meeting 2/5/2020

B. Legislative Liaison - None

C. Policy Subcommittee - Next Meeting 3/11/2020

D. Building Liaisons - None

XI. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Future Agenda Items

XII. INFORMATION**Information**

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

Warrant

AP#1049 \$75,209.84 PR#016 \$395,073.93
AP#1051 \$82,773.58

**8:35-9 p.m. XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None
or earlier**

XIV. ADJOURNMENT :

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Page to adjourn at 8:05 p.m.

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Sarah F., Terri, Melissa, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Michele

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacy L Stewart
School Committee Secretary