

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.

JOINT BUDGET/REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2018

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
Jason Fogue

HUNTINGTON
Darlene McVeigh
Melissa Nazzaro
Aaron Welch

MIDDLEFIELD
Sarah Foley

MONTGOMERY
Madelyn Austin

RUSSELL
Tara Balboni
Sarah Page

SECRETARY
Stacy Stewart

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

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL
Jason Finnie, Middle/High Principal
Wendy Long, District Grant Writer

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

OTHERS: Attorney Russell Dupere, Val Zeh, Peter Spotts, Deb Kuhn, Josh Garcia, Andy Myers
Joe Shea

- Mrs. Crane opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.
- Peter Spotts is recording the meeting.

7:05 p.m. II. PUBLIC INPUT FOR ITEMS NOT LISTED ON AGENDA (3 Minute Limit) - None

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Robert Austin said fall sports are over for the year. There are two drives going on, the blood drive and food drive. They came and picked up the food donations today. They were both a greater success than in past year. They are planning the Semi formal dance and reindeer games. They are also working on more spirit days.

IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITION - None

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Recommendation to adopt Section 21-22 of MGL 32B, thereby notifying union and bargaining groups of the intent to make benefit changes to the district's health insurance plans.

- This recommendation to adopt section 21-22 of MGL 32B was postponed to this meeting.

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to adopt Section 21-22 of MGL 32B, thereby notifying union and bargaining groups of the intent to make benefit changes to the district's health insurance plans.

- Melissa asked if there were any representatives from the GTA.
- Mr. Welch read a statement: "It is clear that we must pass this measure to adopt section 21, because it appears we have no choice. But I would urge those stakeholders at the Hampshire Trust to re-examine both the method and reasoning for this effort. Based on the information provided by the Trust, I remain unconvinced that these plan changes are necessary. The trust is currently overfunded by roughly a million dollars, and the general trends appear to be favorable. That said, if these changes are intended to preserve the long-term performance and viability of the trust and must be done, I'd suggest that the changes be made less severe and done with at least the input from the member unions if not the oversight and approval. For a group of people who have had basically no changes in nearly a decade, having co pays increase by as much as \$500 seems extreme, and given the state of the Trust's balance sheet, unnecessary. If we are presented with plan changes that are identical to those that were presented to us for this vote, and we find ourselves once again painted into a corner with no alternative other than to adopt them, I for one will be extremely disappointed."

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to adopt Section 21-22 of MGL 32B, thereby notifying union and bargaining groups of the intent to make benefit changes to the district's health insurance plans.

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

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

Abstain: Aaron

Absent: Darlene

B. October Grant Approval (an additional grant was added)

Mrs. Nazzaro made a motion seconded by Mr. Welch to suspend the two-meeting rule to vote on the grants.

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

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

Absent: Darlene

Mrs. Nazzaro made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to approve the October Grants.

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

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

Absent: Darlene

7:30 VI. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Motion to Recognize the GEA/MTA/NEA as the Collective Bargaining Unit for Gateway Food Services Employees.

- Attorney Russell Dupere the MTA represents the teachers. The café is looking to join the MTA. It would still be a separate union. You can voluntarily recognize them to do so. He has to speak with them to make sure they have a majority. His legal advice is to voluntarily recognize them rather than go through the legal process.
- Mrs. Nazzaro asked if there is a way to communicate to us if they don't have a majority.
- Attorney Russell Dupere said he is pretty sure they already have a majority. They also have to get a first contract settled before they can get cards.

B. Policies – Minutes (Enc.)

- a. IJNDD – Policy on Social Media
 - b. IJOB – Community Resource Persons/Speakers
 - c. IMG – Animals in School
 - d. JCA – Assignment of Students to Schools
 - e. JEA – Delete (Compulsory Attendance Ages)
 - f. JEB – Entrance Age
 - g. JFABD – Homeless Students: Enrollment Rights and Services
 - h. JFABE – Educational Opportunities for Military Children
 - i. JFABF – Educational Opportunities for Children in Foster Care
 - j. JFBB – School Choice
- Most of them were small wording changes - the minutes and new wording were in the packet.
 - Vote at next meeting.

7:30 VII. JOINT BUDGET SESSION WITH TOWN OFFICIALS**A. FY '20 Budget Development**

- Dr. Hopson gave a Power Point presentation.
 - Mr. Welch asked if 3.8% is worst case or middle case.
 - Dr. Hopson said this is probably middle case. We lock in heating oil for the entire season for what we anticipate using.
 - Mr. Welch said for the town assessment votes should we run both assessments so we have it as information.
 - Dr. Hopson said you would do that so we have the information. What we have now is a five year agreement with the towns and DESE, but once the Regional Agreement is done, you have to vote every year because the state expects you to use the statutory method.
 - Mr. Forgue said wouldn't you want to show it.
 - Dr. Hopson said it depends on how it affects a town. We never really knew what each town was until March, but depending on the way the house and senate budget goes you may have an idea earlier.
- Mrs. McVeigh arrived at 7:27 p.m.
- Mr. Myers said he is hoping to lean toward 2% each. It is level the towns would be able to bare. He would encourage holding town assessments to 2%. His concern is the declining enrollment. Just this March to October we are down students.
 - Dr. Hopson said the first thing that has to go is the Chapter 74 program if we don't receive the revenue we are anticipating.
 - Mr. Myers said we are working with the legislators on claw back. Just last Monday, Chester had a student that wanted to go to voke this month. They had to approve it because it wasn't budgeted.
 - Dr. Hopson said again that would be the Chapter 74 program.
 - Mr. Myers said we need to invest in the district.
 - Mrs. Foley asked if there is a way to do a comparison from 8th to 9th grade to see if we are losing more students than others.
 - Dr. Hopson said we could look at other schools similar to us.
 - Mr. Myers said in March last year we had 63 students in 9th grade and now we have 39.
 - Mrs. Balboni said I know we want to have kids do what they want to do, but she feels like voke is a traveling road show. Kids that don't plan on going and end up going. It is heavily marketed.
 - Dr. Hopson said the law says we have to allow them in.
 - Dr. Hopson said technically if we had openings in the welding program you could go in and do a presentation in other schools.
 - Mrs. McVeigh thought we recommended we have a subgroup look at why students are leaving.
 - Mr. Finnie said there is a school council meeting. He put it on the agenda for tomorrow's meeting. We need to do some foundational work such as getting students to jobs they are interested in.
 - Dr. Hopson said this is why we need a five-year program and is there another Chapter 74 program we can create.
 - Mrs. Long said she did a report, but it is hard to get people to respond. Some is geographical, or parents work that way or they want to play football, or take Latin.
 - Mrs. Balboni said there is an exodus to a lot of online schools as well.
 - Dr. Hopson said Gateway has lost a larger percentage than any other school in MA.
 - Mr. Finnie said what isn't necessarily true is if you build it they will come.
 - Mrs. Garfield said maybe Gateway high school should also do a presentation to middle school students.

- Mr. Finnie said we begin to do that in the second semester.
- Dr. Hopson said we have vans for job placement now. If we do develop a Chapter 74 program that is not full from our kids, we could then market to Westfield. We need to look at what we can do differently and look at what we've done as a basis to move forward.
- Mr. Finnie said one of challenges is staffing. Our welding teacher has been teaching an introduction to welding. But then he has less time for teaching welding to the high school.
- Dr. Hopson said that is a potential investment area. We could have another teacher and double the number of students.
- Mrs. McVeigh said we've opened up two all day preschool programs. Kindergarten has 53 and last year was 70 it is discouraging. We are not a destination yet. A lot of people who live here go other places to work.
- Dr. Hopson said you have to market that this is a great place to live.
- Mrs. McVeigh said hopefully that will change with internet.
- Mr. Myers said in the next couple weeks you will see the Gateway newsletter the economic developer has been working on. It will be mailed to every resident in all six towns.
- Mrs. Page asked can those go to real estate agents.
- Mrs. Nazzaro said maybe links to websites to make it searchable on town websites.
- Ms. Fisk said in 2016 and 17 they went from 79-61 and 163 to 106 in Hampshire so they are similar to us.
- Mrs. Austin said some of the preschool kids stay a second year.
- Ms. Fisk said Mr. Garivalentis has mentioned that it will be full by the end of the year.
- Mrs. Balboni said they are also more prepared for school with hopefully less cost later on.

VIII. CONSENT ITEMS 10/24/18 (Enc.)

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mr. Welch to approve the minutes of 10/24/18

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Sarah F., Jason, Terri, Melissa, Sarah P., Darlene, Aaron, Michele

Abstain: Tara

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

A. School Committee

- Mr. Welch talked about the MASC Joint Conference. They split up tracks. There are five concurrent sessions. School committee law was actually legislative updates. They talked about union agency fees, tort law and liability. Glenn Koocher talked about dealing with difficult stakeholders. General sessions were good as well. There was a really good speaker from CT who gave the overview of lawsuits about funding. School reform bill failure may start the lawsuit again. Although the Supreme Court ruled against stating they are not underfunded.
- Mrs. McVeigh said went to a track about high school student interests - designing courses around their interest. It was more for the suburbs. Dr. Hopson gave a presentation regarding blizzard bags.
- Mr. Welch said it is useful and nice to meet other committee members. Some of the sessions will be coming to divisional meetings. One of the division meetings talked about going on social media, when to go on and when not to go on. You have to make sure you are not debating. Just sending the link is more appropriate.
- Mrs. Balboni said parent teacher conferences were great.

B. Chairperson

School Committee Goals

- Mr. Crane said the reform resolutions were mailed out. She asked everyone to look at the goals that were in your packet. Tuesday the 20th is college day for instant applications. They are looking for someone to speak at that. It's a good day to talk about getting excited about going to college. She believes it starts at 1:15, but you would most likely be speaking at 1:30.

C. Superintendent

Central Office Update (Enc.)

- Dr. Hopson met with secretaries in the first meeting of negotiations – we didn't get an official letter. We did get an official letter from the custodians.

D. Business Manager

- Ms. Fisk has been spending time digging into the budge. The maintenance schedule is linked to the capital improvement plan. It looks pretty solid for the next 10 years.

E. Administration

- Mr. Finnie thanked everyone for coming out to the NEASC meeting. He thanks the parents, co-chairs Jeri Beauregard and Mike Forand, Mary Lyons, and especially the students. The team complimented the students and the team. We should receive a draft report in late December early January with a 10-day period to look it over. The final report available for public release will come out sometime in the spring. He said the chair has chaired 34 visits and this is one of the top 5 groups he has worked with.

F. Town

- Mrs. McVeigh suggested at the December meeting we have our executive session with the towns regarding the Worthington withdrawal. She will work with Mrs. Stewart setting that up.

X. COMMITTEE REPORTING

A. Superintendent's Evaluation - Next Meeting 1/9/19

B. Legislative Liaison - None

C. Policy Subcommittee – Next Meetings 12/12/18

D. Building Liaisons

- Mrs. Garfield and Mrs. Foley are meeting with Jason on the day before Thanksgiving.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Future Agenda Items

XII. INFORMATION

Information

'Boo Bash' at Chester Elementary

Family Boo-vie Night at Gateway

Penny Social on November 16

Gateway's Chris Parker presents at technology conference

'Pawsome Reading Challenge' underway at Littleville

Red Cross Blood Drive at Gateway

Future bright for Gateway's new full day PreK

Superintendent's Corner October 26, 2018

Parent's Rights and Responsibilities Presentation

NEASC accreditation visit underway

Parent-Teacher Conferences

MS X-C girls place second at Western MA meet

Domestic violence assembly at Gateway Regional High School

Donations on Giving Tuesday will help sustain Gateway Literacy programs

NHS annual drive for Hilltown Holiday Help

Annual Penny Social reminder

Vendors, shoppers sought for Annual Craft Fair at Littleville

November School Committee meetings

All schools, offices closed for Veterans Day

Superintendent's Corner November 2, 2018

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

Warrant

AP#1036 \$1,362.04

PR#009 \$369,677.04

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

XIX. ADJOURNMENT :

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mr. Welch to adjourn at 8:10 p.m.

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Sarah F., Jason, Terri, Melissa, Sarah P., Darlene, Aaron, Michele

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacy L Stewart
School Committee Secretary