

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.

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2019

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 Forgue
Martha Otterbeck
Shirley Winer

HUNTINGTON
Darlene McVeigh
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
Wendy Long, District Grant Writer

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

OTHERS: Peter Spotts, Andy Myers, Derrick Mason, Ruth Kennedy

- Mrs. Crane opened the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

II. PUBLIC INPUT FOR ITEMS NOT LISTED ON AGENDA (3 Minute Limit)

- Derrick Mason has several questions on the recent appointment of the assistant superintendent. He said we have spent the last few years working on better relationship, so he has some questions about how this body handled it in accordance with chapter 71. In the process of hiring the assistant superintendent is it an urgent need, is it non-union or union position, was this posted, what was the process, what was the public process, was the two meeting rule followed, where does this process show up in school committee minutes.
- Dr. Hopson asked Mr. Mason if he would share his questions with us. He said this is not a new position it is a transition.

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT - None

IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITION

A. Auditor's Report

- John from Melanson and Heath was here to give the report. He said this is their 3rd year doing the audit. The audit is in accordance with governmental audit practices. The audit does not test 100%, it is impossible to do. It is designed to test the riskiest areas. Journal entries, payroll transaction. Gateway has a 16 million operating budget. It is between \$30,000 and \$100,000 transactions. Financial statement on page 10 shows

the total net position is negative 3 million. This is driven by OPEB and pension liability, two long-term liabilities for the district. OPEB reporting changes require you to report the entire liability. These are actuarial numbers. This is the year the entire liability had to be reported. Pension liability went down a bit. The system as a whole was more funded.

- Mrs. McVeigh said the total obligation was fairly similar; this just put the remaining amount this year.
- John said yes.
- Ruth Kennedy asked for the total.
- John said 17.5 million.
- Dr. Hopson said the net pension liability is 4.8 million.
- John said those are the two big liabilities school districts have. Offsets to that are 2.5 million for total net position. On page 12 government wide financial statements, GASB added all of them together. It works to some degree but your general fund is much different from your grants. The district is in a pretty good financial position with the use of E & D at \$421,000 which is right about what we closed at. We are essentially replenishing what we used the previous year. Also that the district has been able to start funding OPEB and compensated absences. There was no management letter. There are a couple things coming in the future changes to fiduciary funds in 2020. 2021 relates to leases and what gets defined as an operating or capital lease. Kudos to Ms. Fisk and her staff they do a great job. They provide the documentation we need and it runs smoothly.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Policies – Updated

- a. KBA – School-Parent/Guardian Relations Goals
- b. KBBA – Non-Custodial Parent’s Rights
- c. KBE – Relations with Parent/Booster Organizations
- d. KCD – Public Gifts to the Schools
- e. KDB – Public’s Right to Know
- f. KDD – News Media Relations/News Releases
- g. KE – Public Complaints
- h. KHB – Advertising in the Schools
- i. KI – Visitors to the Schools
- j. LDA – Student Teaching and Internships

B. Policies Deleted

- k. KJA – Relations with Booster Organizations
- l. KEB & KEB-R – Public Complaints about School Personnel
- m. KEC – Public Concerns/Complaints about Instructional Resources

- Mrs. Crane said the k, l, and m deletions are because they are becoming part of other policies.

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to approve Policies a-j including the deleted policies.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent 1 (Roll Call Vote)

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

Absent: Martha

C. School Committee Goals

- Mrs. Crane asked if anyone had anything to add. She will update them again in June.

D. Approve Revisions to the Regional Agreement

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Wine to approve the additional changes to the regional agreements.

- Mrs. Crane said we had a lengthy discussion at the last facilitated discussion meeting.
- Dr. Hopson said these changes are as of April. Once the commissioner signs it, it is in effect. Once it is signed it would only change weighted average and five-year rolling average.
- Mrs. McVeigh, Mrs. Austin, John Baldasaro and Derrick Mason went to a meeting with Montgomery select board members. One of them still isn’t happy. We feel he needs to provide wording or come to the

facilitated discussion meeting. She said all the questions that were provided that the group went through and responded to did not satisfy him and there were more questions.

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Wine to approve the additional changes to the regional agreements.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent 1 (Roll Call Vote)

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

Absent: Martha

7:30 VI. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Motion to approve one-year extension of the Regional Transportation Contract to Lecrenski Bros. Inc.

- Ms. Fisk said this is the last option year on the five-year contract. Next year we will be going out to bid again hopefully it won't go up 37%. It is only going up by CPI, but will actually go down because we deleted a bus.
- Mrs. Balboni asked if we reduce a bus is it truly a reduction.
- Ms. Fisk said yes 100%.
- Mr. Forgue asked if we have any idea what the increase will be is it trending that way.
- Ms. Fisk said, yes, and most places are only getting one legitimate bidder.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked are there any significant additional regulations related to bus transportation.
- Ms. Fisk yes, but they had their epi-pen training and fingerprinting already. It is taking forever for people to get 7D certified. There are a lot of new regulations; seatbelt cutter fire extinguisher. They are making it hard for small districts to own their own buses.

B. Motion to approve FY' 19 Budget Transfers

- Ms. Fisk said student activity balances will be part of the audit and procedures. This will be in the quarterly report. The last page is the transfers. Some teachers were on long-term medical or resigned mid-year so the long-term sub line item has a large increase of \$31,000. She tried to gauge what we would spend between now and the end of the year. Heating oil is up. We budgeted \$1.90 and it's at \$2.19. Employee separation costs – anticipated for those who said they were retiring and didn't. Health insurance is just a pay line. Acquisition of motor vehicles this is to get us on tract for maintenance vehicles. When we go out to bid we will word the athletic portion so we can use our own vans. Tuition to non public schools was for our residential change. The 240 grant will pay for some of it.

C. Third Quarter Report

- Third quarter report. Things are running smoothly. Be careful of the electricity costs. Because it took so long for metering to come, there will be a lot of credits. They put the credits on the well originally so we had to fix that.
- Mrs. Foley asked where the field with the panel is.
- Ms. Fisk said Deerfield.

D. April Grant Approval – Safer Schools and Communities Grant (Enc.)

- Mrs. Long said this is a grant opportunity for security at entrances. We applied for the funding to replicate it at Chester, Littleville and the north entrance. She said it is so you accept applying for and receipt of the funding.

E. Motion to Accept Chester's FY'19 Assessment Gift for the Town of Russell in the amount of \$17,290.

- Mrs. Crane said we wanted to have this as a vote to show that this gift was given.
- Dr. Hopson said we are better off being safe.
- Mrs. McVeigh said we are accepting and approving restricted funds from Chester and approving applying it to reduce Russell's FY '19 Assessments.

VII. CONSENT ITEMS 3/27/19 (Enc)

Mrs. Winer made a motion seconded by Mr. Forgue to approve the minutes of 3/27/19.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain 1 Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Jason, Terri, Sarah P., Darlene, Martha, Aaron, Shirley, Michele

Abstain: Sarah F.

XIII. COMMUNICATIONS

A. School Committee

- Mrs. Balboni said before the next meeting is the annual retirement reception at 6:00 p.m. She sent an email out. She brings paper goods and drinks and she is asking for people to bring what they want.
- Mrs. McVeigh will be at a business conference and will miss it.
- Mrs. Balboni will send a reminder email to everyone.

B. Chairperson

Retirement Reception May 8 - 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

- Mrs. Crane said we will be doing the superintendents evaluation fairly quickly. Next week the link will go out for the survey. We will open it next week request to have all responses by May 22. Then she will do the final report. The goal is to have it done by May 22. She said last year we surveyed Dr. Hopson and ourselves at the same time and it was a lot. She is thinking of putting us off until the fall, but she is open to suggestions.
- There was discussion about handing out a paper copy, but it can be printed. If you have trouble contact Mrs. Stewart.

C. Superintendent - None

Central Office Update (Enc.)

D. Business Manager – None

E. Administration

- Mrs. Long said the hilltown family center and the district have teamed up to offer the video Screenagers – effects of screen time and strategies for families to consider. There will be childcare available, you just need to contact Kim Savery. May 9 is the high school concert and the 10th and 11th is the high school production of “Big Fish”.
- Dr. Hopson said Best Buddies is hosting dining for a cause on Tuesday May 7th at the 99 Restaurant in Westfield from 5-8 p.m. There are flyers which you need to bring located in central office.

F. Town

- Mrs. McVeigh said Ms. Fisk is going to get the debt exclusion to all the towns so they can debt exclude the capital portion.

IX. COMMITTEE REPORTING

A. Superintendent’s Evaluation - Next Meeting 4/24/19

- Met tonight. Next meeting is June 12.

B. Legislative Liaison

- Waiting on the Senate.

C. Policy Subcommittee - None

D. Building Liaisons - None

X. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Future Agenda Items

- Mrs. McVeigh has some future agenda items. She feels we should create some sort of policy statement as part of the budget that the school committee will provide the alternate and statutory assessments. She also feels we need to have a formal discussion with continuing with the MARS group for next year. We’ve gone through the regional agreement this year. Next year should be planning and strategy. We need to explore options and determine if there is any money from DESE to get professional help. It is time to set up a superintendent’s search.
- Dr. Hopson said he just talked about having superintendent’s search as a goal for next year.

- Mrs. Long said a lot of people were at the Thunderbirds night. Four seniors sang the National Anthem and they were amazing.
- Mrs. Winer asked if we should be discussing more people to get out to our meetings. It feels like it is sort of dwindling.
- Mrs. McVeigh's son met with a realtor to buy a house and the realtor was not nice when talking about the district. It is the same as looking in the paper and seeing 100 towns with the highest tax rate.
- Mrs. Crane said the realtor breakfast is from 8-9 before our communications council meeting on May 9th.
- Mr. Myers said the realtors that have listings in the area the ones that would be the most interested.

XI. INFORMATION

Information

College Planning Workshop at Gateway

Dating violence education takes center stage at Gateway

Here come spring sports!

Notice of Destruction of Special Education Records

Final Reminder for Gateway Night at Thunderbirds Hockey Game

Gateway P351 ambassadors launch first service project

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

Warrant

AP#1071 \$69,050.19

PR#020 \$372,205.47

AP#1074 \$152,245.25

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

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Page to adjourn at 8:09 p.m.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

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

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacy L Stewart,
School Committee Secretary