

**GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2017**

**Middle School 112/114**

**7:00 P.M.**

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

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

**I. OPENING OF MEETING**

BLANDFORD  
Michele Crane  
Terri Garfield

CHESTER  
Shirley Winer  
Martha Otterbeck  
Diane Dunn

HUNTINGTON  
Ron Damon  
Jeff Wyand

MIDDLEFIELD  
Sarah Foley

MONTGOMERY  
Anne-Marie Buikus  
Madelyn Austin

RUSSELL  
Tara Balboni  
Heather Morgan  
Lyndsey Papillon

SECRETARY  
Stacy Stewart

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

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL  
Megan Coburn, Chs,Lit,Ms Principal  
Jason Finnie, High/Jr. High Principal  
Kurt Garivaltis, Pupil Services Director  
Sara Laing, Chs,Lit, Ms Assistant Principal  
Wendy Long, District Grant Writer  
Anthony Sabonis, High/Jr. High Assistant Principal

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

OTHERS: \_\_\_\_\_

**7:05 p.m. II. PUBLIC INPUT (3 Minute Limit) - None**

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**III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT - None**

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**IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS**

**A. Student Participation**

- Mr. Sabonis gave a presentation on student participation for what we offer for extracurricular activities for the 15/16 and 16/17 school years. We offered three new activities: Jazz Band, Concert Band and an outdoor club. A club fair was held this year and it created a boost in numbers. There was also a change in schedule, which added Project Based Learning (PBL)
- Mrs. Winer asked what was happening with Model UN.
- Mr. Sabonis said we were on of the new history teachers took it on. She has has experience as a student.

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**V. BUDGET**

**A. FY '18 Budget**

- Dr. Hopson said the line item budget was part of the packet. What he is handing out tonight is an updated synopsis.

- There are not a lot of staff changes. We are adding an autism specialist and reducing an adjustment counselor and adding a half time nurse.
- There are increases in health insurance, transportation, and out of district tuition, negotiations, contractual obligations, textbook replacement, heating, food services and athletic field trips.
- This budget does not include, curriculum replacement, stabilization funding, a life skills class, OPEB funding, evaluation team leader, technology director, ELA or Math coaches, data/portfolio coordination, a replacement English teacher, superintendent search, or inflation.
- The leadership team thinks the learning skills class is important.
- Overall the budget increase is \$159,386.00. Ms. Fisk was able to keep it this low due to outplacement reductions and a reduction in use of electricity.
- Mrs. Winer asked what was going on with the solar.
- Ms. Fisk said the last update was two weeks ago, they are waiting for hook up.
- Mr. Damon asked how important it is to replace the English teacher.
- Dr. Hopson said it was the least important on the list.
- Mr. Finnie said we have been able to use special education teachers for 1 period a day for remedial English. He and Mr. Garivaltis are looking at a three-year plan if we don't hire someone. We may lose "A" classes, but not necessarily supports.
- Mrs. Winer asked about AP classes
- Mr. Finnie said it would be easier to lose "A" classes than AP. "A" stands for application.
- Mrs. Crane asked if we had a cost for a life skills class.
- Dr. Hopson said Mr. Garivaltis talked about having someone come in and look at job placements which would cost about \$20,000 the first year to set things up. Hopefully, with the bus we will be able to have a lot of opportunities.
- Mr. Finnie said we could avoid having that age difference for students by having the older students out in job placements.
- Dr. Hopson said after the first year we would have a life skills coach. Mr. Garivaltis has set up these types of programs in other districts.
- Mrs. Foley asked how many students this affects.
- Mr. Finnie said about 6 students.
- Dr. Hopson said we have 6 students now, and we will have 6 more coming up. Grades 6 through age 22. This option would be to avoid adding another teacher for a classroom.
- Dr. Hopson said the leadership is coming up with ways to utilize staff for curriculum work as part of their days. It distributes leadership without a lot of additional costs.
- Mrs. Crane asked Ms. Fisk for an explanation of the insurance increase.
- Ms. Fisk said we are talking about an increase of 10.5% for PPO and 9.4% for HMO. The GIC went up as well about 8.7%. It is driven by the Affordable Care Act. Also, for five or six years we haven't had an increase.
- Dr. Hopson said hopefully we will have assessments at the February meeting. The public hearing is the first Wednesday in March. School Committee will adopt the budget at the second meeting in March. There is one more opportunity the following week. Then you would be out of time.
- The budget as is is bare bones and doesn't add a lot of new staff.
- Mr. Wyand asked if we should prioritize the needs and what the total would be.
- Dr. Hopson said somewhere between \$450,000 and \$500,000.
- Mr. Wyand said we did quite well without Mrs. Blocker last year.
- Dr. Hopson said this will be the first full year. A couple years down the road we may want to add a part time person. He has asked if other districts would be interested in sharing. There are a few, but they are not ready this year as they already have budget increases without a curriculum director.
- Mr. Wyand asked if we could move someone up the ranks in technology and give them more responsibility.
- Dr. Hopson said the three people we have now are stretched out. That would be a good idea and then we could hire at the lower level.
- Mrs. Crane asked what the cost would be if we added the life skills or something else and how would we add that.
- Dr. Hopson said you would just ask us to add that in and we would bring it back. Two towns will have significant increases because they have student increases. Mrs. McVeigh had brought up at GTAC looking at a 5-year rolling average. We may come up with assessments based on statutory, a rolling average on entire budget, and a rolling student average.
- Mrs. Winer said a number of years ago we started the sail program to prevent out placement. Has it worked?

- Dr. Hopson said yes, it has worked very well. We have students moving into the district that have higher needs.
- Mrs. Coburn said since August we've enrolled almost thirty-five new students. Sixteen came with IEP's, and six of them are ELL. She and Kurt spent most of today in Chicopee discussing transition of two of the students a moving in from Chicopee that are blind. We have no experience with blind students.
- Mrs. Winer asked if Mrs. Coburn has the personnel.
- Mrs. Coburn said we have been fortunate they have been spread out K-5 so it hasn't offset any classes.
- Mrs. Foley asked if they are choicing in or moving in.
- Mrs. Coburn said they are moving in.
- Ms. Fisk reminded everyone that we update this as we have new figures. CPI regional transportation, we bid out our oil through the collaborative they are collecting the information now. They have come down a little in the past few days.
- Mr. Wyand asked what she would like to do with OPEB.
- Ms. Fisk said the first time when we opened it we looked at what we have as a savings. We have to be careful, between that and E & D. February is open enrollment. She will have a better idea when that closes.
- Mr. Wyand asked if she is thinking a\$100,000.
- Ms. Fisk said no, she doesn't see that much savings.
- Mr. Wyand asked how the investment is doing.
- Ms. Fisk said it is going well.
- Mr. Wyand said factoring in cost of superintendent separation we should get an idea.
- Dr. Hopson said the average superintendent search is between \$10,000 and \$60,000. School committee has to decide if they want to extend the current superintendent contract and see if the superintendent wants to extend. If not you will have to put it in because it is currently not in the budget.
- Mrs. Winer said we were lucky not to have to complete a search last time.
- Dr. Hopson said our food services director will be retiring in October. There is also another food services director retiring. We may be able to share services with that school. This may offset the life skills class.
- Ms. Buikus asked about retirees.
- Ms. Fisk said there aren't many coming up.

***Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Dunn to go into executive session at or before 8:30 p.m. for the purpose Union Negotiations – Paraprofessionals, Non-Union and Administrative Contracts, and Litigation: Kennedy, et al. v. Commonwealth of Massachusetts, et al. - No.:HSCV2014-00210 to return to open session.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)***

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Anne-Marie, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Heather, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Jeff, Michele.

#### **7:45 VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEM**

**A. Policies: JJF: Student Activity Accounts, DN: Disposal of School Property, JLC: Student Health Services and Requirements**

***Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to approve policies JIF: Student Activity Accounts, DN: Disposal of School Property, JLC: Student Health Services Requirements.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)***

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Anne-Marie, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Heather, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Jeff, Michele.

#### **B. Small/Rural Schools' Caucus**

***Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Winer to approve the following: support the resolution to support MA rural public schools, join the MA Rural School Coalition, and support the MA Rural School Aid Proposal.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)***

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Anne-Marie, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Heather, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Jeff, Michele.

- Dr. Hopson said they will meet again in a couple of weeks.

- Superintendent Michael Buoniconti is putting together a small group of students. Ms. Thompson has offered to use Model UN as a way to help.

## 8:00 - VII. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

8:30 p.m.

### A. Field Trips – 2<sup>nd</sup> Half of the Year

#### Wrestling Overnight 1/13/17- Maple Hill NY, 1/27/17 – Albany NY

- Wrestling overnight coming up on Friday.
- Mr. Finnie is taking the place of coach Forand. He said this is something that has happened in the past. The tournaments are already approved, but he is asking for permission to have an overnight at his house. It is closer than the school, saves on driving time and allows them to get more sleep. Students are not required to stay. Permission slips are already signed by the parents.
- Mrs. Balboni asked how many students.
- Mr. Sabonis said it depends on how many students wrestle. Mr. Sabonis said only 1 student can compete per weight class.

*Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to waive the two-meeting rule to vote on the wrestling overnights: 1/13/17 – Maple Hill NY and 1/27/17 – Albany NY.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)*

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Anne-Marie, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Heather, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Jeff, Michele.

- Mrs. Foley asked who was staying where.
- Mr. Forand just walked in. He said student would be staying at his house. The girls would stay on one floor and the boys on another. His wife will also be there.
- Mrs. Garfield asked how many students,
- Mr. Forand said seven normally but this weekend there will be six.

*Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to approve the two wrestling overnights: 1/13/17 – Maple Hill NY and 1/27/17 – Albany NY.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 12 Nays Abstain 1 Absent (Roll Call Vote)*

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Anne- Marie, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Heather, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Michele.

Abstain: Jeff

#### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade trip to Philadelphia, PA and Washington, DC 4/11-13/17

- Philadelphia field trip, is an annual trip to either pa or DC. Jason gave a brief presentation.
- Move to next meeting.

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade overnight to Becket-Chimney Corners 4/27-28/17

- Mrs. Coburn said school committee received an information sheet and three letters from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade class. They went in the fall as a day trip. They wanted to do an overnight and spend more time. They surveyed the parents before they went any further. A grant is reducing the cost. It is \$75 per student, a block grant made it \$65, and they applied for a foundation grant in hopes to keep it under \$30.
- Mr. Wyand asked how many students.
- Mrs. Coburn said 19.
- Mr. Wyand asked what happens if a student can't afford to go.
- Mrs. Coburn said the PTO would pick up the cost. They are fabulous she cannot say enough positive things about them.
- Mrs. Luciani explained why she wanted to do this and her experience as a child in a similar situation. If it is approved this year, she would like to involve Littleville next year.
- Mr. Waynd asked what the sleeping arrangements look like.
- Mrs. Luciani said they have the opportunity say in one or two cabins. Students will be on a bed with a sleeping bag.
- Mr. Wyand asked about the child that wants to go home in the middle of the night.

- Mrs. Luciani said her experience is it is usually the parents that have more of a problem than the students. It's nice to have avenues like the Chester Facebook page. Once parents see their children having a great time, they are usually fine.
- Move to old business

### VIII. CONSENT ITEMS 12/14/16 (Enc.)

*Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to approve the minutes of 12/14/16.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain 3 Absent (Roll Call Vote)*

Yeas: Tara, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Heather, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Michele

Abstain: Madelyn, Anne- Marie, Jeff

### IX. COMMUNICATIONS

#### A. School Committee – None

#### B. Chairperson

- Mrs. Crane has most of the money and the picture. She and Mrs. Otterbeck had a brief conference call with MARS.

#### C. Superintendent

Central Office Update (Enc.)

- Dr. Hopson said he Mrs. Crane and Ms. Fisk will be meeting with MARS tomorrow. He is still missing two of the draft reports. Mrs. McVeigh had been in contact with them as well.
- Dr. Hopson said school committee should have the information at next meeting. He talked to Steve Hemmen and he wants to give the Mrs. McVeigh the reports at the same time as school committee. The reports will go public the first meeting in February, where they will come and give a presentation and answer questions. He said the reports are a good indication of what is going on. There is nothing in them you haven't seen before.

#### D. Business Manager

- Ms. Fisk said there were not students on the bus that slid off the road. She believes Dr. Hopson sent an email. Another 5-car pileup the same day happened too. It was tough getting to work that morning.
- Lead and copper testing was taken here and the DESE changed it from 10 to 15. They have to take them between January and June. The samples were clear. Littleville's samples have been sent to a competition for the best water.

#### E. Administration - None

### X. COMMITTEE REPORTING

#### A. Superintendent's Evaluation

- Superintendent's evaluation met tonight. They will hold a management meeting next month and they will be providing information for the committee to look at.

#### B. Legislative Liaison – None

#### C. Policy Subcommittee

- Policy meets on the 25<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m.

#### D. Building Liaisons

- Mr. Wyand and Mrs. Crane are in the process of arranging a meeting with Mr. Quinn.

Went into executive session at 8:30 p.m.

Returned to open session at 8:58 p.m.

*Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Dunn to approve putting administrative stipends in the Administrative Amendment A portion of the contracts.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays Abstain 2 Absent 2 (Roll Call Vote)*

Yeas: Madelyn, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Heather, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Michele  
 Abstain: Anne-Marie, Jeff  
 Absent: Tara, Ron

## **XI. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

### **Future Agenda Items**

## **XII. INFORMATION**

### **Information**

'Spirit Days' and special activities highlight week leading into holiday break.

PSAT Interpretation

Superintendent's Corner December 23, 2016

Sixth graders market good reads as cereal boxes

Gateway ASMW team airs on January 14

Costa Rica meets Gateway hilltowns

Gateway celebrates annual 'Reindeer Games'

January School Committee meetings

### **Warrant**

AP#1043 \$200,970.30                      PR# 13 \$356,694.30

AP#1046 \$61,450.89                      PR# 14 \$332,913.32

AP#1048 \$70,855.91

## **8:35-9 p.m. XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**or earlier**

- A. Union Negotiations – Paraprofessionals
- B. Non-Union and Administrative Contracts
- C. Litigation: Kennedy, et al. v. Commonwealth of Massachusetts, et al. - No.:HSCV2014-00210

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*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)*

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Anne-Marie, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Heather, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Jeff, Michele.

## **XIX. ADJOURNMENT**

*Mrs. Dunn made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to adjourn at 8:59 p.m.*

*Motion Carried (Roll Call Vote) Yeas 11 Nays Abstain Absent 2 (Roll Call Vote)*

Yeas: Madelyn, Anne-Marie, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Heather, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Jeff, Michele

Absent: Tara, Ron

Respectfully Submitted,  
 Stacy L Stewart  
 School Committee Secretary