

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2016

**Room 214/216 Jr. High
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
Shirley Winer
Martha Otterbeck 7:33
Diane Dunn

HUNTINGTON
Ron Damon

MIDDLEFIELD
Sarah Foley

MONTGOMERY
Anne-Marie Buikus
Madelyn Austin

RUSSELL
Ruth Kennedy
Heather Morgan

SECRETARY
Stacy Stewart

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

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL
Joanne Blocker, Director of Academics
Megan Coburn, Chs,Lit,Ms Principal
Jason Finnie, High/Jr. High Principal
Wendy Long, District Grant Writer
Alice Taverna, Pupil Services Director

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

OTHERS: _____

7:05 p.m. II. PUBLIC INPUT (3 Minute Limit)

- Mrs. Crane opened the meeting at 7:10 p.m.
- Mrs. Buikus and Mrs. Austin are recording the meeting.
- Derrick Mason read paragraph 3 from the DESE letter from Commissioner Chester encouraging the district and towns work together with a consultant. There is a task force meeting tomorrow night at 7 pm at Stanton Hall in Huntington.

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Brennan Foley said they started the collection for the blessing bags. They have received most of the donations from adults. Collections run through next Friday. The semi-formal is going to be at Tuckers on January 22. Tickets are \$40. There will be a buffet and a DJ. There is a blood drive this Saturday at Stanton Hall at 2pm.

IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS

A. 2nd Semester Field Trips

- Mr. Finnie said the 8th grade team would like to take their annual class trip to High Meadows. They are looking at Wednesday, June 15. Mrs. Guertin would like to do a separate trip to see a Broadway show with a lower cost. It won't include all the behind the scenes. She is looking for a matinee sometime in April in NY.

B. Professional Development Update (Enc.)

- Mrs. Blocker handed out what was included in the packet. We had an opening day speaker this year. She conducted a survey and most staff was very pleased with the day. Saying it set a positive aspect with the whole district. Several groups of teachers are working with consultants to enhance the units and curriculum. The feedback has been really positive. It is a great experience and teachers are able to use the ideas in the classroom.
- Mrs. Coburn said they had a consultant bring in new ideas for hands on science experiments. It brings a lot of good discussion amongst the teachers.
- Mrs. Foley asked who are the consultants and where do you find them.
- Mrs. Blocker said Westfield state, the collaborative, DESE, etc.

V. BUDGET

A. FY '16 Budget Update

B. FY '17 Budget

- Dr. Hopson handed out both FY '16 and 17 budget information with a cover page that summarized major changes.
- Dr. Hopson said what you have is version 1.1 which the school committee came up with. And what the DESE is suggesting.
- Ms. Fisk said as soon as we get the final approval from DESE we will send out the assessment letters.
- Dr. Hopson said we are working on an RFP for the consultant.
- Mrs. Winer asked where you go for one of those.
- Dr. Hopson said that is why you put together the proposal.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if school committee could have a copy of the RFP before it goes out.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if the one of the three options from the last meeting is reflected in the FY '17 budget.
- Dr. Hopson said the FY '16 budget includes \$30,000 for a consultant which seems like an unfunded mandate. In the end it is approximately a .25% (\$42,000) reduction. He went over the major changes.
- Mrs. Winer asked about the possibility of transportation reimbursement.
- Dr. Hopson said these changes are made as of today. The governor is trying to get regional transpiration off of Chapter 70. The state income tax went down and there is talk about 9c cuts because revenue is not high enough to meet expenses.
- Mrs. Winer asked if there is anything rational we can do.
- Dr. Hopson said write letters to your legislature. Our legislators are on top of it but some are not. The Governor cannot cut regional transportation unless they cut educational funding.
- Mrs. Winer wishes DESE had focused more on rural schools rather than urban and suburban schools.
- Mrs. Buikus said usually when you make changes you give us a sheet that shows the line item.
- Dr. Hopson said you have line items for both in the sheets. This is just an overview and he suspects there will be more questions and discussion.
- Ms. Fisk said this will be a working document up until the adoption in March as we here about who will retire when.
- Mrs. Buikus asked if DESE had to approve the changes to FY 16.
- Ms. Fisk said yes.
- Derrick Mason asked how soon do you expect to have a consultant on board.
- Dr. Hopson said there is no way we will have a consultant to help with the FY '17 budget. We are looking at about 6 months of work.
- Ms. Fisk said she believes approval by DESE is only for FY '16 not 17.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked when we might have revenue figures.
- Ms. Fisk said sometime in January.
- Mrs. Kennedy said you mentioned only one more meeting to discuss budget.
- Dr. Hopson explained the timeline.
- Mrs. Winer thinks what Mrs. Kennedy is trying to get at is when school committee will discuss what is where. She doesn't think they know enough about budgeting to do that.
- Dr. Hopson said it is not just Ms. Fisk, which is why the administrators are here. The presentations coming in February will be shorter just to help better understand the budget.

7:45 VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Policies

AC: Non-Discrimination

GBA: Equal Employment Opportuntiy

JFBB: School Choice
 JLC: Student Health Services
 ADDA: Background Checks
 GCCD: Domestic Violence

- Mrs. Crane briefly explained the policies.

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Winer to approve the first four policies; AC Non-Discrimination, GBA Equal Employment Opportunity, JFBB School Choice, and JLC Student Health Services.

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Anne-Marie, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Ruth, Heather, Martha, Shirley, Michele

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to approve policy ADDA Background Checks.

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Anne-Marie, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Ruth, Heather, Martha, Shirley, Michele

Mrs. Garfield made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to approve policy GCCD Domestic Violence.

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Anne-Marie, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Ruth, Heather, Martha, Shirley, Michele

B. Towns' Unfunded Mandates Request

- Ruth Kennedy – Resource Officer
- Andy Montanero
- Mrs. Crane said we have a letter written by Blandford, supported by Huntington two and Mrs. Kennedy was going to look into how we will request unfunded mandates for the resource officer.
- Mrs. Kennedy said she is getting help on the other end of the state. The big schools are having a hard time funding it too. Since she is working with other schools as well, she thinks we should wait and all submit together.
- Mr. Montanaro said Blandford passed a resolution asking school committee to consider Worthington's withdrawal an unfunded mandate. The letter he is handing out is that. There is no specific form, rather just a petition explaining the reasons to the state auditor.
- Mrs. Kennedy thinks it is good she likes it. Her only problem is that it is too early. They are going to declare it an unfunded mandate, but because it is in court now no figures have been assigned to it.
- Mr. Montanaro said if the amount needs to be negotiated at a later date, the auditor has 60 days to respond. The earlier we get moving the better. If it is determined it is an unfunded mandate we will have to come up with a figure. To start the process early is in everyone's best interest.
- Mrs. Winer asked if Suzanne bump is stating it is an unfunded mandate.
- Mrs. Kennedy said yes, but unofficially right now.
- Ms. Fisk suggested including OPEB and retirement.
- Mr. Montanaro would suggest that a separate letter because he wouldn't want to muddy the waters. He would suggest Dr. Hopson send a separate letter for any and all other unfunded mandates. This is a stand-alone subject that has a big impact.
- Mrs. Crane asked if anyone wanted to make a motion for specific actions.
- Mrs. Kennedy said she really wants to make sure this goes in the right way. Can we contact our legal counsel to make because we are part of the lawsuit? She doesn't want to see us get in trouble.

Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mr. Damon to postpone this until the next meeting.

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Anne-Marie, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Ruth, Heather, Martha, Shirley, Michele

Mrs. Buikus made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to send a letter supporting the \$30,000 for the consultant petitioning it is an unfunded mandate.

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Anne-Marie, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Ruth, Heather, Martha, Shirley, Michele

C. Regional Agreement Amendment - Dates for Billing/Percentages for Assessments

- Mrs. Buikus said she hasn't talked to the selectmen, but Jane thinks the 25% and the 15th is fine for her.
- Mrs. Kennedy said the 15th is great and 25% would be okay.
- Mr. Montanaro has had no objections.
- Mrs. McVeigh spoke to treasurer and to Jeff. The treasurer is happy with 25% and would suggest payment due on a certain date with a 30 day grace period. 1 with a 30 day grace or okay with 15th.
- Dr. Hopson asked if the committee went with the 30 day window can we charge a penalty.
- Mrs. McVeigh would be okay with that.
- Mrs. Crane asked if want to wait so they can speak with their towns.
- Mrs. Foley, Mrs. Otterbeck and Mrs. Winer said yes.
- Mrs. Buikus asked if we want to move forward with one man one vote again.
- Dr. Hopson said that would be fine if the committee wanted.

Mrs. Buikus made a motion seconded by Mrs. Winer to re-submit one man one vote to the towns to put the senate version (two reps from each town district-wide elections from each town) as a warrant article at their annual town meetings.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 8 Nays 1 Abstain 2 Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Madelyn, Anne-Marie, Ron, Sarah, Terri, Martha, Shirley, Michele

Nays: Ruth

Abstain: Diane, Heather

- Mrs. Dunn asked for an explanation of 1 man 1 vote.
- Dr. Hopson said he will send the information out. He explained the senate model, two reps with residency requirements with district-wide elections.

D. School Committee Team Building - Survey Update

- Mrs. Crane said Pat Corriera has only received 5 surveys, she is hoping folks will get those back to her.
- Mrs. Winer thinks it is kind of sad, that we don't care.
- Mrs. Stewart will send them out again.

VII. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Policies

- DJE: Bidding Requirments
- DJA: Purchasing Authority
- EBC: Emergency Plans
- Mrs. Crane said these three policies are being recommended by the policy committee.
- Mrs. Buikus asked why there is such a big jump in the dollar amounts.
- Ms. Fisk said it follows best business practice. She thinks it may jump to \$50,000 on July 1st.
- Dr. Hopson said our recommendation is to follow the law.

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to go into executive session at or before 8:45 p.m. for the purpose of union negotiations not to return to open session.

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Anne-Marie, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Ruth, Heather, Martha, Shirley, Michele

VIII. CONSENT ITEMS 12/9/15 (Enc.)

Mrs. Winer made a motion seconded by Mrs. Dunn to approve the minutes of 12/9/15 with corrections.

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Anne-Marie, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Ruth, Martha, Shirley, Michele

Abstain: Heather

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

A. School Committee

- Mrs. Kennedy has a problem with the documents and letter send to DESE. School committee received it 3 weeks after it was sent to DESE. It should have been given to school committee first. She thinks it required the approval of the school committee. She said what was in the letter is not how she feels and not what the school committee voted on. It was signed by the superintendent and school committee chair. She was outraged that Dr. Hopson asked for more money after the towns said they couldn't afford it. She thinks the committee was put in a bad spot. She wants a letter to go to the state that says the school committee did not vote on the letter.
- Dr. Hopson asked if she wants to put it on the agenda for the next meeting.
- Mrs. Kennedy said she doesn't think we can wait.
- Mrs. Garfield said it was to ask for that portion lost from Worthington and special education increases.
- Mrs. Buikus said the letter came to the towns and the school not school committee.
- Mrs. Kennedy said this letter makes it appear that it was seen by the school committee. We could have had a special meeting. We never had a chance to do that.
- Dr. Hopson said DESE asked if there are extenuating circumstances. DESE knew they were going to set a budget. We sent the information and all the figures came from DOR. The letter went to the towns.
- Mrs. Kennedy said she did not vote on the \$236,000 increase.
- Dr. Hopson said it doesn't ask for a \$236,000 increase. It was and explanation of a shortfall in revenue and special education increase.
- Mrs. Austin thinks that no matter what the amount was, they wanted to see it before it went.
- Mrs. Buikus said we have asked to see things before they get sent out, so they have an answer for those who have questions. Anything sent in their name should seen by them ahead of time.

B. Chairperson

- Mrs. Crane explained that the Gateway Education Foundation sold 98 tickets to the Boston Celtics game on January 29. That made us eligible for several prizes. The 10 yellow tickets chosen were for families to take part in a behind the scenes tour of the Boston Celtics organization. Those winners are: J. Arkoette, B. Paquette, T. Pieciak, T. & R. Hyjek, J. Robbins, E. & S. Kusnick, O. & E. Cortis, A. Durgin, J. Vega, and B. & C. Brainerd.
- The 5 blue tickets are those who get to high five the Celtics as the take the floor at the end of half-time. Those winners are: T. Pieciak, E. Hanechak, E. Cortis, K. Kruger, and A. Dowd.

C. Superintendent - None

D. Business Manager - None

E. Administration - None

X. COMMITTEE REPORTING

A. Superintendent's Evaluation

- Evaluation met tonight and they will have a management meeting before the first school committee meeting in February.

B. Legislative Liaison - None

C. Policy Subcommittee

- Meet before the next meeting.

D. Building Liaisons

- Mrs. Kennedy attended the soup and salad night for the choir. It was a success. They are trying to do something else later in the year. The band also sold fruit.

- Mrs. Winer said breaking news is no longer coming via email.
- Dr. Hopson said you should be able to sign up for feed. Mrs. Long has been working on it.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Future Agenda Items

XII. INFORMATION

Information

Boston Celtics support the Gateway Education Foundation
 #GivingTuesday....Wednesday....Thursday....
 Holiday Concerts coming up at Gateway
 Students demonstrate classroom concepts at assembly
 Students hear lessons in bullying
 Superintendent's Corner December 4, 2015
 Gateway hosted 75 seniors at annual brunch, concert
 Winter gift fair at Chester
 Schools close for holiday break
 Student achievers treated to breakfast
 Superintendent's Corner December 14, 2015
 Student council launches project to support homeless
 Jazz band Skypes with music arranger
 January school committee meetings
 Superintendent's Corner December 18, 2015
 VHS to DVD-R conversion

Warrant

AP#1043 \$293,409.30

PR# 012 \$353,893.51

9:00-10 p.m. XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION or earlier

- A. Union Negotiations
- B. Litigation

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to go into executive session at or before 8:45 p.m. for the purpose of union negotiations not to return to open session.

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Anne-Marie, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Ruth, Heather, Martha, Shirley, Michele

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to adjourn at 8:57 p.m.

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Anne-Marie, Ron, Diane, Sarah, Terri, Ruth, Heather, Martha, Shirley, Michele

Respectfully Submitted,
 Stacy L Stewart
 School Committee Secretary