

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE**REGULAR MEETING****WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2013****Gateway Library
7:30 P.M.****(A PORTION OF THIS MEETING MAY BE HELD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION)****I. OPENING OF MEETING**BLANDFORDMichele Crane
Jim KronholmCHESTER

Shirley Winer

HUNTINGTONRon Damon
William HathawayMIDDLEFIELD

Sarah Foley

MONTGOMERYAnne Marie Buikus
Sandra HaasRUSSELLEllen Hirtle
Ruth KennedyWORTHINGTONSue Levreault
Gretchen EliasonSECRETARY

Stacy Stewart

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIONDr. David B. Hopson, Superintendent
Stephanie Fisk, Business & FinanceADMINISTRATIVE COUNCILElizabeth Bienia, Chs, Lit, MS Assistant Principal
Joanne Blocker, Director of Academics
Angela Burke, Technology Director
Megan Coburn, Chs, Lit, MS Principal
Jason Finnie, High, Jr. High School Principal
Wendy Long, District Grant Writer
Celeste Malvezzi, High/Jr. High Assistant Principal
Alice Taverna, Pupil Services DirectorSTUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

OTHERS: _____

7:35 p.m. **II. PUBLIC INPUT FOR ITEMS NOT LISTED ON AGENDA - None**

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT - None

IV. CONSENT ITEMS 3/27/13 (Enc.)*Mrs. Levreault made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to accept the minutes of 3/27/13.**Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 8 Nays Abstain 4 Absent*

V. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS*Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to go into executive session at or before 9:30 p.m. for the purpose of approving executive session minutes.**Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 12 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)*

Yeas: Jim, Shirley, Ellen, Michele, Ruth, Ron, Sarah, Sue, Anne-Marie, Sandra, Bill, Gretchen

A. Guidance Update

- Mr. Finnie introduced Megan Wasiak, and Julie Case the two high school guidance counselors.

- They use the Mass model for guidance and serve the whole student body. Career Cruising is a program they use for post secondary planning, teaching lessons, PSAT preparation, scholarship workshops which is new this year for the seniors. They host a Financial Aid evening for seniors and an early college awareness night for 9th and 10th grade students. This includes guest speakers come from the colleges.
- Mrs. Foley asked what are some of the school's students are applying to?
- Mrs. Case said STCC, Westfield State University, Williams, Framingham State, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, University of Wyoming, and last year a few went to Champlain.
- Mrs. Case went over the guidance website. Guidance has a facebook page as well.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if they promote anything other than college careers.
- They promote technical colleges and they also know there are students who want to go right into a career, which is where the career fair comes in.
- They do interventions as well. There is a group of guidance and faculty members who meet weekly to help support students through social emotional counseling. They have also started a girls' group.
- They have a lot of community outreach with local businesses, for internships, job shadowing, etc.
- They also have Westfield state come and host an early application night where students have been accepted the same evening.
- Mrs. Eliason thanked them. She asked if we've had other colleges come in rather than just Westfield State. Sometimes some of the local private colleges can be less expensive than public schools depending on the scholarships and financial aid.
- Ms. Wasiak said yes, they have a whole list. Bay Path is one of the private schools who do a lot with us. Springfield College is another one. A few students applied there this year.
- Mrs. Buikus asked how many students who receive the John and Abigail Adams scholarship actually use them.
- Mrs. Wasiak said often those are the top students in the class and are more likely to get accepted into private colleges and might not use it.
- Mr. Finnie said Mr. White is working with NHS and they've started a math tutoring program. Transition planning is a big focus – 6th grade step-up. He gives tours of the welding shop and does vocational interviews for transition from here to voke. There is a SAT group for those at risk in Jr. High. Social work placing students in the right classes. School to career – college readiness. Project 351 community service projects for a day in Boston which helps with social skills and planning.
- Mr. Damon is not sure all students applying to college that receive a scholarship know that the scholarship can stay the same when the cost increases. Students need to look at the whole picture.

B. Solar Panel Information

- Eric Weiss from the Hampshire Council of Governments introduced himself.
- They received information from 38 communities/school districts. All bids are under chapter 25A. Five proposals were received and were narrowed down to three top notch vendors. Broadway Capital, Ameresco, and American Capital Energy (we do not have a valid proposal from American Capital Energy). The decision making is done on the local level. One would go on Littleville and one on the high school complex. We need to make sure we are not violating the warranty on the roof. There is no cost to the school district. The vendor is taking the financial risk. Power purchase agreement must be signed and the district would buy the electricity at a specific rate and that comes off the unit.
- The summary sheet a sheet from Broadway Capital, and Ameresco – the savings over 20 years is \$480,000 for Broadway and for Ameresco \$316,000. If there is an increase in electricity, Ameresco is the better.
- There is an educational aspect – students learn about control of electricity, investing in school building infrastructure.
- Mrs. Crane asked what the lifetime on the equipment is.
- Eric said the system will last 30 to 35 years – but the financing is for 20 years. You can extend the terms of the PPA for another 20 years. The degradation is built into the contract.
- Mr. Damon asked if there is protection if there is damage to the roof during the process of installation.
- Eric said yes, it would be the responsibility of the company.
- Mr. Damon asked if they had to be removed to replace the roof membrane, who pays for it.
- Eric said it would have to be fair to the school district – it would be built into the contract. Money would be set aside.
- Mr. Damon asked if either company had anything to do with the solar panels in Hadley.
- Eric said not that he is aware of.
- Mrs. Winer asked if you would replace the panels with upgraded panels that produce more electricity.
- Eric said they would continue to use them unless there was a problem.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if any of the solar panels are built in the United States.
- Eric said very few are built in the United States.

- Mrs. Kennedy asked what happens at the end of 20 if we don't want them.
- Eric said they will take them out.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if the figures are based on consumptions of the school.
- Eric said yes.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked why such a push right now and what is the difference between this and us purchasing our own?
- Eric said these are million dollar investments.
- Mrs. Kennedy wondered if anyone asked western mass electric what their rates will be in the future.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked can we see one of these systems on a roof.
- Eric said he can find out if there are local schools that have them. They are ballasts that hold the rays above that. One of the first steps would be a full evaluation of the roof.
- Mrs. Levreault how much they weigh.
- Mrs. Eliason asked when Eric needs to know, walk us through the process.
- Eric said you have two vendors that are very good. There will be some new state changes in solar after the fiscal year. The roofing issue has to be resolved before you can move forward.
- Mrs. Eliason said when we say yes, we would then have to hammer out the contract details.
- Eric said step 1 is to pick a vendor, step 2 sign (where they would evaluate if it can be done) and step 3 would be to start the project.
- Mrs. Eliason asked if Eric thought the changes might not be in our favor.
- Eric said it depends on who you talk to. There is three 3% charge on green energy, and it could go to 6%.
- Mrs. Eliason asked if Dr. Hopson, Ms. Fisk or Mr. Wing had questions.
- Dr. Hopson said they have already asked a lot of the same questions as school committee.
- Mrs. Winer asked if there is a downfall.
- Eric said the downfall would be if electricity went down significantly, as you do have to work with the company for 20 years.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if we could see pre, during and post construction photo's from each of these companies.
- Eric said we could ask both companies to come and present or leave it up to Mr. Wing, Dr. Hopson, and Ms. Fisk.
- Mr. Damon said these companies are in business to make money, just because they want to make money doesn't mean we should lose any.
- We will get available dates for a presentation from each vendor.

C. Budget Information

- Dr. Hopson's PowerPoint is in response to Deryk Mason's letter in the Country Journal. Dr. Hopson will send a copy to school committee and put it on the website.
- There are a couple of things that are not covered that he will most likely cover in superintendent's corners.
- Mr. Damon needs a hard copy of the presentation.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Student Representative - None

B. School Committee

- Mr. Damon said there is a note in here about money that has not come in. What is the amount of interest money we have lost?
- Ms. Fisk does not know off the top of her head, but she will get the information from the bank.
- Russell's came on April 5, and Middlefield and Montgomery on April 8. We are still waiting for half of Blandford and Huntington.
- Mrs. Kennedy had requested writing a weekly column. There isn't enough room for every week. She and Dr. Hopson will work together. They will start after the elections. On April 25th Ellen and Ruth are having a meeting with Russell. It is important we let people we are doing.

C. Chairperson

D. Superintendent – Central Office Update (Enc.)

E. Business Manager

- Business Manager quarterly report – still waiting on one bank statement.
- She handed some Russell assessment figures as a follow up to the budget presentation.

- Mrs. Buikus asked if Ms. Fisk could do this for each town.
- Ms. Fisk will give this out at the next meeting.
- Dr. Hopson said the average growth in the towns is about 2 to 3%.
- Mrs. Eliason said MGRF was part of her spreadsheet presentation on Chapter 70.
- Mrs. Levreault asked if we looked into if it would be advantageous to purchase our own solar system.
- Dr. Hopson said it would cost millions of dollars.
- Mrs. Levreault said maybe it would be better to purchase if we were saving \$480,000.
- Ms. Fisk remained her it is cost avoidance.
- Mrs. Levreault asked if we could we make it a vote program for green technology.

Mrs. Levreault made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to move executive session to 9:45 p.m.

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

Yeas: Jim, Shirley, Ellen, Michele, Ruth, Ron, Sarah, Sue, Anne-Marie, Sandra, Bill, Gretchen

F. Administration

- Mrs. Burke brought 5 girls to UMAS they were on Channel 40 news. Girls were judged and interviewed and won. They built a robot and their robot drove a path and pushed a combine that pushed corn.

VII. AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTING

A. Superintendent's Evaluation - None

B. Finance Subcommittee - None

C. Policy Subcommittee - None

D. School Committee Goals Subcommittee

- Met last week and worked out some goals. Mrs. Eliason sent them out to the members for comments and then will get them to the full committee.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Regional Agreement Amendments

- Dr. Hopson met with Blandford on Monday and will meet with Joe Kearns on Thursday. They want to know what the costs are. We don't know, there a million variables.
- Mrs. Eliason said she has issues with the preliminary loss \$167,000. DESE would reduce our Chapter 70 – there is no corresponding revenue loss for it, so there is no cost for Gateway for educating Worthington students.
- Dr. Hopson said you are looking at cost avoidance; we won't be reducing a teacher because there aren't that many students.
- Mrs. Eliason said DESE has calculated a loss of \$167,000. It is not free to educate the Worthington students. It's not reasonable and she feels this overstates the cost.
- Ms. Fisk disagrees. We still have to operate and heat the buildings. If one kid drops out of kindergarten we can't cut a teacher. The majority of your budget is not going to change with 46 kids less.
- Dr. Hopson said DESE would agree we receive 1 million more than we need to educate our students. We could add 5 students to in every grade level and it wouldn't change our budget. You are back to marginal cost. It does change what the towns pay to support the school.
- Ms. Fisk said it is not just a one year loss. The reimbursement will be lost the following year.
- Ms. Fisk said when Worthington receives the \$167,000 it is not going to be enough to run the school.
- Mrs. Levreault said we have to remember to look at every single parent as a customer, and if the customers are not happy they have the choice to leave, and then it is hard to get them back.
- Mrs. Eliason said Worthington is asking for a chance to educate their children. Other people may not look at the money portion.
- Dr. Hopson asked if someone in Worthington offered to meet with people to push the budget.
- Mrs. Eliason said Worthington they asked for a letter from the chair stating the terms of the withdrawal. If they do not get the letter before the 23rd then they would they would like to have Dr. Hopson present at the meeting.

B. DESE Report From Spring 2012 Visit - None

IX. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

X. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Future Agenda Items

School Choice Presentation – Wendy Long

XI. INFORMATION**Information**

New Date for Volunteer dinner, 'Teen Brain' Event
 Readers rewarded with trip to Springfield Armor play
 Jazz Band members perform with Karrin Allyson
 Superintendent's Corner March 22, 2013
 Foundation to fund three new Gateway projects
 Community Health & Safety Fair at Gateway
 Superintendent's Corner March 28, 2013
 Updated Wellness Policy online
 Schools close for spring vacation
 Littleville showcases mini-course outcomes
 Upcoming fundraisers for Chester PTO
 Cabaret on April 11
 SEPAC meeting on April 9
 Preschool Screening on May 6
 April School Committee Meeting

Warrant

AP# 1075 \$179,016.85	PR# 20 \$355,808.44
AP # 1077 \$122,612.26	
AP# 1080 \$37.78	

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to go into executive session at or before 9:30 p.m. for the purpose of approving executive session minutes.

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

A. Minutes Approval: 9/26/12, 10/10/12, 12/12/12, 1/9/13, 2/13/13 (Enc.)

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Crane made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to adjourn at 9:51p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
 Stacy L Stewart
 School Committee Secretary