

**GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE****REGULAR MEETING MINUTES****WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12, 2013****Gateway Library  
7:30 P.M.****(A PORTION OF THIS MEETING MAY BE HELD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION)****I. OPENING OF MEETING**BLANDFORD  
Michele CraneCHESTER  
Beth Brett  
Martha OtterbeckHUNTINGTON  
Ron Damon  
William HathawayMIDDLEFIELD  
Sarah Foley  
Brian MillerMONTGOMERY  
Anne Marie Buikus  
Sandra HaasRUSSELL  
Ellen Hirtle  
Ruth Kennedy  
Mary Ann Laurie (non voting)WORTHINGTON  
Gretchen EliasonSECRETARY  
Stacy StewartCENTRAL ADMINISTRATION  
Dr. David B. Hopson, Superintendent  
Stephanie Fisk, Business & FinanceSTUDENT REPRESENTATIVESADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL  
Elizabeth 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 Director

OTHERS: Russell Dupere

**7:35 p.m. II. PUBLIC INPUT FOR ITEMS NOT LISTED ON AGENDA**

- Pandora Hague said she attended the gateway graduation and it was so wonderful and she was so proud. During her next term she would like to work with school committee, finance and GTAC to work on strengthening Gateway. She would like to work with administration regarding where our money is going. She plans on attending finance subcommittee meetings and encouraging others to attend. They have some ideas at GTAC.
- Mrs. Eliason announced there is a finance subcommittee meeting tomorrow at 7:00 p.m. in room 112.
- The school committee introduced themselves by name and town to the new members Mary Ann Laurie, Brian Miller, and Martha Otterbeck.

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**III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT - None**

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**IV. CONSENT ITEMS** 5/22/13 (Enc.)*Mrs. Crane made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to accept the minutes of 5/22/13.***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain 2 Absent**

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## **V. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS**

### **A. Food Service Update – Wendy McCaul**

- Mrs. McCaul gave a Food Services update. Café prices have stabilized. The number one program she's been getting ready for is the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act. The kids are on board. They are eating more grains, fresh fruit and vegetables. Now she has to worry about maximum size. A student has to take a fruit and a vegetable in order for it to be reimbursable. She is still involved with farm to school. Performance based funding – reimbursement of extra 6 cents – it is about \$500 extra a month. The state has started the virtual gateway deployment model which allows schools to access information in real time. We upload student information into the DESE portal and it tells us who receives free or reduced lunch. This way parents no longer have to fill out an application. There is also paid lunch equity which ensures sufficient funds for students not eligible for free and reduced lunch. Our reimbursable meals have gone up. The charging policy is only one meal is charged in the high school. Students at the elementary level cannot be turned down from the lunch line. Mrs. McCaul received the Healthier Us Bronze award. She is planning on doing something at each school in September. The Wellness policy is reviewed annually by the wellness committee. The newest update is parents bringing in food will have to go through the nurse's office because of food allergies.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked what information is uploaded.
- Mrs. McCaul sends the student name, birth date, and state assigned ID – this is a private portal to the state. They pull out anyone who receives free and reduced lunch. It takes the place of an application.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if anything is received from the state about students who take medications which react with certain vegetables.
- Mrs. McCaul said she would only know that if the parent notified the nurse.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if anything has been received about too much fruit taking the enamel off of students' teeth.
- Mrs. McCaul said she hasn't seen anything.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if there is a 500 calorie limitation.
- Mrs. McCaul said it depends on the age.

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## **VI. COMMUNICATIONS**

### **A. Student Representative - None**

### **B. School Committee**

- Mrs. Kennedy talked about the superintendent's/school committee corner. This one is about how mandates affect us. This is the first one. She is hoping to continue this and hopes other members would participate. Hoping it will connect the school committee, towns and community together.
- Mrs. Crane asked how many times are we going to do this.
- Dr. Hopson said he has now written 500 superintendent's corners. He is hoping other people will get involved and come up with topics.
- Mrs. Eliason said she received a letter about the November conference, and would like to add designate a delegate to the next agenda to see if we want to send someone. There is a discount for early registration.

### **C. Chairperson**

- Mrs. Brett received a letter from the teachers' association requesting to begin negotiations on or about October 1, 2013.

### **D. Superintendent – Central Office Update (Enc.)**

- Dr. Hopson said all new school committee member will be set up with school email as this was what school committee decided to be in line with all the archiving requirements.

### **E. Business Manager**

- Ms. Fisk said she will be including line item transfers on the agenda for the last meeting in June. School committee voted to move forward with net metering. She has met with another company and received very different views, and she would like to look at one more company. It is 20 year contract so we want to dot all our I's and cross our t's.

### **F. Administration**

- Mrs. Long said we are one of twenty-five school districts to win a vocational grant. It will purchase a welding simulator. Students and teachers got to use one this week. It is a virtual welding tool. There is a large cost savings and safety benefit for students who might be interested in welding.

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## VII. AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTING

### A. Superintendent's Evaluation Subcommittee - None

### B. Finance Subcommittee

- Finance subcommittee meets tomorrow night at 7:00 p.m. in room 112.

### C. Policy Subcommittee - None

### D. School Committee Goals Subcommittee

- Mrs. Eliason said they were in the packet. She admitted they are not very ambitious, most of them are state requirements.

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## VIII. OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

### A. FY '14 Budget Update

- Dr. Hopson said Chester was the 3<sup>rd</sup> town to vote down the budget. Finance recommended it, the select board was not against it but wanted to hold the vote till the final state figures came out. If they had passed the budget they would have been all set, but they will most likely see an increase. Dr. Hopson sent a request to the commissioner for a 1/12 budget of version 2.1. When the school committee votes on another budget to send to the towns, he will send that one if the commissioner hasn't already approved the first one. We have 30 days to submit another budget to the towns. Chester and Worthington will most likely go up based on minimum. Dr. Hopson's recommendation is we send back basically version 2.1 with the adjustments for staffing, etc., as Version 3.1
- Mrs. Eliason confirmed that the first set of figures was the governors and the second was house and in two weeks are we expecting to have numbers from the conference committee. Then the DESE will put out the foundation budget.
- Ms. Fisk said the biggest difference is the adjustments will come down to 15% not 100 %. When that happens it swings the towns the opposite way. Five towns will come downs and Chester and Worthington will go up. The minimum will change.
- Mrs. Buikus asked if we will we have figures for next meeting.
- Dr. Hopson said we can give you the expense side numbers, but we don't know about DESE. Although DESE is confident they will be out.
- Mrs. Buikus asked if we would have to have special meetings in order to get this done.
- Dr. Hopson said not at this point.
- Mrs. Eliason said we have talked about employee retirements, did we get the numbers we were expecting and are there savings in unemployment insurance, etc.
- Ms. Fisk said there are about 20 line items – special education transportation, heating oil, and health insurance has gone up.
- Mrs. Eliason said administration suggested a \$50,000 change in our out of district tuition. Do we still need that?
- Ms. Fisk said we may have other out of district placements.
- Ms. Taverna said in the last few days we've had some students move into district that are already in an out of district placement.
- Dr. Hopson said in two weeks school committee will have to vote and 12 people need to vote approval for another budget to move it forward.
- Mrs. Buikus asked if they would receive an updated budget before the meeting as she would like to see it first.
- Mrs. Eliason said none of the potential reductions have been alleviated.
- Dr. Hopson said it would helpful to know if school committee was going to cut the budget because layoff notices have to be out by June 15.
- Ms. Fisk said the above minimum will go down, but minimum will go up.
- Mrs. Eliason said it has been our practice any money left over would be used to offset the following year's budget. Will we do that again for the FY 15 budget?
- Dr. Hopson said as long as the year goes okay and we don't use it for heat or something unforeseeable.
- Mrs. Eliason thought we were at the max and using \$650,000.
- Ms. Fisk said it is certified at the end of the year and will be used to take money to off next year's budget.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if this would affect any new hires.

- Dr. Hopson said hopefully what the commissioner sets is enough, but if school committee wanted to make cuts we would have to make reductions, but for now we would move forward with the same services.
- Dr. Hopson requested 1/12 of the budget based on school committee recommendations.
- Mr. Eliason asked for an explanation of layoffs if we are talking about having an excess of \$650,000.
- Dr. Hopson said you don't have an excess of \$650,000. You've already used it to reduce assessments.
- Dr. Hopson said the total amount is \$800,000. You spent \$650,000 as revenue, so you only have \$150,000 left in E & D to give back to the towns. You shouldn't use all your E & D to offset the budget. If you did that you'd be behind before you start.
- Ms. Fisk said even if you used that you still have the potential of layoffs. The budget has gone up \$411,000. If you used the remaining \$150,000 you would still have to find \$260,000 in savings.
- Pandora Hague said some of the \$800,000 in E & D is from fuel and transportation; where does the rest of it come from.
- Ms. Fisk said staffing changes, health insurance, transportation (if we know a staff member is leaving we budget for the average salary), revenue, and Medicaid money. Another example is the preschool population this year is up so we need to add a half preschool teacher.

#### **B. Regional Agreement Amendments Update**

- Chester voted down the Worthington withdrawal and 3 of the 4 amendments to one man one vote, they approved only cleanup amendment.
- Ms. Fisk asked Mrs. Eliason if Worthington has a special town meeting for the vote legislative action.
- Mrs. Eliason said she doesn't know, she is out of the loop.

#### **C. Approval of School Choice for the 2013-2014 School Year.**

***Mrs. Crane made a motion seconded by Mr. Damon to approve School Choice for the 2013-2014 school year.***

- Pandora Hague asked if we have students school choice into our welding program.
- Ms. Malvezzi said maybe one or two.
- Ms. Fisk said it is a flat \$5,000
- Pandora why is it different than the cost to go.
- Dr. Hopson said because we are not a regional vocational center. A student would choice into the high school not into the welding program. A student can't choice into a vocational school, they tuition in.
- Mrs. Foley asked if there was any reason why you wouldn't vote this.
- Dr. Hopson said no. We are only opening slots for grades that won't crowd the classroom and won't increase the district cost. You take school choice as they apply you don't get to pick and choose.
- Pandora Hague asked what is the cost per pupil cost?
- Ms. Fisk and Mrs. Eliason said right around \$13,000.
- Mrs. Eliason asked Ms. Fisk to tell us more about the differential for special education.
- Ms. Fisk said it varies; it is based on student need and the IEP.
- Mrs. Eliason asked if it comes out of town or district budget.
- Ms. Fisk said it comes out of the district budget.

***Mrs. Crane made a motion seconded by Mr. Damon to approve School Choice for the 2013-2014 school year.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 12 Nays Abstain Absent***

**D. Superintendent requests authorization for the District Treasurer or Assistant District Treasurer under provisions of M.G.L., Chapter 71 Section 16 (9) and with the approval of the Chairperson for the Gateway Regional Committee, to incur temporary debt (borrow from time to time) in anticipation of revenue to be received from any source for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2013.**

***Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Crane for approve the following: Superintendent requests authorization for the District Treasurer or Assistant District Treasurer under provisions of M.G.L., Chapter 71 Section 16 (9) and with the approval of the Chairperson for the Gateway Regional Committee, to incur temporary debt (borrow from time to time) in anticipation of revenue to be received from any source for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2013.***

- Dr. Hopson explained this is only if we are short which could happen if several towns don't make assessment payments, or there is a shortage in revenue.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if there max amount.

- Ms. Fisk said if an assessment is late in August we may need to borrow to cover payroll.

***Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Crane for approve the following: Superintendent requests authorization for the District Treasurer or Assistant District Treasurer under provisions of M.G.L., Chapter 71 Section 16 (9) and with the approval of the Chairperson for the Gateway Regional Committee, to incur temporary debt (borrow from time to time) in anticipation of revenue to be received from any source for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2013.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 12 Nays Abstain Absent***

**E. Recommendation to award the special education transportation service to Lecrenski Transportation for the 2013-14 school year.**

***Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mr. Damon to award the special education transportation service to Lecrenski Transportation for the 2013-14 school year.***

- Ms. Fisk said we have been through our 3 years plus our two one year extensions. We were fortunate to work out some good prices that give us flexibility.
- Mrs. Buikus asked what the difference is and it is a bid or quotes.
- Ms. Fisk said initially it is about \$71,000, but that has changed. They were quotes.
- Mrs. Eliason asked if it will be reflected in version 3.0.
- Ms. Fisk said yes.

***Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mr. Damon to award the special education transportation service to Lecrenski Transportation for the 2013-14 school year.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 12 Nays Abstain Absent***

#### **F. FY '13 Superintendent's Evaluation Summary**

- Mrs. Brett said according to Dr. Hopson's contract we have to give him a written summary by June 30. As the chair of the school committee she has the right to do so. This is just informational. It is only a summary from the administration interviews, school committee survey, and management meetings.
- Mrs. Eliason said on page four of the contract it says a summary or a composite of the individual evaluations compiled by Committee members shall be prepared by the Committee Chairperson or designee. A composite is a collection. This is your evaluation as the chair, not the committee.
- Mrs. Brett said this is strictly what came from their comments not her opinion.
- Mrs. Eliason said it doesn't have to be voted on.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked is there anything about the school committee evaluations in there.
- Dr. Hopson said to follow up with Mrs. Eliason's comment there is a composite on the website.

#### **G. Extension of Business Manager's Contract**

***Mrs. Hirtle made a motion seconded by Mrs. Crane to extend the Business Manager's Contract.***

- Mrs. Crane supports the renewal for 6 years. Ms. Fisk does a great job keeping us out of trouble, and she is the past president of all other business managers. She does a great job and is from the district and she would like her to stay here with us.
- Dr. Hopson would also recommend this contract as it is very difficult to find a good certified business manager.
- Mr. Damon would hate to see us hire someone who doesn't have the same experience.

***Mrs. Hirtle made a motion seconded by Mrs. Crane to extend the Business Manager's Contract.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 8 Nays Abstain 8 Absent***

#### **H. Extension of Superintendent's Contract**

- Mrs. Buikus said Dr. Hopson was informed last year his contract was not renewed. The contract states that once they vote not to extend, they don't vote to extend till the end.

- Russell Dupere said you have to read number 2 as a whole. Each year you make that decision. On an annual basis you have the power to make that decision. One vote doesn't bind for the entire time.
- Mrs. Kennedy said in his contract on page 2 second paragraph doesn't it say that it expires.
- Russell Dupere said that means at the end of the contract you don't have to give any other notice. This type of contract is the best case for the school committee and worst case for an administrator.
- Mrs. Brett said if we choose as a committee to extend the contract you can extend.
- Russell Dupere said yes.
- Mrs. Eliason said it says once, not every year. On the question of the 6 year ever green renewal she doesn't feel that is the best approach for the district. He only has to give us a 90 day notice, it doesn't guarantee he will be here for 6 years, it also doesn't keep getting. If the district doesn't want to go through a foreclose, then the committee would have to negotiate potentially up to \$900,000. We saw at Penn State, the president was removed and he didn't do anything wrong. Sometimes something happens and a committee has to make a decision and we are not financially sound enough for that. There is nothing wrong with letting a contract go to the end and then renewing it.
- Russell Dupere said however you read the contract both parties can change it. To vote not to renew a contract one year doesn't mean another committee can't extend it. There are two contracting parties.
- Mrs. Buikus said it says once.
- Russell Dupere said you have to read it as a whole.
- Mrs. Buikus said shouldn't it have a clause that says every year.
- Russell Dupere said state law says you have to give 60 days at the end of a contract. In this contract if you don't vote it will end. In most other contract you have to vote it down in order for it to end.
- Mrs. Hirtle asked why they are so hung up on one word. You are not going to find a superintendent who cares more about this district. She never even sees her superintendent.
- Mrs. Eliason said for her it is the principal of the evergreen 6 year contract.

***Mrs. Crane made a motion seconded by Mr. Damon to go extend the superintendent's contract back to a 6 year contract.***

- Mrs. Buikus said Dr. Hopson does Dr. Hopson's job, but she doesn't think he always looks out for the best interest of the students in the district. Parents are upset and parents don't come to meetings. Why should we extend it when we already took a vote not to extend it? There isn't any good reason to have a 6 year contract. No other superintendents have a 6 year contract.
- Dr. Hopson said the Northampton superintendent does.
- Dr. Hopson said it doesn't matter how well you do on an evaluation or job. In the end, can the superintendent and administration can collaboratively? He is committed to the district. If you don't want to committee to me, then that is fine. Anyone is going to get a 3 year contract. It would make more sense for him to go back to Connecticut and only work for another 3 years. He is not looking for an extension because he has to. He does it because he cares about the students and staff in the district. You will be hard pressed to find someone who does what he has done for the district. At the end of the day, he does his best for students in the district. He is willing to commit to the district. If you don't want to commit to him, then don't vote for him. It doesn't seem to have anything to do with performance.
- Mrs. Otterbeck said as a new member she is confused by what is being presented. What she is hearing is there is a question about the length of a contract, but she is also hearing discussion about Dr. Hopson. Are we talking about an individual or a position?
- Dr. Hopson said in most contracts you either do something for the person or increase salary and benefits.
- Mrs. Eliason said we do have an existing four year commitment to Dr. Hopson and she commends him for his attitude. The best advice she was every given was to go to work every day and show your boss you want to be there. She doesn't think it requires a 6 year contract. Because it goes to the end doesn't mean they don't want you back. Commitment doesn't need to be a contractual negotiation.
- Mr. Damon was teaching in the district when Russell joined the district. He has served for every superintendent this district has ever had and proud he is still in it. He has been involved in the comings and goings and replacing any superintendent is difficult no matter how good they are unless they know the district. He is in favor of the 2 year extension and it will reinforce a commitment.
- Ms. Laurie clarified that last year the committee voted not to extend the contract and this year it would go from 2017-19
- Mrs. Hirtle said by voting to extend we are showing we support what he is doing.
- Mrs. Crane makes decisions on how she votes by what is going on while she is in district, and by what staff and residents say. She doesn't have any staff or residents saying they don't want Dr. Hopson in the district. She has had people ask about this, so she explained it. She has never seen a resident speak against Dr. Hopson at a meeting. Over the last couple of weeks they have seen the committee not stand behind Dr.

Hopson and the staff and students of the district. It is a vote of confidence of Dr. Hopson and staff. A change at the top may mean a lot more than just a change at the top.

- Mrs. Eliason doesn't agree with comparing support for Dr. Hopson with support of kids in the district and does not agree it is false. She has had people come up to her about Dr. Hopson. Maybe it depends on who you know.
- Mrs. Long has been in the district a number of years, she doesn't have a lot of confidence we will ever find a person who cares more and is more dedicated to the district.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked Dr. Hopson when he is looking at retiring.
- Dr. Hopson said at this point he is considering another 6 years.
- Mrs. Kennedy said we will still have to find another superintendent in six years does it matter if it is three or six?
- Mrs. Otterbeck at least we would have some preparation – salary, experience, Ninety days verses a year. Once again what are we talking about?

***Mrs. Crane made a motion seconded by Mrs. Hirtle to call the question.***

***Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays 2 Abstain Absent***

***Mrs. Crane made a motion seconded by Mr. Damon to go extend the superintendent's contract back to a 6 year contract.***

***Motion Failed (VOTE) Yeas 6 Nays 6 Abstain Absent***

## **IX. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS**

### **A. Recommendation to Participate in the National School Lunch Program**

- Dr. Hopson said this is an annual vote which allows us to receive our meal reimbursement.

### **B. School Committee Goals**

- Mrs. Eliason asked if folks would take a look at the document she would answer any questions people might have.
- Ms. Fisk said charting the course they will do it in 1 year off taking office will you show proof.
- Mrs. Eliason said each year the committee would do a report. It would be a self report.
- Dr. Hopson said there is no problem with setting the academic goals, what about performance goals?
- Mrs. Eliason thinks it is a great idea and would like to include something.
- Dr. Hopson said he doesn't see these as smart goals.
- Mrs. Eliason agrees, but they had to start somewhere.
- Mrs. Kennedy thinks we started low so we know they can meet them. She thinks that's where we are.
- Ms. Fisk asked about district governance 10 year plan for facilities and long-term maintenance. She would revise it. Review with facilities director and she feels 10 year is a little long. Five is more realistic.

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

### **Future Agenda Items**

MASC delegate  
Budget transfers under old business  
School Choice Presentation – Wendy Long

## **XI. INFORMATION**

### **Information**

Superintendent's Corner May 3, 2013  
Three Gateway teachers win 'Excellence in Teaching' awards  
Students celebrate National Poetry Month  
Lt. Governor visits Gateway vocational programs  
Sports scholars visit Fenway  
Gateway foundation receives \$5000 from United Bank Foundation  
Gateway Kindergarten Screening reminder  
Crafters sought for 4<sup>th</sup> Annual GatorRoo Music Festival  
Shipman Memorial Concert May 24,

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Fourth graders to visit Middle School  
Schools closed for Memorial Day  
Gateway musicians score in competition  
Superintendent's Corner May 10, 2013

**Warrant**

|                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| AP# 1093 \$154,831.57 | PR# 23 \$378,773.12 |
| AP# 1095 \$42,349.58  | PR# 24 \$397,940.75 |
| AP# 1098 \$40,587.21  |                     |
| AP# 1100 \$56.70      |                     |

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

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**XIII. ADJOURNMENT** Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Buikus to adjourn at 9:45 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,  
Stacy L. Stewart  
School Committee Secretary