

Southern Berkshire Regional School Committee  
Mt. Everett Regional School  
Sheffield, MA  
October 9, 2014  
Meeting #1,481

School Committee Members: Mr. Stewart, Ms. Silvers, Ms. Rundle, Mr. Batacchi, Mr. Valentini, Ms. Fields, Mr. Flynn, Mr. Sears

Absent: Ms. Sahn, Ms. Sparhawk,

Administration: Mr. Hastings, Mr. Turner, Mr. Devoti

Others: Ms. Michele Shalaby; Mr. Kirt Mayland of Reservoir Road Holdings, LLC; Ms. Linda Higgins

Student Representative: Madison Ryan, President, Class of 2015

Press: CTSB TV; Ms. Julie Ruth, Berkshire Record

1. **CALL TO ORDER**: Chairman Stewart called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**: Mr. Valentini moved to approve the minutes of School Committee Meeting #1,480, open and executive sessions. Ms. Silvers seconded the motion, and it was so voted, unanimously.
3. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE PERTAINING TO THIS EVENING'S AGENDA ITEMS**
  - A. Chairman Stewart introduced Student Representative Madison Ryan. Madison read the names of the 2014-15 class officers and Blue and Gold Captains. She reported that at the first student government meeting of the school year, the members discussed holding a joint fundraiser with Monument Mountain. She said that contact has been made with the Monument student government, but talks are still in the early stages.
  - B. There were no communications from the audience.
4. **UPDATES / PRESENTATIONS**
  - A. Mt. Everett School Improvement Plan: Superintendent Hastings explained that he had organized his own goals for 2014-15 around the supervision and evaluation standards. The administrators then developed improvement plans which coordinated with the superintendent's goals. He then introduced Mr. Devoti. Mr. Devoti presented an Improvement Plan and stated that it had been reviewed and unanimously approved by the Mt. Everett School Council. A question and answer session then took place. Mr. Devoti explained that he will be evaluated by the Superintendent on the accomplishment of these goals.
  - B. Solar Net Metering – Mr. Turner introduced Kirt Mayland of Reservoir Road Holdings, LLC. He explained that Mr. Mayland had approached him to see if the District would be interested in purchasing net metering credits to save money on its electrical bill and also to add green technology. At Chairman Stewart's request, Mr. Mayland briefly gave a brief explanation of the proposal. He said that metering credits would appear on the District's electric bill each month, substantially reducing the amount paid directly to National Grid. The District would pay approximately 80% of the value of the metering credits to Reservoir Road Holdings, LLC, thereby realizing a net savings of approximately 20% in its cost of electricity.

It was agreed that Mr. Mayland will give an in-depth presentation to the Finance Subcommittee on October 29, at 6:00 p.m. Subcommittee members requested that information be made available for their review well in advance of that meeting.

## 5. BUSINESS

### A. Superintendent's Report: Superintendent Hastings reported the following:

- He attended his first meeting of the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce. He said that he is hopeful that the contacts in that group will help our students connect with key business people in the Southern Berkshire region.
- Parents' night was last night at Mt. Everett.
- The culinary arts class is reaching out to the community through senior lunches, which they prepare on the first Thursday of each month. The class will also present a free dinner at the South Berkshire Community Center.
- Kari Giordano's class will work to design items that could be of help to senior citizens.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> grade will visit the Sheffield Historical Society on October 10.
- Mr. Devoti and other members of the Safety Committee, along with the Sheffield Police Department, conducted trainings in ALICE earlier in the day.
- The chickens, which had been residing on campus this fall, will be processed next week and will be used for fundraising purposes.
- Thank you to Ann Jon who funded a trip for Mr. Wolgemuth's class to the Mount. The students are now blogging about the sculpture they saw there. The writing is being critiqued by their peers, as well as the teacher. The honors class will also work on a 3-D art presentation.
- Joseph Makuc and Alexander Valentini were named National Merit Commended Students. Approximately 34,000 students of the 1.5 million competing for the honor were named.
- Students Max Lowenstein and Kosta Cassivant left for China earlier in the day.
- The Rotary Club donated \$1,000, and the Sheffield Kiwanis donated \$500 toward the trip to China. Mr. Hastings will write to key people in the community to seek additional donations in order to defray the expenses for the students and teachers.
- There are two plays in the works: *The Magic Tree House*, to be presented by grades 3-6, and *Henry V*, to be presented by grades 7-12, produced through Shakespeare and Company.
- The Berkshire Makers are back. They are signed up to take part in the Connecticut Invention Convention in May.
- Students involved in the Middle School Housatonic River Project are writing a reference book. Each student will write a chapter. They will also create a picture book for elementary kids.
- Four 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, Marion Devoti, Mary Shalaby, Madeline Von Ruden and Jaclyn Derwitsch, recently attended a leadership conference.
- The annual bug parade will take place on October 10 at 1:00 p.m. The parade may be the last for the second grade, as the MA frameworks has moved that unit to another grade.
- The Life Skills class attends a movement and dance class at Berkshire South once a week, thanks to the Eagle Fund. They also go to Berkshire South for aquatic therapy.
- Mr. Turner has been in contact with Berkshire Transit Authority, and he believes they may run a bus from the center of Sheffield to Great Barrington each day at 3:00 p.m.
- Mr. Hastings is conducting a needs assessment survey with District families. The survey can be accessed both on-line and via hard copy.

In response to a question regarding the meetings with select boards about the community schools, Mr. Hastings informed the Committee that he had not yet met with Alford or Egremont. He said that he had

heard that Alford is not interested in having a meeting. Mr. Flynn stated that Egremont is also not interested in such a meeting.

In further discussion regarding how to proceed, given the requests made by three of the towns to consider closing one or more of the community schools, Mr. Valentini stated that the Committee can either bring a motion forward and vote on it, or the Superintendent could send a letter to the three towns who sent letters asking them whether they still desire action, as stated in those letters.

Mr. Flynn then moved, seconded by Mr. Valentini, to ask Superintendent Hastings to send a letter to the towns asking whether they wish to withdraw their requests stated in their earlier letters, or have the School Committee bring forward motions in response.

Following additional discussion, Chairman Stewart called the question, and the motion was approved, unanimously.

B. Request for Preliminary approval of overnight field trip to Galapagos Islands, April, 2016: Ms. Melino and Ms. Johnston requested preliminary approval of this trip in order to begin fundraising. They stated that they are hoping to take 12-15 students. Mr. Flynn moved, seconded by Ms. Silvers, to grant preliminary approval. Committee members requested that the teachers try to secure grants in order to make the trip more affordable to families. Ms. Silvers suggested setting up a meeting with Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, as they may be able to offer leads. The motion was then approved, unanimously.

C. Lateral Movements on the Unit A Salary Schedule, Effective September 1, 2014: Mr. Flynn moved, seconded by Ms. Silvers, to approve the lateral movements, as per the document provided. It was so voted, unanimously.

D. Subcommittee reports:

- 1) Executive Evaluation – Mr. Flynn stated that he was concerned about the nomination of a fellow School Committee member for a state award, because the nomination apparently did not come from the Committee. He then moved to nominate Mr. Valentini to receive a state MASC award. Ms. Rundle acknowledged that she had entered Mr. Valentini's name for the award. (She had not been in attendance at the last meeting when the award was announced.) She said she had submitted his name because she felt that his heart was always in the right place, and he cares about the school and community and tries to do the right thing. She then seconded Mr. Flynn's motion. Mr. Valentini stated that the nomination was a bit embarrassing to him, as no one does anything in a vacuum, and he said that if he has been successful, it was due to the rest of the School Committee. The motion was then approved. Mr. Flynn asked that a letter be sent to the all state school committee in support of Mr. Valentini's receipt of the award.

Mr. Flynn reported that the final evaluation of the superintendent would be presented at the October 30 School Committee meeting.

- 2) Policy Subcommittee: Mr. Flynn reported that the Policy Subcommittee will meet on October 29 at 5:00 p.m. to review the Early Childhood Education policy and others.
- 3) Transportation Subcommittee: Mr. Batacchi set a Transportation Subcommittee meeting for 7:30 p.m. on October 29.
- 4) Cooperation Subcommittee: Mr. Sears reported that the group has not met recently as a subcommittee.
- 5) Finance Subcommittee: Mr. Valentini reported that there will be a Finance Subcommittee meeting on October 15 which will present a kick-off to budget season, as well as presenting to the towns the broad scope of the capital project with the MA School Building Authority (SBA). He explained that the District has been invited to participate with SBA to upgrade the heating system and replace the roof at

the main campus. Simultaneously, the District has also participated in a grant with the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) to evaluate the kind of heating system we should install. Both entities have engineers and project managers. He said that the replacement of the roof is straightforward, but the replacement of the heating system is not. Discussions are centering on installing a pellet system in order to attain significant savings in heating costs and CO<sup>2</sup> emissions. Engineers from both agencies are working the details out. There will be a conference call on October 10 for a discussion of all involved. On October 15, the Finance Subcommittee will have information to present to the towns regarding the scope of the project, with ballpark figures, potential reimbursements, and the impact on each town over the life of the bond.

- 6) Food Subcommittee: Ms. Sahn was unable to attend the meeting, but submitted a written report. Chairman Stewart noted that the Food Subcommittee is doing very interesting things. Mr. Sears added that Mr. Tranfaglia had expressed his personal thanks to the School Committee for including the new software in the budget this year. Ms. Fields stated that Mr. Tranfaglia would make a presentation to the School Committee regarding an after school snack program at its next meeting.
  
- E. Financial Updates / Transfers (as needed): Mr. Turner reported that he and Mr. Hastings had met with the Monterey Select Board at the Monterey School to view an issue with the boys' bathroom there (i.e., the floor is sinking). He said that a solution is forthcoming, but that the building inspector felt that it is alright to use the building in the meantime.  
  
Mr. Turner distributed FY 2013 audit report documents. He said that the auditors will attend the October 30 School Committee meeting.
  
- F. School Committee Calendar: It was the consensus of the Committee to join the School Committee calendar with the budget development calendar for approval at the next meeting.

Mr. Flynn moved, seconded by Mr. Sears, to adjourn the meeting. It was so voted, and the meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

***Documents presented for this meeting:***

- *Agenda, Meeting #1, 481*
- *Minutes, Meeting #1, 480*
- *Request for Preliminary Approval of an Overnight Field Trip to the Galapagos Islands, April, 2016*
- *Lateral Moves on the Unit A Salary Schedule, Effective September 1, 2014*
- *Draft of Budget Development Calendar*
- *Food Subcommittee Report 2014-15*
- *Listing of Meeting Dates of the Southern Berkshire Regional School Committee*
- *Mt. Everett School Improvement Plan, 2014-15*
- *FY 2013 Audit Documents*