

Southern Berkshire Regional School Committee
Mt. Everett Regional School
Sheffield, MA
January 20, 2014
Special School Committee Meeting

School Committee: Mr. Valentini, Ms. Silvers, Mr. Sears, Mr. Stewart, Ms. Sparhawk, Ms. Sahn, Ms. Lartigue, Ms. Rundle, Mr. Batacchi, Mr. Flynn

Absent:

Administrators: Mr. Hastings, Mr. Turner

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

Student Representative:

Others: Ms. Ingrid Borwick; Mr. Charles Ketchen, Alford Select Board Member; Mr. Nathaniel Yohalem, New Marlborough Select Board Member

1. Chairman Stewart called the meeting to order at 6:04p.m. Mr. Stewart announced that this meeting is to reconsider the January 8, 2015 decision on vote procedure.
2. Ms. Lartigue made a motion to reconsider and rescind the January 8th vote regarding the roof/boiler project in which the school committee decided to utilize MGL Chapter 71, Section 16(n). Ms. Silvers seconded the motion.

A vote was then called on the motion to rescind the vote and it was approved unanimously.

3. Mr. Valentini then moved: That the **Southern Berkshire Regional School District (“SBRSD”)** hereby appropriates the amount of **\$7,741,000.00** for the purpose of paying costs of the **SBRSD Roof/Boiler Project at Mt. Everett/Undermountain School, 491 Berkshire School Road, Sheffield, MA 01257 consisting of replacing the entire roof and three boilers**, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto (the “Project”), which proposed repair project would materially extend the useful life of the school and preserve an asset that otherwise is capable of supporting the required educational program, and for which the District may be eligible for a school construction grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (“MSBA”), said amount to be expended at the direction of ***SBRSD School Building Committee***. To meet this appropriation the District is authorized to borrow said amount, under and pursuant to Chapter 71, Section 16(d), of the General Laws and the District Agreement, as amended, or pursuant to any other enabling authority. The District acknowledges that the MSBA’s grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need as determined by the MSBA, and any Project costs the District incurs in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the District; provided further that any grant that the District may receive from the MSBA shall not exceed the lesser of (1) **thirty-nine and twenty-one one hundredths percent (39.21%)** of eligible, approved Project costs, as determined by the MSBA, or (2) the total maximum grant amount determined by the MSBA, and that the amount of borrowing authorized pursuant to this vote shall be reduced by any grant amount set forth in the Project Funding Agreement that may be executed between the District and the MSBA and any additional grant funding received for this project by the District.

FURTHER MOVED: That within **seven (7)** days from the date on which this vote is adopted the Secretary be and hereby is instructed to notify the Board of Selectmen of each of the member towns of this District as to the amount and general purposes of the debt herein authorized, as required by the District Agreement and by Chapter 71, Section 16(d), of the General Laws.

Ms. Lartigue then seconded the motion.

Mr. Valentini stated that the towns now have 60 days to disapprove the indebtedness. If they do not have a town meeting, they approve the indebtedness.

Mr. Flynn asked when the school budget will be approved. Bruce Turner stated that the school budget goes for approval on March 12, 2015.

Ms. Sahn stated that the district has 90 days from January 14, 2015 to get funding approved.

Mr. Sears asked whether the 90 days can be extended. Does the district want to have a back-up plan if the vote is not passed under 16(d) and then plan for a ballot question under 16(n)?

Mr. Flynn stated that the project need to be done. This is over and above what is in the school budget. District needs to look to reduce costs elsewhere and needs to be sensitive to what taxpayers are going through.

Ms. Sahn stated that it is important to remember that there will be little if any financial impact on this year's school budget. The impact on the budgets will not be until FY17.

Mr. Valentini stated that the timeline is not ours but the MSBA's timeline. The job must be done in the summer months. That is the window of opportunity. It is the responsibility of the towns to make this happen. If they don't there will be a 60% increase to the towns plus an increase in bond interest and materials cost.

Mr. Stewart reminded everyone that the purpose of this meeting is not to debate the project but rather rescind the January 8 vote.

Mr. Ketchen asked whether the money from selling Alternative Energy Credits can be applied towards the costs of the project.

Ms. Silvers explained that there will be a motion on that topic.

Mr. Yohalem stated that New Marlborough would like a 20-year bond instead of a 10-year bond; and they wish to see the FY'16 school budget level funded. He also requested that the committee not vote tonight which would start the 60 days because voters want to see the school budget so they have the whole picture prior to voting on the project.

Ms. Sahn reiterated that the first bond payment will not be until FY17.

Mr. Turner confirmed that the first interest payment would be in FY17 and that there would be short-term borrowing summer into fall and that interest can be covered with operating funds.

Mr. Valentini motioned to approve the motion. Fran seconded the motion. Motion approved 7-2 with Mr. Flynn and Mr. Sears voting NO.

Mr. Valentini stated that the 60-day clock has started.

Ms. Silvers wanted to make a motion concerning the Alternative Energy Credits and read the following motion:

MOTION: It is the intention of the School Committee that any funds accruing to the district as a result of installing the new roof and boilers, such as the selling of energy credits, will be used to reduce the principal of the remaining bond issue until the bond is retired. Further, it is the School Committee's intention to work with the district administration to seek opportunities to apply for such funds.

Ms. Rundle seconded the motion

It was questions by a number of people whether this is outside the scope of the meeting agenda.

Mr. Stewart asked if the motion should be saved for next week.

Motion was approved 7-1. Mr. Flynn voted no because he believed that the motion was out of order.

On a motion by Mr. Flynn, seconded by Mr. Valentini, the meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Documents presented at this meeting:

- *Southern Berkshire Regional School District Form of School Committee Vote – MSBA Accelerated Repair Program*
- *Motion on Alternative Energy Credits*