

Southern Berkshire Regional School Committee  
Mt. Everett Regional School  
Sheffield, MA  
February 11, 2016  
Meeting #1503

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

Administration: Superintendent Hastings, Mr. Turner, Ms. Burke, Stacy Burgess, Sandi Hubbard

Press: CTSB

Student Representatives: Ava Garrett, Ryan Meyer

Others: Laura Allen, Karen Frighetto, Jamie Foster, Ken Basler, Sheffield Select Board; JoAnn Gavrity, Marsha Pshenishny, John Pshenishny, , Charlie Ketchen, Alford Select Board; Brenda Ullrich, Angel Roth, Danielle Melino, Mark Carsa, Karen Chamberland, Tara White and Michele Shalaby, New Marlborough Select Board; Sarah Siket, Heidi Zoin, Lynette Gagnon

1. Mr. Stewart, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

*Mr. Sears motioned to add to the subcommittee reports a report by the Legislative Representative. Ms. Lartigue seconded the motion. Voted unanimous.*

2. **Approval of Minutes:** *Ms. Silvers moved, seconded by Mr. Sears, to approve the minutes of School Committee Meeting #1502 of January 7, 2016. It was so voted.*

3. **Communications from the Audience:**

A. Student Representative Report

Ava Garrett and Ryan Meyer were present. Ms. Garrett informed the School committee that the EXPO was a success and some of the projects were moved to the Stone Store in Sheffield for display. Mt. Everett SADD is hosting a breakfast for the annual after prom. The Senior Class will be coming to a meeting soon to talk about the class trip (White Water Raft Trip). The Junior Class in is full swing with prom. The freshman class are doing fundraisers for their class. The sophomore class just finished their fundraiser, which was helping Grades 7 and 8 with EXPO, for \$5.00 they would come in and help the students with their projects. The Senior Girls Basketball team got into Western Mass and the Cheer Leaders will compete for the first time.

The only concerns that the students have are with the online courses. Virtual High School seems to be a problem for a lot of students. Edgeinuity is new, some students like it some do not. Maybe a survey could be done at the end of the year regarding the online courses. Ms. Garrett feels that the AP classes would be better taught in the classroom instead of online. The online courses lacks the connection with the teacher that sometimes a student needs.

Mr. Stewart thanked the students for coming to the meeting and asked her if she could attend the next meeting. He also congratulated Ms. Garrett on being a winner at the Poetry Out Loud event.

4. **Updates/Presentations:** Nothing to report.

5.

**Business:**

**A. Request for approval of FFA Overnight Field Trip:**

Danielle Melino requested permission to take the FFA students to the Massachusetts State FFA Convention in Sturbridge, MA from March 15-18, 2016. The students are paying part of the expense, and the rest will be from fundraisers. They will use the marsh mellow bus for transportation.

*Ms. Lartigue motioned, seconded by Ms. Silvers, to approve the FFA Overnight Field trip to the Massachusetts State FFA Convention in March. It was so voted.*

**B. Lateral Move on the Unit A Salary Schedule:**

*Ms. Lartigue motioned, seconded by Ms. Silvers, to approve the Lateral Move of Kelly MacDonald from level B to Level M step 4 effective February 1, 2016. It was so voted.*

**C. Request to establish a Student Activity Account for the summer 2017 trip to Ireland, Wales, England and Paris:** Kerry Burke represented Michelle Raczkowski who was not able to attend.

*Mr. Flynn motioned, seconded by Ms. Sparhawk, to approve the request to establish a Student Activity Account for the summer 2017 trip to Ireland, Wales, England and Paris. It was so voted.*

**D. Superintendent's Report:**

**Community Outreach:**

- **New Marlborough Central Evacuation Drill.** New Marlborough Central evacuation drill was moved to February 25, 2016 at 8:45 a.m.
- **The winter carnival** which was scheduled for Thursday, February 11<sup>th</sup> has been rescheduled to February 26<sup>th</sup> due to the weather. Students will enjoy skiing and tubing.
- **Kindergarten Registration is being held on March 10th.** Packets will be mailed out to families. This registration includes all schools in the district (UME, NMC, South Egremont and Monterey)
- **Family Literacy Night-** "The Magic of Books" will be held on March 10, 2016, 5-7 p.m. There will be fun and games for parents and students, prizes for students, the Scholastic Book Fair will be held this evening, and a magic show called "The Magic of Books" to close the evening.

**Students**

- **EXPO.** The Middle School Expo was Wednesday Evening. The 7th and 8th grade students did a great job on their EXPO projects. **Twenty of them will have their EXPO projects on display at the Stone Store in Sheffield for 3 weekends (Feb. 13-Feb. 28 from 11:00-4:00).**
- **World Education Alliance Symposium in Germany.** The following students will be participating in this year's **World Education Alliance Symposium in Germany** They are scheduled to depart on February 26th at 2:00, and return March 4th—likely back to school on March 5<sup>th</sup>. Eli Gold, Eliza Maggio, Charles Kerzner, Lily Duval, Samantha Twing, Ava Garrett, Simon Salzman, Jesse Smerechniak
- **Visitors from Hong Kong.** Mount Everett hosted around a dozen students from Hong Kong over the last two weeks. The group will depart on Friday. Stephanie Graham was the primary staff person in this visit. The group stayed with host families and went on several field trips in addition to shadowing their hosts in school.
- **National Girls and Women in Sports Day Celebration.** On Friday, February 5th, Jess Abbott and Emily Coon traveled to Boston to participate in the National Girls and Women in Sports Day Celebration at Faneuil Hall.

- Mt. Everett FFA, under Danielle Melino, was awarded a **\$2500 National FFA Food For All Grant**.
- Danielle Melino awarded a **\$700 Target Field Trip Grant** to go towards the **10th grade science field trip to the Bronx Zoo**.
- **New Lambs:** 5 lambs have been born in the school barn so far this year.
- **Athletics:** The **girls' basketball team is 13-3**. If they beat Mount Greylock on Monday (game is at Mount Greylock), they win the South Division.
- **Western Mass Wrestling Tournament in Southwick:** Some of our wrestlers will be participating in the Western Mass tournament in Southwick this weekend.
- **Monterey School:** Sandi Hubbard, Maria Rundle and Mr. Hastings met with the Monterey Select board on January 19, 2016 to provide the board with information on the plans for the school during the 2016-17 school year. Based on the information the Early Childhood Committee had from the Monterey Town Clerk and the other information provided by the committee, Mr. Hastings believed that there would not be more than one or two students who would be registered for the school in March. Since registration starts in the second week of March, we will soon know if there are more than a few students, whose families would request Monterey. Mr. Hastings had sent copies of the Early Childhood Committee report and a copy of the letter to the Monterey Select Board on January 19<sup>th</sup>. Both documents also appeared in the Berkshire Edge. Mr. Hastings stressed that he has considered that the New Marlborough Central School is the home school for both New Marlborough and Monterey, so there will always be a place for all Monterey children at New Marlborough.
- **Non-Unit Personnel Salary Increases.** Superintendent Hastings explained that at a Finance Subcommittee Meeting, Mr. Flynn requested a report on the administrator salary increases. Upon going through records, the attached document which tied non-unit salary increases to those of Unit A, was presented and approved at a January 9, 2014 meeting. (Copy of the Payroll Personnel – Comparison with Top Teacher and copy of excerpt from January 9, 2014 approved minutes).
- Superintendent Hastings continued that the other item that came up over the last few weeks, was a request from Mr. Flynn regarding the teacher census report and the discrepancy between the School District data and the data reported by DESE. Attached to these minutes is an email dated February 11, 2016 from Mr. Flynn to Mr. Hastings which includes a graph that was provided to the Finance Subcommittee. This graph compared the number of teachers vs the number reported by DESE. Mr. Hastings explained that there was a lot of time spent comparing the payroll list against the report generated via EPIMS. The question is the discrepancy between the two lines.

Mr. Stewart clarified that any document, in any form, presented at a school committee meeting is a public record and available for anyone who requests it.

Mr. Flynn asked what the capacity of the New Marlborough School, Superintendent Hastings responded 210 people. Mr. Flynn sent the email to point out that Mr. Hastings was comparing two different forms of data.

Ms. Silvers understood that under the freedom of information act that documents are available, but it seems that the request came from a single school committee member for Mr. Hastings to create a new document, based on the documents available to anyone under the act. Further, to have Mr. Hastings spend a considerable amount of time on this seems out of line if it was not requested by the School Committee. She asked Mr. Valentini if the Finance Committee has requested the information listed in the email. He replied that they had not.

Mr. Sears also mentioned that the tenor in the email was asking for special work to be done so that Mr. Flynn did not have to do it. He further stated that because Mr. Flynn tends to wear two hats and since he has a bullying nature, he was asking the Superintendent to do his work for him.

Mr. Flynn took offense to being called a bully and left the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Superintendent Hastings explained that today Chris Thompson looked at the data submitted via EPIMS in 2015 and this matched with the payroll records. When DESE compiles the report for the state, they are only counting the core teachers and not everyone employed by the district (i.e. adjustment counselors, guidance, etc.).

Ms. Lartigue stated that it was appalling that Mr. Flynn send Mr. Hastings and others on a wild data chase that was never requested by the Finance Committee. Sometimes the Finance Committee will ask for information, but they usually provide a reason. In this case it was an arbitrary request from Mr. Flynn for data with no reason or explanation as to how this data would be used.

Mr. Stewart reiterated that this incident, or series of incidents, should be a learning experience, or a warning, that the School Committee and its' Subcommittees operate through a democratic process. The School Committee or subcommittees bring matters forward if the majority of the full committee or subcommittee requests it. School Committee or subcommittee individual members should not be initiating factions on their own.

Mr. Valentini stated that as Chair of the Finance Committee he will take some of the blame in so far as he did not insist that protocol be followed. When Mr. Flynn made certain requests or demands he never realized that it would lead to this level of absurdity. He further stated that if any committee member has an issue that needs to be elicited from the Superintendent it should come from the School Committee and be related to school committee business and be expressed in open meeting.

*Mr. Valentini motioned, seconded by Ms. Lartigue, that the Policy Subcommittee examine the procedure by which a School Committee member may make a request to the Superintendent or Administration for information.*

*Roll call vote:*

*Mr. Batacchi – Yes      Ms. Lartigue – Yes      Ms. Sparhawk – Yes      Ms. Silvers – Yes  
Ms. Rundle – Yes      Ms. Bush – Yes      Mr. Sears – Yes      Mr. Valentini – Yes*

*Motion carries.*

#### **E. Subcommittee Reports:**

**Finance Subcommittee:** Mr. Valentini had nothing to report. Ms. Sparhawk mentioned that the school committee had to vote on the amended budget.

*Mr. Valentini moved, seconded by Ms. Sparhawk, that the School Committee of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District vote an amendment to the existing approved FY16 budget of March 11, 2015 pursuant to the provisions of 603 CMR 41.05 and to reflect the following changes:*

- a. To effect a budget reduction of \$217,001 from the total approved on March 15, 2015 by reducing the Operating and transportation budget by \$210,001 and the Capital Budget by \$70,000.*
- b. To direct the Superintendent to apply \$4,000 from FY16 encumbered revenue to effect a direct reduction of Towns' assessment to be applied as defined in the regional agreement.*
- c. To direct the Superintendent to apply \$66,000 from the Transportation Reserve Fund to*

*reduce the FY16 Towns' Transportation assessment to be applied as defined in the regional agreement.*

*Roll call vote: Mr. Batacchi – Yes Ms. Lartigue – Yes Ms. Sparhawk – Yes  
Ms. Silvers – Yes Ms. Rundle – Yes Ms. Bush – Yes Mr. Sears – Yes Mr. Valentini – Yes  
Mr. Stewart – Yes. Motion carries.*

**Building, Grounds & Technology Subcommittee:**

Mr. Valentini reported on the meeting at New Marlborough. There were discussions on the building and possible renovations. Superintendent Hastings suggested that Ms. Borwick do some investigation to see if there are grants available. Another concern that was mentioned is the traffic, with parents dropping off students. Ms. Burgess will look into this.

Mr. Batacchi addressed the issue with the District sign. Mr. Valentini will look into this.

**Transportation Subcommittee:** Ms. Sparhawk did not have much to report. They are still working on establishing a route from New Marlborough to Undermountain. Currently Ormsbee cannot guarantee they have a vehicle available.

**Food Subcommittee:** Ms. Lartigue complimented Mr. Wells on the amazing information that he brought to the Subcommittee meeting. They are looking at vending machines with healthy options. The committee would also like a student representative to join. The committee is also working on bringing breakfast to all the children in the school who would need it. Superintendent Hastings is working with the Principals to ensure that breakfast is made available for all students – maybe breakfast in the classrooms. Mr. Wells is also looking into grants for next year to help with breakfast costs.

**Executive Evaluation Subcommittee:** Ms. Silvers reported that Superintendent Hastings priorities were approved previously, but there were some changes and the amended priorities need to be approved.

*Ms. Rundle motioned, seconded by Mr. Sears, to approve the Superintendent's priorities for the 2015-2017 school years as amended. It was so voted.*

**Policy Subcommittee:** Mr. Sears stated that the committee had met earlier this week. Superintendent Hastings had been provided a draft of the JFBB School Choice Policy. This was the first reading of this policy. The rationale was to change this policy to handle in-district choice. There was a discussion regarding what a non-resident vs a resident means.

*Mr. Sears motioned, seconded by Ms. Lartigue, to insert in the first paragraph of policy JFBB, "residents of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts but not residing within the District". It was so voted.*

**Legislative Representative:** Mr. Sears had brought to Mr. Valentini's attention some of the flux in terms of charter schools and had prepared a motion.

*Mr. Sears moved, seconded by Ms. Lartigue, that the Southern Berkshire Regional School District Committee request the Massachusetts House and Senate not to raise the existing cap on Charter Schools in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as proposed in legislation H.3928.*

*We further request the House and Senate introduce legislation restricting any new Charter Schools from enrolling students residing in towns and cities which have not passed enabling legislation for such enrollments. Such proposed legislation should include:*

- 1. Local taxpayer approval of any new charter school.*
- 2. Local taxpayer elected oversight of the charter school's board of trustees.*
- 3. Full funding of the Commonwealth's Charter School Expropriation Amelioration*

*Account.*

4. *Required social, economic and academic impact study of a new charter school in impacted communities before approval.*
5. *Measureable and enforceable requirements that all charter schools enroll and retain a representative cross section of students with special needs, across all levels, English Language Learners and those classified as economic disadvantaged. Such groups should be represented across all grade levels in the charter school.*

*We believe such legislation would allow Charter Schools to better focus their resources where local taxpayers have identified a demonstrated need for such schools and voted to accept such additional cost to their communities.*

Mr. Sears then explained that if this motion passes then we need to move to figure out some way to communicate this to the appropriate people, maybe a letter from the School Committee to the representatives. There was further discussion.

*Roll Call Vote:*

*Mr. Valentini – Yes      Mr. Sears – Yes      Ms. Bush – Yes      Ms. Rundle – No  
Ms. Silvers – Yes      Ms. Lartigue – Yes      Ms. Sparhawk – Yes      Mr. Batacchi – Yes  
Motion carries 7 to 1*

*Mr. Valentini motioned, seconded by Ms. Lartigue, that the Vice Chair communicate the previous motion to the sympathies to the elected officials, Governor's Office, five Select Boards and the media. Voted Unanimous.*

- F. **Financial Updates and Transfers:** Mr. Turner stated that the district had overspent in legal fees. On a positive note, oil had been purchased at \$1.25 a gallon.
6. **COMMUNICATION FROM THE PUBLIC:** Ms. Heidi Zorn asked that the EXPO projects not be returned to the parents after 2 days. The students spend a lot of time on this project and she would like them displayed in the hallways so that other students and staff can see them.

Ms. Silvers motioned, seconded by Ms. Lartigue, to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m. Voted Unanimous.

**Documents presented at this meeting:**

- *Agenda, School Committee Meeting #1503*
- *Minutes of Meeting #1,502 and Special Meeting of February 4, 2016*
- *Overnight Field Trip Request to Massachusetts State FFA Convention*
- *Lateral Move on the Unit A Salary Schedule, Effective February 1, 2016*
- *Request to Open a Student Activities Account for the summer2017 trip to Wales, Ireland, London & Paris*
- *Superintendent Priorities*
- *Language for Vote on amendment of FY16 Budget Motion*
- *Draft of Policy JFBB, School Choice*
- *Language for Vote on Charter School Motion*
- *Sign-in Sheet*
- *DESE Letter regarding Regional School District Budget Process*
- *FY17 Budget Draft for Preliminary Adoption*
- *Copy of email from Mr. Flynn to Superintendent Hastings*