

Southern Berkshire Regional School Committee  
Mt. Everett Regional School  
Sheffield, MA  
June 9, 2016  
Meeting #1509

School Committee Members: Kristin Sparhawk, Carl Stewart, Vito Valentini, Marcella Bush, Arthur Batacchi, Francois Lartigue, Bonnie Silvers, Dennis Sears

Absent: Charlie Flynn, Fran Lartigue (arrived at 7:10 p.m.)

Administration: Superintendent Hastings, Christine Regan

Press: CTSB, Julie Ruth-Berkshire Record

Student Representatives: Maya Neiski

Others: Michelle Shallaby, Nat Yohalem, Karen Chamberland, Francine Groener, Sue Weinstein, Rebecca Neet, Danielle Melino

1. **Call To Order:** Mr. Stewart called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

A. A Word or Two from the Chair

Mr. Stewart addressed the committee. He stated that the graduation at Tanglewood was wonderful and well attended. He hopes that holding the school committee meeting at NMC after moving up day will become a tradition. Mr. Stewart also recognized the two members of the New Marlborough Select Board and thanked them for their cooperation and effort in working with the school committee and district to help get a difficult budget passed. Mr. Stewart further stated that the Unit D contract negotiation is complete and there is a Memorandum of Understanding which will be signed and ratified in September.

Finally, Mr. Stewart informed the school committee about Linda Higgins illness and to send good thoughts her way.

2. **Approval of Minutes:**

*Mr. Sears moved, seconded by Ms. Rundle to approve the minutes of meeting #1508 as submitted. It was so voted unanimously.*

3. **Communications from the Audience Pertaining to this Evening's Agenda Items:**

A. Student Representative Report:

Maya Neski introduced herself to the School Committee. She reported that the Prom was over and the feedback was amazing. Their class is going to do a car wash over the summer as a fundraiser. They will also be formulating ideas for fundraisers over the summer for the start of the school year. All the grades are talking to their members to get recommendations for the school.

4. **Updates/Presentation(s)**

Integration of Technology into the Elementary Programs – Rebecca Neet introduced herself to the school committee. She had a student share with the school committee what they had done in class that day. Maggie, a grade 4 student, explained that she and all the grade 4 students had done their projects using technology. Her class did state poetry, Sue Garcia's class did National Park Movies. This replaced the projects they used to do on a trifold. The students are learning to use Power Point and other programs to help with their projects. Ms. Neet showed the school committee some of the work that the students had done: an acrostic poem – about Colorado; a shape poem; a movie trailer on Wyoming, Yellowstone National Park.

Ms. Neet explained that this year was the first time they had branched out to the students in South Egremont. A Kindergarten student from the South Egremont School gave a presentation of his project on the Harpy Eagle. Using technology he created a movie.

Presentation by Francine Groener – this was postponed to later in the meeting because she was involved with the Grade 4 recognition night going on at the same time as the meeting.

5. **Business**

- A. Preliminary approval of the overnight FFA Field Trip to the 2016 National FFA Convention in Indianapolis-  
Danielle Melino

*Ms. Silvers moved, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, to give preliminary approval of the overnight FFA Trip to the 2016 National Convention in Indianapolis. It was so voted unanimously.*

- B. South Egremont School Construction Project

Mr. Stewart asked Mr. Valentini if he had any knowledge about this project. Mr. Valentini explained that he was aware of the \$25,000 contribution from the district to the South Egremont School for the removal of a tank and some other things. The Town of Egremont has applied for funding from the Massachusetts Historic Commission, and also voted some money at their town meeting. From what he gathers these repairs are going to be such that we will not be able to hold classes there. He asked where the students will be placed.

Ms. Silvers also mentioned that this was brought up at the last Executive Evaluation Subcommittee meeting. If the plan is to move the students, than the whole program should be moved to Undermountain. It is the Superintendent and the School Committee who decide where the students should be placed. Another item of discussion was that the move should be at the start of the academic year and not in the middle, which would be very disruptive.

Mr. Sears noted that this project was started by the Chair of the Historical Commission in Town of Egremont and then the Select Board became involved.

Ms. Sparhawk stated that her feeling from the information is that nothing is set in stone and decisions should not be based on rumors. She did not feel that the decision needed to be made right now.

Mr. Stewart raised the concern of starting school in Egremont and then having to relocate the students in April.

Ms. Lartigue arrived at 7:10 p.m.

There was further discussion regarding this. Ms. Silvers believes that the district should give advance notice to the parents and did not think it is educationally sound to move students mid-year. Ms. Rundle stated that since we are invited to the Town of Egremont's meeting on July 11<sup>th</sup>, maybe we can invite some input from parents and teachers and bring something back to the July 21<sup>st</sup> meeting.

It was agreed that the Building, Grounds and Technology subcommittee will meet after the Town of Egremont's July 11<sup>th</sup> meeting but before the regular school committee meeting of July 21<sup>st</sup>.

*Mr. Sears, moved, seconded by Ms. Lartigue, that Superintendent Hastings communicate with the Town of Egremont's Board of Selectmen and get the issues resolved before the start of the school year. It was so voted unanimously.*

Francine Groener was now present so item 4A was addressed. Ms. Groener, who is retiring at the end of the school year gave an overview of all of the events that took place at the school over the year. Tonight was the Grade 4 recognition and pot luck dinner.

The School Committee thanked Ms. Groener for her many years of service to the district and wished her well in her retirement. Ms. Groener thanked everyone on the School Committee for their support of the New Marlborough Central School.

*Mr. Valentini moved, seconded by Ms. Sparhawk, to amend the agenda to move item 5 D2 – Finance Subcommittee ahead of item C- Superintendent’s Report and D1. It was so voted.*

D Subcommittee Reports:

2. Finance Subcommittee

Mr. Valentini addressed the letter sent to the district from the Town of New Marlborough requesting that the Finance Subcommittee and district examine the FY17 budget and see if there is a reduction that might be made to help the town balance their budget.

Mr. Hastings commented that when dealing with the Town of New Marlborough it is never nasty. Mr. Hastings indicated that if we can do anything to help we will

Ms. Sparhawk asked if the Town is under a time frame. Mr. Yohalem replied that this needed to be resolved before the budget is certified and that the tax rates cannot be set without an approved budget.

Mr. Valentini said that the Finance Subcommittee can meet in August and at that time will look at the budget. By then they should know what the cherry sheet will be and also the transportation cost.

Ms. Regan explained that she has concerns regarding the budget and state aid. The regional transportation is over-budgeted and she is concerned about that. This year’s E&D was brought down to zero and the special education out of district was underfunded. Ms. Regan stressed that she needs to analyze the FY17 budget before she can recommend any more reductions.

Mr. Stewart mentioned that this year there is barely enough money to cover the cost of one person attending the MASC Fall conference in Hyannis.

C. Superintendent’s report:

**1. Community Outreach:**

- a. **SWAGG Quincy Beach Clean-up.** On Wednesday, seven SWAGG members traveled to Quincy to perform clean-up of the Quincy shoreline. They shoveled sand off of a sidewalk, used by bikers, picked up litter on the beach. The local official and several passers-by thanked the group for its efforts.
- b. **Building Structures Farmers Market Building.** This week, the Mount Everett Building Structures class finished a small building for the Sheffield Farmers market, which opened its season last weekend. The building, designed by the customer, features a hinged roof that may be raised on market day for added headroom. The 13-member Building Structures class, including many seniors, worked from the drawings to complete the pine board structure. The boards were milled by Will Conklin. The building will be loaded onto a trailer and delivered soon.
- c. **Memorial Day.** Our band, complete with new uniforms, appeared in several parades on Memorial Day. This year, Shayna Sawyer and Patrick Hogelin were featured soloists in playing Taps.
- d. **New Marlborough Central Recognition and Pot Luck.** The NMC recognition and Pot Luck Supper part was changed to June 9th from 5:30 – 7:30 at NMC so that the School Committee meeting would be held there.
- e. **Sheffield Historical Society Living History Event, May 27<sup>th</sup>.** Our **fifth graders** participated in a living history event at the Sheffield Historical Society in the morning of May 27<sup>th</sup>. The group completed learning stations related to old tools, law office, genealogy, bee-keeping, butter-churning, school procedures (including discipline methods: lashes), candle-making, laundering clothing, preserving food by smoking, and drawing water from a well. Paul O’Brien worked with Jamie Foster to organize the program that was manned by Sheffield volunteers.
- f. **Southern Berkshire Child Care Program Outreach into the Community on June 10<sup>th</sup>.** This was the last visit of the school year. The children and seniors played with Home-Made Play-Doh, did parachute dance activities, enjoyed snacks (watermelon on a popsicle stick), and sang songs. All the Senior Citizens received flowers in vases that had been hand-painted by children. All children received certificates for participating in the inter-generational series of visits.

## 2. **Staff:**

### a. **Teacher Moves:** Many of the elementary teachers will be moving to new assignments next September.

Tony Bleau- From grade 6 to grade 3	New hire- grade 3
Jodi Hutchison- from gr.5 to gr. 4	Christina Carlson- from gr 4 to gr 1
Ashley Lotz- NMC 2/3 to gr. 1	Sue Garcia- from gr. 4 to gr. 5
Becky Neet- from gr. 4 to gr. 6	Dan Weston- from UME gr. 1 to NMC 2/3
Susanna Mapstone- Sue Garcia's room	

### b. **Teacher and ESP Retirements**

- i. Jo-ellen Height, Pre-Kindergarten
- ii. Carol Ide, Grade 3
- iii. Jody Burkle, Elementary School Special Education
- iv. Francine Groener, New Marlborough Central Pre-Kindergarten
- v. Robin Coulehan, School Psychologist
- vi. Loretta Curtis, Elementary School Paraprofessional

## 3. **Students:**

- a. **Go-Math Materials for Next Year.** We received our elementary and middle school Go-Math materials for next year. Kerry Burke inventoried and prepared the materials for distribution to the classrooms. This is the first year that we will be using Go-Math materials in the Middle School program. The Go-Math Curriculum is tied to the 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum frameworks (Common Core plus). We hope that this will help our k-8 students to improve our achievement by ensuring that our instruction better matches the state curriculum requirements and assessments.
- b. **Graduation:** The class of 2016 received diplomas on Saturday morning. Sean Smith and Justin Makuc did excellent jobs in their speaking roles. Everyone was impressed by the band and choral numbers that were presented. The event, coordinated by Neal Barbieri and Dawn Estes-Daub, received many, many compliments from those attending the graduation. The ceremony went off without a hitch.
- c. **May 25th UME Open House** 4<sup>th</sup> Graders presented their National Park I-Movies that they had created. Teachers displayed work in their classrooms and spoke to families as they cycled through.
- d. **The English Language Education program Family Literacy Night** was held on **May 25<sup>th</sup>** as part of the Undermountain Open House. Nearly all of our families with English Learners came together with Christine Martin for an hour of literacy activities followed by a delicious potluck (Authentic Mexican food). Four high school students volunteered to read with children, three English Learner students read to the entire group and families learned about programs at the Bushnell Sage Library from the Children's Program Coordinator, Caitlyn Hotaling. Native language books were signed out and everyone left prepared for a summer of reading!
- e. **May 26th Elementary Field Day.** All of our schools converged on Undermountain Elementary School for a day of fun in the sun. Everyone had a great time.
- f. **NMC - Science Theater at the New Marlborough Meeting House, June 7<sup>th</sup>.** The Meeting House was packed for the Life-Cycle program, directed and written by Kristen Sparhawk. The PTA provided refreshments after the play.
- g. **South Egremont School Open House.** Susan and Erica hosted an open house Wednesday morning, June 8<sup>th</sup>. The adults had the chance to look at the students' work, including Spanish Language, Science Research work, journals, and other written work. All of the children's science i-Movies the animals they researched were projected for all to see. Rebecca Neet had worked with the class to research and create the i-Movies.
- h. **Eighth Grade Recognition Night, June 8<sup>th</sup>.** Grayson Duval and Madeline Von Ruden were the student speakers. Many of the students received awards for excellence. The sophomore class sponsored a Middle School Dance following the event.
- i. **Sixth grade recognition night** is June 10<sup>th</sup>, starting at 6:00 PM in the TACPAC.

## D. Subcommittee Reports:

### 1. Executive Evaluation Subcommittee:

Ms. Silvers reported that she has almost all of the evaluations, waiting on Mr. Stewart, Mr. Sears and Mr. Batacchi.

The other item discussed at the last meeting was the superintendent selection process. Mr. Valentini informed everyone that the last time the district searched for a superintendent no in-house committee acted

as a steering committee and an ad hoc committee was formed. Motioned that the school committee empower the Executive Evaluation Subcommittee to develop a plan. There was a discussion that this was already discussed at the previous meeting. Mr. Valentini then withdrew his motion.

3. FRRSD/SBRSD Planning Board meeting is Monday, June 13<sup>th</sup> in Sheffield. Mr. Sears informed the School Committee that the FRRSD Grade 6 students, teachers and Principal visited the Mt. Everett campus last week. Everything went very well. There will be an agenda item at the next meeting regarding a tuition agreement between FRRSD and SBRSD similar to the one they have with Berkshire Hills and Lee.

E. Financial Updates and Transfers – Christine Regan

Ms. Regan presented a detailed report as well as a summary of the Budget Transfer Requests (attached).

*Mr. Valentini moved, seconded by Ms. Sparhawk, that the transfers as delineated on the budget transfer sheets handed out by Ms. Regan on June 9, 2016 be approved. It was so voted unanimously. Motion carries.*

*Mr. Valentini moved, seconded by Ms. Lartigue, that the School Committee authorize Ms. Regan to act as the School Committee agent to make whatever transfers are necessary to close the books for Fiscal 2016. It was so voted unanimously. Motion carries.*

6. **Adjourn**

*Ms. Sparkawk moved, seconded by Ms. Lartigue, to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. It was so voted unanimously.*

***Documents presented at this meeting.***

- Agenda, School Committee Meeting #1509
- Minutes of Meeting #1508
- FFA Field Trip Request
- Email from the Town of Egremont regarding school construction project
- Letter from the Town of New Marlborough
- Budget Transfer Requests