

Southern Berkshire Regional School Committee  
Mt. Everett Regional School Library  
Sheffield, MA  
July 21, 2016  
Meeting #1511

School Committee Members: Art Batacchi, Carl Stewart, Bonnie Silvers, Kristin Sparhawk, Charles Flynn, Vito Valentini, Dennis Sears, Marcella Bush

Absent: Maria Rundle, Francois Lartigue (Dennis Sears arrived at 6:16 p.m.)

Administration: Superintendent Hastings, Christine Regan

Press: CTSB, Julie Ruth and Cory Willey - Berkshire Record

Student Representatives: None

Others: Glenn DeVoti, Michelle Shallaby

1. **Call to Order:** Mr. Stewart, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** *Ms. Silvers moved, seconded by Ms. Bush, to approve the minutes of meeting #1510 as submitted. It was so voted unanimously.*
3. **Communications from the Audience Pertaining to this Evening's Agenda Items:** Nothing to report
4. **Updates/Presentations:** None
5. **Business:**

**A. Superintendent's Report – Dave Hastings**

Community Outreach:

South Egremont School Project. The Egremont Select Board informed the District that the South Egremont School Project will begin after the end of the school year so that the school's education program will not be disturbed. Further, there will be an archeology project around the school in October that could involve our students. Fred Finkle attended a meeting this week and learned that the selectboard does not expect any disruptions related to the archeology work. This summer, the emergency exit in the kitchen will be moved from the back of the building to the side of the building so that it will lead onto school property. The current kitchen exit leads to the neighbor's property.

SABIC Math/Science Award: The District received a Grant from SABIC of over \$2,000. This is a three-part grant that will benefit our secondary Math and Science programs. First, the district received 15 high-resolution, full-color backlit display TI-84f Plus graphing calculators, each valued at well over \$160.00 (\$2,400). Second, our Science department received a \$1,950 gift certificate from Fisher Scientific, to be used to purchase additional Math and Science equipment. Third, according to the news release, each Berkshire County high school will receive a \$1,000 check. It is sad that SABIC is leaving the area, but we appreciate this gift as well as the approximately \$10,000 MakerSpace Lab grant that we received last year.

Physical Plant: Workers have completed the installation of the tank, pump and piping for the TACPAC fire suppression system. The almost 40,000 gallon tank is now full and will be tested in the next two weeks. There will be one last meeting to wrap up the project. Chris Regan will have more information on the financial side of the project.

Julie Ruth - Cory Willey Handoff: We are saddened to be saying farewell (for now) to Julie Ruth, whose reporting in the Berkshire Record has been thoughtful, credible, and accurate. Her dedication as a journalist to get each story right was evident in every story she wrote. Friday is her last day, though she will continue to serve as a guest reporter. She will be replaced by Cory Willey, who is with us this evening. We wish her well and hope to see her from time to time in the area.

### Staff:

Administrative Retreat: The administrative team met for two days this week. Day One was devoted to Civil Rights training provided by Paige Tobin from Murphy, Lamere & Murphy. The training covered Title IX, Title VI, Section 504, Discipline, Bullying, and general investigation procedures. The District has made a request to reserve an Inclusive Practice Ambassador to come onsite and work with the District Leadership Team on October 5<sup>th</sup>. Day Two was devoted to updating the District Vision, Theory of Action, Strategic Objectives and the associated Strategic Initiatives. There will be a public meeting between now and the fall to present the document to members of the School.

### Students:

- Gwendolyn Carpenter was one of four Berkshire County players chosen to represent the West in the BayState Games. The Western Mass girls' basketball team, beat Northeast 68-58 to win the bronze medal in last weekend's Bay State Games tournament.
- MassLive named Gwendolyn Carpenter and Chandler DeGrenier to the first team Division III All Western Massachusetts softball team. Devan Galli and Morgan DeGrenier were named to the second team.
- Baseball Camp will be held the week of 7/23-7/29 from 9:00 – 12:00.
- Summer School. This is the last week of summer school. All students have been working hard.
- Mike Smith Motivational Speaker. On the second day of school, Mount Everett will host a motivational speaker, Mike Smith. The presentation will be one hour out of a full-day school culture program in the school.

Mr. Flynn confirmed that the District will be notified as the Town of Egremont receives updates.

### B. 1. **MASS/MASC Conference in November:**

Mr. Stewart informed the committee that the MASC conference is November 2-5, 2016 in Hyannis. This year the District is struggling with available funds and therefore will not be able to send as many school committee members as in the past. Mr. Stewart asked the school committee members to indicate if they wanted to attend this conference. Ms. Regan informed the committee that it costs approximately \$1400 to send one person to this conference (includes travel, hotel, meals and conference costs).

2. **Date of Reorganization School Committee Meeting:** This meeting will be held after the election in November. The scheduled date is November 17<sup>th</sup>. The meeting needs to be posted 6 days in advance.

### C. **Approval of Handbooks:**

- **Staff Handbook 2016-2017**

*Ms. Silvers moved, seconded by Ms. Sparhawk, to approve the 2016-2017 Staff Handbook with comments as noted. It was so voted unanimously.*

Mr. Sears mentioned that on Page 18, regarding Field Trips we have been using the 6:1 ratio and there is nothing in the policy regarding this. Also, there were some phone numbers that were wrong. Mr. Stewart suggested that any corrections regarding names and phone numbers be emailed to Lynette. The gender issue will be addressed at policy meetings.

- **Elementary Parent/Student Handbook 2016-2017**

*Ms. Silvers moved, seconded by Mr. Sears, to approve the 2016-2017 Elementary Parent/Student Handbook with changes as noted. It was so voted unanimously.*

Mr. Sears mentioned that on Page 18 there is a confidentiality statement, there is a note which needs to be eliminated.

- **Mt. Everett Student Handbook 2016-2017**

*Ms. Silvers moved, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, to approve the 2016-2017 Mt. Everett Student Handbook with changes as noted. It was so voted unanimously.*

Ms. Silvers asked Mr. Devoti if there was a section on parent observing classrooms. She also asked if there is a procedure in place for exit interviews at the High School and Elementary School because it

was not in the handbook. Mr. Devoti said he would add that to the handbook. Principal Devoti explained the Educational Proficiency Plan which will be added to the handbook and also the new independent study guidelines.

**D. Financial Updates and Transfers (as needed) – Christine Regan**

- a. Budget Transfers: Christine Regan distributed a list of budget transfers (attached).  
*Mr. Flynn moved, seconded by Ms. Sparhawk, to approve the budget transfer requests presented at the July 21, 2016 school committee meeting. It was so voted unanimously.*
- b. Acceptance of Gifts:  
*Ms. Sparhawk moved, seconded by Mr. Flynn, to approve the acceptance of gifts as written (attached). It was so voted unanimously.*
  - Anonymous Donation of \$6,058.94
  - \$4,500 to be used for a motivational speaker at the Middle and High School
  - \$1,558.94 to reimburse chaperones for the cost of airfare for the Germany Trip
  - SABIC Donation of Calculators and Gift Certificate – Total Value \$4,350 – Mount Everett Math and Science Program.
- c. Governor’s Budget Update: Chris Regan informed the school committee that the Governor had approved the Chapter 70 level that was in the senate approval as well as the regional transportation that was in the proposal. She does not have any information on school choice. Will know more as more information becomes available.

**E. Subcommittee Reports:**

1. Executive Evaluation Subcommittee
  - a. Approval of the Superintendent Search Plan of Action  
Ms. Silvers distributed to the committee members copies of the Highlights of Duties and Responsibilities of Superintendent Search Participants and explained how the process would work. (Attached) There was discussion regarding this. Mr. Flynn suggested that there should be outreach to the community with this process. He further suggested that we hire a search firm to conduct the superintendent search.

Ms. Silvers explained the process further. There was further discussion and questions and answers.

*Mr. Valentini moved that the Executive Evaluation Subcommittee take the lead in finding the district a Superintendent. He then rescinded this motion.*

Mr. Flynn stated that this motion was made and passed at the last meeting and at that time he had asked for a plan.

*Mr. Valentini rescinded the above motion.*

*Mr. Valentini moved, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, to accept the plan that the Executive Evaluation Subcommittee had prepared and submitted. Mr. Flynn – no, other members – yes. Motion carries.*

There was a discussion regarding the motion. Ms. Sparhawk acknowledged that Mr. Flynn’s concerns were valid, but these concerns would be addressed during the second tier of discussion. Discussions regarding the specifics of the plan should be left to after this plan is approved. Mr. Sears suggested that we approve the elements of the plan but leave time to discuss the values of some of the elements.

*Ms. Silvers moved, seconded by Mr. Valentini, that the next Superintendent of the SBRSD would be offered a three (3) year contract. Mr. Flynn voted no, all other members voted yes, motion carries.*

Mr. Sears would like the motion to be amended to include a probationary period of one year.

Ms. Sparhawk stated that what we are deciding tonight is the offer not the stipulations of the contract. Mr. Flynn would like all the items deferred to the August 25<sup>th</sup> meeting and be addressed at that time.

Mr. Stewart asked if there was anything stopping the Executive Evaluation from advertising without the approval of the committee. Ms. Sparhawk stated that the advertisement would need to contain certain items listed in the plan.

*Mr. Valentini moved to call the question, Ms. Sparhawk seconded. Voted unanimously.*

Mr. Batacchi left the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

Mr. Flynn suggested that the next superintendent should have successful service as a principal. Ms. Sparhawk does not have strong feelings either way. It is a question on what is advertised. Mr. Stewart agreed with Ms. Sparhawk. Ms. Silvers also agrees. Ms. Bush in agreement. Mr. Sears stated we need to decide what we advertise as a body. Mr. Valentini believes that principal experience and classroom experience is important.

The next issue discussed was whether the potential candidate should reside in Berkshire County. Consensus was that the potential candidate resides in the county.

*Ms. Silvers motioned, seconded by Mr. Valentini, to hire an independent contractor for up to \$2,500 who will work with the Executive Evaluation Subcommittee and School Committee through this process. Vote: Mr. Flynn abstained, other members yes, motion carries.*

*Ms. Silvers motioned, seconded by Mr. Valentini, to spend up to \$1,500 to have a pdf created to be posted on the SBRSD website with the necessary promotional material. Mr. Flynn abstained, other members yes, motion carries.*

2. Building, Grounds & Technology – Vito Valentini informed the school committee of the following items which were discussed at the last meeting.
  - Discussions regarding the South Egremont School renovation project.
  - Asha VonRuden addressed the BG&T committee concerning the condition of the tennis courts. The committee asked Ms. VonRuden to evaluate the condition and present a cost estimate for renovations.
  - Chris Regan had evaluated all the capital expenses for FY15, FY16 and FY17. In 2015 the BG&T passed a motion establishing a capital projects revolving fund. The committee had requested that Ms. Regan prepare a report of the status of this fund for FY17. Ms. Regan distributed this report to the school committee.
  - In the previous fiscal year \$10,000 in matching funds was dedicated to the Monterey building. The BG&T committee suggested that the Superintendent send a letter to the Town of Monterey asking what their renovation plans are. Should this money be committed to the Town of Monterey or transferred to the general fund?
  
3. Report on the FRRSD-SBRSD Regional Planning Board

Mr. Sears informed the committee that the FRRSD-SBRSD Planning Board had met and at that meeting it was voted to dissolve the board, but keep it as an ad hoc committee.

*Mr. Sears moved, seconded by Mr. Flynn, that the people from SBRSD that were on the Regional Planning Board be a part of the Ad Hoc Committee with Farmington River Regional. Kristen Sparhawk, Dennis Sears, Maria Rundle and Bonnie Silvers will be on the committee. It was so voted unanimously.*

6. **Communication From the Public/Requests for Future Agenda Items:** Nothing to report

## 7. **Adjourn**

*Mr. Flynn moved, seconded by Ms. Sparhawk, to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 p.m. It was so voted unanimously.*

## **Documents Presented at this Meeting:**

- *Agenda, School Committee Meeting #1511*
- *Minutes of Meeting #1510*
- *Budget Transfers – Acceptance of Gifts*
- *2016-2017 Handbooks*
- *Highlights of Duties & Responsibilities of Superintendent Search Participants*