

Southern Berkshire Regional School Committee
Mt. Everett Regional School Library
Sheffield, MA
September 22, 2016
Meeting #1514

School Committee Members: Art Batacchi, Carl Stewart, Bonnie Silvers, Kristin Sparhawk, Fran Lartigue, Vito Valentini, Maria Rundle, Marcella Bush, Charles Flynn

Absent: Mr. Sears

Administration: Superintendent Hastings

Press: CTSB, Cory Willey - Berkshire Record

Student Representatives: Maya Neski, Caitlyn Herrick

Others: Karen Chamberland, Carrie Greene

1. **Call to Order:** Mr. Stewart, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** *Ms. Sparhawk moved, seconded by Bonnie Silvers to approve the minutes of meeting #1513 and the Executive Session Minutes as submitted. Charlie Flynn abstained, all others voted yes. Motion passes.*
3. **Communications from the Audience Pertaining to this Evening's Agenda Items:**

Maya Neski, running for Senior Class President and Caitlyn Herrick, running for Senior Class Vice President, introduced themselves to the School Committee. Right now they are focusing on the individual grades. The Freshmen are doing fundraising at Saturday Morning Soccer. They were very impressed with the Inspirational Speaker, Mike Smith.

4. **Update(s)/Presentations:**

Mr. Stewart introduced Carrie Green, from the Berkshire County Educational Task Force. This is a county wide organization both for school committees and select boards. Ms. Green gave a presentation on the work that the Berkshire County Educational Task Force has been doing. Superintendents, School Committee Chairs, Town representatives, and MASC are part of this group. This is an advisory group doing work that they believe is needed for county districts to make informed decisions on their education futures. They have completed Phase I which was collecting data from the towns and districts in Berkshire County. The U Mass Donahue Institute will further the research to find out the state of education in Berkshire County. The final report will be available in about six weeks and when available the group will be giving county wide presentations to the towns.

During Phase II the task force will try to secure \$150,000 from the State through local legislative representatives, and the Governor. This task force is a model for what other counties can do to come together. Districts are facing declining enrollment and it is a huge challenge for schools. This means that funding is decreasing, but operational costs are rising, but revenues are flat. Doing nothing will lead to further economic and problematic pressures. Phase II will be used to try to predict economic and programming implications. The goal is to accomplish this by next spring. Looking at collaboration and shared services, and the potential for super regions.

We need to talk to people in the county who have rich deep educational experience in the Berkshires who can really inform the task force. Goals for the task force:

Restore and improve educational program quality; Improve educational services and maintain and honor the unique identity of each Berkshire community.

Questions and answers followed the presentation. Mr. Valentini mentioned the foundation budget, which is set by the state. Until the state recognizes that all foundation budgets are not equal, it is not possible for a rural district to operate solely on the foundation budget. Ms. Green stated that the task force had discussed this. The formulas for the foundation budget need to change.

Mr. Flynn questioned the accuracy of the data on the handout which came from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Ms. Green will take this back to the taskforce and check the data.

5. Business:

- A. Approval of the Overnight FFA Field Trip to the 2016 National FFA Convention in Indianapolis from October 18-22, 2016.

Ms. Silvers moved, seconded by Ms. Lartigue, to approve the Overnight FFA Field Trip to the 2016 National Convention, October 18-22, 2016. It was so voted unanimously.

- B. School Committee Meeting Date Conflicts: There was a discussion regarding the possible conflict of holding the meetings the same nights as the HS Band and Chorus Concert and Spring Concert.

- The HS Band and Chorus Concert is on December 15, 2016 at 7 p.m.
- The Spring Band Concern is on May 18, 2017 at 7 p.m.

Ms. Silvers moved, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, to change the date of the December 15, 2016 meeting to December 22, 2016. 5 Yes, 3 No. Motion passes.

Ms. Silvers moved, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, to change the May 18, 2017 meeting date to May 25, 2017 due to the Spring Band Concert on May 18, 2017. It was so voted unanimously.

Ms. Silvers suggested that the December meeting be changed to December 8th.

Ms. Silvers motioned, seconded by Mr. Flynn, to rescind the motion changing the December 15, 2016 meeting date to December 22, 2016. It was so voted unanimously.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Silvers moved, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, to change the School Committee Meeting date from December 15, 2016 to December 8, 2016. It was so voted unanimously.

- C. Vote on Out of District PK Tuition

Mr. Valentini explained that this item was brought before the Finance Committee. Mr. Valentini informed the school committee that Ms. Lartigue had moved, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, that the Finance Subcommittee recommend to the school committee that the student be accepted into the PK program at New Marlborough Central. Further, the Superintendent will advise the parent that the request is only for PK and that the student would be subject to the school choice provision. Each request for waiver of tuition must come before the committee on an individual basis. The child would not be grandfathered because he/she attended the PK program.

Mr. Valentini moved, seconded by Ms. Silvers, that tuition for the PK student attending New Marlborough Central be waived. This does not grandfather the student and he/she will have to apply for school choice when entering kindergarten. All further requests for PK choice will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Vote: Mr. Flynn – NO, All other members YES. Motion passes.

- D. Approval of Lateral Movements on the Unit A Salary Schedule, Effective September 1, 2016 (per attached list)

Mr. Valentini moved, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, to approve the Lateral Movements on the Unit A Salary Schedule, as submitted, effective September 1, 2016. It was so voted unanimously.

- E. Letter from the Town of Monterey

Mr. Valentini reported that Superintendent Hastings had requested from the Town of Monterey an update as to what their plans were for the Monterey School Building. There was \$10,000 put aside in the FY16 capital budget, but nothing happened in FY16. Monterey wrote us a letter stating that they had plans, but the letter arrived after the agenda was generated for the Finance Committee Meeting. The new Monterey Select Board member was at the Finance Committee Meeting. The Finance Committee had prolifically made a motion to adjust the agenda to include this letter on the agenda. The letter requested that the SBRSD hold the \$10,000 in reserve for use by the Town of Monterey. It was the feeling of the Finance Committee that this request be honored.

Ms. Lartigue asked if there would be a timeline set for the use of these funds by the Town of Monterey. Mr. Valentini stated that this \$10,000 was allocated in good faith and there is no reason to doubt that the Town of Monterey is not operating in good faith as well.

- F. Ratification Vote of the Unit D Contract (Memorandum of Understanding) Effective July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2018. (Copy attached)

Mr. Valentini moved, seconded by Ms. Silvers, to ratify the vote of the Unit D Contract (Memorandum of Understanding) Effective July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2018. Mr. Flynn, Mr. Batacchi abstained, All other members YES. Motion carries.

- G. Vote on the Settlement Agreement and Addendum to the Unit A Collective Bargaining Agreement regarding the Theatre Stipend Positions (Copy attached).

Mr. Stewart informed the committee that the Union President has agreed to this Settlement Agreement and it requires a vote by the School Committee. There was a discussion regarding this agreement. There will be a discussion with Mr. Foster, Union President, regarding some of the issues brought up at this meeting.

Mr. Flynn moved, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, to defer the discussion on this agreement to the next meeting. It was so voted unanimously.

Mr. Stewart stated that there will be a special meeting on Thursday, September 29, 2016 at 7 p.m. The items on the agenda will be: Discussion on the 2016 MCAS, PARC and accountability data; Resolution on the Settlement Agreement and Addendum to the Unit A Collective Bargaining Agreement regarding Theatre Stipend Positions.

- H. Superintendent's Report – Dave Hastings

1. **Community**

- a. **Founders' Day Parade.** Our band was very impressive in the Lee Founders' Day Parade last Saturday. The band looked great, with its new uniforms, sounded super and impressed the crowds with the dancing routines. For the first time, we had our Eagle Mascot in the parade. **Kezia Behne** did a great job as our Eagle mascot, waving to people from Elizabeth Petty's convertible and dancing to the music. Although over 30 students were not able to march, there were still over 80 who marched. Our band was the highlight of the parade.

- b. **Eastern States Exposition.** On August 25th our band performed in the daily parade at the Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield.
- c. **Parent Nights: Mary Turo** and I attended Parent Nights in three schools:
Undermountain-September 8th, NMC-September 13th, South Egremont-September 15th
Glenn Devoti and the Middle School staff hosted the Middle School Parents' Night earlier this week.
- d. **New Marlborough Central** will host its annual Harvest Dinner on September 25th, at 5:07 p.m.
- e. **Culinary Arts** will support the New Marlborough Council on Aging for its October 21st luncheon, providing salad, main course, and dessert. Starting on September 28th, the Culinary Arts program will be holding its noontime Café in the Eagles Loft. The class is smaller than usual this year, so the students will have a more intense experience.
- f. **Railroad Street Youth.** Representatives of the Railroad Street Youth Project visited the Mount Everett morning meeting and discussed vocational opportunities; mentorship, internship and apprentice programs available to all students, including a culinary arts apprenticeship at the Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge. Also they have a paid position available on the Youth Operational Board and also have \$10,000 available for youth programs.
- g. **Greenagers.** At the end of last week's Mount Everett Morning Meeting assembly, Will Conklin and Aretha Whitehead talked about Greenagers with the 7th and 8th graders. There will be three different sections of **Crafting the Landscape** offered this school year.

2. Staff

- a. **Administrator School Visits:** Since the last meeting, Mary Turo and Dave Hastings have both visited New Marlborough three times (including the Parents' Night), and visited South Egremont twice (including Parents Night).
- b. **Constitution Day Observances.** Mt. Everett recognized Constitution Day during a student assembly on Friday, 9/16. History teacher Jeffrey Lang and Honors American Government student Maya Neski conducted a short presentation on the importance and role of the Constitution in American life. All students, faculty and administrators were provided with pocket copies of the Constitution and encouraged to familiarize themselves with the entire document.
- c. Superintendent Hastings added that Jon Friedman was hired as the Assistant Principal. He will start on October 5, 2016.

3. Students

- a. **Global Education Coordinator, Stephanie Graham informed Mr. Hastings that** we may have Chinese students here as early as November and maybe in the spring as well. This visit has not yet been firmed up. **An information packet that contains a schedule of the planned events was distributed to the School Committee.** Visiting students will be shadowing our middle school students. We still need host families. In March, we will be sending two groups to Asia: one group to Hong Kong, and another group to China, where they will be presenting at a symposium, as our students did two years ago.
- b. **Interact** may be returning to Mount Everett after being inactive for around a decade. Interact is a club for youth ages 12-18 who want to connect with others in their community or school. Interact club members have fun while carrying out service projects and learning about the world. Interact clubs organize at least two service projects a year: one that benefits their community and one that encourages international understanding. While Interact clubs receive guidance from individual Rotary clubs, they govern and support themselves.

- c. **Sculpture Now.** Kevin Wolgemuth will again be taking the Freshman Class to participate in the annual SculptureNow field trip during the half day on Friday, October 7. This field trip will support Mr. Wolgemuth's upcoming Expository Writing unit.
- d. **BlindSight Tour.** This past Saturday, Kevin Wolgemuth organized a BlindSight Tour at the SculptureNow exhibit at the Mount in Lenox. **Aaron Brown, Caitlyn Herrick and Charles Kuzmech** joined artists **Ann Jon and Gary Orlinski** in leading the BlindSight tour. Using a hands-on and multi-sensory approach to interacting with massive artworks, our three seniors led eighteen children ages 10-18 who are partially sighted or blind. Our students were remarkable: patient, observant, generous, compassionate, witty, well-spoken and incredibly genuine are only a few words to attempt capturing the character they brought to the tour. The response of the touring children was equally as remarkable. Their laughter, questions, and connections to **Aaron, Caitlyn and Charles** were immediate testament to the impact our students have on the lives of others
- e. **8th Grade Housatonic River Project.** 8th graders participated in the Housatonic Unit field trips. Students canoed along the Housatonic River and conducted water testing on the Housatonic and Konkapot Rivers.
- f. **Assistant DA Program for Parents on Technology.** On October 19th, the Assistant District Attorney, **Robert Kizner**, will present a program for parents of elementary and secondary students on technology. This program was last given two years ago and received positive reviews. It is very important that parents understand the benefits and challenges related to technology. This is an issue that was raised recently by Jennifer Gaenzel-Smith, a New Marlborough Central parent and PTA officer.

4. Facilities

- a. Yellow House windows (over 20) were replaced.
- b. The remainder of the **indoor drinking fountains** were replaced, including those in elementary classrooms.
- c. The **carpet was replaced in five classrooms** in the high school.
- d. The blue tile on the hall in the Tech. Ed area and behind the kitchen was replaced.
- e. The bleachers in both gyms were inspected and repaired.
- f. The **street light poles** were sanded and painted.
- g. The **Mt. Everett gym floor** was sanded down to bare wood, relined and a new Eagle painted at half court, and two coats of finish was put on it.
- h. Door and window hardware was repaired/replaced in several areas.
- i. Three classrooms and the multi-purpose room floor were painted in New Marlborough.
- j. Work was done on the driveway. Storm drains and cracks were filled on the cement areas around the school.

I. Governor's Final Budget and Effect on Assessments - Christine Regan

Mr. Valentini – The Governor and Legislature sent us new numbers after we had already established our percentages. We did nothing wrong, we established the percentages based on the information we had at the time. They decided to accelerate toward the 82.5%. They are eager that all 5 towns contribute 82.5% of the foundation budget. What ends up happening is that we are in the same position as we were last year. We have a mismatch. Some towns are supposed to be paying more and some less. Basically the Town of Sheffield has a fairly substantial reduction at the same time the town of new Marlborough has a pretty good increase. The State of Massachusetts and DESE do not care how we do it. The laws do not address themselves to this issue. Option 1 is to do nothing; Option 2 is to change the numbers and go to the towns requesting more, and go to a special town meeting; Option 3 is to look at the budget and reduce the assessments so that all the town are made whole and make the adjustment that way. The problem is doing it at this time is not good business. We would revisit this issue after we have an opportunity to analyze expenses and certify our E&D. The recommendation of

the finance committee was that the appropriate reductions be made in March or April and will have to be an Amendment to the Budget and voted on by the School Committee.

Ms. Silvers asked how much is needed. Ms. Regan informed the committee that \$136,000 would be needed to balance.

Ms. Rundle thanked the finance committee. She stated that each town has agreed to pay a certain amount to provide an education for all our students. It is not the towns or the districts fault that the governor's budget was wrong. Does not think that the District always needs to bend. The towns should be required to vote their fair share for the education of their kids.

Ms. Rundle moved, seconded by Ms. Lartigue, that the Towns hold special town meetings where they vote to approve the new budget numbers and are held to what they are assesses to owe to the district.

Vote 2 = YES, 7 = NO, Motion does not pass.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the assessment issues.

1. Financial Updates/Transfers (as needed). Ms. Regan explained the budget transfers. Trying to more accurately project and report what is spent.

Mr. Flynn Moved, seconded by Ms. Sparhawk to approve the budget transfer requests as submitted. It was so voted unanimously.

Ms. Regan also informed the School Committee of the National Grid Energy Savings Proposal which after the initial cost, would save the district money. This will be put on the agenda for discussion at the next Building, Grounds and Technology Subcommittee meeting.

Accepting Gifts: Chris Regan informed that there is a policy that gives Superintendent Hastings the authority to accept gifts but the committee has the authority to decide how the gifts will be used.

Rate for Substitutes: Basically the committee establishes the rate for substitutes. The rate was established at \$80 for teachers. The rate for paraprofessionals substitutes has been based on the first step in the Unit D contract. What has happened over the years is that the \$80 has not changed, but the rate for the paraprofessionals has increased. So the first step for paraprofessional subs is higher than what it is to substitute for a teacher. This would need to go to policy subcommittee. Policy GCG needs to be addressed.

Mr. Flynn left the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

J. Subcommittee Reports:

1. Executive Evaluation Subcommittee:

Ms. Silvers updated the committee on the Superintendent search process. Going to take advantage of MASC's free services. Have been informed that our process is really heading in the right direction.

An advertisement for a Superintendent will be posted through MASC. The district will continue to look for a consultant.

2. Finance Subcommittee: Items were discussed earlier in this meeting.

Mr. Hastings shared the vocational internships, internal and external, with the school committee.

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

7. **Adjourn**

Ms. Lartigue moved, seconded by Ms. Sparhawk, to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. It was so voted unanimously.

Documents Presented at this Meeting:

- *Agenda, School Committee Meeting #1514*
- *Minutes of Meeting #1513*
- *Letter from the Town of Monterey*
- *Lateral Movements List*
- *Unit D Contract (Memorandum of Understanding)*
- *Settlement Agreement and Addendum to the Unit A Collective Bargaining Agreement – Theatre Stipend Positions*
-