

School Committee Members: Charles Flynn, Art Batacchi, Fran Lartigue, David Travis, Carl Stewart, Bonnie Silvers, Maryellen Brown, Marcella Bush, Dennis Sears, Bob Law

Absent:

Administration: Superintendent Hastings, Christine Regan

Press: CTSB, Cory Wiley – Berkshire Record

Student Representatives:

Others: Vito Valentini, Marsha Pshenishny, John Pshenishny, Karen Chamberland, Tara White, Kristy Genga, Clarke Rowell

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Stewart, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mr. Sears moved, seconded by Ms. Silvers, to approve the minutes of School Committee Meeting #1517, November 17, 2016 as submitted. Voted unanimously.

Ms. Lartigue moved, seconded by Ms. Silvers, to approve the minutes of School Committee Meeting #1518, December 8, 2016 as submitted. Voted unanimously.

3. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE PERTAINING TO THIS EVENING'S AGENDA ITEMS**

A. Student Representative Report – no report

4. **UPDATE(S)/PRESENTATION(S):**

A. Capital Project Bond Presentation – Clarke Rowell, UniBank

Mr. Rowell, from UniBank, informed the school committee that there is \$4.6 million in notes maturing on February 1st. We are renewing \$4,201,000 and the school committee needs to vote on this.

5. **BUSINESS**

A. Approval/Vote of the \$4,200,000 Bond Anticipation Note Sale and Execution of Documents for the Roof/Boiler Capital Project (Attached)

Ms. Lartigue moved, seconded by Mr. Travis, that the School Committee authorize the District Secretary (Mr. Hastings) to sign the Note. Voted unanimously.

Mr. Lartigue moved, seconded by David Travis, that the sale of the \$4,201,000 Bond Anticipation Note, dated February 1, 2017 (the "Note"), to Eastern Bank, at the price of \$4,201,000, is hereby approved and confirmed. The Note shall be payable on August 1, 2017, and shall bear interest at the rate of 1.1%. Voted Unanimously.

He suggested taking advantage of the sale on May 22nd. The sale of the bond needs school committee approval, and this will need to be on the agenda soon after.

Mr. Rowell further explained the following vote.

- B. *Ms. Lartigue moved, seconded by Mr. Flynn, that the District vote to supplement its vote of January 20, 2015, in which it appropriated and authorized the borrowing of the amount of \$7,741,000 for the purpose of paying the cost of the Roof/Boiler project at Mt. Everett/Undermountain School, so that, in accordance with Chapter 44, Section 20 of the General Laws, the premium received by the District upon the sale of any bonds or notes thereunder, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to pay project costs and the amount authorized to be borrowed for the project may be reduced by the amount of any such premium so applied. Voted unanimously.*

Mr. Rowell explained the debt structure and schedule to the school committee (attached). He provided projected payment schedules for a 10-year and 20-year payback. First year total payments on the bond ranged from \$436,000 for the 20-year schedule to \$614,500 for the 10-year schedule. Total projected principal and interest for the life of the loan ranged from \$5,408,250 for the 10-year schedule and \$6,561,000 for the 20-year schedule. Both schedules assumed declining payments over the payback period (level principal payments).

The committee recommended waiting until the end of February to decide on the pay back schedule and bring it to both the Finance subcommittee and Building, Grounds & Technology subcommittee.

Mr. Flynn left the meeting at 7:23 p.m.

- C. Approval/Vote by two-thirds of the School Committee to allow a Five Year Contract for the Upcoming Transportation Bid rather Than a Three Year Contract.

Chris Regan explained that per Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 30 B, the school committee needs to vote to allow the district to have a five-year contract vs a three-year contract. This would allow the district to spread the cost over a longer period.

*Mr. Travis moved, seconded by Ms. Silvers, to allow a five-year contract for the upcoming transportation bid rather than a three-year contract.
All Voted Yes – Motion carries unanimously.*

Questions and discussion ensued.

- D. Approval of the 2017-2018 School Calendar (Attached)

*Ms. Lartigue moved, seconded by Mr. Travis, to approve the 2017-2018 School Calendar as presented.
Voted unanimously.*

- E. Superintendent's Report – David Hastings

Community:

1. South Egremont School Project. Fred Finkle and I attended the contractor walk-through today. The plan is to raise the building approximately 8 inches, repair the sill on the parking side of the building, move the rear exit to the parking side of the building (onto the school property), and construct a ramp to the side door. The town hopes to have the project completed by August 20th, in time for school.
2. New Lambs. Four lambs have been born in the FFA barn since the end of December. FFA members have helped care for them and their mothers. Morgan Derby (Junior) assisted in the delivery of one.
3. FFA Chickens. The school cafeteria served 100 chickens that were raised on campus by the FFA during lunch on Jan. 10th. These chickens were donated to the cafeteria (a value of over \$1500 in donated meat) as part of a National FFA Food for All Project. Danielle Melino & Sue Petrucci oversaw this project.

Staff:

1. Parent-Teacher Conferences:

- Grades 9-12 Parent/Teacher Conferences, Thursday, March 9, 2017, 4:00 – 7:00, High School Cafeteria
- Grade 8 Parent Informational Night, Thursday, March 16, 2017, 6:30, High School Cafeteria
- Grade 6 Parent Informational Night, Thursday, March 23, 2017, 6:30, High School Cafeteria

2. Employee Wellness. About 75% of staff completed the Needs and Interest Survey as part of our grant application for Massachusetts Working on Wellness. If granted we could receive \$9,000 toward new wellness programming. The Wellness Committee will develop an initial plan by the end of January and we should see the first part of the funding cycle begin in February.

Students

1. Spring Plays. Currently, students are auditioning for our two spring plays:

- Aladdin Jr, Middle School (6-9). The performance is March 24-29
- Into the Woods (7-12). The Performance is May 19-21.

2. Berkshire Bateria: We received grants from the Alford/Egremont and New Marlborough Cultural Councils in order to have the Berkshire Bateria perform at our annual Spring Fling again this year in April. Thanks. Roberta

3. Bodies Exhibit Field trip: On Friday, Jan. 6th, around 2/3 of the 10th graders went on a field trip to see the Bodies Exhibit.

4. Poetry Out Loud: The class competition of Poetry Out Loud will be conducted on Wednesday, January 11th. The District Finals competition is on January 26th. The winners will move to the Western Mass championship in Springfield and then possibly on to Boston.

5. China Trip: The following students will be going to China from March 17 – 26, 2017. Half of them will be presenting a research-based project related to the Housatonic River. The other half will attend classes at HKBUAS (the school that sent students here the last two years--and again this coming April). Students include: Sam Webb, Lizzy Sarnacki, Angus Kerr, Jake Martin, Jesse Smerechniak, Lauren Edwards, Kenny Edwards, Nancy Dodds, Madeline Von Ruden, Madeleine Soudant, and Mary Shalaby.

F. Teacher Substitute Daily Rate – Chris Regan

Chris reported that two of our subs are certified teachers. Any changes to the rate of pay for certified subs would not be a big impact. Most of the districts pay for 6 or 6.5 hours or 3 hrs for half day, we are the only district who pays our subs for 7 hours a day. Most districts in Berkshire County pay \$75-\$80 for non-cert and \$75-\$100 for certified subs. Chris explained the reason for bringing this up is due to the discrepancy between the para rate for subs (based on the lowest rate in the Unit D contract) and the teacher sub rate. Further discussion ensued.

Ms. Lartigue left the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Ms. Silvers moved, seconded by Mr. Sears, to increase the teacher substitute rate to \$87.50 retroactive to January 1, 2017.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Batacchi, Ms. Brown – No

Mr. Silvers, Mr. Travis, Ms. Bush, Mr. Sears, Mr. Law – Yes

Vote: 5-Yes; 2-No - Motion carries.

G. Subcommittee – Reconciliation of List (Copy Attached)

A few changes were made to the subcommittee groups:

- Bob Law was added to the Policy Subcommittee
- E. Bonnie Silvers is a full member not an alternate on the Collective Bargaining Subcommittee
- Vito Valentini added as the Legislative Representative

H. Vito Valentini – Legislative Representative – Job Description and Charge

Mr. Sears moved, seconded by Ms. Silvers, that Mr. Vito Valentini be the District's Legislative Representative. Voted Unanimously.

Mr. Valentini explained that Superintendent Hastings had invited him to attend a Rural Schools Initiative meeting with Mr. Buoniconti. Mr. Valentini would like the approval of the School Committee to deal with some of the issues he feels are important to the district, mainly:

- The issue of Chapter 70 funding and the discrepancy in terms of how the state treats rural schools with the foundation budget.
- The Rural Schools Initiative
- The designation of SBRSD at Level 3
- School Choice
- Transportation

Mr. Sears moved, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, that the School Committee charge Mr. Valentini with the three items that he outlined as his charge.

Discussion ensued. Mr. Law asked if Mr. Valentini would consider adding School Choice and Transportation to his charge. Mr. Steward suggested amending the motion.

Mr. Sears moved, seconded by Mr. Law, that the School Committee charge Mr. Valentini to be the district's representative with our local legislatures and the commonwealth wide area to address the issues that affect our school district with the top priority being the five items listed above. Voted unanimous. Motion carries.

I. Subcommittee Reports:

1. Executive Evaluation Subcommittee – Bonnie Silvers

The Executive Evaluation Subcommittee had met this morning. The interviews on January 17th were cancelled due to the weather and rescheduled to January 31st. They are still on track to submit 2-5 finalists to the School Committee on February 2, 2017.

In the packet are the semi-finalist interview questions to the candidates. Jennifer Dowley will contact the finalists after the final interview on January 31st. Ms. Lartigue will send a letter to the candidates that were not selected to be finalists.

Also in the packet is a letter that Ms. Silvers would like sent to all the members of the screening committee from the school committee thanking them for their service. Ms. Silvers asked for any suggestions to the letter.

All the resumes of the finalists will be available to the school committee members at the February 2, 2017 meeting.

- Mr. Travis, Mr. Law and Mr. Stewart will check references.
- Ms. Lartigue, Ms. Silvers, Mr. Sears and Ms. Bush will schedule site visits (to candidates' districts)
- Mr. Law, Ms. Silvers and Ms. Lartigue will plan the in-district site visits (meeting the faculty, parents, students)
- They will also be asking each of the finalists to spend at least half an hour writing, e.g. a letter to parents or a mini article.
- The Executive Evaluation Subcommittee is also working with Kevin Woglemuth to come up with one question posed by the students to the finalists.
- The Executive Evaluation Subcommittee will use the remaining hours in Jennifer's contract to work with her on questions for the finalists.

The next Executive Evaluation Committee meeting is on February 2, 2017.

2. Building, Grounds & Technology – Charles Flynn

Mr. Stewart reported that there had been a meeting of the Building, Grounds and Technology subcommittee meeting yesterday. They had discussed capital expenditures and toured the Elementary School. At this time, there is nothing urgent or critical to report. Chris Regan informed the committee that in 2008 the school committee had voted to establish a threshold of \$10,000 capitalization level. There was further discussion regarding this.

3. Transportation – Art Batacchi

Chris Regan informed the committee that the Bids come in on January 31st.

4. Finance Subcommittee Report – Dennis Sears

Mr. Sears informed the School Committee that the finance subcommittee is working through the budget document. The administration team has done a fair amount of work to bring forward a passable budget. There is still additional work to be done on the budget. Chris is still waiting for the governor's budget.

5. Policy Subcommittee Report – Dennis Sears

Mr. Sears informed the School Committee that they have had a couple of meetings. Focus has been on Nutrition. Based on the audit, just completed by the Nutrition Department; we need to make some policy changes. The District also needs to form a Wellness Committee, which deals with selling and serving healthy food in our schools.

Mr. Travis left the meeting at 9:19 p.m.

Mr. Sears brought up the issue of Nature's Classroom. There was discussion regarding this at the finance meeting. The teachers' position on this issue and the difficulties involved for the faculty in a five-day overnight trip as well as the difficulty of getting chaperones was also discussed. Mr. Sears will spend some time with Ms. Silvers and Mr. Stewart to review this program with the 6th grade team of teachers.

6. Warrant Subcommittee – Carl Stewart

The warrant subcommittee met on December 30th and January 13th to sign warrants (see attached).

7. Berkshire County Educational Task Force Report – Carl Stewart

Mr. Stewart informed the committee that the task force had met last Saturday. They meet every 3 weeks at Nesaccus Middle School. Detailed minutes, exhibits are available on the website.

J. Financial Updates and Transfers (as needed) – Chris Regan

a. Approval to Pay a Bill from the Previous Year.

Mr. Sears moved, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, to approve payment of this bill. Voted Unanimous.

6. **COMMUNICATION FROM THE PUBLIC / REQUESTS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS** - None

7. *Motion to go into Executive Session, to discuss strategy as it relates to collective bargaining with the SBREA regarding Health Insurance changes, as an open meeting would have a detrimental impact on the School Committee's bargaining position and not to return to open session. Roll Call Vote Required*

Mr. Sears moved, seconded by Ms. Silvers, to go into executive session at 9:30 p.m.

Roll Call Vote:

Art Batacchi - Yes

Bonnie Silvers - Yes

Maryellen Brown - Yes

Marcella Bush - Yes

Dennis Sears - Yes

Bob Law - Yes

Could not enter in executive session because there was no quorum.

8. **ADJOURN:** Mr. Sears moved, seconded by Ms. Silvers, to adjourn the meeting at 9:33 p.m. Voted Unanimous.