

Southern Berkshire Regional School Committee
Mt. Everett Regional School
Sheffield, MA
December 12, 2013
Meeting #1,468

School Committee: Mr. Stewart, Ms. Silvers, Mr. Sears, Mr. Flynn, Mr. Batacchi, Ms. Sparhawk, Ms. Fields, Mr. Valentini, Ms. Sahn

Absent: Ms. Rundle

Administrators: Mr. Hastings, Mr. Turner, Mr. Devoti

Press: CTSB Television

Student Representative(s): Erica Sullivan, Madison Ryan

Others: Mr. Jesse Carpenter, Mr. John Hammill, Mr. Michael Farmer, Ms. Betsy Agar, Ms. Ramona Bauer, Ms. Linda Higgins

1. Chairman Stewart called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.
2. **Approval of Minutes:**
Ms. Silvers moved, seconded by Mr. Batacchi to approve the minutes of Meeting 1,467. It was so voted, unanimously.
3. **Communications from the Audience Pertaining to this Evening's Agenda**
 - A. Student Representative Erica Sullivan reported that the student government leaders have developed an on-line survey for the students. She said that they hope to be able to report the results by the end of January. Ms. Sullivan also reported that they had raised over \$100 for the Malala fundraiser and will continue with other projects to raise funds for that cause. Ms. Sullivan requested that future School Committee meeting agendas be e-mailed to her in advance of the meetings. She said that she would then meet with other student government leaders to determine if there were particular items that the students wish to address. She also asked that Committee members make themselves more present to the students, if they are able to do so, as she said that students do not know the members and feel that the committee does not welcome their input. Ms. Sahn and other members pointed out that all meetings are open to everyone, and that the students are most welcome to come. Mr. Stewart noted that although many items may be outside of the limits of the School Committee, the members are very willing to listen to their concerns. Mr. Farmer, who is the Student Government Advisor, added that if there were items which the Committee would particularly welcome student input, it would be helpful if they were highlighted.

(Ms. Sparhawk arrived at 6:12 p.m.)

- B. There were no further communications from the audience.
4. **UPDATE(S)/PRESENTATION(S):**
 - A. Early Childhood Education Task Force: As Ms. Hubbard was unable to attend the meeting, this item was postponed until January 9, 2014. Mr. Valentini stated that he will schedule a special Finance Subcommittee meeting, and budget requests from the Task Force will be the first item on the agenda.

5. **Business:**

A. Field Trip Requests: Following brief presentations by Mr. Carpenter and Mr. Hammill and a question and answer session, Mr. Valentini moved, seconded by Ms. Sparhawk, to approve the 8th grade trip to Washington D.C., the 10th grade economics class trip to Baltimore, MD, and the 12th grade U.S. History class trip to Washington, D.C. from March 5-7, 2014. It was so voted, unanimously.

Ms. Sahn moved, seconded by Ms. Sparhawk, to approve the FFA trip to the State FFA Leadership Conference in North Oxford, MA, January 10-11, 2014. It was so voted, unanimously.

At the Committee's request, Mr. Farmer explained the 12-month long study of alternative learning experiences which he has introduced in the 7th grade social studies classes this year. Mr. Farmer reported that the program centers around technology. He said that he is working with Lesley University in Boston as a part of his Ph.D. program. Mr. Farmer will provide the Committee with a report at the end of the year.

(Mr. Flynn arrived at 6:45 p.m.)

B. Superintendent's Report: Mr. Hastings reported the following:

- MA Secretary of Education Matthew Malone will visit the District on 12/13/13.
- Alumni Day will take place on December 20.
- Mr. Devoti explained a Health and Wellness day planned for January, 2014.
- Mt. Everett recently received the MIAA District G Athletic Sportsmanship Award for 2012-13.
- The Culinary Arts class will prepare an ESP appreciation event on December 13.
- The life Skills Class is at the Stone Store in Sheffield on Monday, Tuesday and Friday mornings.
- The 2014 Greenagers calendars are available.
- The next PBIS celebration at UME will take place on January 6, 2014 at 10:30 a.m.
- Events this past week included the Senior Citizen Luncheon, the elementary production of Willy Wonka, a middle school concert, the New Marlborough Central School Holiday Fair, the Undermountain Cookie Walk and the Sheffield Tree Lighting ceremony.
- Teacher Susan Garcia has completed a curriculum project regarding the Appalachian Trail Invasive Species.
- There will be concerts on December 16, 17 at the school, and on December 15 at Southfield Church. The Madrigals will perform at the Sandisfield Arts Center on December 14.
- The Jazz Band traveled to Lincoln Center on December 3 and will return there on December 13 and 14.

C. Report on MASC/MASS Conference: Ms. Silvers stated that the report was not yet complete, and she reminded others who attended that she needed their input. This item will appear on the January 9 agenda.

D. Insurance for Volunteer Drivers: Mr. Turner agreed to have a representative of the District's insurance carrier attend the January 9 meeting to address liability issues concerning 1) an employee driving a district owned vehicle; 2) an employee driving a private vehicle; 3) a volunteer driving a district owned vehicle; and 4) a volunteer driving a private vehicle. Ms. Silvers added that the issue of a person driving a borrowed vehicle should also be addressed.

- E. Schedule Next Meeting for School Committee Self-Evaluation: The Committee agreed to set Thursday, February 13, 2014 for their self-evaluation meeting.
- F. Report on Status of the Request of a Former Student for a Mt. Everett Diploma: Mr. Stewart explained that a former student who left Mt. Everett following his sophomore year of school to attend Simons Rock, has requested that he be awarded a Mt. Everett diploma. He said that both he and the superintendent have been in touch with Atty. Paige Tobin and have been informed that although the School Committee awards diplomas, the decision, per policy, is made at the administrative level. Mr. Hastings added that there is no precedent or procedure to award a diploma to someone who is not a student at our school. He said that his initial inclination is to deny the request. The issue will not be brought before the School Committee unless the principal decides to award a diploma.

G. Subcommittee/Representative Reports

Buildings, Grounds & Technology: Mr. Valentini reported the following:

- At its reorganization meeting on November 21, Mr. Valentini was again elected chair.
- Ms. VonRuden had reported that the aquaculture program is moving forward. Significant improvements have been made at the “yellow house”, and the class is planning to begin growing fish in January.
- Ms. VonRuden also requested permission for her students to install a koi pond in one of the courtyards, and the subcommittee felt that it would be worthwhile.
- Another courtyard will be named the Oyate Garden (Oyate meaning “community” in Cherokee).
- The insurance company has offered \$109,000 to replace the boiler, and the subcommittee has asked Mr. Turner to seek bids for that job.
- At New Marlborough Central School, pieces of the fence have been removed. A design has been made for the railings for the steps, and the job assigned to Mr. Steve Bangs. LED lights have been installed in the parking lot, and a crack in the foundation has been repaired.
- Mr. Finkle is working with EDM to come up with a solution regarding the flooring in the basement.
- The “dancercise” area is open at Mt. Everett. A ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held early in 2014.
- All the projects fall within the current budget.
- The District has discontinued contracts with Time Warner and WiSpring.
- Chris Thompson is checking into how e-books may impact the district budget.

Policy: Mr. Flynn reported that the subcommittee had met on December 11 and reviewed several policies, which will be brought to the January meeting for a first reading. Also discussed was the continued issue of incomplete/missing policies. Mr. Flynn will invite MASC Representative Patricia Correia to come to a meeting on January 15. Also to be discussed at that time will be to have MASC maintain the policy manual and to put it on line.

Food service: Mr. Sears reported that this group had met after the Policy Subcommittee meeting. Ms. Sahn was elected chair. It was decided to defer a final report of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee until spring.

Finance: Mr. Valentini reported on Finance Committee meetings of December 3 and 4. He said that the numbers are still very preliminary, and he invited the School Committee members to speak with Mr. Turner, if they wished to see those numbers. Mr. Turner will put all the requests together to get a better picture of where the FY'15 budget stands.

Mr. Valentini reported on a discussion regarding non-unit personnel. He said that the subcommittee has been trying to establish a rational method to give pay raises for this group. He distributed a plan which was developed by Mr. Hastings, working with Ms. Silvers, to approach this issue. Mr. Valentini said that Mr. Hastings had met individually with each of the people affected, discussed their duties, and then came up with a plan for future increases. He said that the plan was discussed in open meeting in the Finance Subcommittee meeting, and approval was voted unanimously. He said that he did not feel that the School Committee would need to go into executive session.

Mr. Valentini moved that this become the method by which the people who fall into this category are compensated. Mr. Flynn seconded the motion. Following discussion, Mr. Valentini withdrew his motion, and it was agreed to delay the vote until January 9 to allow those who did not attend the Finance Subcommittee meeting time to thoroughly understand the proposal. It was requested that Mr. Hastings send an explanation of how the proposal was developed to the members, prior to the January 9 meeting. Members were also invited to contact Mr. Valentini, should they desire additional information.

- H. Financial Updates: Mr. Turner reported that the School Building Authority had turned down the District's requests for financing of capital projects for this year. He said that he expects to request votes to resubmit the proposals for next year at the January 9 meeting.

Mr. Turner and Mr. Hastings also reported that the gym floors had been resurfaced in-house, but did not come out right this year. They said that there are issues with the floors being too slippery, and that there is concern about potential injuries. They said that they had checked into having the floors refinished professionally, and they requested the approval of the School Committee to expend the funds to do that. Ms. Silvers moved to approve up to \$8,000 to have the floors in the two gymnasiums refinished during the winter break. Following additional discussion, the motion was so voted, unanimously.

Mr. Turner reported that Ms. Graham and the students who will be going to Italy in the summer have been fund raising, and they have requested a student activities account titled "Beyond Berkshires". Ms. Sparhawk moved to create an account called Beyond Berkshires. Mr. Batacchi seconded the motion, and it was so voted, unanimously.

Mr. Valentini then moved, that as per the vote of the Finance Subcommittee, John Tranfaglia be placed as an employee of the District. [This would take Mr. Tranfaglia's salary out of the food service section of the budget and move it into the general operating budget.] Mr. Flynn seconded the motion. Following discussion, it was so voted, unanimously.

- I. Collective Bargaining: Mr. Stewart stated that the Committee would enter into executive session for the purpose of approval of the Unit D contract and for discussion of a letter that was received by all School Committee members from Mr. Ed Hotaling.

Mr. Flynn moved to enter into executive session to discuss the Unit D Contract and the letter from Mr. Hotaling, and to return to open session to vote on the Unit D Contract. Mr.

Batacchi seconded the motion. The vote:

Mr. Stewart	yes	Ms. Sparhawk	yes	Mr. Batacchi	yes
Ms. Silvers	yes	Mr. Flynn	yes	Mr. Sears	yes
Ms. Sahn	yes	Ms. Fields	yes	Mr. Valentini	yes

The Committee entered into executive session at 8:50 p.m.

The Committee came out of executive session at 9:26 p.m.

Mr. Stewart explained that the Committee had questions regarding the Unit D contract, and until those questions are answered, they cannot vote. He said that the vote regarding the Unit D contract had been tabled to the January 9, 2014 meeting.

Mr. Sears moved, seconded by Mr. Flynn to adjourn the meeting. It was so voted, and the meeting adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

Documents presented at this meeting:

- *Agenda, School Committee Meeting #1,468*
- *Minutes of Meeting #1,467*
- *Overnight Field Trip Request – Grade 8 to Washington, D.C., March 5-7, 2014*
- *Overnight Field Trip Request – Grade 12 US Government Class to Washington, D.C., March 5-7, 2014*
- *Overnight Field Trip Request – Grade 10 Honors Economics Class to Baltimore, MD, March 5-7, 2014*
- *Overnight Field Trip Request – Future Farmers of America, January 10-11, 2014*
- *Brochure - MIAA/MSSADA Sportsmanship Summit November 22, 2013*
- *Document entitled, “This year, a 12-month long study of alternative learning experiences commenced in 7th grade [social studies]*
- *Non-Unit Personnel proposed salary increases*