

Southern Berkshire Regional School Committee
Mt. Everett Regional School
Sheffield, MA
April 10, 2014
Meeting #1,474

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

Absent: Ms. Fields, Ms. Sparhawk, Ms. Rundle

Administration: Mr. Hastings, Mr. Turner, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Devoti

Press: CTSB TV

Student Representatives: Madison Ryan, Taylor Dorsey

Others: Mr. Paul O'Brien, Ms. Tara Johnston, Ms. Kathy Chretien, Ms. Stephanie Graham, Ms. Mary Makuc;
Members of the Higgs Bot Robotics Team: Kosta Casivant, Ben Webb, Justin Makuc, Jake Christinat, Patrick Hogelin, Charles Kuzmech, Michaela Loring, and Jordan Chretien; Ms. Linda Higgins

1. Chairman Stewart called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.
2. **Approval of Minutes:**
Mr. Flynn moved, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, to approve the minutes of School Committee Meeting #1,473 and the Special Meeting of March 19, 2014, as presented. It was so voted.
3. **Communications from the Audience Pertaining to this Evening's Agenda**
 - A. Members of the School Committee and administration applauded those involved in the recent production of *Grease!*
 - B. Mt. Everett senior Taylor Dorsey represented the senior class in requesting permission for a class trip to the Lake George area in June. Mr. Valentini moved, seconded by Ms. Silvers, to approve the trip, as requested. It was so voted.

Student Representative Madison Ryan informed the Committee of several fundraisers which the students have been sponsoring.
 - C. Superintendent Hastings invited all to attend the National Honor Society Induction Ceremony on Monday, April 14 at 6:00 p.m.
4. **Update(s)/Presentation(s)**
 - A. Superintendent Hastings and School Committee members congratulated members of the Mt. Everett Higgs Bot Robotics Team on their recent state championship and their subsequent excellent showing in the regionals which took place in York, PA. Team members explained the rules of the various games and gave a demonstration of their robot.
 - B. District Public Relations/Events Coordinator Travis Daly updated the Committee on recent and ongoing efforts he has made toward the improvement of public relations. A question and answer session followed. Ms. Sahn noted the importance of using the District logo on everything connected with the schools. Committee members commended and thanked Mr. Daly for his efforts.

5. **Business:**

B. Overnight Field Trips:

- Following a brief presentation, Mr. Flynn moved, seconded by Ms. Silvers, to grant preliminary approval for a trip to Spain and Portugal in February, 2015, as requested by teachers Stephanie Graham and Tara Johnston. It was so voted. Final approval will be sought in June or September.
- Regarding a request from Michelle Peters for the 6th grade to go to Nature's Classroom, April 14-17, Committee members expressed displeasure that they were receiving the request very late. They also expressed concern that the requisite number of chaperones, as required by policy, were not listed. Ms. Peters noted that because there are many professional counselors at Nature's Classroom, the trip has not required the 1:6 ratio in the past. Mr. Valentini moved, seconded by Mr. Flynn, that for the purposes of this trip, the School Committee would waive the policy (of having 1 chaperone for every 6 students). Following discussion, the motion was withdrawn.

Mr. Flynn moved to approve the trip to Nature's Classroom, subject to the elementary principal, under the direction of the superintendent, finding the appropriate number of chaperones (9) to meet the stated policy of the Southern Berkshire Regional School Committee, subject to the final approval of the Chair. Ms. Silvers seconded the motion, and it was so voted, unanimously.

A. Superintendent's Report: Superintendent Hastings reported the following:

- The Culinary Arts Class will visit and prepare a luncheon for the New Marlborough Council on Aging.
- Private support has been offered to finance additional equipment for the athletic fitness center and SBRSD on Parade, and to erect a trombone sculpture in memory of Mr. Rick Blackburn.
- Mr. Siket's class is putting together an instructional video for the athletic fitness center.
- Tryouts have been held for the middle school production of *The Music Man*.
- 8th grade students attended the District Attorney's Strive Conference.
- Mt. Everett was selected as one of three schools in the county to host an anti-bullying play.
- There was a presentation sponsored by the Gay/Straight Alliance in an effort to stop suicides that have been happening across the country due to sexuality issues.
- Spring sports are up and running, and some have already enjoyed early successes.
- Accuplacer testing is taking place this week.
- Mr. Bickford and Mr. Devoti will proctor a practice SAT test this weekend.
- New Marlborough students will visit Undermountain on Friday as part of a program which will also involve their parents. Staff is hoping to involve parents and students in follow-up events, as well.
- Kyle Carson has announced that he is organizing a talent show for April 26. More information will follow.
- Secretary of Education Matt Malone will visit the District's community schools on May 21. Mr. Hastings is hopeful that Mr. Malone will be able to stay for at least part of SBRSD on Parade that evening.
- Stork Club will be presented on May 31. Mr. Devoti noted that the students will be recruiting some School Committee members to take part.

C. Request for Approval of Mt. Everett Program of Studies, 2014-15: Mr. Devoti stated that he is hoping to send the program off to the printer so that students will be able to have their schedules in hand before the end of the school year.

Mr. Valentini expressed a reluctance to vote on the Program of Studies, and he said that he needed additional time to review it. He then moved to table approval until the May 8 meeting. Mr. Flynn seconded the motion.

Following discussion, Mr. Flynn moved to modify the motion to defer approval of the Program of Studies until May 8, but to allow registration to go forward. Mr. Batacchi seconded the motion.

Mr. Sears asked Mr. Flynn to modify his motion to say that the Committee would approve the Program of Studies with the caveat that they have the right to come back and take out of it any courses for which they feel registration is too low. He suggested that it may be wise to take the course data and refer it to the Finance Subcommittee.

Mr. Flynn said that although tough discussions make for a good school, it was questionable what the community or the students would gain from the Committee's taking another month to approve the Program of Studies. He asked the Committee to consider granting approval and allowing the scheduling to go forward. He asked Mr. Valentini to withdraw his motion.

Mr. Valentini did not withdraw his motion. He said that the point was that the Committee has a responsibility to the community to have an efficient course of study. He said that the motion was to postpone until the Committee has a chance to compare numbers.

Mr. Batacchi requested that the question be called.

The motion passed, with four members voting in favor and two members voting in opposition. (Ms. Sahn and Ms. Silvers voted in opposition.)

Mr. Devoti noted that if the school enrolls students and employs teachers for classes that the Committee then cancels, it could be disastrous. Mr. Flynn noted that Mr. Devoti should move forward as if the Program of Studies had been approved. He then conceded that the Committee could be creating a problem. Mr. Devoti explained that classes of two or three students are handled as independent studies. Ms. Sahn urged the Committee to have confidence that their administrators have created a Program of Studies that is sensible and defensible. Ms. Silvers added that when the registrations come in, it will be up to Mr. Devoti to make judgments; and he should not have to go back to the Finance Subcommittee before he can do that.

Following additional comments, Mr. Flynn moved to rescind the previous vote. Ms. Silvers seconded the motion. It was so voted, unanimously.

Mr. Flynn then moved, seconded by Ms. Silvers, to approve the Program of Studies, as presented. It was so voted, unanimously.

Mr. Batacchi requested that Mr. Devoti discuss at a full School Committee meeting some of the issues regarding enrollment and how he figures out which courses to run. Mr. Valentini requested that the Committee receive a listing of courses, with the enrollment and teachers' schedules, in June.

- E. Discussion/Vote Re: Request to Accept the Donation of a Lowrey Organ: Following discussion, Mr. Valentini moved to accept the donation of a Lowrey Organ from a community member. Mr. Flynn seconded the motion. Mr. Stewart noted that the District does not have a place for the organ; rather, they would be accepting it in order to sell it. He said that the worth should be between \$500 and \$1,000. It was noted that the donation was being made with no restrictions. The motion was then approved, unanimously, with gratitude to Ms. Rogge for her gift.

F. Approval of School Choice Report to MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Regarding School Choice Seats Available for 2014-15: Mr. Flynn moved, seconded by Mr. Valentini, to strike this item from the agenda and for it not to come up again. It was so voted. Mr. Hastings will inform the School Committee and publicize the numbers.

G. Subcommittee/Representative Reports

1) Buildings, Grounds & Technology Subcommittee: Mr. Valentini reported that the Subcommittee met earlier in the evening to consider submissions to the School Building Authority for the Monterey, South Egremont, and New Marlborough Central Schools. He noted that the Subcommittee had requested a cover letter explaining that the small schools are an integral part of the District and not to be considered separate from the District. The deadline for submission is April 11.

Mr. Valentini also reported the following:

- He updated the Committee regarding the work that has been accomplished at New Marlborough Central School and at Undermountain.
- The insurance company will cover \$69,000 on the boiler. It is hoped that the School Building Authority will help to cover the remaining cost of replacement.
- Will Conklin and the Greenagers are interested in running a program in the environmental center, but his organization does not wish to own the program. Materials re: the proposed program have been sent to Mr. Hastings.
- Plans are going forward to install air conditioning on the second floor of the high school. Most computers in the District have now been updated to Windows 7.

Mr. Valentini then moved to authorize the superintendent and business administrator to make submissions to the School Building Authority for the buildings in New Marlborough, South Egremont, and Monterey and that the resolutions become part of these minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Silvers, and it was so voted unanimously. The resolutions:

Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on April 10, 2014, the School Committee of Southern Berkshire Regional School District, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest dated April 10, 2014 for the **Monterey School** located on Route 23, at 459 Main Street, Monterey, Massachusetts which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which Southern Berkshire Regional School District may be invited to apply to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future: This being priority seven (7) of the eight of the MSAB priorities requesting “replacement of or addition to obsolete buildings in order to provide for a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirements.” The identified deficiencies are as follows: The Monterey School building has outlived its useful life as a school for 21st century education and therefore it is more feasible and cost effective to build a new structure rather than repair the existing structure; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that submitting this Statement of Interest, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Southern Berkshire Regional School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on April 10, 2014, the School Committee of Southern Berkshire Regional School District, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest dated April 10, 2014 for the **New Marlborough Central School** located at 44 Hartsville-Mill River Road, New Marlborough, Massachusetts which describes and explains the

following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which Southern Berkshire Regional School District may be invited to apply to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future: This being priority five (5) of the eight of the MSAB priorities. The identified deficiencies are as follows: kitchen remodel and code compliance; elevator accessibility; fire code compliance including sprinkler system; boiler/heat system; fire break for storage area; energy management system; water system (tank and well pump); hot water tank; flooring; gymnasium building; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that submitting this Statement of Interest, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Southern Berkshire Regional School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on April 10, 2014, the School Committee of Southern Berkshire Regional School District, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest dated April 10, 2014 for the **South Egremont School** located at Route 23-42 Main St, South Egremont, Massachusetts which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category (s) for which Southern Berkshire Regional School District may be invited to apply to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future: This building being priority five (5) of the eight items considered by the MSBA. The existing identified needs are: foundation; sill; floor joists; doors; siding; furnace and ventilation system; wiring; insulation; ADA compliance; underground fuel tank; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that submitting this Statement of Interest, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Southern Berkshire Regional School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

2) Food Subcommittee: Ms. Sahn reported that the subcommittee had held two meetings and that open conversation had been held at both meetings with school staff and members of the community. She said that over 50 people have participated in the conversations, each with varying degrees of enthusiasm for helping the District achieve the goals of the Subcommittee. She said that the Subcommittee is currently trying to figure out how to harness all the energy of those interested in helping. A listing of all of the potential projects, along with potential funding sources has been compiled. Ms. Sahn also expressed appreciation for the support of the administration, and especially the work of Mr. Tranfaglia, with the Subcommittee.

3) Ad Hoc Advisory Subcommittee: Ms. Silvers reported that the group has met three times and has created outreach information. She asked that the Committee revise their original timeline by two months. She then moved to amend the timeline originally stated in January to reach into September. Mr. Flynn seconded the motion. Ms. Silvers further explained that each of the remaining items on the timeline would be moved forward by two months. The motion was then approved, unanimously.

Ms. Silvers distributed the mission statement as approved by the Ad Hoc Subcommittee. She updated the Committee on progress made, and she said that there would be additional support documents to be approved at the next meeting which would be given to the leaders, when known. She said that a number of the people who have been approached will attend SBRSD on Parade.

H. Financial Updates / Transfers (as needed): Mr. Turner reported the following:

- The District will need to purchase one additional tank of fuel oil this year at a cost of \$25,000.
- The District has locked in a price for oil for next season at \$3.17 per gallon.

- The Ways & Means budget numbers were released earlier in the day and include some additional transportation money.
- The District has received a grant from the MA Department of Energy and has been approved for the first steps of possibly receiving a grant for geothermal energy.
- He is also talking with an individual who is doing local solar projects to see if solar energy may be feasible for the District.

I. Requested Discussion Items

- Revival of “Cooperation Committee” – Mr. Sears reviewed the history of this subcommittee and asked to have it reactivated, in hopes that there may be a greater interest from other districts at this time. He then moved to reopen the Committee of Cooperation. Mr. Flynn seconded the motion, and it was so voted. Mr. Sears and Mr. Flynn will serve on this Committee, and Mr. Stewart will seek a third member to join them.
- School Closing Process: Statement – Committee members discussed responding to the two towns who have written letters asking that the Committee close a community school. It was noted that per the District Agreement, such an effort would require a School Committee vote to consider the closure, followed by open public hearings, and a supermajority vote of the Committee to put the closing forward to the towns for a vote. Assuming such a vote was taken, it would then require the electorate in four of the five towns to approve. Committee members expressed that the towns may need to consider amending the District Agreement at some point.
- November Elections – Mr. Sears reminded Committee members that this is an election year, and that at least five seats will be open.

6. **Communication from the Public / Requests for Future Agenda Items**

A. There were no communications from the public.

Mr. Flynn moved to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing litigation, and to not return to open session. Mr. Valentini seconded the motion. The vote:

Mr. Flynn	Yes	Mr. Valentini	Yes
Mr. Batacchi	Yes	Ms. Silvers	Yes
Mr. Sears	Yes	Ms. Sahn	Yes
Mr. Stewart	Yes		

The Committee moved to the Superintendent’s Office and entered into executive session at 9:44 p.m.

The Committee came out of Executive session at 10:04 p.m.

On a motion by Mr. Flynn, seconded by Mr. Valentini, the meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Documents presented at this meeting:

- *Agenda, School Committee Meeting #1,474*
- *Minutes of Meeting #1,473*
- *Minutes of Special Meeting of March 19, 2014*
- *Overnight Field Trip Request – Lake George Area, June 4 – 5, 2014*
- *Request for Trip to Lisbon, Seville, and Madrid, February, 2015*
- *Request for 6th Grade Trip to Nature’s Classroom, April 14 – 17, 2014*
- *Letter from Ms. Janet M. Rogge, offering donation of a Lowrey Organ*
- *Handout Re: Public Relations efforts from Travis Daly*
- *Ad Hoc Advisory Subcommittee Mission Statement*
- *Resolutions to be submitted to the MA School Building Authority*