

Southern Berkshire Regional School Committee
Mt. Everett Regional School
Sheffield, MA
March 5, 2015
Meeting #1,488

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

Absent:

Administration: Mr. Hastings, Mr. Turner, Ms. Hubbard, Mr. Simon

Press: CTSB TV

Student Representatives:

Others: Ms. Michelle Peters; Ms. Stephanie Graham; Mr. Wayne Burkhart, Monterey Select Board; Ms. Linda Higgins

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Stewart called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. He announced that the Mt. Everett Higgs Bots Robotics Team had won the state championship for the third straight year. He said that he had also attended the western semi-finals of the Poetry Out Loud contest, where Mt. Everett's Kristin Wolfe had competed as one of 70 finalists of some 21,000 contestants in MA. He credited Mt. Everett English Teacher Jeanne Lemlin as the driving force for Mt. Everett's having received a plaque for having participated in this contest over the past seven years.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Ms. Silvers moved, seconded by Mr. Flynn, to approve the minutes of Meeting #1,487. It was so voted, unanimously.
3. **Communications from the Audience:**
 - A. Student Representatives: There were no student representatives in attendance.
 - B. There were no communications from the audience.
4. **Business:**
 - E. International Education: Ms. Stephanie Graham reported that in a further effort to provide students with international experiences, Mt. Everett will welcome students and a teacher from China on March 29. She said that the visit will be brief, but the students are collaborating on a mural project. They will also all travel to New York City together, and to that end, there will be fundraisers, including a spaghetti dinner and art auction on March 24. Ms. Graham said that there will also be other student visitors, including a contingency from Morocco.
 - A. Request for Approval of 6th Grade Trip to Nature's Classroom, April 13-17, 2015: Mr. Valentini moved, seconded by Mr. Flynn, to approve the trip. It was so voted, unanimously. The Committee thanked Ms. Peters for putting the trip together and for attending the meeting.

- B. Superintendent's Report: Mr. Hastings reported the following:
- The Child Care Program continues to visit the Sheffield Senior Center, and their visits are greatly appreciated.
 - Students Who Achieve Goodness (SWAG) will host a Red Cross blood drive on Tuesday, March 10.
 - Ms. Giordano's article has been published in an art magazine.
 - Ms. Giordano and her husband are filming staff bios for the Web page.
 - A ten-person elementary principal screening team has been put together, including representatives of the PTO, PTA, grade level teachers, and School Council. Mr. Devoti will chair the group.
 - An alumnus of Mt. Everett has contacted Mr. Devoti to volunteer to help make the Paul O'Brien Outdoor Classroom a reality.
 - Mt. Everett senior Max Lowenstein is now a finalist for a National Merit Scholarship.
 - The winter athletic teams were in the Western Mass tournaments. Wrestlers Brad Lupiani and Pat Fosby will represent Mt. Everett in the wrestling finals.
 - The Robotics team won the state championship and will go on to Scranton, PA for regional competition.
 - The elementary/middle school robotics teams will compete at Lenox High School on March 14.
 - The trip to Washington, D.C. went off well, despite many things being closed due to weather.
 - There will be a SADD breakfast on March 17.
 - The Future Farmers of America hosted the national president and officers from MA recently.
 - The FFA will go to a state veterinary science competition on March 13 and to the state convention from March 16 through March 18.
 - The National Honor Society provided child care for the Egremont and Sheffield town meetings.
 - A letter was received from Curriculum & Professional Development Director Kerry Burke requesting the use of funds from this year's RtI position (which was not filled) to provide MCAS support for 10th graders. The letter explained that funding from a grant was not received this year because students did very well last year.
- C. Report on Town Meetings to Date: Ms. Rundle reported that the Monterey town meeting was well attended, and the warrant item regarding the roof and boilers project passed with overwhelming support. Ms. Silvers reported that the voters in Sheffield also approved the project by a large margin, but must also pass the debt exclusion at a special election on March 16. Ms. Sahn reported that the project passed in Egremont by a vote of 79-10. She said that voters appreciated the efforts to save money and make the school a better place. It was noted that New Marlborough will hold their meeting on March 16, and Alford will meet on March 12.
- D. Discussion: Are alterations to the 2014-15 School Calendar Necessary Due to the Number of Closures Due to Weather?: Following discussion, which included the option of cancelling the Good Friday holiday or restoring another day in order to avoid closing school on a Monday, Mr. Flynn moved that no change be made to the 2014-15 school calendar. Ms. Sparhawk seconded the motion. Additional discussion took place. The question was then called, and was so voted, 8-1 (Mr. Batacchi voted in opposition.)
- E. Subcommittee/Representative Reports:
1. Finance Subcommittee: Mr. Valentini reported that the Finance Subcommittee had not yet had the opportunity to discuss the budget numbers in light of likely state receipts. He said

that there will be a Finance Subcommittee meeting on March 10, 7:00 p.m., at the New Marlborough Central School for that purpose.

2. Policy Subcommittee: The Committee observed the first reading of the following policies: ADDA/ADDA-R, Background Checks; DJE, Bidding Requirements; GCCD, Domestic Violence Leave; JEB, Entrance Age; JIC, Student Discipline; JII, Student Complaints and Grievances; JK, Student Conduct. It was noted that there may be negotiations implications regarding the Domestic Violence Leave; however, the Committee opted not to discuss, as the agenda did not include an executive session.
3. Executive Evaluation Subcommittee: Mr. Flynn reported that the subcommittee had met with the Superintendent and reviewed his objectives for evaluation. He noted that although state regulations call for the submission of five objectives, Mr. Hastings had submitted seven. Mr. Flynn read the objectives, and he then moved that the School Committee approve the seven objectives for the Superintendent's evaluation. Mr. Batacchi seconded the motion, and it was so voted, unanimously. Mr. Flynn requested that Mr. Hastings send a copy of the document to each member electronically.
4. Transportation Subcommittee: Ms. Sparhawk reported that the subcommittee met on February 26 and began looking at bus routes in a detailed way in order to see how many students actually ride the buses. She said that the data had been difficult to gather, and thus the Subcommittee was recommending that the District ask the bus drivers to do a "click tally" survey (a census of how many are riding each bus each day). She said that this effort would involve the District purchasing the click tally devises. The bus drivers would be asked to do the tallies over a couple of months' time.

Ms. Sparhawk then moved to ask the administration to undertake having the bus drivers count the number of students using the buses for the next two months. The motion was seconded by Ms. Silvers and so voted, unanimously.

Ms. Sparhawk continued her report. She said that the subcommittee had also discussed ways of helping to transport the Sandisfield students, even though the District can no longer provide a bus. She said that at Mr. Miller's suggestion, the Subcommittee had agreed to invite the Sandisfield families to use the existing bus-stop at the New Marlborough Meeting House or Inn on the Green. She added that although a bus does go to Great Barrington, there is no door-to-door service for them, either.

Mr. Hastings reported that he had opened a dialogue with the Superintendent of Farmington River, and although she had communicated the District's interest in talking with their school committee about this issue, the Farmington River School Committee indicated no interest in such talks.

Ms. Sparhawk moved to instruct Superintendent Hastings to communicate with choice families and the school committee of the Farmington River Regional School District that this will be SBRSD's way of accommodating the Farmington River students, beginning in 2015-16. Ms. Lartigue seconded the motion, and it was so voted.

5. Collective Bargaining: Mr. Stewart reported that the subcommittee met with Attorney Michelle McNulty earlier in the day to develop a proposal to submit to the Association within the week. He said that the next meeting will take place on March 11 with the Association representatives.

F. Financial Updates/Transfers: Mr. Valentini moved to transfer \$2,450 to support the MCAS extra help program (as outlined in Ms. Burke's letter brought forward earlier in the evening). Mr. Sears seconded the motion, and it was so voted, unanimously.

7. **Communications from the Public/Requests for Future Agenda Items**

A. Mr. Turner thanked School Committee members for their help in the recent town meetings regarding the roof and boilers project. Ms. Silvers added a special thank you to Ms. Borwick for all of her assistance in the presentations.

B. There were no communications from the audience.

Ms. Silvers moved, seconded by Ms. Sahn, to adjourn the meeting. It was so voted, and the meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Documents presented at this meeting:

- *Agenda, School Committee Meeting #1,488*
- *Minutes of Meeting #1,487*
- *Request for Overnight Field Trip for Grade 6 to Nature's Classroom, April 13-17, 2015*
- *Policy File ADDA/ADDA-R, Background Checks*
- *Policy File JEB, Entrance Age*
- *Policy File DJE, Bidding Requirements*
- *Policy File GCCD, Domestic Violence Leave Policy*
- *Policy File JIC, Student Discipline*
- *Policy File JK, Student Conduct*
- *2014-16 Strategy/District Improvement Plan*