

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

Absent:

Administrators: Mr. Hastings, Mr. Turner

Press: CTSB Television; Ms. Julie Ruth, Berkshire Record

Student Representative:

Others: Mr. Thomas Scanlon of Scanlon & Associates; Mr. Nathaniel Yohalem, Municipal Representative for Collective Bargaining; Ms. Nadine Hawver, Chair, Sheffield Select Board; Ms. Theresa Licata; Ms. Linda Higgins

1. Chairman Stewart called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. **Business:**

A1. Ratification of Unit A Contract: Mr. Sears moved, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, to approve the Unit A Contract, effective September 1, 2015 through August 31, 2018. The vote:

Mr. Flynn	no	Mr. Batacchi	yes	Ms. Lartigue	no
Ms. Sparhawk	yes	Ms. Silvers	yes	Ms. Rundle	yes
Ms. Sahn	yes	Mr. Sears	yes	Mr. Valentini	yes
Mr. Yohalem	yes				

A2. Ratification of Unit E Contract: Ms. Silvers moved, seconded by Ms. Sparhawk, to approve the Unit E Contract, effective July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2018. The vote:

Mr. Flynn	yes	Mr. Batacchi	yes	Ms. Lartigue	yes
Ms. Sparhawk	yes	Ms. Silvers	yes	Ms. Rundle	yes
Ms. Sahn	yes	Mr. Sears	yes	Mr. Valentini	yes
Mr. Yohalem	yes				

A3. Ratification of Unit D Memorandum of Agreement: Ms. Sparhawk moved, seconded by Ms. Silvers, to approve the Unit D Memorandum of Agreement (regarding ESPs serving as substitute teachers). The vote:

Mr. Flynn	yes	Mr. Batacchi	abstain	Ms. Lartigue	yes
Ms. Sparhawk	yes	Ms. Silvers	yes	Ms. Rundle	yes
Ms. Sahn	yes	Mr. Sears	yes	Mr. Valentini	yes
Mr. Yohalem	yes				

A4. Side Letter of Agreement Re: Dual Employment: Following Mr. Stewart's explanation that this item was still being dealt with by the attorneys, Mr. Valentini moved, seconded by Ms. Sparhawk, to table action until the next meeting. It was so voted, unanimously.

3. **Approval of Minutes:** Ms. Silvers moved to approve the minutes of School Committee meeting #1,493, open and executive sessions.

Ms. Sahn moved to amend part 4 of the open session minutes to add a sentence indicating that several School Committee members had asked to see better data in support of the amount of power to be purchased through net metering credits and to potentially raise such above the proposed 50%. Ms. Silvers seconded the motion, and it was so voted, unanimously.

The minutes were then approved, as amended.

4. **Communications from the Audience:** There were no communications from the audience. No student representatives were in attendance.

5. **Updates/Presentations:** FY 2014 Auditors' Report

Mr. Thomas Scanlon presented the District's FY'14 audit report. He reviewed the Management Letter, paying particular attention to the deficit in the food service account. He explained that the MA Department of Revenue had reduced the District's Excess & Deficiency fund to make up for the deficit. Mr. Scanlon also reported that he had come back in March to further review the lunch accounts and had found that no reimbursements from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education had yet been received. He noted that either the claims had not been submitted, or possibly the government was withholding money in order to be sure they receive information they had requested, as the District's food service program was undergoing review. Mr. Scanlon added that he had never seen the state withhold claims from so far back, though, and he believed that it was more likely that the claims had not been submitted. He suggested that prior to the next school committee meeting, up to date numbers should be obtained from the MA website to see where the District really stands regarding reimbursements. He added that it was possible that the District may not be able to recoup some of the moneys due, if the claims were submitted beyond the 90 day window allowed by the state.

It was determined that there is currently a deficit of approximately \$149,000. Mr. Scanlon explained that the Committee would need to vote to transfer funds from their general accounts to cover the deficit, even though the money had been deducted from the District's E & D, prior to the Department of Revenue's certification.

Mr. Turner stated that he believed that all claims have now been submitted. School Committee members requested that they receive a report on the fund as soon as possible.

Mr. Scanlon also reported that paperwork had not been filed in order to receive the additional .06 per student meal, which the District is eligible to receive, having followed all applicable guidelines. Additionally, there were unpaid charges of over \$4,500 both times the auditors had been present. Mr. Scanlon recommended that the Committee adopt a policy to address lunch charges and other lunch program issues.

Additional issues noted by Mr. Scanlon included the following:

- Overpayment of a vendor – Mr. Scanlon stated that he believed that this was an isolated occurrence, as 74 of 75 items audited were fine. It was noted that once the overpayment had been discovered, the District had contacted the vendor, and the money had been returned.
- Student activity accounts procedures have improved. The variances have remained the same, and old accounts will be adjusted to reflect the bank balances. Mr. Scanlon will work with Mr. Turner on this over the summer.
- Health insurance withholding account - the business office has implemented procedures to review withholding account balances and to verify correct deductions are properly withheld from individuals. Committee members thanked Mr. Scanlon for his presentation. Mr. Scanlon invited members to call him directly, should further questions arise.

Mr. Batacchi left the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

## 2. **Business:**

B. Superintendent's Report: Mr. Hastings distributed an updated course section report, per the request at last meeting to better reflect the student/teacher ratio in each classroom. Additionally:

- He reported that some AP courses may not be available through Edgenuity and may have to be picked up via another virtual education program.
- The last two weeks of school were very busy with several nice graduation ceremonies.
- Mr. Hastings attended the Chamber of Commerce breakfast last week. Mt. Everett will host a breakfast here on Nov. 5
- Incoming Elementary Principal Stacy Burgess will start on July 6.
- Jennifer Cupp has been hired as high school English teacher; and the elementary art position is expected to be filled within the week. Interviews for the elementary nurse position will take place soon.
- Student and staff handbooks will be forwarded to School Committee members no later than July 30. Mr. Hastings asked that members please call with any problems they see so the handbooks can be approved at the August 13 meeting.
- Mr. Hastings requested permission to move to a 6 hour office work day in the summer. (He noted that if deadlines need to be met, the shortened hours would not apply.) Mr. Flynn moved to approve the administrative work schedule, as requested. Ms. Silvers seconded the motion, and it was so voted.
- Of the four students who did not walk for graduation, two have now received their diplomas. Of the remaining two students, one needs to take an exam in an on-line course, and the other still has some work to do. It is anticipated that both will finish by end of summer. Mr. Devoti and Mr. DeGrenier and appropriate teachers are working closely with these students.
- Mr. Hastings noted some of the activities that will take place on campus over the summer.

C. Financial updates/transfers: Mr. Turner reported that the District is doing well financially this year. He also updated the Committee regarding the building project.

Mr. Turner presented a request for transfers totaling \$100,000. Mr. Flynn moved, seconded by Mr. Sears, to approve the request for transfers, as delineated by the business manager, in the memo dated June 25, 2015. It was so voted, unanimously.

Mr. Flynn moved to amend the agenda to include the transfer of money from E & D to the school lunch fund. Ms. Silvers seconded the motion, and it was so voted.

Mr. Valentini moved to transfer \$125,000 from E & D into the school lunch fund. Ms. Sparhawk seconded the motion, and it was so voted, unanimously.

D. Subcommittee/Representative Reports:

1) Policy Subcommittee: The Committee observed the first reading of amended Policy JEB. Approval will be requested at the next meeting. Mr. Flynn reported that the Subcommittee had also talked about issues re: youth athletics. They will meet again on July 22.

2) Executive Evaluation Subcommittee: At Mr. Flynn's request, Mr. Hastings explained his 2014-16 Strategy/District Improvement Plan. Mr. Flynn moved to direct the Superintendent to devise a transition plan that reflects goals of the District's 5-year plan, as developed by the School Committee. Ms. Silvers seconded the motion. Mr. Flynn explained that this would allow the next superintendent to have a document that would allow him/her to hit the ground running from the beginning. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Flynn then moved to have a meeting of the School Committee on July 23 for the purpose of developing the process and parameters to guide the creation of a District five-year plan and other items

that may arise. Ms. Silvers seconded the motion. Following discussion, it was so voted, unanimously. Mr. Stewart requested that members submit items for the agenda to him or to the superintendent.

3) Transportation Subcommittee: Ms. Sparhawk reported that the Subcommittee had been disappointed that the data regarding bus ridership was incomplete for their meeting, and that they had not yet receive recommendations from those asked to look at our routes.

Ms. Sparhawk reported that because the District will receive greater than anticipated transportation reimbursement, it was the recommendation of the Subcommittee to establish an afternoon bus route originating at New Marlborough Central School that would bring students to the Sheffield Campus and then pick up students in Sheffield and continue on to Great Barrington to bring in-district students to Berkshire South, and other activities. Ms. Sparhawk then moved to establish that route. Ms. Silvers seconded the motion. Following discussion, it was so voted, unanimously. The administration will seek quotes for the bus route and notify District families (and Berkshire South).

4) Selection of representative to serve on County-wide ad hoc education committee: Representative to serve on county-wide ad hoc education committee: Mr. Stewart explained that Mr. John Hockridge, North Adams School Committee Member and MASC Region VI Chair, is in the process of forming a committee of interested people to discuss the future of education in Berkshire County. The ad hoc committee will include Senator Ben Downing, Representative Smitty Pignatelli, and a representative from the Governor's Office, along with representative area superintendents and School Committee members. He noted that there are many issues, and that it is believed that Berkshire County schools are in trouble due to a decline in population. The committee intends to look at the issues and discuss possible solutions.

Lengthy discussion ensued and included whether the county-wide committee is the right vehicle to foster change, especially given the number of towns and districts they propose to include.

Mr. Valentini moved that the School Committee appoint three people who will form a group to attend the meetings and that group will elect a chair who will be the primary person to attend the meetings, but the other members can fill in if the chair cannot attend. The group will consult after each motion. Ms. Silvers seconded the motion, and it was so voted, unanimously.

It was agreed that the group will be comprised of Mr. Flynn, Ms. Lartigue, and Ms. Silvers. Mr. Stewart will request that Mr. Hockridge include the group on his committee.

E. Review of 2015-16 Selection of School Committee Meeting Dates: Mr. Stewart distributed a 2015-16 school calendar and asked the members to suggest School Committee meeting dates. Further discussion will take place at the July 23 meeting. Mr. Stewart said that he will send his suggestions along for their consideration.

Ms. Sparhawk moved to adjourn. It was so voted, and the meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

***Documents presented at this meeting:***

- *Agenda, School Committee Meeting #1,494*
- *Minutes of Meeting #1,493, Open and Executive Sessions*
- *SBRSC/SBREA Memorandum of Understanding – Unit A Teachers, effective September 1, 2015 through August 31, 2018*
- *SBRSD/SBREA Memorandum of Understanding – Unit E, effective July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2018*
- *Memorandum of Agreement Re: Unit D*
- *Southern Berkshire Regional School District Administrative Procedure – Administrative Work Schedule*
- *School Calendar (copy of Newton Public Schools') 2015-16*
- *Memo to the School Committee from Bruce Turner, Business Administrator, requesting transfers totaling \$100,000.*
- *Executive Evaluation Subcommittee Minutes, Meeting of June 24, 2015*
- *2014-16 Strategy/District Improvement Plan – Mid-Year Assessment (Updated 11 June 2015)*
- *Mt. Everett Regional High School Course Enrollment, 2010-15*