

Southern Berkshire Regional School Committee
Mt. Everett Regional School
Sheffield, MA
August 13, 2015
Meeting #1,496

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

Absent: Ms. Sparhawk, Ms. Lartigue, Mr. Sears

Administrators: Mr. Hastings, Mr. Turner, Ms. Burgess, Mr. DeVoti

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

Student Representative:

Others: Ms. Nadine Hawver, Chair, Sheffield Select Board; Ms. Karen Chamberland; Mr. Kirt Mayland, Housatonic Solar; Mr. James Knight, President, Pelletco; Mr. Freddy Friedman, Representative, Pelletco; Ms. Linda Higgins

1. Chairman Stewart called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Mr. Valentini moved, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, to approve the minutes of School Committee meeting #1,495. Mr. Batacchi requested that the spelling of his name be corrected. The minutes were then approved, with that correction.
3. **Communications from the Audience:** There were no communications from the audience. No student representatives were in attendance.
4. **Updates/Presentations:**
 - A. Mr. James Knight, President of Pelletco, explained a proposal for his company to provide a pellet boiler and pellets to heat the New Marlborough Central School. Following a question and answer period, it was the desire of the Committee to refer the idea to the Buildings, Grounds & Technology Subcommittee for further exploration. Mr. Valentini will call a meeting of that subcommittee to be held at the New Marlborough Central School prior to the next School Committee meeting. Mr. Knight will be invited to attend that meeting. The District's attorney will also be consulted regarding the proposed contract, should the School Committee vote to proceed.

5. **Business**

Mr. Flynn moved to change the agenda to move item 5C ahead of item 5A. It was so voted.

- C. Mr. Kirt Mayland, of Housatonic Solar, stated that he had recently received a marked-up copy of the proposed contract. He said that he believed that his company could accommodate all the requested changes. He stated that the question that needed to be answered was how many kWh the District wished to purchase, and said that he felt that the District should take all of them, as electricity would have to go down to about 1 cent per kWh in order for the deal to become "upside down". He said that the only other risk would be if electricity usage should drop more than 30%. He said that currently, the benefit of taking all 816,000 kWh is approximately \$25,000, but that would go up to \$40,000-50,000, should National Grid rates continue to climb.

Following discussion, Mr. Valentini moved to enter into a contract with Housatonic Solar for 816,000 kWh, subject to the contract being worked out between their company and the District's attorney.

Mr. Flynn seconded the motion, and it was so voted, with five members voting in favor and one member (Mr. Batacchi) abstaining.

- A. Superintendent's Report: At Mr. Hastings' request, Mr. Devoti thanked the following for their efforts on the Paul O'Brien Outdoor Classroom: SADD students; Bill Dodge, Herrington's, the Tomich family (especially Mark Tomich and Jessica Tomich), Joe McSpiritt; the Torrico family, and the Eagle Fund. Committee members who had already visited the outdoor classroom commented on how impressed they were with the work thus far.

Mr. Hastings then noted the following:

- The Sheffield Antiques Fair was on campus for several days last week.
- He intends to work with the administrators and Ms. Silvers to reach out to community members, asking them to provide mentoring to students in particular areas of expertise.
- MakerSpace will move into a new room this year. They will receive new furniture via a grant from SABIC. The furniture and their new equipment will be brought in by volunteers on September 19.
- Mr. Jeremy Wells has accepted the position of Food Service Director. Although a plan to share a food service director with Berkshire Hills district did not work out, it is planned to hire their director to mentor Jeremy in his first year.
- The following have also been hired for 2015-16: Hilary Bashara, Elementary Nurse; Jennifer Cupp, 9-12 English Teacher; Kimberly Conant, 10-12 Guidance; Joseph McSpiritt, 7-12 Health/PE Teacher; Brianna Ouellette, K-6 Art Teacher.
- Summer school has ended. There are still a couple of students working hard to finish earning their diplomas.

- B. Approval of 2015-16 Staff and Student Handbooks: Mr. Flynn moved, seconded by Mr. Valentini, to approve the 2015-16 Staff Handbook. It was so voted, unanimously.

Mr. Flynn then moved to approve the Mt. Everett Student Handbook for 2015-16. Mr. Valentini seconded the motion. Discussion took place regarding the constitutionality of the dress code language included. Mr. Devoti also explained changes in the cell phone policy for 2015-16. The handbook was then approved, unanimously.

Mr. Flynn moved to approve the 2015-16 Elementary Student Handbook. Mr. Valentini seconded the motion. Ms. Silvers asked that the suspension of the program in Monterey be made clear in the handbook. She also gave a marked-up copy to Ms. Burgess, which included some edits. The handbook was then approved, as amended, unanimously.

Ms. Burgess thanked Ms. Silvers for her donation of a raised garden bed, which they will put where the former elementary garden had been. Ms. Silvers explained the process for buying and/or donating such a raised garden bed, should others be interested in following suit.

- D. Financial Updates: Mr. Flynn moved, seconded by Mr. Valentini, to approve the proposed contract for audit services with Scanlon & Associates for fiscal years 2015, 2016, and 2017. It was so voted, unanimously.

Mr. Turner updated the Committee on the building project. He said that the roofers are running a little behind, but should finish just a couple of days after the students get back to school. He also reported that the oil boiler is due to come in next week, with the pellet boilers to arrive in October.

Mr. Turner reported that the first submission for reimbursement has been submitted to the School Building Authority. He said that the District has received \$97,000 from the Department of Energy Resources.

Mr. Turner also reported that the District has hired an outside firm to professionally clean the kitchen, due to the amount of dust and particles that have resulted from the ceiling/roof work.

E. Subcommittee/Representative Reports:

- Berkshire County Education Ad Hoc Committee: Mr. Stewart reported that the group had met on Saturday, August 9. The minutes from that meeting, as well as the paper presented at that meeting, will be put on the District's web site. The next meeting will take place on August 29, 9:00 a.m. at Nessecus School in Dalton.
- Ad Hoc Committee for Discussions with Farmington River Regional School District: Ms. Rundle reported that the group had met on August 10 and had reviewed the enrollment challenges in each District. Each member of the group was assigned some research to do, and they will meet again in late September.
- Policy Subcommittee: Ms. Rundle moved, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, to approve Policy JEB, Entrance Age, as revised. It was so voted, unanimously.

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

A. Mr. Valentini requested that discussion of the possibility of entering into lease agreements with the towns of New Marlborough, Egremont, and Monterey be put on the next agenda.

B. Ms. Sahn announced that this would be her last meeting, as she is moving from the area. Members expressed their best wishes and thanks for her hard work on the Committee.

On a motion by Mr. Flynn, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Documents presented at this meeting:

- *Agenda, School Committee Meeting #1,496*
- *Minutes of Meeting #1,495*
- *Quote for Audit Services for fiscal years 2015, 2016, and 2017 from Scanlon & Associates*
- *Draft of Policy JEB, Entrance Age*
- *Letter from Nancy Company, of Murphy, Lamere & Murphy, PC dated August 13, 2015*