

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

Absent:

Administrators: Mr. Hastings, Mr. Turner

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

Student Representative:

Others: Ms. Nadine Hawver, Chair, Sheffield Select Board; Ms. Karen Chamberland; Mr. Charles Ketchen, Chair, Alford Select Board; Ms. Jennifer Gaenzel Smith, Chair, New Marlborough/Monterey PTA; Ms. Sarah Siket; Mr. James Siket; Ms. Danielle Melino; Ms. Kari Giordano; Ms. Linda Higgins

1. Chairman Stewart called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Mr. Sears moved, seconded by Mr. Flynn, to approve the minutes of School Committee meeting #1,496. It was so voted.
3. **Communications from the Audience:** There were no communications from the audience. No student representatives were in attendance.
4. **Updates/Presentations:**
  - A. Discussion Re: Possibility of Developing Lease Agreements for the Community Schools with the Towns of New Marlborough, Monterey, and Egremont: Mr. Valentini reported that this subject had been broached at a Buildings, Grounds and Technology Subcommittee meeting, and the feeling was that the discussion would be premature at this time. He then moved to table the discussion to a time to be determined. Ms. Sparhawk seconded the motion, and it was so voted, unanimously.
  - B. Flying Cloud: Ms. Jane Burke, Founding Director of Flying Cloud Institute, relayed some background of her group's involvement with the school district since 1983. She expressed concern that Flying Cloud programs may not be allowed in the elementary classrooms this year, as they had in the past. Superintendent Hastings explained that some very real deficiencies currently exist within the elementary grades. He said that in order to address the situation, the new principal and he were seeking to eliminate some of the extras and get back to basics this year. He said that a new math program was also being introduced in the elementary grades. Lengthy discussion took place, with School Committee members expressing support both for the administrative team and for the Flying Cloud programming. It was noted that a meeting between representatives of Flying Cloud and Superintendent Hastings and Elementary Principal Burgess was planned for September 21. School Committee members expressed hope that the situation would be resolved amicably and in the best interests of the students at that meeting.

## 5. Business

- C. Request for Approval of Overnight Field Trip to National FFA Conference in Louisville, KY, October 27 through November 1, 2015: Mr. Valentini moved, seconded by Mr. Sears, to approve the FFA trip. It was so voted, unanimously.
- A. Superintendent Hastings reported the following:
- Part of the public relations position vacated by Travis Daly will be picked up by Kari Giordano;
  - The Mt. Everett Band will perform in the Lee Founders Day Parade on Sept. 19.
  - A connection is being formed between the District lunch program and the Mill River Farm.
  - Kari Giordano will be awarded the Kapteyn Prize on Sunday, September 20.
  - The staff development half-day on September 18 will focus on DDMs and Go Math.
  - Chuck Higgins is retiring after 25 years of service.
  - Class presidents for 2015-16 are: Ryan Meyer, grade 12; Maya Neski, Grade 11; Marya Makuc, Grade 10; Sam Webb, Grade 9; Mary Shalaby, Grade 8; Mickey Masters, Grade 7.
  - The school that visited last year from Hong Kong is seeking to establish Mt. Everett as a sister school.
  - Mr. Farmer is pursuing tuition exchange students from Saudi Arabia and Morocco.
  - The fall sports teams are off to a good start.
  - Refurbishing of the “yellow house” is nearly complete. The World Language classes will prepare foods there.
  - The annual 7<sup>th</sup> grade balloon launch will take place on September 21 at 8:30 p.m.
- B. Action Re: Monterey School for 2015-16: Chairman Stewart explained that the District’s attorney believes that the School Committee strayed from the requirements of the Regional Agreement when they voted to join with the town of Monterey in placing the Monterey School program in hiatus for 2015-16. Therefore, the attorney had advised rescinding that vote. He said that as there are no students at the Monterey School this year, there is no program this year.

In response to a concern that a part of the agreement with Monterey was that the children of Monterey be guaranteed a place at New Marlborough Central School, Mr. Flynn stated that the Policy Subcommittee is working to incorporate that into a policy, which will be brought forward at the October 1 meeting.

Following additional discussion, Mr. Flynn moved, seconded by Ms. Sparhawk, to rescind the vote (taken in regard to this issue on July 23, 2015, SC Meeting #1,495). Additional discussion took place. It was requested that a letter be sent to the Monterey Select Board explaining that the vote is being rescinded due to a technicality and that the Committee is not going back on its word. The motion was then approved, with 7 voting in favor, and 1 abstention. (Ms. Rundle abstained.)

- D. Financial Updates: Mr. Turner reported the following:
- The first payment (in the amount of \$755,000) has been received from the School Building Authority.
  - The biomass boilers were delivered earlier in the day.
  - The roof is progressing very well. The skylights will be installed over Columbus Day weekend.
  - Pellets are priced at \$218 per ton, which is under the amount originally estimated.
  - There are issues with the fire suppression (sprinkler system) in the TAC/PAC which may cause an additional cost to the roof/boiler project.
  - The net metering credit agreement has been completed.

Mr. Valentini moved to empower the Business Administrator and the Superintendent to enter into the net metering agreement with Kit Mayland and Housatonic Solar. Ms. Sparhawk seconded the motion, and it was so voted, with 6 members voting in favor, and 1 opposed. (Mr. Batacchi voted in opposition; Mr. Flynn was not in the room for the vote.)

Ms. Rundle left the meeting at 9:01 p.m.

E. Subcommittee / Representative Reports

- 1) Berkshire County Ad Hoc Committee: Chairman Stewart reported that the next meeting of this group will take place on Saturday, September 19. He informed the Committee that there has been a request for information. Mr. Flynn stated that he did not wish to have anyone do the work to gather the information. He then moved not to release the information. Ms. Lartigue seconded the motion. Mr. Flynn recalled that the School Committee had voted to send a subcommittee to the meetings of the ad hoc committee, but the request had been ignored.

Mr. Sears said that although he had spoken out against the group at the start, he believed they were beginning to collect some valuable information. He said that he saw no harm in giving them the information.

Mr. Valentini said that if the group was more specific in their requests and stated the reasons they were asking, he would be willing to consider their request.

Following additional conversation, Mr. Valentini asked to call the question. The motion was then approved, with 5 voting in favor, and 2 voting in opposition. (Mr. Sears and Ms. Sparhawk voted in opposition.)

- 2) Ad Hoc Committee for discussions with Farmington River Regional School District: Mr. Sears reported that this group has not met since the last School Committee meeting.
- 3) Policy Subcommittee: Mr. Flynn moved to reaffirm Policy JJIF, Athletic Concussions. Mr. Sears seconded the motion, and it was so voted.

The Committee observed the first reading of Policy EEAG, Student Transportation in Private Vehicles. Mr. Flynn noted that two changes had been made, allowing the marshmallow buses to be incorporated into the policy.

Mr. Flynn reported that the Policy Subcommittee had talked about standardized testing, but did not vote to bring forward a motion that he had suggested. Ms. Sparhawk moved to make a decision about whether the School Committee wants to get involved in making a statement regarding standardized testing. Mr. Flynn seconded the motion. Mr. Flynn then explained that some school committees have voted to solicit their legislators and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to call a three-year moratorium on high stakes testing. Following discussion, it was the consensus of the Committee to leave it up to the Policy Subcommittee whether to draft language to be presented to the full Committee in this regard. Mr. Flynn will schedule the discussion for a Policy Subcommittee and let all the members know when it will be discussed.

- 4) Buildings, Grounds & Technology Subcommittee: Mr. Valentini reported that after reviewing financial information regarding the Pelletco proposal for New Marlborough Central School, the Buildings, Grounds & Technology Subcommittee was unable to recommend going forward with their proposal. He said that the District has paid an average of \$15,097 per year (average includes at least two severe winters). The Pelletco proposal would cost \$19,600 in the first year, then \$20,000+ and \$21,000+ (4% escalation per year). He said that the current boiler is working

and not leaking. Mr. Turner will obtain an evaluation of that boiler to be reported at the next meeting.

- 5) Finance Subcommittee: Mr. Valentini reported that the District's FY'15 E&D has been certified at \$569,000, which is what is left after subtracting \$125,000 for the cafeteria deficit.
- 6) Transportation Subcommittee: Ms. Sparhawk reported that the subcommittee has asked the superintendent and business administrator to seek out contractors who may be interested in bidding on the proposed afternoon New Marlborough Central to Undermountain Elementary to Great Barrington route. They have also been asked to re-word the proposal to make it more attractive to the District's current contractors.

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

- A. Chairman Stewart asked Committee members to consider filling the void left by Ms. Sahn on the Food Subcommittee.
- B. Ms. Silvers asked to schedule the new Food Services director for a future School Committee meeting.

On a motion by Ms. Silvers, seconded by Ms. Sparhawk, the meeting adjourned at 9:31 p.m.

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

- *Agenda, School Committee Meeting #1,497*
- *Minutes of Meeting #1,496*
- *Letter from Nancy Company, Murphy, Murphy, Lamere & Murphy, PC, dated August 13, 2015*
- *Request for Overnight Field Trip to Louisville, KY, October 27 – 11/1, for FFA*
- *Policy JJIF, Athletic concussion Policy*
- *Draft of Policy EEAG, Student Transportation in Private Vehicles*