

Southern Berkshire Regional School Committee
Mt. Everett Regional School
Sheffield, MA
October 1, 2015
Meeting #1,498

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

Absent: Ms. Sparhawk

Administrators: Mr. Hastings, Mr. Turner, Mr. Devoti

Press: CTSB Television

Student Representatives: Maya Neski, Kayla Krom

Others: Ms. Nadine Hawver, Chair, Sheffield Select Board; Ms. Mary Shalaby, Chair, and Mr. Nathaniel Yohalem, Member, New Marlborough Select Board; Ms. Theresa Licata; Ms. Zoe Marinelli; Ms. Cathy Jo Willig; Ms. Amy Murray; Ms. Linda Higgins

1. Chairman Stewart called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. He announced that there would be no executive session under Item 5G this evening, as the request had been rescinded for the time being.

Mr. Sears then moved to amend the agenda by adding an executive session to prepare for negotiations with non-union personnel. Ms. Silvers seconded the motion. Following discussion, the motion was approved, with Mr. Valentini voting in opposition. Chairman Stewart added the item at the end of the evening's agenda.

2. **Approval of Minutes:** Mr. Flynn moved, seconded by Ms. Lartigue, to approve the minutes of School Committee meeting #1,497. It was so voted.

3. **Communications from the Audience:**

A. Student representatives Maya Neski and Kayla Krom reported that elections had been held during the week of September 21. They said that their goals for the upcoming year included engaging in the community and getting students more active in their government. They also reported that they are planning a community-wide drive to collect non-perishable food items. The drive will be conducted in concert with other area schools. Ms. Lartigue suggested that the students consider conducting a diaper drive, as young parents are often in need of those. Students agreed to check into that.

B. There were no further communications from the audience.

4. **Updates/Presentations:**

A. Mr. Devoti presented the 2015-16 Mt. Everett School Improvement Plan (copy on file with these minutes). He explained that the plan has been organized around the four standards that the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education asks the superintendent to evaluate the principals on. He also said that the items included in the plan are currently all works in progress, with some nearing completion and others just getting started. Following a question and answer session, Mr. Flynn moved to approve the School Improvement Plan. Ms. Silvers seconded the motion, and it was so voted, unanimously.

5. Business

- A. Superintendent Hastings reported the following:
- The Paul O'Brien Outdoor Classroom ribbon cutting ceremony was held earlier in the day.
 - Students in the Southern Berkshire Child Care Program will begin going to the Sheffield Senior Center once a week, beginning on October 7.
 - A fire safety presentation took place at New Marlborough Central School.
 - Kari Giordano has revised the District web page to include access buttons for the "District in Photos", You-Tube, and Facebook.
 - The Mt. Everett fall athletic programs are all going well.
 - Chris Clark and the Mt. Everett Chorus will perform between the first and second periods of an Albany Devils hockey game on October 30.
 - 112 Mt. Everett students are in the band this year.
 - Kevin Wolgemuth's psychology class collaborated with sculptor Ann Jon in exploring multi-sensory approaches to experiencing art. An article in this regard appeared in the Berkshire Eagle.
 - Shakespeare & Company has begun to recruit actors, technicians and stage hands for this year's production.
 - Mt. Everett high school parent/teacher conferences will take place on October 8.
 - The middle school open house was held on September 17.
 - Three Mt. Everett students have met with Berkshire Community College faculty and have had projects approved for credits.
 - Mt. Everett staff members Stephanie Graham, Chris Clark, Mike Farmer, and Michelle Raczkowski have organized a global education committee to explore options for Mt. Everett students, families and faculty.
 - Mr. Hastings also presented a listing of the projects to be presented by Flying Cloud in 2015-16.
 - Mr. Hastings presented comments from teachers and administrators in Lenox and Lee Public Schools regarding their experiences with the Go Math Program. He also reported that he had spoken with Superintendent Dillon from Berkshire Hills Regional School District, who confirmed that his district had never used the Go Math program.
- B. Mr. Flynn moved, seconded by Mr. Sears, to approve the Memorandum of Agreement with Unit A regarding the elementary homework center. It was so voted, unanimously.
- C. Following discussion, Mr. Flynn moved to adjust the School Committee's December meeting date to December 10, in order to avoid a conflict with the Middle School Holiday Concert. Mr. Sears seconded the motion, and it was so voted. At Chairman Stewart's request, Committee members agreed to review the remaining suggested meeting dates and bring up any other problems or conflicts at the October 29 meeting.
- D. Mr. Flynn moved, seconded by Ms. Silvers, to approve the lateral movements on the Unit A Salary Schedule, as listed, effective September 1, 2015. It was so voted, unanimously.
- E. Financial Updates: Mr. Turner noted that he was the administrator that had made the error in calculating the assessments to the towns. He said that he regretted the error, but took full responsibility and was glad the error had been caught and was being addressed, so everyone could move forward.

Mr. Valentini moved to establish a student activities account for the April 2016 trip to the Galapagos. Ms. Silvers seconded the motion, and it was so voted. Mr. Turner noted that all student activity funds will be brought to the School Committee for review at the end of the year. Mr. Flynn asked Mr. Turner to work with his association to develop a way to retire accounts no longer active.

Building Update: Mr. Turner reported that the work on the roof was nearing completion. He said that the skylights will be replaced sometime between Columbus Day and the end of the month. Roof inspection/testing will take place within the next few days.

Mr. Turner also reported that it is hoped that the oil boiler can be fired early next week. The pellet boilers will be fired when the pellets arrive.

- F. Berkshire County Ad Hoc: Mr. Stewart reported that the group will meet on October 7 at Nessicus School in Dalton.

Ad Hoc Committee for Discussions with Farmington River Regional School District: Mr. Sears reported that the group had decided to form a regional school district planning committee to look at forming one regional district. He noted that no two districts have done this before in the state of Massachusetts.

Mr. Sears said that each district will form a regional school district planning committee, which will together form a regional school district planning board. He then moved that the Southern Berkshire Regional School District School Committee vote to form a Regional District Planning Committee comprised of the current members of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District Ad Hoc Committee, such committee to then join with a Regional District Planning Committee comprised of the current members of the Farmington River Regional School District to form a Regional School District Planning Board. Each district will select new school committee members as needed to replace any openings up to a total of 3 for each district. The FRRSD SBRSD Regional School Planning Board will select public community members and set individual terms as “advisory non-voting members” of the Board as needed for Board work. Such selection will be through the Board in open meeting by a quorum of said Board.

Mr. Flynn seconded the motion. (Mr. Sears noted that the language of his motion had been cleared with Christine Lynch of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.)

Following additional discussion, the motion was approved, unanimously.

Policy Subcommittee: Mr. Flynn moved to accept Policy EEAG, Student Transportation in Private Vehicles. Ms. Silvers seconded the motion, and it was so voted.

Mr. Flynn reported that the Policy Subcommittee is reviewing policies recently updated by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC). He also presented Policy JKAA, Student Restraint, for the first reading. He explained that the version of JKAA presented had been vetted by an attorney and was believed to be all encompassing. A vote will be requested at the next School Committee meeting.

Ms. Silvers moved to add a report from the Executive Evaluation Subcommittee to the agenda. Mr. Sears seconded the motion. The vote:

Ms. Silvers	yes	Mr. Sears	yes	Mr. Flynn	yes
Mr. Batacchi	yes	Ms. Rundle	yes	Mr. Valentini	yes
Ms. Lartigue	yes				

Executive Evaluation Subcommittee: Mr. Flynn reported that he will soon get together with Mr. Thompson to arrange for all School Committee members to be able to complete their evaluations of the Superintendent in Baseline Edge.

Mr. Flynn also reported that in an effort to avoid problems such as what had occurred with Flying Cloud, the Subcommittee had asked Ms. Lartigue to act as a liaison to the elementary principal to share ideas on the community. Mr. Hastings pointed out that such a designation may produce a

conflict with Policy BHC, School Committee – Staff Communications. Mr. Flynn stated that this was intended as an additional resource to the principal to help her assimilate into the community as a leader.

Following additional discussion, Mr. Flynn moved to suspend the policy BHC for this particular instance of creating a liaison between the School committee and the elementary principal for the remainder of the academic year. Mr. Valentini seconded the motion. The vote:

Ms. Silvers	yes	Mr. Sears	yes	Mr. Flynn	yes
Mr. Batacchi	yes	Ms. Rundle	yes	Mr. Valentini	yes
Ms. Lartigue	yes				

It was noted that the item must be on the agenda of the next meeting, as it takes two votes to suspend a Policy of the Committee. It was also noted that should Ms. Lartigue wish to meet with the elementary principal prior to the second vote, she would do so in the capacity of a parent.

Finance Subcommittee: Mr. Valentini reported that the meeting on September 30 was well attended by select board members from all five towns. He explained that each year, the state sends two sets of numbers which determine percentages that each town will be assessed. Per our District Agreement, the numbers are supposed to be those listed as “Minimum”; however, the set listed as “Foundation” was used, instead. The numbers are very close, but not the same, and the net effect was that three towns were under-assessed, and two towns were over-assessed. Mr. Sears found the error and brought it to the attention of the Superintendent.

The Finance Subcommittee had suggested softening the discrepancies by lowering the actual budget. The Superintendent had indicated that the budget could be lowered by approximately \$216,000 (through the elimination of two positions that had been funded, but were subsequently not filled; by not filling a recently vacated custodial/maintenance position; and by reducing line items for out-of-district special education placements, which have so far not been needed). The Superintendent will schedule a meeting of the town officials sometime next week, after they have met with their finance committees and had a chance for further discussion.

Mr. Valentini then moved that the School Committee vote to approve a revised FY’ 16 operating budget of \$13,649,811; Transportation budget of \$1,172,000; and Capital budget of \$385,372 for a total Expenditure Budget of \$15,207,183. Further, that the School Committee approve revised assessments as follows: Operating assessment of \$11,194,335; Transportation Assessment of \$697,000; and Capital Assessment of \$385,372. Ms. Lartigue seconded the motion. The vote:

Ms. Silvers	yes	Mr. Sears	yes	Mr. Flynn	yes
Mr. Batacchi	yes	Ms. Rundle	yes	Mr. Valentini	yes
Ms. Lartigue	yes				

Mr. Valentini expressed his gratitude to the town officials, noting that the spirit of good will was extraordinary. He said that all had recognized that there was no malice or deception intended.

6. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC/REQUESTS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

A. There were no communications from the audience.

5H. Mr. Sears moved to enter into executive session to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-unit personnel, and upon exiting, not to return to open session. Ms. Silvers seconded the motion.

Following brief discussion, a roll-call vote was taken:

Ms. Silvers	yes	Mr. Sears	yes	Mr. Flynn	no
Mr. Batacchi	yes	Ms. Rundle	no	Mr. Valentini	no
Ms. Lartigue	no	Mr. Stewart	no		

The motion failed, with 3 voting yes, and 5 voting no.

On a motion by Ms. Silvers, seconded by Mr. Sears, the meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Documents presented at this meeting:

- *Agenda, School Committee Meeting #1,498*
- *Minutes of Meeting #1,497*
- *Memorandum of Agreement (draft) Re: Elementary Homework Help Center*
- *School Committee Meeting/FY 2017 Budget Development Calendar – Draft*
- *Listing of Lateral Moves on the Unit A Salary Schedule, Effective September 1, 2015*
- *Request to Open a Student Activities Account for the April 2016 Galapagos Island Trip*
- *Draft of Policy EEAG, Student Transportation in Private Vehicles*
- *Restraint Prevention and Behavior Support Policy and Procedures*
- *MADESE Steps to Forming A Regional School District (dated August 27, 2010)*
- *Go Math! Testimonials*
- *Vote to Approve Revised FY'16 Operating, Transportation and Capital Budgets and Assessments*
- *FY'16 (revised) Assessments*
- *Mount Everett Regional School Improvement Plan, 2015-16*