

School Committee Members: Bonnie Silvers, Dennis Sears, MaryEllen Brown, Art Batacchi, Bob Law, Carl Stewart, Marcella Bush, Fran Lartigue,

Absent: David Travis, Genis Melandez-Delaney

Administration: Superintendent Regulbuto, Christine Regan, Kerry Burke

Press: Chris McDermott, Berkshire Record

Others: Lynette Gagnon, Charlie Ketchen, Tara White, Nat Yohalam, George McGurn, Carol Edleman, Stephen Weisz

1. **Call to Order:** Bonnie Silvers, Chair, called meeting #1540 to order at 5:00 p.m. Ms. Silvers thanked the school committee, administration, attorney and towns, particularly Egremont and Monterey for being so helpful. Further, we will be doing this in terms of process. The Public Comment portion of this meeting only relates to new business, which is whether to begin the process related to the closing of the Monterey and South Egremont schools as per the Regional Agreement. Ms. Silvers also stated that she had been advised per council that everything is to be done separately for Egremont and Monterey. Should the committee decide to move forward there are motions (attached). The reason for holding the special meeting was to avoid the towns incurring additional expenses by holding special meetings. By holding this meeting we are able to meet all the deadlines so that every town can put this item on their regular annual meeting warrant.
2. **Public Comment**  
Mr. Yohalam, Select Board member from New Marlborough urged the school committee to begin the process of closing the Monterey school. The program has been suspended for two years and prior to the suspension children were being educated in other districts as well as SBRSD and the proposed enrollment was zero. Since the program has been suspended the building has deteriorated and no money has been put into the building.
3. **New Business**
  - a. Discuss Whether to Begin the Process Based on the Regional Agreement for the Closure of the South Egremont and/or Monterey School – Vote Required.

*Mr. Sears moved to initiate the process based on the Regional Agreement for the closure of the Monterey School. Art Batacchi seconded the motion. Following a brief discussion, the roll call vote was as follows:*

Art Batacchi – Yes; Carl Stewart – No; Fran Lartigue – Yes; Maryellen Brown – No; Marcella Bush – Yes, Dennis Sears – Yes, Bob Law – Yes, Bonnie Silvers – Yes.  
Motion carries 6 to 2

*Mr. Sears moved to initiate the process based on the Regional Agreement for the closure of the South Egremont School. Art Batacchi seconded the motion. There was no further discussion, roll call vote as follows:*

Art Batacchi – Yes; Carl Stewart – No; Fran Lartigue – Yes; Maryellen Brown – No; Marcella Bush – No, Dennis Sears – Yes, Bob Law – Yes, Bonnie Silvers – Yes.  
Motion carries 5 to 3

### **Monterey**

*Mr. Sears moved that pursuant to Section 3 of the Regional Agreement for the Southern Berkshire Regional School District, to provide notice to all Member Towns of the District of a proposed school action to close the existing Monterey School located at 459 Main Rd, Route 23, Monterey, MA, with such closure to take effect commencing with the 2018-19 school year; and to include in such notice to all Member Towns the times, dates, and places of two public hearings to be held regarding such proposed school action: namely a meeting to be held in Monterey, Massachusetts at the Monterey Town Hall on March 20, 2018 beginning at 7:00 p.m.; and a meeting to be held at the Mt. Everett Regional School TACPAC at 491 Berkshire School Road, Sheffield, MA 01257 on March 28, 2018 beginning at 6:00 p.m. Ms. Lartigue seconded the motion.*

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Stewart stated that he did not think that we should begin the process to close the Monterey School and that this should not be conducted in open session but in executive session.

Ms. Silvers stated that at least two public hearings must be held on each proposed school action. Monterey and South Egremont will be considered separate actions. The meetings will be scheduled in Monterey and South Egremont and the second meeting will be held at SBRSD. The school committee will vote on the closings at the April 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. These motions only deal with the process as per the guidelines of the regional agreement.

Carol Edleman informed the committee that after meetings with the select board they decided to set up a meeting for the residents of Monterey on March 6, 2018 to get their input.  
Further discussion ensued.

Ms. Brown stated that she would like to see an educational program in the Town of Monterey.

*Roll Call Vote: Art Batacchi – Yes; Carl Stewart – No; Bonnie Silvers – Yes; Fran Lartigue – Yes; Maryellen Brown – No; Dennis Sears – Yes; Bob Law – Yes, Marcella Bush – Yes  
Motion carries: 6 to 2*

Mr. Sears brought up a concern regarding the vote and quoted item 3 of the Regional Agreement “No action shall be taken on any proposal to open any new school or close any existing school except upon the affirmative vote of at least seven (7) members of the committee”.

Mr. Stewart stated that it takes seven people to constitute a meeting, a simple majority passes the motion. There was further discussion.

Ms. Silvers stated that we should continue the process but prior to moving ahead we will contact our attorney for clarification on the number of votes needed.

Ms. Regan stated that item #3 states no action shall be taken on any proposal and that this meeting was to take a vote on beginning the process not a proposal to open or close any existing school.

*Ms. Lartigue then moved that the meeting continue based on the original assumption that the motion requires a simple majority of seven votes to begin the process depending on what our attorney confirms. Ms. Bush seconded the motion. Further discussion ensued and the motion passed unanimously.*

### **South Egremont**

*Ms. Lartigue moved that pursuant to Section 3 of the Regional Agreement for the Southern Berkshire Regional School District, to provide notice to all Member Towns of the District of a proposed school action to close the existing South Egremont School located at 42 Main Street, South Egremont, MA, with such closure to take effect commencing with the 2018-19 school year; and to include in such notice to all Member Towns the times, dates, and places of two public hearings to be held regarding such proposed school action: namely a meeting to be held in South Egremont, Massachusetts at the Egremont Town Hall on March 21, 2018 beginning at 7:00 p.m.; and a meeting to be held at the Mt. Everett Regional School TACPAC at 491 Berkshire School Road, Sheffield, MA 01257 on March 28, 2018 beginning at 8:00 p.m.. Mr. Batacchi seconded the motion.*

*There was no further discussion.*

*Roll Call Vote:*

*Art Batacchi – Yes; Carl Stewart – Yes; Fran Lartigue – Yes; Maryellen Brown – Yes;*

*Dennis Sears – Yes; Bob Law – Yes, Bonnie Silvers – Yes; Marcella Bush - No*

*Motion carries: 7 to 1*

*Mr. Stewart motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m. Ms. Lartigue seconded the motion. There was no discussion and the motion was unanimously approved.*

#### **Documents presented at this meeting**

- **Agenda #1540**
- **Proposed Motions**
- **Regional Agreement**