School Committee Minutes

Upstairs of the Town Hall

Monday, March 27, 2017

6:00 p.m.

Members attending: SusanMary Redinger, Mary Traphagen, Jon Green, Nancy Lancellotti, Patty Wenger, Maureen Babcock, Linda Dwight and Peter Rowe

SusanMary Redinger called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Mary Traphagen read the Core Value Statement.

**Open to Interested Citizens’ Commentary**

Mark Thompson – school calendar relative to professional development time and Good Friday.

**Share out from students about the Dominican Republic Trip**

Bryce Mattie and Katelyn Russell attended the meeting with Jack Allen, Audrey Hettinger and Isabelle Lee who attended the trip to the Dominican Republic in February. Students described their volunteer projects. One was at a college where they worked with students to paint three murals. The second project was the “Dream Project” which is a school for impoverished children. They worked to fix up a building and were able to finish the project and see the children enjoy their new space. The students were inspired by their experience and are passionate about continuing their work.

**Student Report**

Chloe Cushing reported that sophomores took the MCAS test last week and that went well. Spring sports started which is making everyone very happy to get back into shape after winter. Classes are entering into the final chapters and sections of their curriculum in most classes.

**Public Hearing**

Peter Rowe presented the FY18 Budget to the Committee. The budget increase is 3.17% for a total of $13,005,805. In addition there are offsets that total $ 2.9 million dollars contributing to the budget from other funds including Devens, Circuit Breaker, IDEA Grant, School Choice, Title I, K and Pre-K tuition, Transportation Fees. Major cost drivers were provision for a 1.5% COLA, Out of District tuition increase, custodial contract services for cleaning and snow removal, and regular student transportation.

**Superintendent Report**

Hildreth Elementary Building project update

* The School Building Committee met and reviewed the on-going status of the building reports. They also looked at initial conceptual designs and provided input to the architects. The meeting ended with a tour of Bromfield to view the space issues firsthand.
* Several people from the School Building Committee attended a conference call with MSBA about the idea of potentially moving 6th grade and the central administration offices into the building project. For several reasons, MSBA was less than enthusiastic about changing the grade configuration. This led us to hold a workshop with Arrowstreet and NV5 to analyze the space issues at Bromfield and make a recommendation. The group recommended taking the move of 6th grade out of the plan. We will focus later on better student use of the spaces at Bromfield.
* The architect firm, Arrowstreet came out to HES and spent time with teachers and students in focus groups. They also held another parent drop-in forum and 6 parents attended.
* Sue Frederick, Josh Myler and Dr. Dwight worked on the Educational Plan document that will be reviewed by the Visioning Committee and School Building Committee this week before being submitted to MSBA

Dr. Dwight asked the Committee to approve a grant for $1,000 from Harvard Schools Trust for presenters Charles Dew who will speak at Fruitlands at 8 p.m. on April 29th and Gish Jen who will speak on May 5th at 8 p.m. at the top of the Town Hall as a one-time request.

Mary Traphagen made a motion and Patty Wenger seconded to move that we accept the gift from Harvard Schools Trust of $1,000 to Arm in Arm and $1,000 to supplement the Washington, DC trip contingent upon Arm in Arm knowing this is a one-time request.

VOTE 5/0

* A request for seeking a sabbatical waiver has been withdrawn at this time.
* Teacher leaders and district leaders met on Thursday. Topics of discussion included planning for the upcoming April PD ½ day and updating the District Improvement Plan. The upcoming April PD day will be a combination of K-12 Curriculum work and diversity issues. The department leaders and vertical team leaders will be collaborating together to further design the afternoon.
* Bromfield Drama Students will compete at States on March 31st. The show, Shipwrecked was selected to continue on to the third round of competition. Congratulations to the student actors, actresses, stage crew, director, and others involved with the drama festival.

**Update on Building Project**

SusanMary Redinger reported that the School Building Committee will be putting together a 10 minute presentation to present to the community at Annual Town.

**Financial Projection Report for Devens’ Fund**

Peter Rowe reported on the Revenue/Expense Projection for FY16 to FY20. The projections were based on enrollment of 85 students growing by 5 students each year, the FY16 per pupil cost of $16,216 growing by 2.7% annually, Capital budget commitments to Science Labs in FY18 and FY19, a technology support position (proposed) and .5 School Business Manager in FY18 and beyond, classroom teacher funding increased by $100K in FY19 and beyond, maintaining FY17 funding for technology initiatives ($354K) to continuously renew 3 and 4 year leases. The year-end balance projections for FY18 = $739,253, FY19 = $654,709 and FY20 = $820,517.

**Athletic User Fee Funding Vote**

Patty Wenger and Mary Traphagen as members of the Athletic User Fee Subcommittee requested using $40K from the Devens account to supplement the Athletic Account that is currently running a deficit.

Patty Wenger made the motion and Nancy Lancellotti seconded to approve to take $40K from the Devens fund to supplement the Athletic User Fees for the next three years.

VOTE 5/0

**Recommendation for April 14th Day of School**

Dr. Dwight explained the difficulty in making a decision about holding school on Good Friday with high number of staff requesting to be absent. It has been a difficult decision but Dr. Dwight is recommending changing Good Friday from a full day of school to an early release day. Teachers will be working hard to making it an educationally viable day.

Mary Traphagen made a motion and Patty Wenger seconded to move April 14, 2017 from a regular dismissal to an early dismissal for this year.

VOTE 4/1

**Review the Recommended 2017-2018 School Calendar**

Dr. Dwight presented the recommended 2017/2018 School Calendar. The teacher’s contract requires that 5 days be built into the calendar for teacher professional development days. The proposed calendar has 12 early dismissal days and 5 half days. The Committee agreed to change the early release day in April from a Wednesday to a Tuesday to accommodate the town election which would historically be held on the first Tuesday in April.

Mary Traphagen made a motion and Patty Wenger seconded to move that the Committee approve the 2017/2018 school calendar as amended.

VOTE 5/0

**Update on Charter Commission Draft**

SusanMary Redinger explained that a town meeting petition was passed to create a Charter Commission tasked to write a Charter that would direct how town government is run in Harvard. The Charter Commission has begun their work and is currently proposing to make changes. The Charter Commission is proposing to change School Committee terms to all two year term with re-election happening for all members at the same time, an eight year term limit and a limit of two years to serve as Chair. SusanMary Redinger felt that if the Committee agreed she would like to send a message back to the Charter Commission asking to meet with them to gain a better understanding of the reasons behind the changes. SusanMary Redinger agreed to write the letter and bring it back for Committees approval at the next meeting.

**Discuss Roles at Town Meeting**

The School Committee is seeking approval for the following Capital Articles to be approved at Annual Town Meeting:

* Article 26: Door locks at The Bromfield School $84K.
* Article 27: Science Lab at Bromfield $175K (contingent on debt exclusion) additional lab to be funded by Devens.
* Article 28: Bromfield Middle School Bathroom renovation project $40K to be shared with Devens funding.
* Article 29: Middle School Ramp Study $30K.
* Article 32: Hildreth Elementary School Feasibility Study and Design report.

At Annual Town Meeting Mary Traphagen will present Article 27, Patty Wenger will present Article 28, and SusanMary Redinger will present Article 26 and Article 29. SusanMary Redinger and Dr. Dwight will present Article 3

**Brainstorm Student Advisory Topics**

Recommend moving the meeting to Friday, April 28th.

Bus to prom

ER Day – April 14th

Thoughts on Building Project

Review calendar with students

Inclusion work – impact on students

**Review meeting minutes**

With no objection SusanMary Redinger made the motion to approve the minutes of the March 13th meeting as amended.

VOTE 5/0

**Liaison/Sub-committee reports**

**Mary Traphgaen** reported that HES School Council met and there was a question from Sue Frederick on how to make the School Improvement Plan more concrete by cutting some stuff out and adding stuff in. Linda will talk to her about this. The Council talked about the Student survey and there is a concern about how children felt about their teachers. There was percentage of students, who felt their teachers weren’t friendly, but the way the question could be answered was Always, Sometimes or Never and many student chose Sometimes. The Council discussed how to better ask the question to allow students to be more specific with their answers.

Athletic Advisory met and there is interest in seeking approval for a Concussion Grant Testing Program being made available through Emerson. It will need School Committee support. They also discussed renting lights and bleachers to put up for a week at the McCurdy Track.

DEAC met and reviewed their survey and discussed how to tweak it a little bit to better develop the questions to really get the best results from the survey. The 11th house sold. All of the single family houses have been sold. The duplexes are going a little slower. There are four new children living at Devens, 2 attend Harvard Public Schools and two attend the Oxbow School.

**Jon Green** reported that he met with Dr. Dwight and Dr. Harrington to review the SEPAC survey data and came up with some ideas on how to proceed.

**Nancy Lancellotti** reported that TBS School Council are breaking into two Subcommittee groups - Handbook and Climate and then coming back in April to report out.

Policy Subcommittee is planning to meet to continue reviewing the policies.

**Suggested Future Agenda Items**

School Committee Evaluation

School Choice

Parent Survey

Youth Risk Survey

Building Project Update

Policy Flow Chart

Policy Sections

**School Committee Commentary**

**SusanMary Redinger** – thanked Patty for coming back and stepping into CPIC without missing a beat really can’t thank you enough. So appreciate your passion and excitement for the kids and your wisdom and for helping new members learn and grow in the time that you have been here. Thank you from the Committee and the Schools. For me personally and me as the Chair and for all the people you made a difference for “Thank you”!

**Patty Wenger** – Thanks for having me back, it was a quick nine months. You all have so much on your plates. I commend all of you. Keep up the good work; you are doing an awesome job.

**Linda Dwight** – it was a pleasure having the chance to work with you again. I will always remember that your eyes always lit up the most when anything was student centered and new and creative. You had the chance to weigh in with past history on some projects that we have moved forward.

**SusanMary Redinger** announced that this will be her last meeting serving as Chair. It has been an extreme honor to serve in that capacity. It has been great and I thank the Committee for their work and to Dr. Dwight who has been a joy to work with. Thank you for your trust and partnership for the last five years.

Dr. Dwight is so happy that SusanMary Redinger will continue on the board. I can’t imagine stepping into this position without your support and collaboration. You work tirelessly at this job. I thank you for serving the schools with passion and for all the hard work in the five years.

With no objection SusanMary Redinger adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

VOTE 5/0

Respectfully Submitted:

Mary Zadroga