School Committee Minutes

Upstairs of the Town Hall

Monday, March 13, 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.

Dr. Dwight read the Vision Statement.

**Open to Interested Citizens’ Commentary**

None

**Arrowstreet Q&A Regarding HES Renovation**

The district is currently in the feasibility study stage of the project. During this phase, the District will work with Stephanie Gilman from NV5 and Emily Grandstaff-Rice from Arrowstreet to document its educational program, generate an initial space summary, document existing conditions, establish parameters, develop and evaluate alternatives and recommend the most educationally appropriate preferred solution to the MSBA Board of Directors for their consideration. Emily Grandstaff-Rice is meeting with teacher and student focus groups as well as holding community member drop in meetings to gather input from stakeholders

**Student Report**

Chloe Cushing reported that ninth grade students will be leaving on Wednesday for the Washington DC field trip. Tenth grade students will be taking the MCAS test during three days next week. Spring sports are scheduled to start on Monday, March 20th.

**Field Trip Approval**

Michael Poe, Debate Team Advisor asked for approval to take two students who qualified for the National Debate Team Convention to Louisville Kentucky over Memorial Day weekend. The Debate team will be holding fundraisers to defer some of the costs of the trip.

Mary Traphagen made a motion and Patty Wenger seconded to approve the overnight field trip to Louisville Kentucky for the National Debate Convention for the Memorial Day weekend.

VOTE 5/0

Dr. Dwight asked the Committee to consider a request from the Crew Team to depart for the Saratoga Invitational at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, April 28th instead of after school as originally scheduled.

Patty Wenger made the motion and Mary Traphagen seconded to approve the request from the Crew Team to leave at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, April 28th.

VOTE 5/0

Josh Thurston, Kristen McManus, Mischa deRuijter and Greer Jarvis attended the meeting to seek approval for the Business Professional of America (BPA) Club to attend the National Convention in Orlando Florida from Wednesday, May 10th through Sunday, May 14th.

Nancy Lancellotti made the motion and Mary Traphagen seconded to approve the overnight, out of state trip for 10 to 15 students and 2 chaperones to travel to Orlando Florida from May 10th to May 14th as proposed tonight.

VOTE 5/0

**Special Education Report**

Marie Harrington, Director of Pupil Services gave a status report of special education in the district. Dr. Harrington reported on the number of students receiving services at each school as well as out of district by disability type. Dr. Harrington included in her report the DESE mid cycle review process, current staffing, department successes and goals for the year.

**Financial Report**

School Business Manager, Peter Rowe reviewed the FY17 Second Quarter Budget update. The report is projecting total spending for the year at $15,190,501, which would yield a small surplus for the year of $4,562. Custodial services exceed the budget by $50K with an additional snow removal overage of $35K, regular transportation contract increase of $33K, Out of District Placement costs of $59K over budget and the loss of the state funded Kindergarten grant at $20K. These overages are largely offset by approximately $163K in salary savings from staff turnover and a projected surplus of $24K in the Special Education transportation account.

**User Fee Subcommittee Recommendation**

Mary Traphagen and Patty Wenger reported to the Committee that their recommendation would be to use the Devens fund to offset more of the Athletic User fees. Jon Green asked for a report out of Devens expected revenue versus expenses for the next five year period in order to understand how this offset will affect that fund. The Committee will bring back for further discussion and vote at a future meeting.

**Superintendent Report**

***\*****Hildreth Elementary building project update*

30 community members attended the Community Forum on March 2nd

Over 200 people have completed the on-line survey

We have meetings planned with the teachers and students at HES with the architect firm. We also have several community meetings planned.

The website has the presentation from March 2nd with voice over content, the Q&A, and other resources.

*\*Inclusion Steering Committee meeting*

Leaders Sharon McCarthy and Emma Franzeim planned the 2nd Steering Committee meeting. The Steering Committee members decided on the name Arm in Arm to identify their group to the public. Stay tuned for information on educational offerings, a town-wide read, and other inclusion based opportunities.

\**Collecting Data on April 14th*

We currently have a 52 staff members requesting the day off for religious observance. As this number continues to grow (10 were added this week), I may need to close school due to low attendance. Our first priority is the safety of students and unless we are able to find more substitutes, I may have to close school and have the day made up in June.

**Update on Tree Warden Recommendation Regarding Trees outside Library**

As a result of a student injury due to climbing a tree located between the library and the Bromfield School parking lot, Dr. Dwight met with the Tree Warden, Christian Bilodeau. Christian agreed to trim the lower branches of the trees to make tree climbing improbable.

**BOS proposal regarding Community Ed/Park and Rec position**

The Board of Selectman are going to submit an article at Town Meeting to combine a new Park and Rec position with the School Community Education position. Due to the schools loss in revenue with this configuration, approval is unlikely and as a result other alternatives will be looked at.

**SC Self-Assessment Process/Form Review**

SusanMary Redinger reviewed the process for completing the School Committee Self-Assessment form. The Committee will need to return the completed form to SusanMary Redinger by Wednesday March 22nd in order for her to compile results to be presented at the March 27th School Committee meeting.

**Review Letter of Supporting Transgender Students’ Rights**

Dr. Dwight shared with the Committee a letter she intended to send out to the school community regarding transgender rights. Dr. Dwight explained that in February the US President rescinded a national order by which transgender students were no longer protected under Title IX. Massachusetts State Law prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender identity. This letter will reassure students and their families that the Harvard Public Schools will abide by the Massachusetts State Law and will continue to provide a safe and support school environment for all students.

Mary Traphagen made the motion and Jon Green seconded to approve the letter as presented and include the School Committee as co-signers to the letter.

VOTE 5/0

**Grant Approval**

The Committee approved the generous grant from the PTO in the amount of $2,500 to be used to off-set the cost of the Washington DC trip.

Jon Green made the motion and Mary Traphagen seconded to approve the grant from the PTO in the amount of $2,500 to be used to off-set costs for the ninth grade Washington, DC trip.

VOTE 5/0

**Review of Minutes**

With no objection SusanMary Redinger made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2017 meeting as amended.

VOTE 5/0

**Liaison/Subcommittee reports**

**Mary Traphagen** attended the Athletic Advisory meeting and shared the idea of using Devens funds to offset the Athletic budget. Because there were very few responses to the fall sports survey the group is thinking of having less questions on the survey and making it mandatory requirement for athletes. The Athletic Advisory is working on fundraising ideas and would love to get lights and bleachers for the soccer fields.

HES School Council discussed homework. The Grade 2-5 student survey is complete but has not been made public. HES held a very successful lock down drill.

The Science Fair was held last Friday. Mary Traphagen presented two awards at the science fair on behalf of the School Committee.

**Patty Wenger** reported that CPIC met a couple of weeks ago to finalize things for town meeting on April 1st

**Jon Green** reported that Harvard Cable Television will meet this Wednesday.

SEPAC will be meeting to regroup and re-strategize and is looking for a recommendation on how to proceed with that.

**Nancy Lancellotti** reported that parents would like to get the health fair going again. There is some hesitation that students would travel off campus and would like to use the model where speakers would come to the school. The discussion now is how to involve parents. It would be unfortunate to lose the student parent component and the common information discussed.

The Policy subcommittee met and looked at the Harassment policy and will be making some changes to the language and will bring it back to the committee at a future meeting.

**Maureen Babcock** reported that DEAC did not meet March 7th and is rescheduled for March 22nd.

**SusanMary Redinger** reported that the Committee met with the Student Advisory Committee meeting. Four students attended the meeting. The students would like to have more information on course descriptions and syllabus, homework is useful for what you know and don’t know. Wish that homework was distributed more equitably. The students would like to have a speaker who could talk to them about risky behavior. They thought that moving the sixth grade back to Hildreth Elementary School would be an overall positive move.

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**Future Agenda Items**

School Committee Self-Assessment

Recommendation regarding Athletic user fees

Approve school calendar for 2017/2018

Public Hearing on the budget

Budget book

Student Advisory topics

Parent Survey

Youth at Risk Survey

Bryce – Dominican Republic Trip

Devens projections

Policy flow chart

Science Fair award criteria

**Closing Commentary**

Dr. Dwight acknowledged students for an outstanding performance at the Drama Fest. They did a play called Shipwrecked and performed well and will be advancing to the next round. There were many students at the Drama Fest from many different school districts interacting and having a lot of fun.

An Art display in Volunteers Hall that matched the Garden Clubs floral arranged with student art work. It was great to see the intergenerational conversations and interactions.

Mary Traphagen- we really need to reach everyone in town to weigh in on the HES building project. It is clear that we need to reach out to the entire population. It makes me a little nervous that people don’t know more but it is on us to get the information out. It can be found on the HES page of the psharvard.org website.

Patty Wenger acknowledged the Committee for all the work they are doing. This is a really dynamic Committee and a lot of work is being done. Keep up the good work.

Maureen Babcock – thanked Nancy and Mary for judging the Science Fair.

SusanMary Redinger announced that the next meeting will be Patty Wenger’s last meeting – Looks like SusanMary Redinger and John Ruarke will be elected to serve on the Committee at the upcoming election as there are two candidates for two openings on the ballot.

With no objection SusanMary Redinger adjourned the meeting at 8:38 p.m.

VOTE 5/0

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Zadroga