

School Committee Meeting Minutes  
Hybrid Meeting  
November 14, 2022  
6:15 PM

Members attending: Suzanne Allen, Abigail Besse, Sharlene Cronin, Heather Knowles, Shannon Molloy, and SusanMary Redinger.

Others in attendance: Linda Dwight, Caitlin Lelievre, and Ingrid Nilsson.

Ms. Besse called the meeting to order at 6:15 PM.

**Vision Statement:**

Ms. Cronin read the vision statement.

**Public Commentary:**

Kathleen Doherty, Chair of the Bargaining Association of the Harvard Educators Association (HEA) and Bromfield Social Studies Teacher, read a prepared statement on behalf of the HEA outlining the goals of starting the negotiations early this year. Currently, meetings are scheduled for November 15th and December 6th.

Stuart Sklar discussed the reasons why the Town of Harvard's finance report was so flawed and indicated that he feels the School Committee has been very responsible with the Devens fund. It is his hope that the Committee will push back on the Select Board.

**Student Update:**

Asha Khurana said the girls' soccer team finished up the week of November 7th at the MIAA playoff game and that the boys' soccer team made it to the semi-finals and will play on November 15th. The cross country teams are going to the state finals and the middle school and high school plays will take place the weekend of the 19th. Additionally, the coffeehouse was a great success.

Tegan Allen added that final grades will be released on November 18th.

**Review School Improvement Plans:**

Dr. Dwight started off by recognizing The Bromfield School Principals, Kim Murphy and

Stephen Greene, for their work preparing their school improvement plans (SIPs). Ms. Besse also introduced Heather Knowles, who will serve as the Committee representative from Devens.

Ms. Murphy gave a brief overview of the way the high school's SIP is organized and then walked the Committee through the entire document. Committee members asked questions following each section of the SIP. Dr. Dwight also shared that each SIP, once approved, will be shared with the community in the School Committee Highlights that are sent after each meeting.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the SIP for the Bromfield High School as presented. The motion was passed unanimously.

*Move: Ms. Redinger                      Second: Ms. Cronin                      Status: Passed*

Mr. Greene discussed the way the middle school core values align with the district's core values and then reviewed each section of the SIP. Committee members had the opportunity to comment and ask questions. Members commented on the fact that the plans build off of each other and how well Mr. Green and Ms. Murphy are collaborating to build a welcoming environment.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the SIP for the Bromfield Middle School as presented. The motion was passed unanimously.

*Move: Ms. Cronin                      Second: Ms. Redinger                      Status: Passed*

**Superintendent Update:**

- Three District PD Day: Teachers and staff from Ayer-Shirley, Littleton, and Harvard met again for an engaging day of professional development. The keynote speaker was Ken Williams, the author of Ruthless Equity. The day also featured workshops offered by teachers from three districts. Presenters from Harvard included: Jackie Travers, Wyatt Holt, Beth Graham, Jesse Shaw, Michelle Phillips, Tammy Route, Bryce Mattie, and Claudia Owens.
- Community Events: The PTO hosted a meet and greet for the TBS principals last week. The event coincided with the Coffeehouse so parents were able to attend both. The Coffeehouse gave students an opportunity to share their interests and talents with their peers and community members. They read poetry, sang, played instruments, and performed comedy skits.
- Fall Team Successes: Many of our teams have enjoyed winning seasons. Of note is the post-season for our girls' and boys' soccer teams. Additionally, the girls' JV soccer team had an undefeated season! The boys' and girls' cross-country teams are advancing to the State finals.

- Technology Advisory: The Technology Advisory met for the first time on November 10th to share district information and align on some goals and interests for future meetings. Everyone shares a desire to provide the best possible learning experience for our students and support for parents. The next meeting is set for January 12th.

### **Budget Subcommittee Update:**

Ms. Cronin updated Committee members on where the budgeting process stands. The Budget Subcommittee has met with all of the cost centers and Ms. Cronin commented on how exciting it was to hear what they would like to offer. The subcommittee is meeting again the week of November 14th to review the big picture. Some items they will need to consider include: 19 level advances with only two retirements, the bus contract, the math curriculum, the loss of ESSER funding, and higher prices due to inflation.

### **Devens Report Update:**

Ms. Besse discussed the accusations being made in the press that the District is misusing the Devens Fund. The report that was created by the Town of Harvard was done so without the knowledge or input of the District. Ms. Besse reiterated that the funds are not being misused and that there has been full transparency about how this funding has been used to date.

Ms. Besse discussed a meeting that took place at Town Hall on November 7th with herself, Dr. Dwight, Ms. Nilsson, the Town Manager, the Assistant Town Manager, the Finance Director, the Chair of the Finance Committee, and the Chair of the Select Board to discuss the Devens Report. Unfortunately, very little progress was made. Ms. Besse shared the memo that was prepared in advance of this meeting with the Committee.

Ms. Besse discussed the three options that were prepared by the Select Board Chair as a summary of the potential handling of the Devens Fund. Upon discussion, Committee members decided to reject all three options as presented.

### **Grant/Field Trip/Club Approval:**

Dr. Dwight shared a completed Harvard PTO Grant Request form. The request is for \$406.30 and will cover the cost of a new whiteboard for a classroom.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the grant request as presented. The motion was passed unanimously.

*Move: Ms. Cronin*

*Second: Ms. Redinger*

*Status: Passed*

Dr. Dwight shared an additional grant request. HES received a donation from Educational Products Incorporated at the start of the school year to provide supplies to families in need or to provide teachers with additional classroom supplies. After ensuring that all students have the supplies they need, HES is requesting to use the leftover funds to provide additional materials to the specialists. They are requesting approval in the amount of \$332.88.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the grant request as presented. The motion was passed unanimously.

*Move: Ms. Redinger                      Second: Ms. Cronin                      Status: Passed*

Dr. Dwight shared three applications for new clubs and organizations: Bromfield Coding Club, Fashion Club, and Skate Club.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the clubs as presented. The motion was passed unanimously.

*Ms. Redinger                      Second: Ms. Cronin                      Status: Passed*

#### **Future Meeting Dates:**

The next meeting will be held on November 28, 2022 at 6:15 and will be remote via Zoom.

#### **Agenda Items:**

Upcoming agenda items include: the FY24 budget and the HES school improvement plan.

#### **Minutes:**

Ms. Besse approved the October 24th meeting minutes as presented with no objections.

#### **School Committee Liaison and Subcommittee Reports:**

Ms. Cronin already shared updates from the Budget Subcommittee meeting, but also indicated that the Best Practices Subcommittee will be meeting later this month and that CPIC is due to submit application requests on November 15th and will meet later this week.

Ms. Molloy shared that November is SEPAC Awareness Month and that the District's SEPAC will be displaying signs and inviting community members to wear yellow on November 18th. Dr. Dwight added that there is a place on the middle school ramp to display lights if they would like

to take advantage of that as well. Ms. Molloy indicated that there is a warrant in the folder for review and the DEI and Negotiations Subcommittees will meet on November 15th. There is also a legislative update in the folder for Committee members to review which may be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Ms. Allen said that the Policy Subcommittee is planning to meet the week of November 21st and will save that update until after budget season. She had no updates from the Transportation Advisory.

Ms. Knowles discussed the survey results that were reviewed at the last DEAC meeting. While the results of the survey were positive, there was a poor response rate - the hope is that creating their own database will help with this. The next meeting is scheduled for November 17th.

Ms. Redinger shared that the School Building Committee approved the contract from Beyond Construction for the wall. Work on the wall has already started, but is currently on hold until a Certificate of Appropriateness is received from the Historical Commission. Feedback from the Revenue Ideation Committee was already shared with members.

Ms. Besse discussed the recent HES School Council meeting and said that there are monthly assemblies held at the elementary school that each have a theme. Additionally, she commented on the positive feedback of the School Committee Highlights that go out after each meeting and asked if there was a way for everyone in school council to receive it even if they don't have children in the district. She said the work on Ann Lees is progressing well and looks great. Ryan Land is near completion and they may be reaching a resolution on the sheds.

#### **School Committee Commentary:**

Ms. Cronin expressed her gratitude to Dr. Dwight, Ms. Nilsson, and members of the leadership team that the Budget Subcommittee met with over the last couple of weeks.

Ms. Allen recognized all the work that has been done by the District's facilities staff to make improvements at The Bromfield School.

Ms. Redinger expressed her excitement about the vision and passion of the Bromfield principals.

#### **Public Commentary:**

Kara Minar, Town of Harvard Select Board member, spoke to offer some points of clarification. She indicated that the Select Board received the Devens Report on September 27th, but did not discuss it and received no advance notice on this particular report. It is not on their next agenda, but the report will be discussed in a future meeting. She also mentioned the Revenue Ideation

Committee and said the final report will be part of the November 15th Select Board meeting.

**Adjourn:**

At 8:57 PM, Ms. Besse adjourned the meeting to enter Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the HEA because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the School Committee. Members will not return to open session. Members agreed unanimously by roll call vote and Ms. Knowles excused herself.