

GROTON-DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

High School Library
Business Meeting Minutes
October 25, 2011

Approved 11.15.11

PRESENT:

Ms Berta Erickson
Mr. Jim Frey, Chair
Mr. John Giger
Ms Leslie Lathrop
Ms Alison Manugian, Vice-chair
Mr. Jon Sjoberg

ABSENT:

Mr. Erik Dichter, Secretary

ADMINISTRATION:

Mr. Joseph Mastrocola, Superintendent
Mr. Gerald Martin, Director of Business and Finance

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE:

Gerrit Bolt

STAFF, PRESS, OTHERS: P. Comtois, Groton Landmark; A. Snodgrass, K. McKenzie, A. Eisenklam, S. Eisenklam, R. Connerty, C. Connerty, C. Lindemer, P. Myerson, M. McCaffrey

I. Call to Order:

a. Vote to Enter Executive Session

The GDRSC Meeting was called to order at 6:45 p.m. A. Manugian moved to adjourn to Executive Session under M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21a-2, for the purpose to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non-union personnel for the purpose of Cafeteria/Maintenance Negotiations, Seconded by L. Lathrop.

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL

b. Reconvene in Regular Session

The GDRSC Meeting reconvened in open session at 7:10 p.m. and was called to order by the chair, J. Frey.

II. Pledge of Allegiance - Students of Swallow Union

Fourth graders Cole Connerty and Abby Eisenklam led the Pledge of Allegiance. Cole shows great leadership skills, is thoughtful and is an outstanding student. Abby is warm, kind and an excellent role model. She is also a great basketball player.

III. Announcements

L. Lathrop announced the Boston Gay Men's Chorus will be performing at the Performing Arts Center on November 8th at 6:00 p.m. and tickets are available on the website.

B. Erickson announced there were two outstanding programs held at the middle school. A father told a compelling story about a suicide that had taken place in Vermont. On Shadow Day, Jay Head, who played in the Blind Side, was interviewed. She noted Principal Silverman brings in a similar program every year.

J. Giger announced the Groton-Dunstable Alliance for Youth sponsored a very good session on adolescent depression and anxiety last Wednesday night that was very well attended. He gave kudos to the group for putting on such a high quality event.

IV. Approval of Minutes

B. ERICKSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 11, 2011 AS AMENDED. SECONDED BY L. LATHROP
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

V. Vote to Accept Warrant Articles

A. MANUGIAN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE REPORT OF ONE PAYROLL WARRANT DATED OCTOBER 20, 2011 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$801,534.53 AND OCTOBER VENDOR WARRANTS TOTALING \$2,812,284.09. SECONDED BY J. GIGER
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

VI. Questions and Comments from the Public

With respect to the MASC resolutions that will be discussed later in the meeting, K. McKenzie said he is looking for the committee's support on Resolution 1 that is being put forth by his committee. He will be available to answer any questions at that time.

VII. Presentations

A. Washington DC Field Trip - A. Snodgrass explained the eighth grade trip to Washington, DC is the same itinerary as last year's and will be June 4, 2012 through June 7, 2012. The cost is also the same as last year's and they generally have a 90% to 95% participation rate and anticipate at least 215 students will participate. It is a family's individual choice to have their child attend and students who do not go, are required to attend school and participate in supervised activities connected to the curriculum. Parents are made aware that financial assistance is available and parents just need to speak with Principal Silverman.

J. GIGER MOVED TO APPROVE THE EIGHTH GRADE WASHINGTON, DC TRIP ON JUNE 4, 2012 THROUGH JUNE 7, 2012. SECONDED BY L. LATHROP
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

B. Update of Athletics and Wellness - J. Mastrocola formally introduced Athletic Director/Wellness Coordinator Michael McCaffrey who has been in the district since August. He has been invaluable to the high school staff and a very good connection for the high school students. M. McCaffrey said he is excited to be part of a fantastic district and looks forward to doing some great work. He is proud of all the teams and athletes.

J. Giger said he received an email notification about an all day event in Boston that is explicitly focused on wellness in schools and thought someone from the district might be interested in attending. He will forward the information to committee members and J. Mastrocola.

B. Erickson asked in what context the term wellness is used in the district. M. McCaffrey said it is part of the co-curricula activities on the field and education by the coaches off the field in terms of lifestyle choices and trying to develop a healthy outlook towards life. They are looking to bring in speakers to talk about decisions students can make to benefit themselves as they move forward. Wellness dovetails perfectly with athletics and fits in with the healthy attitude toward keeping all students moving in the right direction to make the right choices.

J. Mastrocola said he has asked Mr. McCaffrey to specifically look at the existing wellness policy and associate documents related to wellness across the district. He will also look at the health curriculum and will take over the bullying plan implementation. J. Mastrocola anticipates all this will take 12 to 18 months.

B. Erickson understands legislation is pending that will require more stringent time be put into the school day for physical education. She said 40% of the students do not take part in organized sports and feels they need to reach those students since physical activity is important to their well being. M. McCaffrey agrees and feels

some of the issues at the high school level can be addressed in a cerebral way through guest speakers, seminars and classroom work. J. Frey said there is compelling research about physical activity being beneficial.

L. Lathrop asked Mr. McCaffrey to tell them about his background. M. McCaffrey said he has been coaching for over 20 years, particularly at the college level. He has always wanted to lead an athletic department and said he could not be in a better place. He was hired to coach lacrosse in England and worked at the oldest lacrosse playing school in the country, dating back to the mid-eighteen hundreds. He brought 2 teams to New England in 1993. He has found the superintendent and staff to be very welcoming and enjoys working with the coaches and wants to give them new ideas, support and the resources they need. He said there are not enough hours in his day but he looks forward to developing some policy and streamlining some things to be more efficient.

J. Giger said the Policy Subcommittee needs his recommendations on what the policy is for dealing with concussions and returning players to playing after a concussion. He advised Mr. McCaffrey that he and Ms Erickson were members of the committee that put together the plan for anti-bullying and anti-cyber-bullying and he hopes the leadership can come up with a list of "lessons learned" from the previous year that can be looked at moving forward. M. McCaffrey said they will have a policy in place on concussions by the first of the year as mandated by the state and has begun work on it. He has gone over the anti-bullying plan with Principal Silverman but needs more time to research and develop policy. As a member of the Budget and Finance subcommittee, J. Giger said they have great hopes that Mr. McCaffrey's efforts will keep them on budget this year.

G. Bolt asked M. McCaffrey how he would describe the culture at the high school. M. McCaffrey said he is very impressed with the openness of the school and students that are accountable for their actions, making it easier to teach. He finds the relaxed atmosphere very refreshing.

On behalf of the committee, and the community, J. Frey welcomed Mr. McCaffrey to the district and wished him success. L. Lathrop asked Mr. McCaffrey to share any accomplishments and kudos that can be announced at the meetings. He said he notified the superintendent today that the high school boys soccer team is currently ranked third in New England, more recently being sixth.

VIII. Reports

A. Subcommittees

Personnel and Negotiations - J. Sjoberg reported they met to review the superintendent's goals and some slight modifications were made to those goals. The school committee will vote on the goals at their November 8th meeting. The subcommittee will meet at MSS for two hours, beginning at 9:00 a.m., on November 8th to add measurable actions to the goals. They also discussed the superintendent's evaluation instrument and how it may not serve all the purposes they need. Non-subcommittee members wishing to attend their meeting were asked to notify the chair so the meeting can be dual-posted.

J. Giger believes it is acceptable to post one subcommittee meeting notice indicating "and/or" - that the meeting will be a subcommittee meeting or a special meeting of the school committee, with a footnote that says the type of meeting will be decided at the beginning of the meeting.

J. Frey suggested they check with the Attorney General's office. He said they received acknowledgement from the Attorney General's office that the district is authorized to use the website as the primary means of notifying the public. They will continue to send courtesy copies of their posted meetings to the town clerks and the schools.

Policy Subcommittee - L. Lathrop reported they will meet at 5:30 p.m. on November 1st.

Budget & Finance Subcommittee - A. Manugian reported they met last Thursday and discussed what they would be looking for in a new assistant business manager. They had a presentation from a software company

to talk about software updating options. The budget process has begun with the site leaders and town government representatives have been invited to attend their November 17th meeting which will be held at MSS at 8:00 am. She advised all their meetings are dual-posted. B. Erickson questioned whether the early time would be difficult for people to attend but J. Giger advised the time worked well last year.

Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee - A. Manugian reported they met to talk about what they will be looking at for the year and set up the structure of the committees. She will be the co-chair and E. Dichter will be the secretary. J. Sjöberg asked the subcommittee to develop a Mission Statement.

B. Superintendent

1. Joint Town Budget and Finance Meeting - The budget process started with a kick-off meeting with the Leadership Team and principals in regards to programmatic budgeting. Town officials have been invited to attend the Budget and Finance subcommittee meeting on November 17th. They expect to unveil the FY13 budget in early February.

2. November Family Literacy - Governor Patrick has declared November Family Literacy Month. This is an opportunity to support children of all ages in out-of-school learning, engage parents in supporting their children's education and engage community partners in supporting and celebrating lifelong learning and family well-being. A list of suggested family activities will be shared with the principals for inclusion in student packets.

3. Staff Directory - A staff directory was distributed.

C. Director of Business and Finance

1. Budget Transfers - G. Martin reviewed the five budget transfers totaling \$534,878.

A. MANUGIAN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE ACCOUNT CHANGES AS PRESENTED.

SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL

2. On-line Payments - They are close to expanding their on-line payment system to include parking fees, user fees and tuitions. G. Martin said he needs to meet with Mr. Babin next week to discuss any technical issues.

D. Advisory Committees

Tarbell Advisory Committee - B. Erickson reported Groton's town meeting unanimously passed the article to have the owner of Country Kids purchase the Tarbell School for \$35,000. The article to release the district from any responsibility of the school also passed. It was noted the school committee will need to take a vote in December to get out of their lease. The town of Groton will be taking over the insurance on the building in November. J. Mastrocola believes the sale of the property will be finalized in early January 2012.

Prescott Advisory Committee - B. Erickson reported they will meet next Tuesday. They are waiting for references from prospective architects so they can make their final choice.

E. Chair

Memorial Review Committee - J. Frey reported he is looking at how to constitute an appropriate review committee for the request to process and assign a memorial name to the high school gymnasium in memory of Sgt Billy Woitowicz. He hopes to name a committee chair within the next few weeks. He said this is an important process and they want to assemble a group of people who will be thoughtful and will consider all of the implications of the memorial naming and also be open to considering alternative methods for doing the memorial.

L. Lathrop said there has been discussion about naming the Forge Village fields in Sgt Woitowicz's memory.

J. Giger said a memorial plaque will be placed on Forge Village Road on November 11th at 9:30 a.m. in Sgt Woitowicz's honor.

IX. Discussions

1. MASC Resolutions

A. Manugian was chosen to be the committee's voting delegate at the MASC Conference and L. Lathrop was chosen to be the alternate. J. Giger will also be attending. On November 11th, representatives to the 2011 Delegate Assembly will consider five resolutions presented by member districts. The pros and cons of each resolution were discussed by committee members.

Resolution 1 - Providing greater access for students to Exploratory Visits to Chapter 74 Approved Vocational Education Programs The intent of this resolution is to provide clarity to 603 CMR27.07 by requiring Exploratory visits for eighth grade middle school students to the vocational technical high schools.

K. McKenzie stated Groton-Dunstable does an excellent job of allowing students to visit the vocational high schools but other districts do not provide adequate exposure. J. Frey said it would be an "opt-out" rather than an "opt-in" choice. K. McKenzie noted it is usually up to the Chapter 74 program to cover the transportation costs but this will be decided by DESE. The vocational schools have the transportation cost built into their budgets. G. Bolt said it is good for the students to be informed about vocational schools.

J. FREY MOVED THEY SUPPORT RESOLUTION 1 PENDING THE INCLUSION OF THE REQUIREMENT THAT CHAPTER 74 SCHOOLS SPECIFICALLY MAINTAIN FUNDING OF THE EXPLORATORY VISIT.
SECONDED BY J. GIGER

J. Sjoberg said he supports the program but is uncomfortable with mandates.

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2 - Teacher Evaluation and Resolution 5 - State Educator Evaluation Process - Resolution 2 formalizes the transition to the new teacher evaluation process and Resolution 5 asks the legislature to enact statute requirements that the regulations be reviewed not later than every two years and that the legislature fully fund the cost of implementing the regulations.

J. SJOBERG MOVED THEY SUPPORT RESOLUTION 2 AND RESOLUTION 5. SECONDED BY J. FREY
In Favor: J. Giger, L. Lathrop, A. Manugian, J. Frey, J. Sjoberg
Abstention: B. Erickson

Resolution 3 - Charter School Funding - This reaffirms MASC's position to change the funding mechanism so that Commonwealth Charter Schools, which are approved and supervised solely by the state, be funded directly out of a line item in the state budget.

L. LATHROP MOVED TO SUPPORT RESOLUTION 3. SECONDED BY A. MANUGIAN
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 4 - Enactment of a Freeze on Federal Regulations Pending the Reauthorization of No Child Left Behind - The resolution urges Congress to enact a thorough revision to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that precludes unfunded federal mandates and that establishes standards and assessments that are reasonable, workable and fully funded.

J. Frey said there is action at the federal level that renders this largely moot and thinks some of the recommended actions are all ready being taken.

J. FREY MOVED THEY TAKE NO POSITION ON THIS RESOLUTION. There was no second and the motion was withdrawn.

L. Lathrop would like to vote on the Resolution to reaffirm the actions that have been started.

L. LATHROP MOVED THEY SUPPORT RESOLUTION 4. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON

In Favor: J. Giger, L. Lathrop, A. Manugian, B. Erickson, J. Sjoberg

Abstention: J. Frey

J. Mastrocola noted the Board of Education voted 8-0 today to ask for the waivers.

2. Cafeteria/Maintenance Contract

J. SJOBERG MOVED THEY RATIFY THE AGREEMENT WITH THE SEIU LOCAL 888 CAFETERIA AND MAINTENANCE UNION. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON

J. Frey advised this contract is extended through June 30, 2012.

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL

X. New Business

With respect to Mr. McCaffrey's statement that they need to have a concussion policy into the state by the end of December, J. Giger said the Policy Subcommittee would need to have his proposal by November 1st in order to have the first and second readings at school committee meetings. If the subcommittee received it by their December 6th, meeting, they could waive a second reading and vote on it at the December 13th school committee meeting. If necessary, J. Sjoberg suggested having the Policy Subcommittee meeting be a school committee meeting and that would cover the first reading.

XI. Adjournment

J. SJOBERG MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 9:25 P.M. SECONDED BY L. LATHROP

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Smith
Recording Secretary