

GROTON-DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

High School Library
Business Meeting Minutes
May 22, 2012

Approved 06.19.12

PRESENT:

Ms Berta Erickson
Mr. John Giger
Ms Alison Manugian, Vice-chair
Mr. Jon Sjoberg

ABSENT:

Mr. Jim Frey
Ms Leslie Lathrop

ADMINISTRATION:

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

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE: Ariana Cho

STAFF, PRESS, OTHERS: C. Lindemer, Groton Herald; P. Comtois, Groton Landmark; K. Milano, J. Foster, M. Mastrullo, M. Brisson, R. Arena, S. Bartel, Destination Imagination students, See attached sign-in sheet

I. Call to Order:

A. Vote to Enter Executive Session

The GDRSC Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. The committee unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session for the purpose to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21a-3 for the purpose of SEIU Local 888-Cafeteria and Maintenance. To discuss reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21a.1.

B. Reconvene in Regular Session

The GDRSC Meeting reconvened in open session at 7:28 p.m. and was called to order by the vice- chair, A. Manugian.

II. Pledge of Allegiance (Students from Florence Roche School)

Fourth graders Katie Milano and Jack Foster led the Pledge of Allegiance. Katie likes karate, horseback riding and football and loves to read. Her favorite author is J. K. Rowling. Jack loves sports of all kinds and plays on several teams. He is a huge reader and writer and started a comic book making craze in his classroom.

III. Announcements

A. Cho announced last week the Peer Leaders coordinated SADD Week. This week involved a mock car crash scene for the upper classmen, as well as a PowerPoint for the underclassmen, shown to demonstrate the horrors of distractions while driving.

Upcoming events include the spring concert at the PAC at 7:00 p.m. on May 24th, the Junior/Senior prom this weekend and graduation on June 1st.

B. Erickson announced there were two assemblies at the Middle School this morning for the first look at the Big Book. Representative Tsongas and the president from Peace Abbey in Sherborn were present as well as

graduating seniors who originally started the Big Book project. Members of the Bookmakers and Dreamers Club paraded through the auditorium, waving flags representing every country in the world. The concert choir sang many songs appropriate to peace and she said it was a wonderful ceremony. It will be repeated on June 2nd at 11:00 a.m. when more pages will have been added, and they are looking for community participation.

IV. Approval of Minutes

B. ERICKSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 8, 2012.

SECONDED BY J. SJOBERG

In Favor: J. Sjoberg, B. Erickson, A. Manugian

Abstention: J. Giger

V. Vote to Accept Warrant Articles

A. MANUGIAN MOVED THEY ACCEPT ONE PAYROLL WARRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$798,477.56 AND FOUR VENDOR WARRANTS TOTALING \$727,431.34. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

VI. Questions and Comments from the Public

J. Giger asked members of the audience to use the microphone so people at home can hear.

VII. Presentations

A. Dr. Chris Scott, Executive Director MSEC (Merrimack Special Education Collaborative) -

J. Mastrocola said they had a lot of turmoil at their consortium last August and he, along with other members of the Board of Directors and members from other school committees, spent a lot of time trying to create a stable organization financially and complying with regulations brought on through the Commissioner and DESE. In March, the Board of Directors appointed Dr. Chris Scott as the Executive Director of MSEC.

C. Scott said she has been on board since March and a lot of work has been done at the Collaborative over the last twelve months and there is a great deal more to do. She has been hired to set up a school district at the Collaborative with a finance office, HR office, curriculum office and to run independently of the center. She noted Mr. Mastrocola's support has been very helpful in moving the Collaborative forward.

She provided copies of the new law passed two months ago (Chapter 43 - An Act Relative to Improving Accountability and Oversight of Education Collaboratives). There are 28 collaboratives in the state and this law was passed because of the scandal that occurred at MSEC and is a step in the right direction.

As they move forward, she said they have support from the Department of Elementary Secondary Education and the Commissioner has appointed a team of professionals to work with them at the Collaborative. The first annual budget of the Collaborative, of just over \$21M, was presented last week and it, and their annual report, will be presented to the school committee at another time. She has made a commitment to the Board to maintain a flat tuition rate for the next three years. She noted they have other revenue streams, such as offering professional development opportunities and a summer school program, to help offset tuition costs.

J. Giger said he understands the new law provides some flexibility from a governance perspective around the makeup of the membership of the Board and asked Ms Scott if it is her intention to move toward that model in the fall. C. Scott said the new law stipulates a school committee member, or the superintendent, will sit on the Board so it is up to the school committee to decide who they would like to sit on the board. A decision would need to be made by June 1st as the new executive board and chair will be chosen in July. He requested this item be on committee's the May 29th agenda.

B. Destination Imagination - J. Sjoberg said his daughter did Destination Imagination this year and he was an Appraiser. He had the opportunity to go through training and after learning so much, felt everyone should

experience what is happening. The students did an Instant Challenge called DIanimal for the committee where they had five minutes to come up with a solution to the challenge. The task was to make an animal that might exist in the future and was a combination of two animals and the performance was telling the Appraisers about it. K. Duhamel said the program is run by volunteer groups and she introduced the students and volunteer managers. They scored third out of nineteen teams in their Central Challenge and received a DI Spirit Award for their teamwork during the Instant Challenge. J. Sjoberg said their teamwork is amazing.

K. Duhamel thanked Principal Silverman for bringing DI to the district four years ago and the students thanked him for his support. J. Sjoberg said this is primarily funded through contributions of volunteers and the teams pay for their supplies. There is money in the middle school budget to pay registration and tournament fees which run about \$35 per student. K. Duhamel said the Florence Roche PTA pays for the parent training and funds it through student activity funds. The high school also funds it through student activity funds and volunteers.

**A. MANUGIAN MOVED THEY SUSPEND THE RULES TO VOTE ON THE APPROVAL OF THE LONDON TRIP. SECONDED BY J. GIGER
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY**

London Field Trip - Final Approval (Action)

The committee initially approved the London trip in the fall and policy states an out of state field trip needs two approvals. The trip is August 1st through August 9th. T. Savoy distributed an updated itinerary. Twenty-nine students, three faculty members and eight parent chaperones will be going. J. Mastrocola said he worked with Principal Mastrullo and legal counsel to develop a more extensive out-of-country consent form and T. Savoy said these have been given to the students.

The cost per student is about \$4350 and T. Savoy said they raised enough money to pay the final bill and enough was raised to cover the full cost of the trip. Left over money will be used to reimburse parents for their initial costs.

**B. ERICKSON MOVED THEY APPROVE THE LONDON TRIP. SECONDED BY J. SJOBERG
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY**

J. Giger commended Mr. Savoy for the excellent work and success of phase one of this event that included fund raising efforts and preparations for the trip. He is confident the group will make phase 2 just as successful and they will wind up with an outstanding event for everyone involved. A. Manugian congratulated everyone involved and said this is a tremendous honor for the district.

C. Middle School - School Council

Principal Silverman said the primary goal of their School Improvement Plan is to raise expectations for all students while creating a learning environment of continuous teaching and learning so all students can be successful. The goals are aligned with Turning Points 2000 which emphasizes that in addition to structural changes in classrooms and schools, educators must make substantial, far-reaching changes in curriculum, instruction and assessment in order to prepare their students to be successful in the 21st century.

SIP - GOALS 2011-2014

Goal 1 - To implement the Reading, Writing and Mastery of Content Areas of Essential Learning beginning in September, 2011 with an articulated year-long action plan for Professional Development

A. Myette reviewed the strategies for this goal. Teachers are having students write AEL's on a quarterly basis and filing them in their portfolios. Administration checks them on a quarterly basis.

Goal 2 - To implement differentiated instructional strategies to provide students with different learning pathways in the acquisition of content, processes and the development of ideas

K. McKenzie reviewed the strategies for this goal. New staff members were introduced to DI techniques through the Teacher Induction Program. Observations and walk-throughs have shown evidence that more teachers are pre-assessing students' knowledge of new material and differentiating their instruction based on these results to better meet the needs of their students.

Goal 3 - To implement a program(s) that addresses the unique needs of identified high-end learners

S. Silverman said gifted and talented students are being left behind under NCLB (No Child Left Behind). The NNAT, that identifies gifted and talented students, was taken by 250 students in grades 4 through 7 and last summer, 21 teachers participated in an online course on Cluster Grouping. Cluster grouping will be piloted in the seventh grade next year since they had the most students scoring in the 98 percentile. They will be talking with teachers in other districts who have cluster classrooms.

Goal 4 - To create and enhance a positive school climate free of all forms of bullying

All students signed a No Bullying Pledge at the beginning of the school year. Mr. Halligan, the parent of a seventh grade child who committed suicide as a result of being bullied, mostly done online, presented a program on the dangers and consequences of bullying. Teachers led post-assembly discussions and the program was an eye opener.

Student Handbook - S. Silverman said the handbook has been very effective. He reviewed the minor changes which include adding I-Parent - background and procedures, clarifying the searching of lockers, adding the do's and don'ts of using Nooks and Kindles and adding rules and regulations related to the 8th grade annual trip.

B. Erickson asked Principal Silverman if he has noticed less bullying since the policy was introduced. He thinks there is less bullying but said they are not always contacted by a parent. They have staff in the hallways during classroom changes, the paraprofessionals monitor the cafeteria and the bus drivers report any bullying they see. Ms Myette said the students are more aware of what bullying is and it is talked about a lot.

D. High School - School Council

Principal Mastrullo said the NEASC report proved to be an invaluable resource when constructing this plan and it is their intent to construct a SIP that works in conjunction with the report. Together they will serve as the blueprint to assist with their perpetual ambition of improving the overall high school experience, particularly in the areas of teaching and learning.

SIP - GOALS 2011-2012

Goal 1 - Continue to collaborate in an effort to improve curriculum, instruction and student services

Principal Mastrullo said this is a broad goal with specific and measurable strategies. They are grouped in curriculum development, alignment, instructional practices and professional development. He said they need to invest in the teachers and allow them time to collaborate and share instructional practices.

Goal 2 -

2a. To promote a school culture that is equitable, inclusive, and embodies the school's foundational core values and beliefs about student learning

M. Brisson said this is a cultural goal. The advisory program is constantly being reviewed to promote school culture and help them meet the NEASC expectations. They want to make the time on learning meaningful for staff and students.

2b. The leadership of the school will foster a safe, positive culture by cultivating shared leadership and engaging all members of the school community in efforts to improve teaching and learning

This is a leadership and communication goal. They will focus on professional development and communication, always keeping in mind strategies to improve student learning. She said they will be applying for a small grant that would help them implement professional learning communities.

NEASC recommended they look at course offerings, scheduling practices and restructuring graduation requirements to better meet the needs of 21st century learners. They will be offering a multitude of new class offerings next year by using staff expertise.

Goal 3 -

3a. To provide professional development that supports teachers in their use of 21st century technology

R. Arena said they have people on their staff that are adept in technology and they would like to use those resources to “teach the teachers” since they know the goals, the initiatives and the limitations in the building.

3b. Infuse technology into the curriculum to engage, educate and help students achieve our 21st century learning experiences

Having a Technology Integration Specialist on staff to support them will dramatically move them forward. They are getting ready to be completely wireless in the high school.

J. Sjoberg said it would be nice for them to come to the committee after the technology goal is implemented and tell them what technology gave them the “biggest bang”. M. Brisson gave an example of a teacher trying to use a Smart phone in math class. M. Mastrullo said it is a combination of all technology.

J. Giger said they have to work collaboratively to link technology to student goals and achievements and this will take some time to see how it makes a significant difference in the depth of learning, the rate of learning and the caliber of learning.

Handbook Changes - R. Arena reviewed the proposed handbook changes that are based on the student survey results, Leadership Team suggestions and input from faculty, staff and administration.

VIII. Reports

A. Subcommittees

Policy Subcommittee - No report

Budget & Finance Subcommittee - A. Manugian reported they will not be meeting prior to the school committee reorganizing next Tuesday evening.

Personnel and Negotiations - J. Sjoberg reported they met as a school committee to conduct interviews for the interim superintendent position.

Curriculum and Instruction - A. Manugian reported they met on May 11th and talked with Principal Mastrullo about the graduation requirement changes being considered. The homework concern brought forward by Mr. and Mrs. Kelly was also discussed and a survey will go out in the next few months. An advisory group will be put together to look at homework, particularly at the elementary level, to see what is appropriate in terms of quantity and how to make sure the quality is there to improve teaching and learning. They received an update on the standards-based report card.

B. Superintendent

1. London Field Trip - Final Approval (Action) - See earlier vote

2. Introduction of the Director of Teaching, Learning and Accountability (Info) - This position was posted in January and 9 of the 40+ applicants were interviewed. J. Mastrocola said they found an outstanding person to serve as the Director of Teaching, Learning and Accountability. He introduced Kerry Clery and said she comes with a varied background in curriculum instruction and teaching and will start on July 1st.

K. Clery said the transition process has begun and she gained a wealth of knowledge when she visited last Friday. There is a lot of work to do and this summer she will be preparing for the implementation of the new educator evaluation tool and bring it to fruition in September. She looks forward to working with in the district.

Members welcomed her to the district.

C. Director of Business and Finance

1. Schematic Design on MS Roof (Action) - On March 28th the SBA accepted the district into their accelerated repair program for the middle school roof. G. Martin said a vote by the committee is needed within 60 days of that date to approve funding for the schematic design. He will know in June or July if they get the funding and the \$15,000 would not be spent if they do not get final approval. A separate contractor will take off the existing roof. If SBA approves the funding, the schematic plan would need be submitted in October.

B. Erickson asked if there are leaks in the gymnasium and G. Martin said there are leaks in the school.

A, MANUGIAN MOVED TO AUTHORIZE FUNDING NOT TO EXCEED \$15,000 FOR SCHEMATIC DESIGN SERVICES FOR THE MIDDLE SCHOOL SOUTH ROOF PROJECT SUBJECT TO FINAL PROJECT APPROVAL FROM THE MASS SCHOOL BUILDING AUTHORITY. PROCUREMENT FOR THIS DESIGN WORK WILL BE SUBJECT TO M.G.L. CHAPTER 7 ss38A. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

1. D. Advisory Committees

Prescott Advisory Committee - B. Erickson reported they will tentatively be meeting with the Board of Selectmen to seek their opinion on choices for the Prescott School. There will be a couple of public hearings before town meeting in the fall.

E. Vice-Chair

1. Interim Superintendent - A. Manugian announced they are in contract negotiations with interim superintendent candidate Dr. Anthony Bent. They have requested a waiver from DESE for paying him. He will be here for a few per diem days in June to get a feel for the district while school is still in session.

2. Approval of SEIU Local 888-Café and Maintenance (Action) - The Memorandum of Agreement with SEIU Local 888-Café and Maintenance has been forwarded to the committee.

J. SJOBERG MOVED THEY APPROVE THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT WITH SEIU LOCAL 888 - CAFÉ AND MAINTENANCE. SECONDED BY J. GIGER
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

3. Approval of Unit A Memorandum of Agreement - The Memorandum speaks to their salary increase and there are some changes in the text. This was ratified by the teachers' union.

J. SJOBERG MOVED THEY APPROVE THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT WITH UNIT A.
SECONDED BY J. GIGER
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

IX. Discussions

A. DESE Performance Indicators - J. Mastrocola distributed copies of the Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation. He pointed out the indicators are items they intend to use in collective bargaining as the basis to adopt, adapt or revise an evaluation tool. The components of the elements, and what is inside the elements, are negotiable but the indicators are not. The information is available on the Department of Education's website (603 CMR 35.02 (Code of Massachusetts Regulations)).

B. First Reading - Policy JH - Student Absences and Excuses - Postponed

X. New Business

None

XI. Adjournment

B. ERICKSON MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 9:10 P.M. SECONDED BY J. SJOBERG
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Smith
Recording Secretary

With attachment