

approved 11/14/12

GROTON-DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

High School Library
Business Meeting Minutes
October 24, 2012

PRESENT:

Mr. Luis DeLoureiro, Secretary
Ms Berta Erickson
Mr. Jim Frey
Mr. John Giger, Vice-chair
Ms Leslie Lathrop
Ms Alison Manugian, Chair

ABSENT:

Mr. Jon Sjoberg

ADMINISTRATION:

Dr. Anthony Bent, Superintendent
Mr. Gerald Martin, Director of Business and Finance
Ms Kerry Clery, Director of Teaching, Learning and Accountability
Ms Jeanne Mitchell, Human Resources Manager

STAFF, PRESS, OTHERS: B. Sawyer, K. Kilroy, A. Snodgrass, D. Gentile, See attached sign-in sheet

I. Call to Order:

The GDRSC Meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by the chair, A. Manugian.

II. Pledge of Allegiance - Students from the Middle school - Betsy Sawyer with her students

B. Sawyer introduced Nila Krishna Kumer and Ainsley Muir, who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Big Book Presentation

B. Sawyer said Groton-Dunstable has the perfect storm of success with the bright students, family support and the administration coming together to support what the kids are doing and helping their hopes and dreams come true. She is amazed by the students every day. She thanked the parents and the Board of Directors for their 6 to 8 years of dedication. Dr. Bent also acknowledged the dedicated teachers. L. DeLoureiro said Ms Sawyer is being modest as she is a great inspiration.

Seventh grader Zachary Harrison talked about visiting the William B. McDowell Observatory in N.J. and the domed room that holds the telescope. They saw a dead star, a binary star and a planet. They went outside and were shown how to find galaxies and constellations using an evening sky map. Sixth grader Ryan McFarland thought it was cool the observatory is built on an old dumpsite near the heart of New Jersey. It has a special filter to filter out light pollution.

Renee Hampton said the 911 Memorial is unique, with a fountain where the North Tower stood and one where the South Tower stood. The square around it is covered with the names of those who were lost that day. She said it was very touching to see and you felt a connection to the people who died that day.

This was Hannah Tellier's second year going on the trip and the first time she saw Ground Zero. Running her hand across the names was unbelievable and she recognized one name.

Alex Philibert had the honor of meeting, and speaking with, Ambassador Chowdhury, General Assembly leader at the UN. He presented the Ambassador with a page from the letter he wrote to them in 2009. Alex said Ambassador Chowdhury loved the book group and thinks they are doing the right thing to promote peace.

Michael Suchecki and Jordon Winn delivered the page to the Ambassador's office and due to its size, it was a challenge getting it there. On the way back down, they passed a replica of the first Declaration of Rights that is 2500 years old.

Students displayed a page from the Big Book which is printed on tyvek media donated by Dupont. Unigraphics donated low cost printing and EFI Vutek donated \$100,000 in ink. A page is 12 feet tall and 10 feet wide.

Emily Gaines talked about their visit to the Tillman Chapel that is open to all religions. She noted acceptance of all religions is a great aspect of finding peace. They also learned about the art around the UN that represents peace. B. Erickson asked if there is a symbol that represents all religions and suggested it be a heart which represents love.

Hannah Tellier said two students in peace education at Columbia University gave them a tour of the campus and showed them a video about how people can create peace.

Seventh grader Jesse Trainor talked about visiting the John Lennon Memorial and Strawberry Fields.

Drew Gentile is in college now and joined the Book Club in fifth grade. He said the Book Club gave him drive, ambition and changed his life so much.

K. Kilroy said this was a wonderful experience with learning across the board.

III. Announcements

J. Frey announced they are looking for people who would be interested in being part of the Screening Committee for the next superintendent search. They are looking for a senior citizen and a citizen from Groton or Dunstable. There will be time commitments in December. People may contact him or Ms Mitchell to submit their names for consideration.

IV. Approval of Minutes

J. FREY MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 17, 2012 AS AMENDED. SECONDED BY L. LATHROP
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

V. Vote to Accept Warrant Articles

J. FREY MOVED THEY ACCEPT ONE PAYROLL WARRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$829,562.96 AND FOUR VENDOR WARRANTS TOTALING \$401,898.30. SECONDED BY L. DELOUREIRO

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

Abstention: L. DeLoureiro

VI. Questions and Comments from the Public

None

VII. Presentations

A. Eighth Grade Washington DC Trip (Action)

Adam Snodgrass explained this is his seventh year coordinating the trip. Two changes have been made - the trip was moved to April vacation week (April 16-19, 2013) and the participation fee has increased from \$5.00 to \$15.00. This will be used to fund the coordinator stipend and specific sundries the nurses may need to get for specific students. Any remaining funds go into the 8th grade student activity fund. The cost per student is \$672 and he expects about one third (60) of the eighth grade students to participate. The economic crisis has left families less willing to spend the money for this trip. Every effort is made to let them know financial support is available yet some may not ask and he respects that. The deadline for requesting assistance is February 15th but if a family has an emergency after that time, they can call the principal.

He explained the three reasons why the trip was moved to April vacation. The priorities of working on the AEL's came first and the team did not have time to plan lessons that coordinate the curriculum with the trip. He relies on volunteer chaperones and 10 to 14 staff members are needed to supervise 100-120 students. This is not a productive way to provide supervision as the pool of available chaperones is small. Last year, 30 students did not register for the trip and 28 came to school. An administrator is needed to administer to the varied group for four days and he said they need to provide a stipend for the coordinator. If these issues are addressed, he may be able to move the trip back to June. The trip can continue to be in April until 2016 when April vacation week is Passover week.

L. Lathrop asked if eighth grade is still the appropriate grade curriculum wise for this trip. A. Snodgrass said yes since there are a lot of connections to world history in Washington. B. Erickson asked what is taught in the classroom around civics and our government. A. Snodgrass said the world history curriculum is not based on American civics and citizenship but they do look at these issues at least twice a year and the 8th grade history teachers do incorporate civics frequently. He may teach some enlightenment lessons prior to the trip.

J. FREY MOVED THEY APPROVE THE FIELD TRIP AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY L. LATHROP SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

VIII. Reports

A. Subcommittees

Policy Subcommittee - L. Lathrop reported they will be meeting at 8:00 a.m. at MSN on October 31st.

Budget & Finance Subcommittee - A. Manugian reported they will be meeting at Prescott tomorrow.

Personnel and Negotiations - No report - meeting was cancelled

B. Superintendent

1. Boys Golf Team - Principal Mastrullo has advised the boys golf team finished overall 12 and 7 for the season. Brendan Hunter was the co-MVP of the league. The team finished in second place in the District E tournament and Brendan Hunter finished in second place in the individual competition. The team has advanced to the state tournament.

2. Funding Athletic Program - A. Bent & G. Martin

Revenues from student fees, compounded by shortfalls in collecting student fees, and the district budget were insufficient to cover the expenses of the athletic program each year. On September 12th, the school committee voted to transfer \$144,402.26 from the General Fund to resolve the growing deficit.

Dr. Bent said he, Principal Mastrullo, Mike McCaffrey and Jerry Martin reviewed the athletic fees, potential efficiencies and program reductions and gathered information on the percent of budget dedicated to athletics by eight area communities. They also discussed the "success penalty" for teams when they qualify for post-season play and incur unanticipated costs. He noted the electronic payment system for athletic fees has essentially eliminated the problems associated with last year's paper process.

They recommend increasing the student fee for participation on the ice hockey team from \$400 to \$600 and increasing the student fee for participation on the ski team from \$300 to \$500 for 2012-2013. They also recommend increasing the percent of total budget from .57% to .75% to .80% of total budget and adding \$62,000 for athletics in FY14. Compared to 8 area communities, he stated Groton-Dunstable has the lowest percent of total budget.

L. Lathrop said she would like to include extra-curricula intramural sports at the middle school and high school. L. DeLoureiro agrees this would be nice but feels they need to address the current program first. B. Erickson asked if the question L. Lathrop asked at a previous meeting about what happens to the post season money when they host a game was answered and she was told they do not have an answer. She asked if there was any discussion about whether or not they will need to fund the football program in the future and was told no. While a strong supporter of sports, she said she is also a strong supporter of the arts and believes equal treatment is needed for those programs.

L. DeLoureiro asked if students will be shut out of playing hockey if they cannot afford the increased fee and A. Manugian advised financial aid is available. J. Martin advised the family cap will not change.

J. Giger said many of the listed school districts have football in their budgets and noted the community supports Groton-Dunstable's football program. He asked what the Football Club pays and J. Martin said about \$20,000 goes into the revolving account. J. Giger is uncomfortable with instructing the superintendent to build the preliminary budget for FY14 using a fixed number (\$62,000) and said while sports are important, they need to have a better understanding of what all their budget expenses will be. Dr. Bent said the number was a starting point and noted they need to present to the communities a quality program budget that protects the program and offers some improvements.

B. ERICKSON MOVED THEY APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATION TO INCREASE THE STUDENT FEE FOR PARTICIPATION ON THE HOCKEY TEAM TO \$600 AND THE STUDENT FEE FOR PARTICIPATION ON THE SKI TEAM TO \$500 FOR 2012-2013. SECONDED BY J. FREY

J. Giger said he would like to understand alarms will be set off when they start going over the money that is in revolving accounts and wants assurance they will be managed. A. Manugian said Budget and Finance has discussed this as well.

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL

J. Frey said Budget and Finance can work with the administration to put in measures so they will be better informed of the balances in the revolving accounts. J. Martin said the new accounting system will put in any encumbrances.

C. Director of Business and Finance

1. Middle School Roof - J. Martin reported the middle school roof replacement is moving forward and they are waiting for approval on November 14, 2012. Work will begin in mid-June. The SBA reimbursement is 45.74% and the funding will be a debt service spread over 10 years. He will reach out to the towns with the time frame.

2. PAC Lighting System - They will be going out to bid on November 27th to upgrade the lighting system at the PAC.

D. Advisory Committees - No report

E. Chair

Anonymous Letters - An anonymous letter from a group of parents expressing concerns was received and A. Manugian advised it is the committee's practice not to respond to anonymous letters. Concerns can be brought to the administration, to a school committee meeting or to the committee in a signed letter.

MCAS Resolutions and Selection of Delegates

A. Manugian advised she, Jim and Leslie plan to attend the conference.

A. MANUGIAN NOMINATED LESLIE LATHROP AS THEIR DELEGATE TO THE MASC RESOLUTIONS DISCUSSION AND JIM FREY AS THE BACKUP DELEGATE. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

J. Frey provided a brief summary of each Resolution.

1. Establishment of a special commission of the legislature for the study of mandated reports and data submissions for school districts.

L. LATHROP MOVED THEY SUPPORT THIS RESOLUTION. SECONDED BY J. FREY

Discussion has been ongoing with MASC for years. There is a lot of duplicated and redundant data in the mandated reports.

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

2. Modification of the circuit breaker formula.

L. LATHROP MOVED THEY SUPPORT THIS RESOLUTION. SECONDED BY J. GIGER

This would be good for all districts but it is not known where the money would come from. A. Manugian is concerned districts would not work to keep costs down.

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

Abstention: L. DeLoureiro

3. Health insurance coverage for medically necessary treatment in school.

J. FREY MOVED THEY SUPPORT RESOLUTION 3. SECONDED BY J. GIGER

This legislation will require health care systems to cover medically necessary expenses without exception. J. Martin said they received about \$110,000 last year in reimbursed Medicaid costs. J. Frey said the district would get away from the paperwork and parents would have more consistency with care.

In Favor: J. Frey, L. Lathrop, A. Manugian, J. Giger, L. DeLoureiro

Opposed: B. Erickson

4. Funding for educator evaluation system

L. LATHROP MOVED THEY SUPPORT THIS RESOLUTION. SECONDED BY L. DELOUREIRO

J. Giger feels this is a good opportunity to track the costs of implementing the system. J. Frey said he is against this resolution as he feels they should be doing evaluations as part of running an organization. Dr. Bent agrees the evaluations are necessary for the way they do business but said it takes up about 50% of Ms Clery's time and a substantial piece of professional development.

J. Frey feels this is a one time "hit". K. Clery agrees there is a one time burst with professional development but the management piece is new to all districts. Evidence has to be collected under 33 different elements for each person being evaluated and there is no consistent system in place to facilitate the process. She noted this is step one. In the future, they will be collecting data from students and parents as part of the evaluation process. Teachers will also be surveyed.

In Favor: L. Lathrop, A. Manugian, J. Giger, L. DeLoureiro

Opposed: B. Erickson

Abstention: J. Frey

5. Adequacy Study

J. FREY MOVED THEY SUPPORT RESOLUTION 5. SECONDED BY A. MANUGIAN

J. Frey said the Chapter 70 and foundation formulas are outdated.

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

IX. Discussions**1. School Committee Goals**

1. Successful completion of the Superintendent Search process.
2. The Arts, foreign language and athletic programs will be reviewed with an eye to possible expansion of programs and necessary budget support.
3. Increased communications with various constituencies via multiple mediums are needed.
4. Via the Policy Subcommittee, we will work with the Massachusetts Association of School Committees to review our policies and ensure they are correct.
5. The committee will continue to support the new educator evaluations.
6. We will assess the space needs of the district for employees currently working at Prescott and review overall facilities in the district with regard to space utilization.

J. FREY MOVED THEY ADOPT THE SIX GOALS. SECONDED BY L. LATHROP

L. Lathrop asked if they should add something about the revolving accounts. J. Frey said this is part of Budget and Finance's process.

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

X. New Business

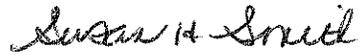
None

Executive Session - Not held

XI. Adjournment

J. FREY MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 9:06 P.M. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,



Susan H. Smith
Recording Secretary

With attachment