



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
January 14, 2014**

LOCATION: Swift River Elementary School Library
TIME: 7:00 pm

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Dr. Linda Tsoumas, Chair (present); Ms. Clare Popowich, Vice-Chair (present); Mr. Richard Fritsch, Secretary (not present); Ms. Myndi Bogdanovich, Member (present); Dr. Michael Knapp, Member (present)

ADMINISTRATION: Dr. Judith Houle, Superintendent of Schools (present); Mr. Brian Cameron, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning (present); Mr. Edward Dunn, Contracted School Business Manager (present)

BHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES: (not present)

VISITORS: Ms. Brenda Aldrich, Selectmen Liaison to School Committee; Mr. Kevin Flanders, Sentinel reporter

MINUTES

- I. Call to order
Dr. Tsoumas called the Regular School Committee meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.
- II. Special awards and presentations
None
- III. Update from BHS Student Advisory Council representatives
None
- IV. Public comment regarding items on the agenda
None
- V. Approval of minutes
 - A. December 10, 2013
MOTION: Ms. Popowich moved to approve the December 10, 2013 Regular School Committee meeting minutes, as presented. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.
VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously
COMMENT: Dr. Knapp inquired as to the details provided under *Item VII. E. 1. Personnel & Policy Report from the December 10, 2013 meeting*. Dr. Tsoumas explained that those notes were included as representing what had transpired at that evening's Personnel & Policy subcommittee meeting and Ms. Popowich confirmed that information.

B. December 23, 2013

MOTION: Ms. Popowich moved to approve the December 23, 2013 School Committee meeting minutes, as presented. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 3-0-1 (abstention: Ms. Bogdanovich)

VI. Reports and recommendations of the Superintendent

A. Out-of-state field trip: BHS Varsity Hockey Team to Sheehan High School, Wallingford, CT on January 29, 2014

Dr. Houle presented a request for an out-of-state field trip by the BHS Varsity Hockey Team to Sheehan High School, Wallingford, CT on January 29, 2014. The team will leave BHS at approximately 4:30 p.m. to arrive for a 7:00 p.m. scrimmage game against Sheehan High School. The team will be transported by First Student Bus Company, which will be funded by the Athletic Transportation Fund, and will be returning to BHS after the game. Dr. Houle stated that she has reviewed this out-of-state field trip request and found it to be fully compliant with all safety and liability requirements as required by school policy, and she recommends approval of this trip by the School Committee.

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to approve the BHS Varsity Hockey Team out-of-state field trip to Sheehan High School, Wallingford, CT on January 29, 2014, as presented. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously

B. Donation of flat-screen television to Belchertown High School

Dr. Houle stated that Ms. Christine Vigneux, BHS Principal, had received an offer from Mr. William Kirk, a retired BHS teacher, to donate a 64" flat screen television to the high school for use in Room #317. This television will be utilized to enhance students' and teachers' access to the Internet as an additional monitor and will allow for better viewing of online content. Dr. Houle recommends approval by the School Committee of this donation.

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to approve the donation of a flat-screen television to Belchertown High School from Mr. William Kirk, as presented. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously

COMMENT: Dr. Houle will send a letter on behalf of the School Committee to Mr. Kirk in grateful acceptance of this donation.

C. Contracted School Business Manager: mid-year transfers

Mr. Dunn presented his request for approval of mid-year budget transfers and stated that these transfers are necessitated by changes in personnel, services, etc.

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to approve the FY 2014 mid-year budget transfers in the amount of \$193,247.52, as presented by Mr. Dunn, Contracted School Business Manager. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously

COMMENT: Dr. Knapp asked if the increases in public school tuition costs were for SPED students, and Mr. Dunn confirmed that that was correct. Ms. Bogdanovich inquired as to the increase in SPED legal services, and Mr. Dunn explained that these costs vary from year to year, depending on changes in services and the level of litigiousness that results from possible dissatisfaction with those situations.

D. Partnership with Behavioral Health Network

Dr. Houle discussed her continuing effort to bring various community partners together to address the increase in students with social/emotional and mental health issues in our district. She stated that we are currently contracted with the Carson Center at Wing Memorial Hospital, using Valley Human Services. As the number of students with mental health issues has risen, it has become apparent that the current services are not sufficient to meet those needs. Dr. Houle recommended adding the services of the Behavioral Health Network, which will provide on-site therapy in designated schools during school hours. The cost for start-up and implementation of this agreement for services by BHN is \$3,600.00, with all subsequent services to be billed to third-party medical insurance. Dr. Houle also stated that the Leadership Team strongly recommends contracting with BHN for the added services needed by students with social/emotional and mental health issues.

MOTION: Ms. Popowich moved to approve the purchase of an agreement for contracted services with Behavioral Health Network in the amount of \$3,600.00, as presented. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously

E. FY2015 budget schedule

Dr. Tsoumas discussed a proposed schedule of FY 2015 budget meetings which will coincide with the current schedule of School Committee meetings, with the exception of March 11th, due to a conflict that evening with a Superintendent Screening Committee meeting. She explained that because it is very important that all School Committee members attend all budget meetings, the Regular School Committee meeting on March 11th will be rescheduled to March 18, 2014. The proposed budget schedule also includes an added meeting on April 29, 2014 for the public hearing on the FY 2015 budget and vote by the School Committee. This meeting will be held at Belchertown High School. The final budget vote will take place at the Annual Town Meeting on May 12, 2014. The proposed schedule of FY 2015 budget meetings was approved by consensus.

Dr. Houle then briefly reviewed the budget process for the newest members of the School Committee, stating that we will begin with a "level service dollars" budget, as has been done in the past. It will continue to be refined as it is decided what the most effective use of that dollar amount would be, and as the school district works with the town on anticipated revenues, including state projections.

It was also noted that Mr. Dunn will be preparing the bid specifications for the bus transportation contract, as the current contract with First Student Bus Co. will be

expiring in 2014. Mr. Dunn said that the district is entertaining the notion of a joint bid with two other districts (Ware and Hadley). Ms. Bogdanovich inquired as to how many bus companies are available to provide services to a district of our size, and Dr. Houle provided names of several local companies.

F. Update on Emergency Operations Plan draft

Dr. Houle referred to the draft of the Belchertown Public Schools Emergency Operations Plan which was included in this evening's correspondence, noting that this is the public version. There will also be a confidential draft provided which will include appendices. She said that the School Safety Task Force, consisting of a group of 30-40 people, which included administrators, teachers, staff, parents, as well as fire and police department representatives, had worked on the plan, crafting best practice for our district in emergency situations, and stated that the FEMA template was used and adjusted to the needs of Belchertown. This comprehensive plan outlines specific protocols in four areas: fire/hazardous materials, medical, natural disaster, and physical violence. Updates to the plan include the implementation of an Emergency Radio Network, expanded camera surveillance in all buildings, identification badges, and locked school building entrances and classroom doors. The Task Force is also recommending that all classrooms be furnished with Lockdown Kits, which would contain supplies to keep students comfortable, nourished and occupied in an emergency situation. The kits will cost approximately \$50-60 each, and could be funded by donations. In addition, it was noted that an important part of the plan is the "standard reunification method", which is a protocol for a formalized, controlled release of students so that parents are able find their children in a crisis situation. Dr. Houle stated that this plan was also discussed at the most recent *Coffee and Conversation with the Superintendent*, held on January 9th, and will welcome further input on this subject at the next such gathering on January 16th. The final draft of the Emergency Operations Plan is slated to be presented for approval at the February 25th Regular School Committee meeting.

G. Superintendent's transition plan

Dr. Houle presented her plan for the next six months as the district prepares to transition to a new Superintendent. She identified and reviewed ten key areas that will be the focus of her work through the end of her tenure on June 30, 2014, in order to ensure that her successor has important policies and procedures, as well as an approved FY 2015 budget, ready for implementation. Also included were items that will need closure during that timeframe in order to ensure that any work begun has been completed and is ready for the next steps. Some of the priority areas included in the Superintendent's transition plan are as follows: completion of the Emergency Operations Plan and revised Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan; meeting with the BTA to conduct the annual review of the Educator Evaluation Plan; finalizing the FY 2015 budget; working with the Contracted School Business Manager on the RFP for a new bus contract; working with the new Superintendent to bring him/her up to speed for the July 1, 2014 start date; monitoring and administering the final year of the Race To The Top grant; providing oversight of the PARCC assessment pilot.

- VII. Reports of subcommittees/representative to Collaborative for Educational Services
- A. Collaborative for Educational Services (Ms. Bogdanovich)
1. Report from January 8, 2014 meeting
Ms. Bogdanovich reported that the final interview for Executive Director of CES will take place next Wednesday, and she will provide that information at the next School Committee meeting. The annual report and audit for CES was provided on its website www.collaborative.org. There were also some additional revisions made to the Articles of Agreement (due to changes in laws with regard to collaboratives), and this document will be brought to the School Committee for approval at a future date when it is finalized.
- B. Curriculum & Instruction (Dr. Tsoumas/Dr. Knapp)
1. Need to meet regarding District-Determined Measures pilot, pilot of Edwin Teaching and Learning System curriculum units, honors mathematics plan for grades 6-11
Mr. Cameron stated that teachers are continuing to meet with regard to math, art, music, and "writing to text" DDMs. There have also been preliminary conversations with math teachers to establish written curriculum for honors math classes.
A meeting of the Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee was scheduled for February 11th at 6:30 p.m.
- C. Healthy & Safer Schools Advisory Committee (Ms. Popowich)
1. Report from December 11, 2013 meeting: draft revisions to the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and Policy
Ms. Popowich referred to the revised draft of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and Policy which was included in this evening's correspondence, noting that it had been a topic of discussion at the most recent *Coffee and Conversation with the Superintendent* meeting. She also noted that this plan will be discussed again at the next such gathering on January 16th, and any further feedback will be presented at next month's School Committee meeting. Dr. Houle stated that although the plan has been in place since 2010, it was time to assess how effective those initial measures have been, and to move forward with improvements. She explained that the document contains strikeouts, which indicate those items that have already been accomplished, as well as items in bold print, which represent proposed additions (i.e., protocol for addressing bullying by staff, and revisions to the form for reporting an incident of alleged bullying).
Dr. Knapp commented that he was very pleased with the revisions to this plan.
- D. Jessica's Boundless Playground Committee (Dr. Tsoumas)
1. Update: CPA grant application
Dr. Tsoumas stated that a meeting of the Playground Committee is scheduled for next Wednesday, January 22nd, and there will be discussion of questions regarding the CPA grant, including time frames and levels of responsibility, so

that the grant can move forward. The Committee will also meet with the consultant to review onsite construction planning and setting a final timeline for this project.

- E. Personnel & Policy (Ms. Popowich/Ms. Bogdanovich)
None
 - F. Property & Transportation (Mr. Fritsch/Dr. Knapp)
None
 - G. School Safety Task Force (Mr. Fritsch)
Dr. Houle stated that the work of this Task Force has been completed, unless an issue arises in the future.
 - H. Technology Advisory Committee (Mr. Fritsch)
 - 1. Next meeting: February 5, 2014
- VIII. New business
- A. Second January meeting
Dr. Tsoumas proposed that the January 28, 2014 School Committee meeting be cancelled as there is no pending or pressing business at this time, and Dr. Houle added that last year's meetings also reflected very light agendas throughout January. This decision was agreed upon by consensus.
 - B. Change of first March meeting date
Dr. Tsoumas stated that the first School Committee meeting in March will be changed from March 11th to March 18th, as the original date conflicts with a meeting of the Superintendent Screening Committee, and it is very important that all School Committee members are present for FY 2015 budget meetings which will begin on March 18th as previously noted in *Item VI. E. FY2015 budget schedule*.
- IX. Unfinished business
None
- X. Correspondence
- A. Agenda: January 14, 2014
 - B. Minutes: December 10, 2013 and December 23, 2013
 - C. Out-of-State Field Trip Request: BHS Varsity Hockey Team to Sheehan High School, Wallingford, CT on January 29, 2014
 - D. Memorandum regarding donation of flat screen television to Belchertown High School
 - E. Budget transfers list
 - F. Memorandum regarding the schedule of meetings for the FY2015 budget
 - G. Agreement for partnership between Behavioral Health Network and Belchertown Public Schools
 - H. Draft Emergency Operations Plan

- I. Memorandum regarding the Superintendent's transition plan
- J. Draft Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and Policy
- K. Conflict of Interest Document

Dr. Houle referred to the Conflict of Interest documents which had been distributed to the present School Committee members this evening, noting that all members must sign off as having received the document, as well as completing the mandatory online training. This online training will have a certificate to be printed upon completion, and both documents must be sent to the Town Clerk directly, or dropped off at C.O.

XI. Adjourn

MOTION: Ms. Popowich moved to adjourn the Regular School Committee meeting at 7:48 p.m. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.


VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously

Respectfully submitted by,



Kathryn A. Petersen
Non-Confidential Recording Secretary to the School Committee

School Committee members' signatures:

, Linda Tsoumas, Chair

, Clare Popowich, Vice Chair

_____, Myndi Bogdanovich, Member

, Michael Knapp, Member

The mission of the Belchertown Public Schools is to ensure that every student meets with success every day. To that end, we pledge to ensure that we have rigorous, standards-based curriculum; instruction designed to meet the needs of diverse learners in every classroom; and access to the global learning community via state-of-the-art technology in schools that are communities of respect and civility for all.

2011-2015 Strategic Plan Goals (adopted by the Belchertown School Committee, 3/1/11):

- Goal #1: To have guaranteed (standards-based and implemented by all), viable (doable and accessible to every student), seamless K-12 curriculum in every content area.
- Goal #2: To have rigorous (standards-based), relevant (grounded in 21st Century skills), differentiated instructional practices with the ability to access the global learning community via technology available to every learner.
- Goal #3: To implement a plan to ensure that our students understand the importance of acceptance, tolerance, and respect supported by all adults in the community.

The Belchertown School Committee conducts its business in open session pursuant to Chapter 30A, Section 21 of the Massachusetts General Laws. The public is welcome to comment only on items on the agenda for this meeting as noted above. If you wish to address the School Committee regarding an item not on the agenda for this meeting, please contact the Superintendent of Schools at 413.323.0423 or via email at superintendent@belchertown.org to determine the best way to address your concerns (see [School Committee Policy BEDH](#)).