



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
April 12, 2016**

LOCATION: CHCS Auditorium
TIME: 7:00 p.m.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Mr. Richard Fritsch, Chair (present); Ms. Myndi Bogdanovich, Vice-Chair (present); Ms. Dawn French, Secretary (present); Dr. Michael Knapp, Member (present); Dr. Thomas Laughner, Member (absent)

ADMINISTRATION: Mrs. Karol Coffin, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Brian Cameron, Assistant Superintendent and Director of Student Support Services; Shawn Fortin, Director of Teaching & Learning; Mr. Edward Dunn, Contracted School Business Manager

BHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES: Benjamin Stone, Maddie Hamparian

VISITORS:

Minutes

Pledge of Allegiance

I. Call to order

Mr. Fritsch called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

II. Public comment regarding items on the agenda

Mr. Fritsch opened the public comment by reading a statement with regard to the Massachusetts State Auditor, Suzanne M. Bump, of a released report by the Division of Local Mandates. He noted all departments should be commended for their hard work.

Public comments:

- (student) presented her views to the Committee. She has a petition started on Change.org with over 500 signatures. Programs are important. How can we resolve the issues with the budget? We can find a way, with a 2 ½ override, revenue, neutral program, paying for sports or band, taking the total deficit and dividing by the number of students that is \$353 per student. We need to advocate for students in the future.
- (band students) the impact of band on them. Grateful for the opportunities that they have had. They want the same for those coming into the program. To them it means family and community. They would like to advocate for the effect sports and band has had on them. The phenomenal music education in this district was inspirational. Spoke to the studies that show music and art are instrumental in education. Colleges look at the extras, maybe more than the grades.
- (parent) there is a lot of support for sports and band, would like to talk to the Nature's Classroom cut of \$6,900. \$4,500 for busses, the number of teacher student ratio is 10-1, negotiations has a \$200 stipend added to the contract and

nurse is needed which the town had to pay. Spoke with Nature's Classroom, they have a nurse, JBMS teachers that go on the DC trip do not get a stipend. Suggests taking it off the cut list, parents would be happy to pay the additional costs.

- (public) survey of surrounding towns, Belchertown has a higher than average income, higher home value, lower tax rate, per pupil expenditure is in the basement, we should support the band, sports, education, maintenance. We should be paying for it.
- (public) Before cuts, come back with what is required to grow and what do we need to do; taxes supporting, up per pupil expenditure, we need to go the next step, too long on short money.
- (parent) worked in schools, currently works in another district, exposed to other funding, create a think tank, we need to think outside the box. There are tax breaks for out of district placements. There are no positive outcomes in losing programs.
- (parent) Sports is not dollars but people, educate the whole child, why is it the first to go on the cutting board, must have versus wants, the problem starts at the state level.
- (public) passionate about art and music, Belchertown music and marching band the pride and joy of Belchertown. Noted the many studies that show the benefits of music and art in education.
- (public) thanked for the community discussion, all aspects of budget are part of the community and town, you will destroy the heart by streamline, we are top heavy, more mandates, these are all killing the essence of education, teachers create that aspect.
- (public) we need human interaction, diverse people, you need to allow them to grow or you destroy the future. This is our future; we need to be in this together.
 - Mr. Fritsch noted we are #1 in the state because of our students.
- (student) spoke to history in band, single greatest decision ever made.
- (students) spoke to band and athletics, music is worldwide, is an 8th grade student and would like to do both band and sports in high school.
- (parent) this decision is not easy, has students in band, strong reputation of the band in the area. Requested to look to private business community. Band community an asset to the town and willing to do something to keep it moving forward.
- (parent) proposed budget affecting his family. Left another program to join band here. Looking at proposed cuts, how did you come up with the cuts? How could town see value in cutting? Town will vote next month on budget, would like more transparency in budget. Town cannot tell the school how to spend the money.
- (student) move here this year, music is ageless, cut music how would you communicate? Everyone wants something memorable to say about their past and future. Society of people that aren't creative, lack personality, without personality you can't do anything. There is more thinking involved with music. Spoke to the quality of the JBMS marching band and the instruction given by the 5th & 6th grade director. Cutting the program will cause a deficit in quality.

- Mr. Fritsch noted after talks with the state they are trying to save the 2 programs.
- (educator) bulk of the budget cuts are coming on the backs of teachers. Quality of teachers and environment is shown in top MCAS scores, high graduation levels, this excellence is because of the teaching staff. Cuts will affect the kids in the middle, there are laws for the SPED and AP classes are safe, that leaves the cuts affecting the kids in the middle. Some classes are small not all numbers fit in a box. Calls on the School Committee to find a solution and advocate what everyone in the room is for.
- (parent) spoke to the ripple effect of cutting the 5th and 6th grade band program. Music is different than an after school program. Cutting would put those students into more study halls.
- (student) JV sports are an outlet for students, students want to maintain their grades, some students only care about school because of sports. JV sports are an introduction to high school sports, cutting JV will destroy the program. Coaches could take lower pay, students willing to pay more.
- (parent) lunch recess para-keep what we have instead of adding on, want to keep our student successful every day.
- (parent) there is not a lot of "fat" in our district. Shocked that we are cutting 6-7 teaching positions and nothing in administration. 2008-2014 trend notes that administration has gone up. Cuts should be consistent across the board.
- (parent) 1 year here, main reason was band program. Some kind of tax revenue to not lose teachers.
- (student) remembers band night, percussionist, will not know what she will do if you take band away.
- (student) astonished we were cutting band and Nature's Classroom. It teaches you the outdoors is beautiful. Band is fun and teaches you something. Education doesn't always have to mean math and science. The fourth graders can't start later.
- (student) excited about joining band next year, the 3rd and 4th grade will be devastated to not have a band program. Wants them to have the same opportunities.
- (educator) appreciate those here for the band program. Getting band and JV sports should not be a "win" that cuts 6-7 teaching positions. Everything is important, we need money.
- Mr. Fritsch noted the budget is just proposed and noted the town's effort to raise revenue.
- Ben Stone noted during his student updates the following; Everyone understands and respects the value of education. At the heart of it all is not grades, conformity or standardization, at the heart it is passion, inspiration, and learning. Without students in education there won't be much learning. Without teachers there would be **no** learning.

III. Update from BHS Student Advisory Council representatives
Ben Stone spoke to the update:

CSS: Art night sponsored by the PTO, Thursday March 31st. Over \$435 was raised for art teacher to purchase resources.

SRE: Spring session of Unified Arts Enrichment Program for 2nd & 3rd grade.

CHCS: April 1st author Tamra Wight presented interactive workshop.

JBMS: April 11 JBMS rallied for the Jimmy Fund.

BHS: BHS Band trip is April 27 – May 1st and performed at Mechanics Hall in Worcester for the Gold Medal MICCA concert.

IV. Approval of minutes (A.I.)

A. March 22, Regular Session
tabled

V. Reports and recommendations of the Superintendent

A. Recommendation for 2016-2017 School Choice Openings (A.I.)

Motion: Ms. French moved to approve the school choice openings for 2016-2017.

Second: Ms. Bogdanovich

Vote: 4,0,0

Discussion: Dr. Knapp questioned the impact in the classroom at the K-6 level?

Superintendent Coffin noted 1 student per class. Dr. Knapp noted that every school choice seat brings in \$5,000.

122 school choice students;

8 ; K

4; 1st

6; 2nd

2; 3rd

Closed; 4th

4; 5th

Closed; 6th

10; 7th

10; 8th

10; 9th

Closed; 10, 11, 12

B. Strategic Team Mission Statement and Core Values (A.I.)

Motion: Ms. Bogdanovich moved to accept the Strategic Team Mission Statement and Core Values

Second: Ms. French

Vote: 4,0,0

Discussion: Presented by Ms. Caponi-Babb, Ms. Parker, and Ms. Frederick. This was the culmination of 5 fall open meetings held in each school. Presented to the School Committee the vision statement and mission of the Belchertown Public Schools;

Vision:

“Belchertown students, both individually and collaboratively, will be innovative thinkers, problem solvers and unique, creative contributors to their community and the world.”

Mission:

In the pursuit of excellence and the development of life-long learners, it is the mission of the Belchertown Public Schools to challenge and engage all students in a respectful,

positive learning environment that fosters personal, social and academic growth in order to achieve success in a global society.

VI. Personnel update

Superintendent Coffin welcomed Pamela McConnell and Matthew Lareau to the district.

VII. Unfinished business

A. Discussion and Vote on FY 2017 School Department Budget (A.I.)

Motion: Ms French moved to propose \$28, 427,687 budge to the Finance Committee.

Second: Ms. Bogdanovich

Vote: 4,0,0

Discussion: Superintendent Coffin noted the audit from the business department was found accurate and in order.

Superintendent Coffin presented the budget proposal. Dr. Fortin presented the information with regard to science and STEMscopes. Superintendent Coffin noted the need for volunteers for the feasibility committee. Superintendent Coffin presented the reduction considerations. Superintendent Coffin noted the needs of the administration. She remarked on how proud she was of all the students that came and spoke up. She is talking with parents about long term solutions.

Mr. Fritsch noted this would be a proposed budget if the state comes through with more money for the town. Dr. Knapp is not comfortable voting tonight without knowing the ramification of the teacher cuts. Mr. Fritsch suggested going to Finance Committee with a range of numbers. Public comments suggested going with a tiered budget, there would be more flexibility that way. Mr. Dunn spoke to the timing of the money from the state. Ms. Bogdanovich noted the School Committee votes on the dollar amount and does not take additions into account. Perhaps approach as what can we spend instead of what we need for a budget. \$28,427,687 to move the district forward. Ms. French proposed the above number to present to the Finance Committee. Public comments on how to advocate for the schools. School Committee and Finance Committee members noted that they have been advocating for the schools since the fall. It was suggested that constituents contact their legislators to speak to the budget deficits. Public comment with regard to returning the 5% given to the town instead of the school. It was noted there will be another FinCom meeting Thursday night. Discussion included how to raise revenue, taxes and fees.

VIII. New business

A. JBMS Out of State Field Trip Request – Washington D.C. (A.I.)

Motion: Ms. Bogdanovich moved to approve the JBMS out of state field trip.

Second: Dr. Knapp

Vote: 4,0,0

B. CHCS Out of State Field Trip Request – Connecticut Science Museum (A.I.)

Motion: Ms. Bogdanovich moved to approve the CHCS out of state field trip.

Second: Ms. French

Vote: 4,0,0

Discussion: Dr. Knapp asked if Superintendent Coffin has endorsed the trip.

Superintendent Coffin noted she had.

IX. Reports of subcommittees/representatives

Motion: Dr. Knapp moved to (punt) table the subcommittee reports.

Second: Ms. Bogdanovich

Vote: 4,0,0

- A. Curriculum & Instruction (Dr. Knapp/Dr. Laughner)
- B. Personnel & Policy (Ms. Bogdanovich/Ms. French)
- C. Property & Transportation (Mr. Fritsch/Ms. French)
- D. Finance & Budget Subcommittee (Dr. Laughner/Dr. Knapp)
- E. Collaborative for Educational Services (Dr. Knapp)
- F. Healthy & Safer Schools Advisory Committee (Mr. Fritsch/Ms. Bogdanovich)
- G. Technology Advisory Committee

X. Correspondence

- A. Agenda, April 12, 2016
- B. Minutes, March 22, 2016, Regular Session
- C. Town of Belchertown Mass. DESE End of Year Pupil and Financial Report
- D. Recommendation for School Choice openings
- E. Strategic Core Mission Statement and Core Values
- F. Personnel Update
- G. JBMS Out of State Field Trip Request-Washington D.C.
- H. CHCS Out of State Field Trip Request – Connecticut Science Museum
- I. Board & Administrators Newsletters (Informational only)

- XI. Vote to enter into Executive Session under M.G.L., 30A, §21, Part 3 to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation as conducting said business in open session would have a detrimental effect on the School Committee's bargaining or litigation position. The Committee will not return to open session.

School Committee voted to enter into Executive Session at 10:10 pm. They will not return to open session.

Vote;

Richard Fritsch – yes

Myndi Bogdanovich – yes

Dawn French – yes

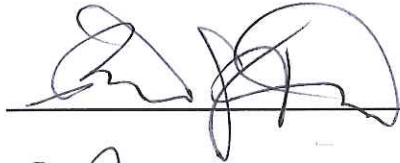
Michael Knapp – yes

Thomas Laughner - absent

Respectfully submitted by,

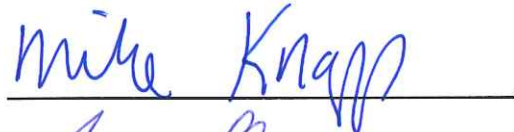
Ramona Griffin
Non-Confidential Recording Secretary to the School Committee


School Committee members' signatures:

 _____, Richard Fritsch, Chair

 _____, Myndi Bogdanovich, Vice Chair

 _____, Dawn French, Secretary

 _____, Michael Knapp, Member

 _____, Thomas Laughner, Member

Belchertown students, both individually and collaboratively, will be innovative thinkers, problem solvers and unique, creative contributors to their community and the world.

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](#)).