



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
APRIL 30, 2013**

**LOCATION:** Belchertown High School, Veterans Memorial Auditorium  
**TIME:** 7:00 pm

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

Dr. Linda Tsoumas, Chair (present); Mr. Eric Weiss, Vice Chair (present); Ms. Clare Popowich, Secretary (present); Ms. Beverly Phaneuf (present); Mr. Richard Fritsch (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); Mr. Ben Admussen, Data Administrator (not present); Mr. Scott Karen, Director of Technology (not present); Ms. Kristi Guzzo, Director of Student Support Services (present); Ms. Sandra Bremer, Cold Spring School Principal (not present); Mr. Robert Kuhn, Swift River Elementary School Principal (present); Dr. Jose Irizarry, Chestnut Hill Community School Interim Principal (present); Mr. Thomas Ruscio, Jabish Brook Middle School Principal (present); Ms. Christine Vigneux, Belchertown High School Principal (present); Mr. Robert Lachance, Director of Buildings and Grounds (present); Ms. Phyllis Ducomb, School Nurse Leader (not present); Mr. Robert Marchewka, Dean of Students/Athletic Director (present)

**BHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES:**

(not present)

**VISITORS:**

Mr. Paul Silva, Finance Committee Chair; Mr. Ronald Aponte, Select Board member; Mr. Gary Brougham, Town Administrator; Mr. Stephen Swift; Mr. George Synan  
*(See attached sign-in sheet for additional visitors.)*

**MINUTES**

- I. Call to order  
Dr. Tsoumas called to order the Regular School Committee meeting at 7:02 p.m.  
Dr. Tsoumas made the Public Assembly Notice announcement.
- II. Public comment regarding items on the agenda  
None at this time; Dr. Tsoumas stated that public comment would be allowed after the public hearing on the FY 2014 budget.
  - A. Public Hearing on the FY 2014 budget  
Dr. Houle gave a PowerPoint presentation of the Belchertown Public Schools FY 2014 Proposed Budget, which was described as a level service budget. Two different sets of figures were presented: All Funds Budget (all expenditures and revenue offsets, including grants and revolving funds) and Local Education Agency (LEA) Budget (Chapter 70 reimbursement for public education and the local town contribution), and Dr. Houle elaborated on the details of each. The resulting school district budget figures represented a gap of \$243,421.00 in order to meet the budget recommended by the Finance Committee. With the need to close that gap in mind, and as directed by the School Committee, Dr. Houle and administrators developed a three-tiered plan of budget adjustments and she reviewed those items. These adjustments include

reductions in personnel, building projects, extra-curricular activities, and increases in bus fees, athletic fees, and parking fees. Dr. Houle also reported on the many new unfunded or underfunded mandates from the DESE facing the school district, i.e., reports, submission of information and data, curriculum/instruction/assessment initiatives, as well as new health and safety initiatives, etc., and she noted that there are more regulations and requirements with less funding every year. Despite a decreased budget, she was pleased to note the many accomplishments of the Belchertown school district in the last few years: clearly articulated K-12 curriculum is nearly complete; accountability status of several schools has improved; technology infrastructure has been stabilized and updated; cohesion and collaboration now exists among all five schools. Dr. Houle concluded that the three-tiered budget proposal, as well as the proposed increases in fees, would close the gap with the Finance Committee's recommendation for the school budget, and also provide some surplus cash for the School Committee reserves, which is essentially the school district's "rainy day fund". Mr. Silva then discussed the available town-wide revenue, as well as town-wide expenses. He explained that, at the Annual Town Meeting, additional monies have historically been requested to be released from the stabilization fund to meet increasing needs and that amount is usually \$250,000.00. Mr. Silva proposed that this year the town be asked to release \$325,000.00 from the stabilization fund. At this time, Dr. Tsoumas welcomed public comment regarding the proposed budget. Mr. Stephen Swift expressed his concerns regarding proposed budget cuts, as follows: the elimination of Freshmen Sports and the viability of an Intramural Sports Program; the elimination of two paraprofessionals and the proposed third Team Leader in the SPED Department (now Student Support Services); the elimination of the proposed additional tech support position in the IT Department. He also discussed the salary increases for administrators, which he felt should be eliminated in order to restore some of the cuts made in programs and personnel. Mr. Swift did respectfully acknowledge the difficult task the school district faced with increased needs and decreased funding. Mr. George Synan asked if, with regard to the many unfunded and underfunded mandates, the school district could request an extension on some of the deadlines for these mandates until more funding became available, and Dr. Houle explained that we are required to follow all regulations that are given despite the current budget situation. Mr. Synan thanked the School Committee and the town boards for their hard work in putting together the best budget they could with limited resources.

In conclusion, Dr. Tsoumas expressed her appreciation to the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen for their cooperation and support of the school district in its continued pursuit of quality education for the students of Belchertown.

### III. Reports and recommendations of the Superintendent

#### A. Approve FY 2014 budget

Dr. Tsoumas read a statement (Massachusetts State Ethics Commission Advisory #05-03) prior to the vote taking place with regard to two School Committee members having specific conflicts of interest with family members who work in the district. Two line items will require a vote where the affected member will not participate in the discussion or vote on the line item that would cause the conflict of interest.

*(Mr. Weiss excused himself from the room.)*

First vote read by Dr. Tsoumas:

Department 072, Science High School

Line item 722305-51110, Full Time Salary & Wage: \$500,981.00

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve this budget line item in the amount of \$500,981.00, as presented. Ms. Phaneuf seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-1 (abstention: Mr. Weiss)

*(Mr. Weiss returned to the room.)*

*(Dr. Tsoumas excused herself from the room and Mr. Weiss took over as chair for the following vote.)*

Second vote read by Mr. Weiss:

Department 081, Special Education High School

Line item 812310-51110, Full Time Salary & Wage: \$366,993.00

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve this budget line item in the amount of \$366,993.00, as presented. Ms. Phaneuf seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-1 (abstention: Dr. Tsoumas)

*(Dr. Tsoumas returned to the room and resumed as chair.)*

1. All funds budget: \$27,919,328.72

MOTION: Ms. Phaneuf moved to approve the FY 2014 All Funds Budget in the amount of \$27,919,328.72 for presentation at the Annual Town Meeting on May 13, 2013. Mr. Weiss seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

2. Local budget: \$25,879,863.00

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve the FY 2014 LEA Budget in the amount of \$25,879,863.00 for presentation at the Annual Town Meeting on May 13, 2013. Mr. Weiss seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

B. Approval to post and advertise anticipated openings for the 2013-2014 school year, subject to appropriation

Dr. Houle referred to her memorandum in this evening's correspondence which listed anticipated vacancies for the 2013-2014 school year due to retirements. She is asking that the School Committee approve her request to post and advertise these positions as anticipated vacancies, subject to appropriation, prior to the Annual Town Meeting, in order to tap a greater pool of available qualified candidates. The successful candidates will not be appointed to these positions until after the budget has been approved at Town Meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Weiss moved to approve the Superintendent's request to post and advertise anticipated SY 2013-2014 openings, subject to appropriation, as presented. Ms. Phaneuf seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

COMMENT: Ms. Phaneuf stated that it made sense to start this process early in order to choose from a larger pool of applicants.

C. Appointment of School Committee representatives to a Joint Labor Management Committee to study the feasibility of release time for common planning time

Dr. Houle referred to the Memorandum of Agreement signed with the Belchertown Teachers Association, Unit A, included in this evening's correspondence, with regard to the appointment of representatives chosen by the School Committee to a Joint Labor Management Committee. This committee will study the feasibility of release time for common planning time, and present its recommendation to the School Committee and BTA at a future date.

Dr. Houle recommended that Mr. Cameron, ASTL, and Ms. Phaneuf, Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee Chair, be appointed to the Joint Labor Management Committee, as well as a third member, a school principal, to be chosen by the Superintendent.

MOTION: Mr. Weiss moved to approve the appointments of Mr. Cameron, Ms. Phaneuf and a school principal (TBD) to the Joint Labor Management Committee, as presented. Mr. Fritsch seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

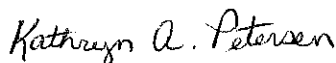
- IV. Approval of minutes
- A. April 23, 2013
- MOTION: Ms. Phaneuf moved to approve the minutes of the April 23, 2013 Regular School Committee meeting, as presented. Mr. Weiss seconded the motion.
- VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously
- V. New business
- None
- VI. Unfinished business
- None
- VII. Reports of subcommittees/representative to Collaborative for Educational Services
- A. Collaborative for Educational Services (Ms. Phaneuf)
- A meeting of the CES is scheduled for next Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>.
- B. Curriculum & Instruction (Ms. Phaneuf/Ms. Popowich)
1. Request from Mr. Cameron for meeting on May 14, 2013 at 6:30 pm to hear recommendation on mathematics textbook series, grades K-8
- Mr. Cameron stated that the Instructional Leadership Team is currently working with two publishers on a math series, consisting of both textbooks and e-books. A meeting of the Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee was scheduled for May 14, 2013 at 6:30 p.m.
- C. Healthy & Safer Schools Advisory Committee (Ms. Popowich/Ms. Phaneuf)
- This subcommittee will have a meeting next month.
- D. Jessica's Boundless Playground Committee (Mr. Weiss)
- Mr. Weiss reported that the Playground Committee had a meeting last week and the project has a plan, a budget, and a consultant. He also stated that many fundraising events have taken place and more are being planned. Mr. Weiss said that the creation of this handicapped-accessible playground is an exciting project, and its funding is not part of the school district's budget. Dr. Tsoumas extended her thanks to this hardworking group.
- E. Personnel & Policy (Ms. Popowich/Dr. Tsoumas)
- Ms. Popowich and Dr. Tsoumas agreed that this subcommittee will next meet on May 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. in order to prepare for the Superintendent Evaluation process.
- F. Property & Transportation (Mr. Weiss/Mr. Fritsch)
- None; a meeting of this subcommittee will be scheduled with Mr. Lachance at a future date.
- G. Technology Advisory Committee (Mr. Fritsch)
- A meeting of this subcommittee is scheduled for tomorrow evening.
- VIII. Communications
- A. Agenda: April 30, 2013
- B. Minutes: April 23, 2013
- C. Proposed FY 2014 budget, as amended on April 23, 2013
- D. Memorandum regarding anticipated vacancies for the 2013-2014 school year

- E. Memorandum of agreement with the Belchertown Teachers' Association regarding a Joint Labor Management Committee to study the feasibility of release time for common planning time.
  
- IX. Vote to enter into Executive Session under M.G.L., c. 30A, §21, Part (3), to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with Unit A, Teachers, Unit B, Secretaries, Unit C, Custodians, Unit D, Food Service Workers, and Unit E, Paraprofessionals as conducting said business in open session would have a detrimental effect on the School Committee's negotiating position, and Part (4), to discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto. The Committee will not return to open session.

Dr. Tsoumas – yes  
Mr. Weiss - yes  
Ms. Popowich – yes  
Ms. Phaneuf - yes  
Mr. Fritsch – yes

The Committee entered into Executive Session at 8:26 p.m.

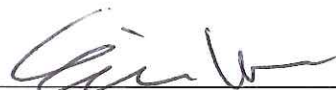
Respectfully submitted by,



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


School Committee members' signatures:

, Linda Tsoumas, Chair

, Eric Weiss, Vice Chair

, Clare Popowich, Secretary

, Beverly Phaneuf, Member

, Richard Fritsch, 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 Dr. Judith Houle, Superintendent of Schools, at 413.323.0423 or via email at [jhoule@belchertown.org](mailto:jhoule@belchertown.org) to determine the best way to address your concerns.

BELCHERTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
REGULAR SESSION  
SIGN IN SHEET

DATE: 4-30-13

PLS. PRINT NAME BELOW

Joyce O'Leary

GARY BROUGHAM

Max N. Doeh

Robert J. Marchewka

Stephen Swift

Christo N. V. ...

Jose H. Trizny

George Syman

Robert Kahn

Stephanie Davies

Jose Vinagre

Rob & Monica Guffin