



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
December 13, 2016**

LOCATION: Chestnut Hill Community School Auditorium

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

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

ADMINISTRATION: Karol G. Coffin, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Brian Cameron, Assistant Superintendent and Director of Student Support Services; Mr. Edward Dunn, Contracted School Business Manager

BHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES: Mr. Parker Mas

VISITORS: see sign in sheet

MINUTES

Pledge of Allegiance

I. Call to order

Ms. French called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

II. Public comment regarding items on the agenda

Motion: Mr. Charron moved to approve public comments for items not on the agenda

Second: Dr. Knapp

Vote: 5,0,0

Discussion: the Committee agree to add a 3 minute per person time limit to comments with a 20 minute total time allocated. Ms. French noted if anyone could submit something in writing to be added to the minutes.

Beth Butin: Questioned why if the contract negotiations have not been an issue for 30 years they are now an issue. Would like a general explanation of a reason.

Ms. French noted that this is not the first time negotiations have not been settled right away. There have been negotiations that were not settled until November and January previously.

Ben Stone: Noted he is an alum from Belchertown. Mr. Stone noted that 92 % of other districts spend more per student. He also noted this is a testament to our teaching staff that our district still performs very well.

Tamara Sullivan-Daly: 20 years in Belchertown and teaching. Concerned with the disconnect between the Belchertown Vision and why that same respect is not given to the teachers. Noted there are already many state mandates that cover curriculum. Success at the high school also goes toward the lower grade levels as well as collaboration through the district.

Ms. French: Concerned about the amount of people using words like autonomy and 30 years. Autonomy is not being touched. We all (School Committee members) have students in the district. We advocate for; students, teachers, parents, taxpayers, district employees, and the budget. The Committee was under the impression that they were close to an understanding. They were shocked that the meetings were stopped and mediation was called in.

Don Bieber: Now that it is public knowledge, he hears that the teachers feel threatened, not supported and not getting the right respect. Feels that we have a top down management system. Meetings schedules were difficult. Would like affirmation that they respect the teachers.

Ms. French: note there is a lot of hearsay out there. Several dated were sought for meetings and there were many schedules to accommodate. They respect the teachers and find it unfortunate that the public and children have been put into this. Can't fix what we don't know is broken. There is a lot of information out there that is not correct. The Committee is looking for what is right for the kids and change is difficult. If there are changes then the Committee feels they are necessary.

Jason Burke Murphy: Commented that if there is a reasonable contract the teachers would sign it. Some changes have come in that have eroded trust.

Pamela Cavanaugh: Has 2 children in the district and is a teacher in another district. Chose Belchertown for the schools and is very happy with the schools. Commented that it is concerning for residents that are here the provisions brought to teachers that districts practices need to change. Ranked 13th because of teachers and does not want to see teachers leave because of a contract.

Ms. French: Commented that it takes a whole team; the School Committee, paras, food service, secretaries, custodians, etc. Everyone makes the district. Counsel has advised the School Committee, just because you have the right to speak, does not mean you should. Mediation also advised them not to speak in open meeting.

Lucinda Fuller: Lifelong resident of Belchertown with 3 kids that have graduated. Does not want grandkids entering the schools as it is now. Classroom freedom is necessary. Why are teachers viewing it as a loss of prep time. There are budget cuts but more administration positions. Colleges are looking for a well rounded student.

Alaina Sanborn: Chose Belchertown because of schools. Concerned with teachers being left without a contract. What are teachers or School Committee asking for that is so out of the ordinary from past practice?

Ms. French: This is not an abnormal time frame, and teachers are protected by law even without a contract. This is not as alarming as being made out. Nobody has reached out to the School Committee. Not sure when this became an us against you dilemma.

Brian Gibbons: Happy with the Belchertown schools. Feels this is a common theme, as with the budget last year does not feel there are satisfactory answers being given. He spoke to budget concerns, and finds admin uncooperative about accountability and gives misleading information.

Mr. Charron: Our teachers are amazing and it is ours. People leading the schools have many years of experience too. Trust a little bit, we want contracts too.

- III. Special awards and presentations
There were no special awards or presentations.

- IV. Update from BHS Student Advisory Council representative – Mr. Parker Mass

Cold Spring School

Cold Spring School is conducting a SOCK DRIVE entitled, "Warm Hearts, Warm Feet" in the spirit of community goodwill and fostering citizenship. After collecting new, unused socks of all sizes, they will be donated to: Friends of Hampshire County in Florence, The Grove Street Inn in Northampton, and the Amherst Survival Center.

Swift River Elementary School

On Friday all students at Swift River Elementary School will attend a performance by the Pumpnickel Puppets to conclude the One School, One Story program. The program was a great success and students enjoyed talking and sharing their reading with others. In the spring the literacy initiative will continue and another great children's book will be selected to share with the school community.

Chestnut Hill Community School

The students in Ms. Mook's Art class at Chestnut Hill Community School are taking part in an activity that teaches them the value of giving back and helping their communities. They are each painting a clothespin and donating it to one of the following organizations: The Belchertown Soldiers Home, The Holyoke Soldiers Home, Health South Rehabilitation Center of Western Massachusetts and Soldier On in Leeds. Through this small donation of their artwork, the students will see the positive impact that they can have on people within the community.

Jabish Brook Middle School

The Jabish Brook Middle School Winter Concert was held at the BHS auditorium on Thursday, December 8th at 7:00 P.M.

Belchertown High School

Belchertown High School will host the Senior Citizens' Brunch on Thursday, December 22nd from 9am - 10:30am in the auditorium and the cafeteria. Guests will be treated to holiday music from the BHS Music Department and a delicious brunch prepared by the National Art Honor Society and Student Council. Guests may board a bus for BHS at 8:45am from the Belchertown Senior Center or they may drive to BHS on their own. Everyone is welcome to attend this wonderful holiday event!

- V. Approval of minutes (A.I.)
A. November 15, 2016, Regular Session
B. November 29, 2016, Regular Session
Motion: Dr. Knapp moved to approve the minutes of November 15 and November 29 as presented
Second: Mr. Charron
Vote: 5,0,0
- VI. Reports and recommendations of the Superintendent
A. Communication to parents of professional release days
Superintendent Coffin noted that notification to all families about early release days has been sent out. Has received a few phone calls about it. This was a prior practice. People are welcome to see her about concerns.
- VII. Personnel
A. Update as of December 13, 2016
Announce Sandra Bremer's retirement from Cold Spring School. A letter went out to CSS families. Applications are being accepted. There are a couple of parents on the committee. Wishes Ms. Bremer well on her retirement.
Superintendent Coffin welcomed the new hires to the district, Suzanne Chanis and Jeanne McDonough-Ferreira
- VIII. Unfinished business
A. Report on MASC Conference – Ms. French/Ms. Bogdanovich
Ms. Bogdanovich, Ms. French, and Superintendent Coffin attended the conference. Ms. Bogdanovich noted that many of the workshops dealt with social/emotional and budget. Ms. Bogdanovich, Ms. French, and Superintendent Coffin found many of the workshops beneficial. Ms. Bogdanovich and Ms. French attended social/emotional and budget workshops.
- IX. New business
A. JBMS Out-of-State Field Trip Request – NYC (A.I.)
Motion: Dr. Knapp moved to approve the JBMS out of state field trip request
Second: Ms. Bogdanovich
Vote: 5,0,0
Discussion: Dr. Knapp noted this has already been approved by the Superintendent. Mr. Ruscio noted this would replace a DC trip.
- B. BHS Out-of-State Field Trip Request – Boys' Lacrosse Teams (A.I.)
Motion: Dr. Knapp moved to approve the Boy's Lacrosse trip to Brattleboro
Second: Ms. Bogdanovich

Vote: 5,0,0

Discussion: Superintendent Coffin noted this trip is because they have a game there. Dr. Laughner questioned if it is an excused absence because of athletics and does the policy cover this. Dr. Knapp noted that the time is at the end of the school day so athletes will have been in school the whole day. The personnel and policy subcommittee will be looking at the excused absence policy to include athletics.

C. Acceptance of donation – Cold Spring School entry sign (A.I.)

Motion: Mr. Charron moved to accept the donation at CSS

Second: Dr. Laughner

Vote: 5,0,0

Discussion: Ms. French noted a neighbor to CSS has redesigned the sign. It has a value of \$1,500.

X. Reports of subcommittees

A. Curriculum & Instruction (Dr. Knapp/Mr. Charron)

Dr. Knapp noted they met a week ago. Discussed; RADAR data, exploring other ways to measure data. There will be another meeting in January.

B. Personnel & Policy (Ms. Bogdanovich/Dr. Laughner)

1. Job Description – Director of Cold Spring School (Early Childhood Center (Possible A.I.)

2. Job Description – Executive Assistant to the Superintendent (Possible A.I.)
School Committee will look at job description and vote at next meeting.

3. District Bullying Prevention & Intervention Policy and Plan

4. IHAMB - Policy

5. JH Policy

School Committee will review District Bully, IHAMB, and Jh policies, and has forwarded them to the next meeting.

C. Property & Transportation (Ms. Bogdanovich/Ms. French)

Ms. French noted they have not met.

D. Finance & Budget Subcommittee (Dr. Laughner/Mr. Charron)

1. Payroll & Accounts Payable Warrants (A.I.)

Motion: Dr. Laughner moved to approve the warrants

Amended motion: Mr. Charron moved to amend the motion to include all 3 payroll warrants in the amounts of; \$738,637.88, \$751,354.52, and \$786,655.75

Second: Dr. Laughner

Vote: 5,0,0

Motion: Dr. Laughner moved to approve the 4 scheduled invoice warrants in the amounts of \$181,309.91, \$323,314.07, \$1,937.15, and \$89,528.86

Second: Mr. Charron

Vote: 5,0,0

2. Update on revenue committee

Finance & Budget subcommittee working on 2018 budget in preparation for town meeting. Mr. Dunn has given first draft with a forecast of capital expenses. The subcommittee discussed presentation of warrants at full Committee.

- XI. Reports of school department liaisons
- A. Healthy & Safer Schools Advisory Committee (Ms. French)
Ms. French noted they met last week. Updated the Bully Prevention Policy. They are still working on creating a progress report to the School Committee for a future meeting.
 - B. Technology Working Group (Dr. Laughner)
Dr. Laughner noted they met last week, he was unable to attend.
 - C. Collaborative for Educational Services (Dr. Knapp)
Dr. Knapp noted they had a presentation on DYS education that the Collaborative oversees.
 - D. RADAR (Dr. Laughner, Mr. Charron)
 - a. Update on RADAR
Dr. Laughner noted there is no update at this time.
- XII. Correspondence
- A. Agenda, December 13, 2016
 - B. November 15, 2016, Minutes
 - C. November 29, 2016, Minutes
 - D. Professional release days – letter to parents
 - E. Personnel Update
 - F. JBMS Out-of-State Field Trip Request – NYC (A.I.)
 - G. BHS Out-of-State Field Trip Request – Boys' Lacrosse Teams (A.I.)
 - H. Memo regarding donated CSS sign
 - I. Job Description – Director of Cold Spring School (Early Childhood Center)
 - J. Job Description – Executive Assistant to the Superintendent
 - K. District Bullying Prevention & Intervention Policy and Plan
 - L. Payroll and Accounts Payable Warrants
 - M. Collaborative- Exec. Director's Report – Informational only
- XIII. Vote to enter into Executive Session under M.G.L. 30A, §21, Parts (2) and (3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with Unit A, Teachers, Unit B, Secretaries, Unit C, Custodians, Unit D. Food Service Employees, Unit E. Paraprofessionals and negotiations with single contract employees 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 8:28 pm. They will not return to open session.

Vote:

Dawn French - yes

Thomas Laughner - yes

Michael Knapp - yes

Myndi Bogdanovich - yes
Jeff Charron - yes

Motion: moved to adjourn at
Second:
Vote: 5,0,0

Respectfully submitted by,

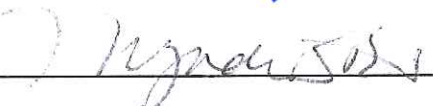
Ramona Griffin
Non-Confidential Recording Secretary to the School Committee

School Committee members' signatures:

 _____, Dawn French, Chair

 _____, Thomas Laughner, Vice Chair

 _____, Michael Knapp, Secretary

 _____, Myndi Bogdanovich, Member

 _____, Jeff Charron, Member

Vision Statement

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

Mission Statement

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.

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](#)).

