

GROTON-DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

High School Library
Business Meeting Minutes
June 4, 2008
(Approved June 16, 2008)

PRESENT:

Peter Carson
Ms Berta Erickson
Mr. Jim Frey
Dr. Paul Funch, Chair
Mr. Chuck McKinney, Vice-Chair
Mr. Frank O'Connell
Mr. Jon Sjoberg, Secretary

ADMINISTRATION:

Dr. Alan Genovese, Superintendent
Timothy Sheehan, Director of Business and Finance

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE:

Kayleigh O'Brien

STAFF, PRESS, OTHERS: C. Beckert-Long, Groton Herald; P. Myerson, R. Goguen, D. Diggins, S. Marcus-Cohen, M. Brisson, C. Jones, See attached sign-in sheet

CALL TO ORDER:

The GDRSC Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. and the Committee voted to adjourn to executive session under M.G.L. Chapter 39, Section 23B-3. The meeting reconvened in open session at 7:08 p.m., with no plans to return to executive session, and was called to order by the by the chair, P. Funch

ANNOUNCEMENTS/SPOTLIGHT

K. O'Brien and committee members read prepared announcements and a copy is attached to these minutes.

Dr. Genovese announced Class Day was held today and many students were recognized for doing phenomenal things. He highlighted several of their academic achievements and noted the district has every reason to be proud of the students and the staff works miracles in the classroom every day. B. Erickson said the band and chorus were also impressive.

T. Sheehan announced Marilyn Gallardo has completed two seminars and will shortly be recertified as an Associate Public Purchasing Official.

Dr. Genovese recognized Carolyn Starrett, Joellen Sheehan, Betty Ireland, Janice Buxton and Pat Rudy for their years of service and presented them with retirement certificates. Carolyn Jakubiak and Joanne Antonelli were also recognized. Collectively, they represent over 160 years of service.

Tonight is student representative Kayleigh O'Brien's last meeting and Dr. Funch thanked her for her dedication. She will be attending the University of Georgia.

MINUTES

C. MCKINNEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 21, 2008.

SECONDED BY F. O'CONNELL

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

J. SJOBERG MOVED TO APPROVE THE EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 6, 2008 AND FEBRUARY 27, 2008. SECONDED BY F. O'CONNELL

In Favor: F. O'Connell, C. McKinney, P. Funch, B. Erickson, P. Carson

Abstention: J. Frey, J. Sjoberg

J. SJOBERG MOVED TO APPROVE THE EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 22, 2008 AS AMENDED THIS EVENING. SECONDED BY C. MCKINNEY

In Favor: C. McKinney, P. Funch, J. Sjoberg, B. Erickson, P. Carson

Abstention: J. Frey, F. O'Connell

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

While at a meeting at the town hall, F. O'Connell said he was told the high school band did a wonderful job at Dunstable's Memorial Day parade.

Dr. Funch said Saturday's dedication of the Million Pennies Commemorative Memorial was very touching and he encouraged everyone to view the moving display at MSN.

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION

Principal Marcus-Cohen extended an invitation to members to attend the high school graduation ceremony on Friday, June 6th at 6:00 p.m.

High School Handbook - Principal Marcus-Cohen stated they wanted to work on the respectful tone of the handbook and they received input from students, faculty and staff to be sure they could make this the best document possible. She, M. Brisson and C. Jones reviewed the major changes to the handbook. The attendance appeals process was explained. It was also clarified students are allotted three days per year for college visitations. There has been an awareness campaign with respect to the changes in attendance to comply with state law. Feedback has been very supportive and parents appreciate the tightening up of the language.

B. Erickson asked if there could be mandatory attendance in a health class or facility for students caught smoking. S. Marcus-Cohen said it would be difficult to be sure the student attended even if they were able to get him/her there. This year the drug and alcohol counselor had two students, who were caught smoking, give mini-presentations at the middle school and they talked about their personal struggles with addiction to nicotine.

Swallow Union SIP - Principal Myerson recognized the School Council members and his staff. He reviewed their goals, objectives and strategies for 2008-2010.

1. To improve student achievement in literacy
2. To improve student achievement in mathematics
3. To improve student achievement by providing time for teachers to collaborate using the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model

P. Myerson explained Goal #3 is new and grade level teachers come in at 8:30 am once a week and work collaboratively until 9:15 am on team goals, analyzing students' work and designing lessons and common assessments. Aides are watching the classes during this time. The staff read Getting Started and grade level teams presented an assigned section at monthly staff meetings. A copy was given to Dr. Funch. A PLC committee has been established to help carry out strategies from the book study and to work on a master schedule.

F. O'Connell noted Principal Myerson is more excited about this SIP than in the past and he agreed, stating they are seeing results every day and everyone is following the same vision. C. Scafidi said the teachers are

seeing the results and the collaborative planning time has taken off.

J. Frey noted accommodations are made in the strategies for Sped students within the math and PLC sections and asked if this is covered in the literacy section. P. Myerson said accommodations are made and special ed students are treated as regular students and they try not to delineate between the two.

Florence Roche SIP - Members had received a packet of MCAS data and Principal Goguen said as educators, their job is to constantly look at data and tie it back into what is going on in the classroom. District assessments are also looked at. She reviewed their mission statement, goals, highlights and focus areas for 2008-2010 and noted Goals 6, 7 and 8 are new.

1. To improve student learning and achievement in mathematics.
2. To improve student learning and achievement in written expression.
3. To improve student learning and achievement in reading.
4. To support the development of students as responsible citizens of the world.
5. To use technology ethically and responsibly and to demonstrate a broaden educational experience for our students and staff.
6. To provide a safe and secure learning environment for students, faculty and staff.
7. To further develop social studies and science curriculum and assessments that are aligned to the Massachusetts State Frameworks.
8. To promote actions, behaviors and learning that create a healthy and safe environment for all students, faculty and staff.

R. Goguen said a lot of effort is going into involving the students and teachers in welcoming the new students into their school to be sure everyone is comfortable. F. O'Connell asked how they will collaborate to raise the bar consistently across the schools. R. Goguen said she and Principal Myerson are in constant communication, they share staff and follow the same curriculum. They want to foster the teachers being a part of what is going on in each school but that may differ a little because of the different teachers and buildings. Dr. Genovese said the continuity will be embedded in the district's strategic plan. Teachers have a voice and are a part of creating things aligned to the Frameworks. They share curriculum days throughout the year. It was noted it is difficult to share curriculum leaders and they have taken on a great leadership role.

It was stated that developing the professional learning communities have contributed to the improvement in MCAS scores. There is also teamwork, communication and a clarity of what is really quality work. With respect to the need for reliable computer equipment, R. Goguen said they could use more computers and printers for teachers in the classroom but it is a funding issue. A reallocation of computers and equipment is in the works and the district has a lease/purchase program. Swallow Union's lab will be updated extensively with the lease program and the inheritance of computers from Prescott.

R. Goguen congratulated all the students for the progress they made over the course of this year.

REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

Dr. Funch reported the following subcommittee appointments were made:

Policy - B. Erickson, P. Carson and J. Frey

Budget & Finance - F. O'Connell, C. McKinney and J. Frey

Personnel & Negotiations - P. Carson, B. Erickson and J. Sjoberg

F. O'Connell will be the GDAY representative and Dr. Funch will continue to be the Sped PAC representative.

Policy - P. Carson reported they will be meeting Tuesday to elect their officers.

Personnel & Negotiations - P. Carson reported they have not met.

Budget & Finance - J. Frey reported they will elect officers at their next meeting. They discussed the three capital projects that are in the process of being awarded and how these will be funded. Principal Silverman provided a preliminary list of things that may need to take place to make the middle school buildings equitable for the reconfiguration. It is expected a bulk of the work can be done from within the operating budget and some work can possibly be done through the MSN building fund. The challenges of predicting year-end balances were briefly discussed.

C. McKinney reported he, B. Erickson and J. Frey attended an informal meeting today with representatives from the Boards of Selectmen to discuss the situation around the debt exclusion not passing in either town. A number of scenarios on how to address the financing of the \$2.5M bond (currently a BAN coming due in October) were discussed. Both towns seem to be leaning toward a ballot question in the fall. Dr. Genovese stated they are all on the same page and they need the public to understand how important it is for the debt exclusion to pass for the purchasing of this land. They are committed to working with town officials.

Director of Business & Finance - T. Sheehan reported they are nearing completion of the reference checks for the Swallow Union elevator repair and the building security upgrades and they expect to award the bids this week to the apparent low bidders. He expects to hear from the AAB regarding the elevator tomorrow and does not expect a problem. The next step for the three projects is to convert each Invitation for Bid into a binding contract. There is an action item tonight for an appropriation from E & D for \$132,000 to pay for these three projects and to provide a small contingency. Budget and Finance voted to support this recommendation.

Last week he was invited to make a presentation to the GDEA on the issue of 403 B tax sheltered investments. The IRS is shifting the fiduciary and regulatory responsibilities for these programs from the investment firms to the employer. The goal is to put these on the same footing as 401 K's. He said they need to encourage teachers to invest and prepare for their retirement.

He will be attending a bid opening tomorrow at MEC for the fuel oil. He noted the cost was \$2.14 a gallon for this FY and \$1.93 a gallon in FY07. They had to commit to participate before they know the price.

Report of the Chair - Dr. Funch reported he is not available for the June 18th meeting and it was agreed the committee will still meet that evening.

A school committee meeting was scheduled for August 20th. A workshop will be held at 6:30 p.m. at Tarbell on July 23rd to discuss their goals and meeting structure. This will be a facilitated workshop if possible. A second workshop was tentatively scheduled for August 27th.

Report of the Superintendent -

SPED Transportation Update - Dr. Genovese reported they are looking at cost efficiencies and a number of vendors have expressed an interest. They will get information on June 13th and this will be distributed to committee members for review. A letter will be going out tomorrow to parents who drive their own children to schools outside of the district or are using Sped transportation.

Reference to BOS Letter - Dr. Genovese said he appreciates the members participation in getting together for the joint meeting.

Review of Attorney Comparables - As requested, members had received a copy of comparable hourly rates and Dr. Genovese said Attorney Greenspan is asking for \$200 an hour, up from \$150 an hour. He stated Attorney Greenspan is very responsive and helpful and supports the request.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

P. Carson said the advertising needs to be addressed by the Policy subcommittee right away. A number of questions have come up in the meantime and he asked if members would be interested in having a motion to

leave advertising as it is and not take on new things until this issue is resolved. He does not want the policy written by things coming in. Dr. Funch advised he will need to suspend the rules for a motion.

ACTION ITEMS

VOTE: Authorization to Appropriate from E & D \$132,000

P. CARSON MOVED THE GROTON-DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROPRIATE FROM THE EXCESS AND DEFICIENCY (E&D) ACCOUNT THE SUM OF \$132,000 TO BE EXPENDED FOR THE FOLLOWING CAPITAL PROJECTS:

1. Heating and air conditioning unit replacement at the Performing Arts Center of the Middle School South Building - \$70,000.
2. Replacement of the elevator at Swallow Union Elementary School - \$30,000
3. Building security upgrades and improvements - video intercoms and buzzers on main entrances - at various sites - \$20,000

AND

4. Contingency fund for all three projects, to be expended at the discretion of the Chief Procurement Officer, for additional work if needed - \$12,000.

SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON

It was clarified the video camera will have a two-way intercom. Dr. Genovese suggested the Committee have an executive session meeting in the fall to talk about surveillance and how it all works.

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL

VOTE: Appoint Howard Greenspan, Attorney

F. O'CONNELL MOVED TO BRING THE MOTION BACK TO THE TABLE. SECONDED BY J. SJOBERG

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

C. MCKINNEY MOVED THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPOINT HOWARD GREENSPAN AS THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE'S ATTORNEY. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

J. FREY MOVED TO SET THE COMPENSATION RATE FOR THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ATTORNEY AT \$200 PER HOUR. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL

VOTE: Accept Donation of 27" TV

C. MCKINNEY MOVED THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE DONATION OF A 27" TELEVISION FROM RYAN MCMENIMAN. SECONDED BY F. O'CONNELL

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

VOTE: Approval of the High School Handbook

B. ERICKSON MOVED THE COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE 2008-2009 HIGH SCHOOL HANDBOOK. SECONDED BY P. CARSON

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

P. CARSON MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES. SECONDED BY J. FREY

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

P. Carson asked if a motion would be in order to continue to suspend the advertising policy and follow current practice. Dr. Genovese advised someone did ask if it was okay to put temporary signs/banners on the fence at football games. It is not clear there is a collective agreement of what the current practice would be since the policy has been suspended for two years. It was agreed Dr. Genovese can use his discretion until June 30th.

ADJOURNMENT

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F. O'CONNELL MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 9:59 P.M. SECONDED BY J. SJOBERG
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Smith
Recording Secretary

With attachments