

GROTON-DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

High School Black Box Theater

Business Meeting Minutes

October 3, 2007

(Approved 10/17/2007 as amended)

PRESENT:

Ms Cindy Barrett, Chair
Dr. Forrest Buzan, Vice-Chair
Peter Carson
Ms Berta Erickson
Dr. Paul Funch
Mr. Chuck McKinney
Mr. Frank O'Connell

ADMINISTRATION:

Dr. Alan Genovese, Superintendent
Timothy Sheehan, Director of Business and Finance
Dr. Susan Rubel, Director of Curriculum/Staff Development

STAFF, PRESS, OTHERS: C. Beckert-Long, Groton Herald; P. Comtois, Groton Landmark;
K. Icenogle, Dunstable News; D. Palma, S. Silverman, A. Snodgrass, R. Goguen, D. Bermudez,
L. Lefebvre, K. Figueroa, S. Byrne

CALL TO ORDER:

The GDRSC Meeting was called to order at 6:30 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 7:05 p.m. and was called to order by the by the chair, C. Barrett.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/SPOTLIGHT

Introduction: New Groton Police Chief Donald Palma

Dr. Genovese highlighted Chief Palma's work experience. Chief Palma thanked the committee for the opportunity to come in and say "hi".

Members read prepared announcements and a copy is attached to these minutes.

Dr. Genovese announced they are in the process of finding three crossing-guards, as well as a substitute guard, for the middle school and Prescott. The police have been helping out.

Dr. Rubel thanked the committee for giving them half days for curriculum work and they had their first one yesterday. The high school staff updated and revised their core assignments and associated rubrics, the middle school staff corrected approximately 930 writing samples, approximately 450 writing assessments were scored in grades 3 and 4 and K -2 worked on math assessments and scoring.

The Blacktop Blues Program will be held on October 27th from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. at the Alpine Grove in Hollis, NH. This is a blues concert and swing dance event to help raise funds for Florence Roche's playground group. Information is available on the district's website.

Dr. Rubel announced Karen Spangenberg-Postal, PhD, will be presenting a lecture in the Black Box Theater on October 11th beginning at 7:00 p.m. Her specialty is on executive functioning and how to help children develop good organizational and study skills.

GDEF

K. Figueroa announced the deadline for their ninth grant cycle is November 1st and they will be considering grant applications for \$500 or less. They were recently awarded a \$6000 grant from the Bruce J. Anderson Foundation. Concurrent with the min-grant cycle, GDEF will be accepting applications for this grant. The goals of that program are to increase enrichment opportunities in arts education. Requests for this grant are not limited to \$500. Additional information is available at www.gdefinc.org.

K. Figueroa highlighted some of GDEF's community relations work. Their third annual direct mail Giving Campaign will kick off in November and they will host a Reach for the Stars benefit auction in the early spring. GDEF can now accept vehicle donations and they have a link on their website to donationline.com. In addition to event volunteers, GDEF is looking for several people to join their marketing team.

Dr. Genovese said they are fortunate to have such a strong partnership with the GDEF.

MINUTES

C. MCKINNEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE WORKSHOP MINUTES OF AUGUST 22, 2007. SECONDED BY F. BUZAN

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

C. MCKINNEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 18, 2007.

SECONDED BY P. CARSON

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

F. BUZAN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 8, 2007 AS AMENDED, AND SEPTEMBER 18, 2007. SECONDED BY P. FUNCH

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

F. BUZAN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 5, 2007. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON

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

Abstention: P. Funch

(The September 5th and September 20th business meeting minutes will be available for the October 17th meeting).

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

None

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION**Middle School Field Trip to Washington, D.C.**

Principal Silverman stated the trip to Washington, D.C. is a very educational trip for the eighth grade students and a lot of planning has gone into it. A. Snodgrass stated they will be leaving on June 9th and will tour Washington for four days, returning on June 12th. It is anticipated that 90% of the eighth graders (about 200 students) will participate and financial assistance is available. About ten staff members will go along as chaperones and ten parents will be invited to chaperone. Two RN's will also join them. It was stated the itinerary is very similar to last year's.

F. Buzan asked if they will be touring the White House, the Capitol and/or the Supreme Court and

A. Snodgrass said they do not tend to go into those buildings since getting in line consumes a lot of time but they are viewed from the outside.

B. Erickson asked Mr. Snodgrass to elaborate on the assignments the students have at the end of the trip. He stated they will be visiting the Holocaust Museum and this assignment was developed out of the Language Arts. Students will write reflection essays where they share their ideas about ways to make sure that future eighth grade students get the most out of learning about the Holocaust. The scrapbook assignment was

developed as a way to connect the student to the activity and have something to remember it by. Students will also write a Best of/Worst of essay and this assignment places students in the role of Historian.

C. Barrett asked if they will be doing any fundraising for the trip. A. Snodgrass said they do not do specific fundraising but as a middle school, they support fundraising that supports the Groton Trust. The cost of the trip is \$597 and with transportation being a substantial part of the cost, he has asked that the number of buses be reduced to five.

**C. MCKINNEY MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES AND ADVANCE FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION THE ACTION ITEM TO APPROVE THE MIDDLE SCHOOL FIELD TRIP. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY**

**C. MCKINNEY MOVED THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE MIDDLE SCHOOL FIELD TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C. JUNE 9 THROUGH JUNE 12, 2008 AS ARTICULATED IN THEIR PACKET AND PER POLICY IJOA. SECONDED BY F. BUZAN
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY**

Florence Roche Playground Update

L. Lefebvre reported that on the first day of school, students were presented with a new playground area consisting of a rock wall, five slides, a chin bar, a balance beam and monkey bars. Members were provided with a memo detailing the equipment installation by contractor O'Brien and Sons. The associated costs of the project were reviewed and L. Lefebvre stated they need to raise an additional \$7000 by November. They recently learned the state determined the project is not eligible for CPA funding because the playground property was not purchased with CPA funds. L. Lefebvre thanked the hundreds of people involved in this three year process.

F. Buzan asked about the soil test results and L. Lefebvre said they needed to test one sample for every 500 cubic yards. The results showed the soil was suitable to be used as cover for the Charlton landfill. S. Byrne has copies of the lab results.

Dr. Funch commended the playground group for staying with this project throughout the ups and downs and for their fundraising efforts. C. Barrett asked if the rubber surface on top of the asphalt is a durable material and she was advised it is made from old tires and is allergy free. It should last ten to fifteen years and in today's dollars, is \$22.00 a square foot (\$16,000). She asked if the post holes are sealed to prevent soil from coming up and was advised cement comes to the very top.

Principal Goguen acknowledged the countless hours Ms Lefebvre and Ms Bermudez gave to this project.

REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

Policy - Policy will be meeting on October 9th and October 23rd.

Personnel & Negotiations - Update on Superintendent Evaluation Process - C. McKinney reported they met last night and are working on the amendment to the Superintendent Evaluation. Their next meeting is at the high school on October 25th at 7:15 p.m.

Budget & Finance - Dr. Funch reported they discussed the EQA and the large amount of documentation that will be required and they received an update on the Swallow Union roof. They have begun discussion on how to open up communications with the communities to help them understand what the school budget includes and how it is put together. The Chief Procurement Officer position was also discussed and the committee recommends approval of the position. The School Committee makes this appointment and is done by title, in this case the superintendent, and gives the district the ability to negotiate contracts that are other than simply "lowest bidder" contracts. The CPO can delegate his/her responsibilities and Dr. Genovese will delegate procurement responsibilities, with the exception of the final approval of work that needs to be done, to

Mr. Sheehan. The ultimate oversight is with Dr. Genovese. The funding source for any work is with a vote of the School Committee.

Report of the Director of Business & Finance - T. Sheehan reported Quick Books accounting software has been installed in three computers in the high school office and their goal is to link them together so they are multi-user, allowing certain "company files" to be accessed simultaneously by licensed users. The software will be used to manage the athletic budget, the student activities account, the operating budget and the revolving funds for parking fees and lost books. Quick Books will be the standard for the district for all the student activity funds and revolving funds.

T. Sheehan reported the high school water system passed the copper and lead tests and they are working with Mr. O'Donnell, from Tata and Howard, to make some engineering modifications to the system so they can maintain the newly found control of pH. A pH probe will be installed in a location further downstream from the chemical mixing equipment that will give more accurate readings. Changes made to the system require formal approval from DEP and a certified engineer. The bottled water would be removed from the high school after the water has passed two successful tests, two to three months apart.

With respect to the end of year report, T. Sheehan reported they asked for, and received, a one month extension from the DOE's deadline of September 28th. The report is expected to be completed by October 15th.

T. Sheehan reported the architect hired to handle the bidding process for the Union Building roof has reported favorably on the references for the apparent low bidder and there will be a walk-through meeting with the bidder next Tuesday at 3:30 p.m. The design firm will also be present. It is expected a recommendation will be made to the School Committee at their October 17th meeting.

F. Buzan asked when they can expect the final report from Micro Waters and T. Sheehan said the arsenic remediation is done and he will forward the report to Mr. Buzan.

Report of the Chair - C. Barrett reported their Communications Research Team survey was mailed with the Groton electric bills. The survey can be mailed or faxed to Tarbell and it can be downloaded from the district website. K. Icenogle has provided an online survey on the district website using her Dunstable Commons. Dunstable residents will receive a hardcopy of the survey as an ad in the Neighbor to Neighbor that will be distributed at the end of October. Data will be presented to the Committee in December.

C. Barrett reported they had a meeting with the Groton Board of Selectmen and their financial planning group and will be meeting with them monthly. The goal is to "have the bean counters be on the same page" and this will help prepare for better budget planning and communication.

Members have received their MASC delegate manual and will be voting on a delegate tonight.

C. Barrett reported she would like to discuss the actual resolutions at their next meeting. Dr. Funch distributed copies of the resolutions.

Report of the Superintendent - Procurement Officer

(See earlier comments by Dr. Funch)

Dr. Genovese reported he would like to add an Action Item to the agenda. A retiree needs to be appointed to the Insurance Advisory Council and the Association is recommending Brian LeBlanc be appointed.

Mr. LeBlanc was a GDRSD elementary teacher from 1969 to 2004.

Rather than a having a presentation on just Prescott's air quality, Dr. Genovese reported there will be a future presentation that compares the air quality at all of the schools and will include the PTYC and Tarbell.

Facilities Task Force - P. Carson reported they will be meeting on October 18th.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Members received a copy of the May 10, 2007 meeting minutes from a joint meeting of the Groton and Dunstable Boards of Selectmen. F. Buzan asked if the Committee has received any correspondence from Mr. Welch regarding a joint meeting of the Committee and the towns. C. Barrett said this was discussed at the financial planning group meeting this morning. She brought the two outstanding action items to the group's attention and they said they would review the minutes. There is a commitment to follow through with making sure action items are completed. She feels it was the general sense that the joint meeting would not take place and there would not be a separate communication to report concerns and issues. The group discussed presenting the information at an evening meeting when more people could attend and would be televised.

F. Buzan stated it appears Mr. Welch did not try to set up a meeting as he was authorized to do but instead requested an audit of the district. The minutes do not reflect he was authorized by the Groton Selectmen to represent them in contacting state officials. C. Barrett will see if any of the selectmen would like to attend a School Committee meeting to present concerns or issues. With the perception by some that there is excessive spending on the part of the district, F. Buzan feels it would be appropriate for comments and concerns to be brought to a Committee meeting.

Dr. Funch questioned why the minutes are only signed by the Groton chairman since it was a joint meeting.

ACTION ITEMS**VOTE: To Appoint Procurement Officer**

P. FUNCH MOVED THEY APPOINT THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE GROTON DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT TO BE THE CHIEF PROCUREMENT OFFICER. SECONDED BY C. MCKINNEY

It was stated this appointment is by title and unless it is revoked, a successive superintendent would automatically become the Chief Procurement Officer for the district.

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY**VOTE: To Approve Middle School Field Trip**

See previous vote

VOTE: To Appoint MASC Delegate

C. MCKINNEY MOVED THE GROTON DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPOINT DR. PAUL FUNCH TO BE THEIR MASC DELEGATE AT THE UPCOMING CONFERENCE.
SECONDED BY P. CARSON

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY**VOTE: To Appoint Brian LeBlanc - Retiree Representative**

C. MCKINNEY MOVED THE GROTON DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPOINT BRIAN LEBLANC AS THE RETIREE REPRESENTATIVE TO THE INSURANCE ADVISORY COUNCIL.
SECONDED BY F. O'CONNELL

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY**ADJOURNMENT**

C. MCKINNEY MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:30 P. M. SECONDED BY P. FUNCH

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Smith

GDRSC 10/03/2007
Recording Secretary

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With attachment

(Transcribed from video tape)