



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
JANUARY 8, 2013**

**LOCATION:** Swift River Elementary School Library  
**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, Member (present); Mr. Richard Fritsch, Member (present)

**ADMINISTRATION:**

Dr. Judith Houle, Superintendent of Schools (present); Mr. Edward Dunn, Contracted School Business Manager (present)

**BHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES:**

(not present)

**VISITORS:**

Ms. Ramona Griffin (present)

**MINUTES**

- I. Call to order  
Dr. Tsoumas called the Regular School Committee meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.
- II. Special awards and presentations  
None
- III. Update from BHS Student Advisory Council representatives  
None
- IV. Public comment regarding items on the agenda  
None
- V. Approval of minutes
  - A. December 11, 2012  
MOTION: Ms. Phaneuf moved to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2012 Regular School Committee meeting as presented. Mr. Fritsch seconded the motion.  
VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously
- VI. Reports and recommendations of the Superintendent  
None
- VII. Unfinished business  
None
- VIII. New business  
None

## IX. Reports of subcommittees/representative to Collaborative for Educational Services

## A. Collaborative for Educational Services (Ms. Phaneuf)

The next meeting of the Collaborative is scheduled for tomorrow in Northampton.

## B. Curriculum &amp; Instruction (Ms. Phaneuf/Ms. Popowich)

Dr. Houle reported that a math pilot has begun with a publisher at the elementary level.

## C. Healthy &amp; Safer Schools Advisory Committee (Ms. Popowich/Ms. Phaneuf)

The next meeting of this subcommittee is scheduled on January 30<sup>th</sup> at 2:15 p.m. at Belchertown High School.

Dr. Houle took this opportunity to publicly thank Chief Fran Fox for the increased police patrols to ensure safety at the schools over the last week. She also reported on other measures that are being taken with school security in mind: the IT Department is working on ID badges for all staff; building doors are being locked internally; custodians will be trained in being more alert and aware of unusual occurrences. Dr. Houle said there is a possibility of sending some staff members to the Canton school district to observe its security model. In conclusion, Dr. Houle stated that, in light of recent events, many parents have had questions and concerns over school security, and she said that she is willing to schedule sessions with parents to address these issues.

## D. Jessica's Boundless Playground Committee (Mr. Weiss)

Mr. Weiss stated that this subcommittee will meet tomorrow evening. He reported that good progress is being made, but that there has been feedback from the public regarding the price of the project, with a desire to see that price come down. Mr. Weiss said that he has had discussions with the designer about downscaling the project from the "Cadillac" version the Playground Committee had originally chosen in an effort to lower costs. He also reported that a subcommittee of the Recreation Board is considering the use of the tennis courts at Chestnut Hill Community School, and so the Playground Committee will focus on a different site at CHCS, which is at the bottom of the hill, and will provide easier access, proximity to the parking lot, and a flat area for construction.

In conclusion, Mr. Weiss stated that the committee members will be working on a grant application at their meeting tomorrow. This is a grant funded by the Community Preservation Act worth \$80,000.00 to \$100,000.00. The CPA now allows for funding to be used for rehabilitating and/or renovating an existing site. Due to the deadline for submission of this grant application, Mr. Weiss asked that Dr. Houle be authorized to sign the grant application when she receives it, as this will need to be done before the next School Committee meeting.

MOTION: Ms. Phaneuf moved to authorize the Superintendent to sign the grant application for Community Preservation Funding when she receives it after the Playground Committee meeting. Mr. Fritsch seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

- E. Personnel & Policy (Ms. Popowich/Dr. Tsoumas)  
Dr. Houle reported that the CES is offering a workshop for School Committee members to attend regarding working with superintendents on the Educator Evaluation System. This workshop is taking place on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, and Dr. Tsoumas plans to attend along with two other members.
- F. Property & Transportation (Mr. Weiss/Mr. Fritsch)  
None; Dr. Houle commented that the parking lot lights at Belchertown High School, Chestnut Hill Community School and Swift River Elementary School have been changed to LED lighting, and this represents a significant saving in energy costs.
- G. Technology Advisory Committee (Mr. Fritsch)  
Mr. Fritsch reported that education days are being planned to instruct teachers in the use of technology. The next phase will then be to provide students with more opportunities for technology use. Dr. Houle stated that the trend for students has been one-on-one programs, and typically is offered in one of three ways: iPads for all students; laptops/notebooks for all students; or BYOD (bring your own device). She said that a team will travel to other districts in order to view all three choices being implemented.
- X. Correspondence  
A. Agenda: January 8, 2013  
B. Minutes: December 11, 2012  
C. Belchertown Evaluation System Feedback Memorandum  
Dr. Houle referred to the memorandum she received from the DESE with regard to the Belchertown Public Schools' Educator Evaluation System, as it pertains to collective bargaining agreements. She said that the DESE has given Belchertown the go-ahead as we are compliant with the system.
- XI. 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. 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 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

*Kathryn A. Petersen*

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

School Committee members' signatures:

Linda Tsoumas, Linda Tsoumas, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_, Eric Weiss, Vice Chair

Clare Popowich, Clare Popowich, Secretary

Beverly Phaneuf, Beverly Phaneuf, Member

Richard Fritsch, 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.