



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
MARCH 5, 2013**

**LOCATION:** Swift River Elementary School Library  
**TIME:** 7:30 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. Brian Cameron, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning (present); Mr. Edward Dunn, Contracted School Business Manager (present); Mr. Ben Admussen, Data Administrator (present); Mr. Scott Karen, Director of Technology (present); Ms. Kristi Guzzo, Director of Student Support Services (present); Mr. Robert Lachance, Director of Buildings and Grounds (present); Ms. Sandra Bremer, Cold Spring School Principal (present); Mr. Robert Kuhn, Swift River Elementary School Principal (present); Mr. Thomas Ruscio, Jabish Brook Middle School Principal (present); Ms. Christine Vigneux, Belchertown High School Principal (present); Ms. Phyllis Ducomb, School Nurse Leader (present)

**BHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES:**

(not present)

**VISITORS:**

Ms. Mona Griffin

**MINUTES**

- I. Call to order  
Dr. Tsoumas called the Regular School Committee meeting to order at 7:35 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; Ms. Griffin asked if she could ask questions during the budget presentation for possible clarification purposes and the Chair agreed to allow questions at that time.
- V. Approval of minutes
  - A. February 26, 2013  
MOTION: Mr. Weiss moved to approve the February 26, 2013 Regular School Committee meeting minutes as presented. Ms. Phaneuf seconded the motion.  
VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

## VI. Reports and recommendations of the Superintendent

## A. Payables warrant signatures

Dr. Houle and Ms. Popowich signed the payroll warrant.

## B. Public Access Defibrillation Program Procedures

Dr. Houle referred to this document provided by the Belchertown Public Schools Department of Health Services and stated that the district's new school physician had reviewed and approved it. Ms. DuComb reported that all five school buildings now have AEDs in place, as well as Central Office.

Dr. Tsoumas asked that changes be made to the document in order for the School Committee to approve it, as follows: the document states that it was revised in 2011, and therefore needs to be updated; in the "Implementation Phase", the document should state that there are now AEDs in all five school buildings, as well as Central Office, since it currently implies that the district is still in the process of acquiring these devices. Dr. Tsoumas also questioned the protocol during an emergency situation, since it seemed that the school physician would need to be contacted for permission before using an AED. Ms. DuComb clarified that there is a "standing order" from the physician to approve the use of an AED in an emergency situation. Ms. DuComb also added that training has taken place for personnel in the district, and this training will be ongoing.

MOTION: Mr. Weiss moved to approve the document of the Belchertown Public Schools Department of Health Services, "Public Access Defibrillation Program Procedures", with changes to be made to the document as agreed upon by the School Committee and the Nurse Leader. Ms. Phaneuf seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

## C. Special/Annual Town Meeting warrant articles

Dr. Houle referred to the memorandum from Mr. Gary Brougham, Town Administrator, which provided the schedule for the town meetings in May, as follows:

Special Town Meeting-May 13, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. at BHS

Annual Town Meeting-May 13, 2013 at 7:30 p.m. at BHS

Dr. Houle also referred to the memorandum from Mr. Dunn regarding the proposed warrant article which needs School Committee approval for the Town Meeting on May 13<sup>th</sup>. This warrant article is for the authorization of the use of a revolving fund for the purpose of transportation of pupils in grades 7 through 12 for school attendance.

MOTION: Mr. Weiss moved to approve the proposed warrant article from Mr. Ed Dunn, Contracted School Business Manager, to authorize the use of a revolving account for student transportation in grades 7 through 12, as presented. Ms. Phaneuf seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

## D. Proposed FY 2014 Budget presentation

Dr. Houle began the presentation of the proposed FY 2014 budget by stating that a level service budget will be used as the foundation with the philosophy of "living within our means". She then reviewed how the proposed budget will be aligned with the district's three strategic goals. She also compared the All Funds and LEA budgets from FY2013 to FY2014, which reflected 2% and 3.5% increases respectively. Dr. Houle then discussed the district's revenue sources (Chapter 70, grants, revolving accounts, and town contribution) and the changes in those numbers from FY2013 as compared to FY2014 estimates. She then reviewed the highlights of the School

Committee/Central Office budget, commenting on increases, decreases and level funding. Dr. Houle also presented the student enrollment trends for all grade levels since SY 2002-03 through the present, and she noted that the data reflects varying enrollment decreases beginning in SY 2007-2008.

Mr. Cameron discussed the budget for District Academic Leadership, which included the addition of his position as Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, contractual obligations for reimbursement, professional development from grants, etc.

Mr. Admussen and Mr. Karen discussed the budget for school district technology. Mr. Admussen noted that no changes will be made to data services, with contracted services (PowerSchool, Connect5, Destiny Library System) being level funded. Mr. Karen requested that the district hire an additional tech support specialist, as the IT Department is severely short-staffed to meet the needs of the district. He stated that a heavy investment has been made in technology and hardware, but there is not enough support staff to implement and maintain these systems. He suggested that a reduction in the hardware budget could be used to offset the cost of the new tech support position. He also noted that every administrator has made a cut in their budgets to help support the hiring of additional manpower for the IT Department. Mr. Karen then discussed the three main areas of focus for his department: classroom technology upgrades; infrastructure/network; and systems.

The five principals (Ms. Vigneux, Mr. Ruscio, Mr. Cameron for Dr. Jose Irizarry, Interim CHCS Principal who was not present, Mr. Kuhn, and Ms. Bremer) then presented their individual proposed FY 2014 budgets and outlined items, as follows: goals, requests for increases, noted decreases, consolidation of line items, transfers of line items, overall improvement in technology, as well as further needs in that area, etc.

Ms. Guzzo presented her proposed budget for Student Support Services, noting that while she was asking for a significant increase in that department's budget, she felt it was necessary to consider hiring additional personnel for the many needs that are being unmet (i.e., 0.5 FTE Preschool Teacher, Transition Specialist, Team Leader/Coordinator). Her budget also reflects an increase in out of district tuitions.

Ms. DuComb's proposed budget for Health/Nurse Services was level funded on all lines except for an increase for the contracted services of Health Master, a software program which was purchased three years ago. She noted that although our contract with this vendor is now in its fourth year, she was able to obtain another discounted yearly fee beyond the three year fixed discounted price.

Mr. Lachance discussed the highlights of the proposed Maintenance budget, noting that in FY 2014, the price per gallon budgeted for fuel will remain the same, and there will also be a decrease in electricity costs. He reported that the Siemens Performance Contract project is 95% completed, and commented on the savings incurred as a result of the new boiler installations. He then reviewed upcoming general building maintenance projects (i.e., asbestos removal at CSS and JBMS, library wiring upgrade at CHCS, etc.).

Dr. Houle concluded the FY2014 budget presentation by reiterating the district's overall goals and living within our means with regard to the many new mandates, most of which are unfunded or under-funded (i.e., new nutrition guidelines, medical emergency response plans, educator evaluation system, concussion monitoring and reporting, bullying prevention and intervention, gender identity regulations, etc.). Lastly, Dr. Houle requested that the School Committee review the proposed FY 2014 budget as presented this evening and offer any guidance with regard to potential cuts or changes.

- 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 collaborative will meet next Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup>.
- B. Curriculum & Instruction (Ms. Phaneuf/Ms. Popowich)  
None
- C. Healthy & Safer Schools Advisory Committee (Ms. Popowich/Ms. Phaneuf)  
This subcommittee will meet at the end of March.
- D. Jessica's Boundless Playground Committee (Mr. Weiss)  
None
- E. Personnel & Policy (Ms. Popowich/Dr. Tsoumas)  
This subcommittee will meet Thursday, March 7<sup>th</sup>.
- F. Property & Transportation (Mr. Weiss/Mr. Fritsch)  
A meeting of this subcommittee will be scheduled in the near future.
- G. Technology Advisory Committee (Mr. Fritsch)  
This subcommittee will meet tomorrow, March 6<sup>th</sup>.
- X. Correspondence
- A. Agenda: March 5, 2013
- B. Minutes: February 26, 2013
- C. Public Access Defibrillation Program Procedures
- D. Memo regarding Special/Annual Town Meetings from Mr. Brougham
- E. Memo for Annual Town Meeting warrant from Mr. Dunn
- F. Proposed FY 2014 Budget and PowerPoint presentation
- 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 9:24 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*, 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.