

GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
REGULAR SESSION

Minutes
Thursday, April 23, 2009
Voted and approved May 14, 2009

Present: Chairman Dalton Athey; committee members: Maryelen Calderwood, Doris Doyle, Donovan Eastman, Mayor Forgey, John Lunt. Also present, Interim Superintendent Susan Hollins, members of the public, city finance administrator Lane Kelly, and the press.

I. Call to Order: With a quorum present, Chairman Athey called the school committee to order at 6:10 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes: Passed to future meeting.

III. Financial Report.

The Superintendent briefly reviewed the financial report, saying the district is within its budget and is financially steady at this time. She discussed English Language Learner and nursing services and recent adjustments to increase staffing this year. The report was accepted as presented. The School Committee requested of the report on Reading First.

IV. Delegation and Presentations: Lane Kelly, Treasurer & City Finance Administrator

L. Kelly presented a packet of reports and documentation to again review the end-of-year finances and balances for 2007-2008. She reviewed how she created the end-of-year balance documents. She summarized her closing report stating:

1. the school department had an over-expenditure of \$1,339,876,
2. no money was missing,
3. all the funding overspent was accounted for.

The Superintendent thanked Ms. Kelly for her time and attention given to school finances and reports this year.

6:21 p.m. School Committee Member Greg Aubin arrived & joined the committee.

V. Communications: None

VI. Reports & Recommendations of the Superintendent

The Superintendent gave an update on math, the idea of science and discovery centers in an available classroom at each school, the status of her investigation of online courses and a virtual school, the Reading First Audit and positive results, and no change in support from the School Building Assistance program, although they are requesting additional information at this time.

Regarding the virtual school and online courses, the Superintendent said she had reached a point of now going forward to discuss contract details so she could then make a

recommendation to the school committee and asked if the committee would like her to proceed. Several members of the committee have attended either a seminar or demonstration.

Motion by Calderwood; 2nd Aubin: To have the Superintendent ask K12, Inc. to come to the next school committee meeting and give a presentation (who they are, what they do, the benefit of their online courses to students). Passed. Unanimous. Discussion: Mr. Aubin clarified that he would like to know who they are, what they do, the benefit of their online courses to students. The Superintendent offered to clarify broadly the terms being discussed for a school as the committee is interested in understanding structurally how this would work.

M. Calderwood asked about Four Corners School, which is planned to re-open this September. Specifically, she wants to be sure there are no districting laws that determines who attends which school and that the district can make these decisions. **Motion by Calderwood; 2nd Aubin: That Attorney Peter Smith come to the committee and bring forward any laws that pertain to districting. Passed. 5:2** Mayor Forgey and Doris Doyle opposed, with Mayor Forgey saying she thought this did not require attorney services.

VII. Unfinished Business

School Choice & Choice Data: The Superintendent reviewed the school choice law and requested the School Committee vote its position: **Motion by Athey; 2nd Calderwood: For the 2009-2010 school year, the Greenfield School Committee will participate in the Massachusetts school choice program under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 76, Section 12b, and will accept students from other school districts in both general and special education programs at all schools on a space available basis. Passed. Unanimous.**

Franklin Technical School Agreement: The committee again reviewed the technical agreement and asked that Greenfield's representatives be invited to meet with the school committee. When Doyle asked about the goal, Chairman Athey responded "to see that the provision is observed." Mr. Aubin said the agreement among school districts is a contract that needs to be followed. The issue is the formula and recruiting at the same level as in 1974. The Superintendent was asked to put something on the next agenda.

Clarification of Charge: Lunt: Two contiguous districts have just re-upped with new Superintendents. We should have communication and also talk about sharing business services. **Motion by Aubin; 2nd Calderwood: The School Committee establish a subcommittee to investigate/research collaboration with other districts or government entities.** Discussion: There has been pressure to look at one possible solution and Mohawk is asking Greenfield to follow this through. Should there be a subcommittee for research that focuses on just one outcome? Does the committee need separate subcommittees working on the same topic? If the outcome is known, is this really doing research? Can money really be saved by these collaborations? If so, where and how? **Motion passed. 4:3 Yes: Athey, Aubin, Eastman, Lunt. No: Calderwood, Doyle, Forgey.**

Motion by Calderwood; 2nd Aubin. That the Superintendent look for a research consultant to do the work for the consolidation grant. Passed. 5:1 & 1 Abstention: Voting Against: Calderwood. Abstaining. Aubin.

Grade 8 Course Policy: The draft policy read at last meeting was again reviewed.

Motion by Athey; 2nd Lunt: That the Grade 8 proposed policy become a new school district policy. Passed. Unanimous.

Summer Programs. The Superintendent discussed expanding summer programs at the high school and the summer programs planned at three schools—Middle School, Newton, and Federal. The committee requested a short written description for vote at the next meeting.

VIII. New Business

Last Day of School: For 2008-2009, the last day of school for K-8 will be Tuesday, June 23, 2009, and for the high school, Wednesday, June 24, 2009. This change is warranted due to snow days. The high school missed one day due to the national election. **Motion by Aubin; 2nd Donovan: To approve the change in district calendar. Passed. Unanimous.**

Mailbox System for Committee Members. **Motion by Doyle; 2nd Lunt: To establish a mailbox system for school committee members and for information requests to be provided in a reasonable amount of time. Passed 6:1** Mayor Forgey opposed part of the motion.

Ceiling of the Auditorium: Member Calderwood express concern based on a community member's comment: debris is falling from the high school auditorium ceiling. **Motion by Calderwood; 2nd Eastman: To have the Superintendent look into possible deterioration of the ceiling over the audience and band. Passed. 5:2.** Mayor Forgey objected and said this was just regular business and not appropriate for a motion. Doyle objected.

Franklin Advocacy Group: The chairman explained that group would like a representative to attend their meeting on May 11th at Turners Falls High School, related to forming a county-wide school committee advocacy group. No vote was taken. Chairman Athey and Donovan Eastman will attend. There is no correspondence.

IX. Reports

Mohawk Subcommittee has a meeting on the 28th. They are interested in continuing discussions with Greenfield. Maryelen will relocated information and provide it.

X..Motion by Aubin; 2nd Lunt. To adjourn. Unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.