

GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING OF DECEMBER 28, 2009

MINUTES
Approved January 14, 2010

Present: Chairperson Doris Doyle (DD); Members Dalton Athey (DA), Marcia Day (MD), Keith McCormic (KM), Mayor Martin (MM). Also present: Interim Superintendent Susan Hollins, Attorney Peter Smith, and members of the press/public.

1. Call to Order

With a quorum present, the chair called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

2. Topics for Discussion:

A. Charter School Proposal. Does the school committee have consensus regarding a response due January 4th?

The particular proposal represents a niche program that already exists. Four Corners is already doing most of what this school proposes. It is legitimate to bring to the state's attention that the Greenfield Public Schools already has a school very similar in design. It is entirely appropriate to say we have a school that satisfies the stated need. Stating the facts in a letter of non-support for this proposal is supported. Mayor Martin explained that he spoke in opposition at the hearing. Motion by MM; 2nd KM: To endorse a letter in opposition to approval, partly on behalf of the school committee using elements of tonight's discussion. Passed. 4:1 with DA abstaining.

B. Virtual School. Does the committee have consensus regarding a letter to DESE encouraging approval of opening?

Discussion: It makes sense to send a letter. We began the process under the impression that we could open in January and we need to press on so the initiative continues. The idea of a pilot program probably needs more definition, e.g. period of time, measurement criteria. Hollins described the pilot program intended. There are two models for payment: 1) choice money, and 2) direct tuition from school districts (or others). We should write a polite letter and also contact our legislators to garner their support. Other districts have need for a virtual school and might finance it themselves.

E. Race To The Top: Does the school committee have consensus to sign a memorandum of understanding with DESE at this juncture?

Discussion: There are concerns. Is RTTT mostly for urban districts? The demands as currently understood would require another administrator and the costs of this would likely equal any additional sums received. There is unanimous consent to politely not sign on at this time as the goals of the RTTT program do not appear to link with the significant goals for Greenfield schools. Additional administrative time needed to comply with new requests would require additional personnel for which costs would likely provide no benefit to the extra funding.

F. Curriculum Planning for Greenfield High School: Does the school committee support continued review of agriculture and natural resources curriculum electives and working with the city as regards land for a school garden?

Yes. The mayor explained his planning for use of the former town farm. The Superintendent requested 5 acres for use by the school system for expanding into agricultural sciences. School committee members were supportive of expanding into lab sciences, as these are becoming more important. There are grants available in this area. The superintendent will continue to work on this strand of coursework

G. Siemens ESCO project: Does the school committee have consensus to proceed with Four Corners as a first priority, the high school as a 2nd priority, etc.?

The committee would like to see the ESCO audits. The middle school had warranties for much of the work—there is a request to try to locate and identify these documents. There is agreement that Four Corners Elementary and Greenfield Middle schools are the next concerns. Hollins will provide the ESCO audits to the school committee. There is consensus to go ahead with Four Corners and wait on all of the other school until there is information on the scale of expense per school.

H. Business Manager position. The Superintendent explained that the position is being looked at and possibly redefined.

2. Motion by DA; 2nd MD: To enter non-public session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining. Passed. Unanimous by roll call vote. The committee entered non-public session at 8:03 p.m.

The committee discussed strategy with respect to collective bargaining.

At 9:20 p.m. the committee voted by roll call to exit non-public session.

3. Motion to Adjourn at 9:21 p.m.