

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES: Wednesday, March 8, 2017**
GCTV Studios, 393 Main Street, Greenfield MA
Approved 04.12.17

Present: Don Alexander (DA); Timothy Farrell (TF); Jordana Harper, Superintendent (JH); Susan Hollins (SH) (arrived 6:35); William Martin (WM); Adrienne Nunez (AN); Nathaniel Tripp (NT); Cameron Ward (CW). **Absent:** none

Also present:

Howard Barber, Business Manager; Susan Cameron-Eckstrom, president, Special Education Parent Advisory Committee; Tara Cloutier, GHS Spanish teacher; Dianne Ellis, Director of Pupil Services; GHS Student Representatives Amy and Sarah O'Sullivan; other school staff and citizens.

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (DA, TF, WM, AN, NT, CW), Chair Martin opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

TF moved to approve minutes of Feb. 8, 2017. CW 2nd. Motion passed.

III. Public Comment

Caitlin von Schmidt, Federal Street School parent, spoke in favor of ELT, especially economic benefits.

IV. Reports

A. Student Representatives

Amy and Sarah O'Sullivan reported on activities at GHS including prom dress program, Key Club's food drive, new juggling club, end of winter sports, world cultures program, FBL and Student Council conferences, guest speaker Josh Dreaan.

V. Public Hearing FY 18 Budget

Chair Martin opened the public hearing on school department's budget and announced:

- March 13 School Cte mtg will include ELT vote and budget vote.
- March 29 Executive-Session-only meeting

IV. Reports (continued)

A. Superintendent's Report

- 2017 Grinspoon Award winners for Excellence in Teaching: Stacey Quinn, art teacher, Newton School; Rachel Cummings, science teacher, GMS; Jackie Pinger, grade 4 teacher, Discovery School at Four Corners. To be invited to next mtg for public acknowledgement
- Letter to Commissioner and Board of Education re: expansion of Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School. Board subsequently denied expansion.
- Promotion of GMS Robotics Club

Consensus to move agenda to next consider VI. A.

VI. Business

A. Update on GHS trip to Puerto Rico

GHS Spanish teacher Tara Cloutier requested approval to change dates of trip to reduce airfare costs. Group would travel Tuesday-to-Tuesday (April 18-24) and miss two days of school following spring break. **TF moved to accept change of dates. DA 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.**

IV. Reports (continued)

A. Facilities, Health & Safety

CW reported on discussion of improved safety plan for pick-up/drop-off at GMS, including effects on MSA move to GMS building. Seeking input from town and Police Chief Hague.

B. Personnel & Collective Bargaining

NT reported that Subcte created timeline for superintendent evaluation, adjusted for JH's parenting leave. Vote on final evaluation at School Cte meeting in May. Supt. has submitted proposed goals; all members to review for potential vote at March 13 meeting.

Extension of Assistant Superintendent's contract

AN moved to extend assistant superintendent's contract through June 30, 2018. 2nd.

Discussion:

AN: Finance Subcte recommends position of Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development. Automatic renewal of contract would retain same terms.

JH: AS position is important to keep focus on teaching and learning; however, position is not in Superintendent's budget to avoid tight budget's impact on classroom teachers.

TF: Curriculum is top priority; Cte can craft a budget that retains this position.

Motion passed unanimously.

C. Budget & Finance

AN reported that Unit C negotiations are ongoing.

D. ELT Task Force

DA reported that Task Force has held three meetings, with many parents attending to support ELT. Members studying grant content and process; re-application is time-consuming. Newton, GMS principals supporting process. Praise for work by AN, CW, and Kia Burton (Title I Family & Community Outreach Liaison). ELT recommendation at March 13 mtg.

E. Policy & Program

SH reported that work continues on curriculum and instructional policies. Meetings are open to all. Working with DA to publish/distribute policies.

VI. Business (continued)

B. 2017-2018 School Year Calendar

JH presented calendar, reviewed by administrators, GEA.

TF moved to approve 2017-2018 Calendar. SH 2nd.

SH noted varying start dates (Aug. 30, Sept. 1, Sept. 5) for different grades.

Motion passed unanimously.

C. Jonelunas Trust Fund

WM announced that George Jonelunas' estate giving \$172K to GHS math department to use "as it sees fit, including but not limited to the creation of the George R. Jonelunas Scholarship Fund." Fond memories of a great man. Likely need to set up separate fund.

SH moved to accept the very generous gift of Mr. Jonelunas and authorize the chair to sign the related appropriate paperwork on behalf of the School Committee. AN 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

D. Policy BK: School Committee Membership – 2nd reading and vote

SH provided 2nd reading of Policy BK School Committee Membership.
TF moved to accept Policy BK. DA 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

E. Policy BDG: School Committee Attorney

SH policy passed July 11, 2016. Addition proposed now clarifies that members requesting legal services must go through chair. Policy allows more than one attorney. One sentence added: "Requests for legal services go through the chairperson [or by majority vote of the School Committee]; School Committee members do not contact the attorney directly without authorization."

TF moved to accept the change. 2nd.

NT: Who provides authorization? Proposed friendly amendment: "or by majority vote of the School Committee."

Addition to Policy BDG: "Requests for legal services go through the chairperson or by majority vote of the School Committee; School Committee members do not contact the attorney directly without authorization."

Motion passed unanimously.

F. School Attorney

WM presented draft Client Fee Agreement with Attorney Peter Smith, and email from Sullivan, Hayes & Quinn, firm that represents City, offering \$225/hour discounted rate.

SH clarified that policy allows more than one attorney.

SH moved that we move forward to establish a contract with Sullivan & Hayes for legal services that relate to education law including student discipline and labor and employment matters, which includes advice and representation for collective bargaining negotiation, issues of contract interpretation, grievance handling and arbitration and, on these issues, representation before state and federal administrative tribunals and courts. TF 2nd.

Discussion:

AN: What is process of identifying attorney candidates? Desire to postpone vote.

WM: Hiring attorneys need not comply with procurement law. Selection of attorney is annual. Seeking timeliness, professionalism.

SH: Given proposal to combine school and city HR, favors using city's attorney. Intent to offer second motion; this motion does not include special education services.

JH: Current attorney reliable re: school law, including discipline. Favors delaying vote to allow review, discussion.

AN moved to table until March 13. NT 2nd. Motion to table passed.

NT requested letter of engagement, terms of representation from Sullivan, Hayes. Important to see details. WM has requested.

SH moved to enter into negotiations with Peter Smith for attorney services in connection with consultations, negotiations, dispute resolutions, mediations, conferences, hearings, motions, trials, and appeals generally regarding student services including but not limited to special education, Section 504, DCAP, disciplinary matters, student health services, English language learners and similar other representation specially assigned to him. TF 2nd.

Discussion:

Members may comment via email on Smith's "Client Fee Agreement."

Who negotiates agreements? Chair and chair of personnel subcommittee (WM, NT).

NT requests feedback from Central Office re: student services.

If transition, current attorney to complete cases in process; new attorney to receive new cases.

Motion withdrawn (SH, TF).

F. Budget Presentation

- JH thanked all who collaborated to create proposed budget.
- JH presented "Superintendent's FY18 Budget," including vision and mission; enrollment data; school choice data, trends; local aid estimates; cost increases.
- Requested Level Service budget accommodates \$1.25million increase (SPED, contractual obligations, Green River building).
 - Green River: Barr Foundation grant pending for planning and implementation
- Effects of increasing costs for out-of-district tuition. Supt's level-funded budget is \$600K below level-services budget. "Nothing extra in here."

TF made a motion to remove \$193,069 for Green River proposal. SH 2nd.

Discussion:

Green River program's potential to attract out-of-district students

Consider \$ reductions to balance vote to reinstate Assistant Supt. salary

Building closed at least through end of year for renovations (new heating system, hazardous waste removal). Notifying MSBA.

\$193K includes staff (nurse, custodian, teachers, guidance counselor) starting January (half-year).

Proposed for Green River: Alternative Program at GHS

SH: Reminder to follow policy for new programs

Motion withdrawn.

TF made a motion for the Superintendent, working with the Business Manager, come forward [at March 13 meeting] with an amended budget eliminating the Green River proposal at this time and assigning a number to that reduction.

Intent to remove program costs but retain necessary expenses (e.g., custodians shovel sidewalks).

Won't know Barr Foundation grant funding until July.

JH recommends removal of Green River \$ because of potential grant funding.

Motion passed 6-1 (No: AN).

SH moved to reduce budget by \$45K, zeroing out the sick leave buy-back line, because the City will pick up those costs. AN 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

Early childhood services: Discussion to reduce early childhood balance to \$100K, using approx. \$100K to reduce general fund costs. Superintendent to consider in preparing revised budget for March 13 meeting.

Special education destabilization account: Discussion to ask Council for \$125K for prepayment in April. Subcommittee supports, Mayor supports, likely Council will support. Formal request would have to come forward at March 13 mtg.

Negotiated salaries, \$137K:

City's contract destabilization account would cover?

JH: Includes principals, central office administrators, with individual contracts (not union)

WM to research whether individual contracts governed by Supt. should have separate account.

Barber: May include contracts currently in negotiation (paras). If agreement after contract expires, school budget may need to absorb two years' increase in one year. City covers only for current fiscal year.

SH cited policy: School Cte determines levels of compensation

Special education services

JH: Dianne Ellis, Director of Pupil Services, has saved \$277K through returning out-of-district students to Greenfield and cooperating with other districts. Proposed partnership with New

England Center for Children (NECC), included in budget, will pay for itself in returning students from out-of-district.

Ellis described benefits of NECC program (for moderate-to-severe autistic students) including: NECC special education teacher; training for Greenfield tutors; behavior analyst; curriculum. Would operate at GHS. \$175K annual contract cost for NECC, additional \$40K staffing costs (paras). Projected savings \$200K, plus reduced liability.

Barber: Uses \$175K IDEA federal funds.

Paras (tutors) would have same hourly rate, but increase hours from 30 to 40.

SH: "Technical issues" with contract? JH: Have begun preliminary conversation with union.

AN moved that the School Committee supports continuation of development of the NECC program in Greenfield Public Schools. TF 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion: Need for more citizens to speak up, state legislators to respond to needs of public schools.

WM closed public hearing on the budget at 9:35 p.m.

AN summarized Budget Subcommittee's recommendations which support:

- maintaining Assistant Superintendent position
- \$250K for GHS electives
- transportation modifications
- system for new labor contracts to include legal input
- continued review of early childhood services
- programming desired by students
- study of civics education

New Business

SH announced MASC full-day program on poverty.

Susan Cameron-Eckstrom, president of Special Education Parent Advisory Committee, requested better communication to facilitate greater citizen involvement.

SH urged continued advocacy for circuit-breaker funding for budget stability.

WM thanked Committee members and Superintendent.

VII. Adjournment

CW moved to adjourn. NT 2nd. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary