

GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES: Monday, March 13, 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); William Martin (WM); Adrienne Nunez (AN); Nathaniel Tripp (NT); Cameron Ward (CW). **Absent:** none

Also present: Howard Barber, Business Manager; Tom Bevacqua, GEA president; Erin Drake, parent; Melodie Goodwin, principal, Newton School; Kia Burton-King, Title I Family & Community Outreach Liaison; Jennifer Perreault, parent; other school staff, citizens, and the press.

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (DA, TF, SH, WM, AN, NT, CW), Chair Martin opened the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

II. Public Comment

Speaking in support of Extended Learning Time:

- Melodie Goodwin, Newton School principal
- Kia Burton-King, Title I Family & Community Outreach Liaison and parent
- Erin Drake, Newton School parent
- Jennifer Perreault, parent

Tom Bevacqua, GEA president, citing budget deficit, spoke to changing role of teaching, urged not to cut teaching positions.

III. Business

A. ELT Ad Hoc Committee Report and ELT Vote

DA, chair of ELT Ad Hoc Committee, summarized Committee's work and learning, including funding, parent/community support, and benefits to students.

DA moved that the School Committee endorse the Greenfield Public Schools' application for the ELT Grant for FY 2018. AN 2nd.

JH: Thanked all who participated. Described ELT, 90 minutes of enrichment, learning at MSA, GMS, Newton.

Motion passed unanimously.

B. FY 2018 School Committee Budget

JH described amendments to Superintendent's budget from March 8 School Cte decisions:

- adding Assistant Superintendent position
- removing funding for alternative GHS program at Green River (because of potential grant funding and need to repair building)

Reiterated cost savings through New England Center for Children

TF moved to support the \$18,744,475.27 budget as presented by the Superintendent. AN 2nd.

Discussion:

TF encouraged community to contact Mayor, Council to support budget; further changes, potential layoffs unknown until after Council votes on budget.

WM noted March 8 vote to reduce budget by \$45K sick leave buy-back; reduction not yet reflected in Supt's amended budget.

SH moved to amend the motion, to decrease by \$45,000, with a new amount of \$18,699,475.27. NT 2nd. Motion to amend passed unanimously.

JH confirmed that \$137K circuit breaker has been removed from budget. Town's contract stabilization fund to be used for negotiated contracts. \$67,314 in budget for individual contracts (cost-of-living adjustments, central office staff, school administrators).

Pilots of alternative GHS program, NECC autism program:

SH: Desire to start pilot programs 2017-2018. Use choice \$ for pilots?

JH: Could use choice funds for new proposals in general, but goal to cover operating costs in operating budget.

WM: Don't use for salaries because choice \$ is unreliable; "creating havoc" in neighboring districts.

Barber: Clarified NECC funded by IDEA federal grant; some paras previously paid from IDEA \$ were moved to general fund. Full \$193K Green River staffing removed from amended budget. GPS Facilities Director, Town cooperating to manage site during facilities renovation.

AN: Mayor's involvement in Finance Subcommittee added efficiency. Supporting budget reluctantly; problem is at state level. "We need to look bigger to find solutions."

SH: Concern that allocation of \$50/student for supplies and materials may not be adequate. May need more for K-3?

JH: Title I provides \$ for basic consumable materials. "This is a budget of necessity."

WM: Use schools' balances left now for next year's special education costs?

SH: Prudent to carry over \$ in key funds (such as circuit breaker, preschool). "A million is conservative for keeping stability." Increasing enrollment = more furniture, textbooks, etc.

TF: Premature to discuss spending end-of-year balances in 3rd quarter.

JH: Reviewed revenue offset and projected balance sheet in school committee member's packet for use of funds.

Need line item to fund pilot programs? Consensus that it can be worked out.

WM: New programs to come before Unique Learning Subcommittee.

Enrollment approximately 1,700. Number varies: 5 students enrolled today.

Motion [to support the \$18,699,475.27 budget as presented by the Superintendent] passed unanimously.

C. Superintendent Goals

NT made this motion: **Whereas the Personnel Subcommittee unanimously endorses these goals, and whereas they are aligned to the district's Strategic plan, I move that the School Committee accept the Superintendent's goals as presented for the 2017-2018 school year as part of the Superintendent's evaluation process. AN 2nd.**

SH: Goal 3 (parent/community engagement) focuses on Supt's participation; also consider how Supt works with schools to enhance parent engagement. Goal 2 (curriculum alignment): Specific focus (math/science acceleration; physical education; civics). NT: Discuss curriculum focus in collaborative goal-setting in summer.

Motion passed unanimously.

D. School Committee Attorney

WM clarified past practice of 2 attorneys, one for special education, one for education law and negotiations.

JH relayed positive reference from Gordon Smith, Supt. of Longmeadow, which uses Sullivan, Hayes & Quinn for labor law, Peter Smith for special education. For educational law, useful to have "broad leniency" to work with either.

SH moved that the School Committee enter into negotiations with the law firms of Attorney Smith and Attorney Quinn for the 2017-2018 school year. CW 2nd.

Discussion:

AN: Contracts should not be exclusive. Correct dates, confirm fees on Smith's proposed agreement. Ensure Committee has flexibility; can use town or other attorney, as policy allows.

WM: Motion is for one-year agreement.

Friendly amendment revised motion: **that the Chairs of the School Committee and the Personnel Subcommittee meet to review the two attorney contracts and bring a proposal back to the School Committee, and that other interested School Committee members may attend [the review discussion].**

Review shall consider comments from members.

Motion passed unanimously.

E. Prepayment of Special Education Funds

TF made a motion that the School Committee request the Mayor to expeditiously place before the Town Council a request for supplemental funds, to be used for FY18 out-of-district tuition payments, in the amount of \$150,000. NT 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

F. Special Executive Session Meeting

WM announced special School Committee meeting March 29, executive session to discuss potential litigation.

IV. New Business

A. Charter change

TF announced his intent to bring to next regular meeting a request for a charter change to increase School Committee membership from 7 to 9 members. Had been 9 previously. Approval process: School Committee → Town Council → MA House/Senate. Place on April agenda.

WM asked Supt to get from Town Clerk documentation of prior change from 9 to 7 members.

B. Film Festival

SH thanked those who supported Film Festival fund.

VII. Adjournment

AN moved to adjourn. SH 2nd. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary