

GREENFIELD SCHOOLS

POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE

MINUTES OF September 7, 2016

1. Meeting called to order at 2:32 p.m.
Present: Subcommittee Members Susan Hollins (chair) and Tim Farrell (TF). Also present, Superintendent Harper; school administrators Barber (Bus. Manager) and Grant (Asst. Supt.); city finance administrator Lane Kelly (LK).
2. No public comment.
3. TF accepted minutes.
4. Review of three (3) Fiscal Management Policies from review of 8.19.16.

***DKC EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENTS**

Discussion: Existing policy states “all” travel by all employees must be approved in advance by the Committee. Policy revision clarifies that “all” travel must be pre-approved, but the “Committee” only approves travel requests of the school committee and superintendent. Today’s revisions distinguish (for superintendent) regular travel between schools from significant travel out-of-state or overnight. While intent of stipend vs. day-by-day noting/reimbursement is efficiency for school and city personnel, today’s wording revision leaves decision about stipend to superintendent in case it is not appropriate in a particular circumstance.

- Para.5, #2: add “Overnight and out-of-state”
- Para.6, rewrite: “The Superintendent will review personnel assigned to travel between schools and set an annual travel allowance in lieu of monthly reimbursement submissions, when appropriate.”
- Attach city guidelines for meal reimbursements as exhibit (DKC-E)

***DJB CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING (CIP)**

Discussion: The goal of this new policy is to assure the school committee is informed about existing and new CI requests going forward on behalf of the school department so it can agree and advocate. Today’s revisions acknowledge a 5-year capital plan is in place and is revised each year; accordingly, the school committee’s CIP process begin with sharing of the existing 5-year capital improvement plan. This might be revised, per subsequent superintendent recommendation. LK thinks most major school building improvements have been accomplished. Long discussion on technology planning and funding. Last paragraph changed to acknowledge advocacy with mayor, Capital Improvement Committee, and City Council. LK shared the city’s new calendar expecting CI requests by end of September. One thought—sharing existing CIP might be a June/July/August agenda item.

- Para. 2, “...by reviewing the current five-year capital improvement plan for the school system.” (instead of “the Supt’s report of all requested ...”
- Para. 3, Mayor “presents” CIP to city council, doesn’t “create” it.
- Para. 3, School Committee will advocate “to the Mayor, CIC, and City Council.

***DIE AUDITS**

Discussion: The goal of this revision is to clarify the relationship of city audit to school department audit and statutory requirements. Today's revisions included deleting unnecessary added info about process and other accounting reports. After much discussion about handling financial concerns it was agreed that there could be circumstances that might justify NOT seeking out district auditors. JH comment that 98% of the time the first recourse for accounting concerns would be the certified city financial auditors, but there could be an exception.

- Para. 2, delete sentences 2 and 3.
- Para. 3, reverse statements and add "generally"
- Para. 4, change "will consider" to "will be advised of" since the response to audits is handled by administrators and sometimes the response is to disagree.

5. Process for Policy Work

The chair explained that policy work has different goals but one is informing others about school committee policies. So, SH opined, there needs to be a process for how policies go from discussion, through feedback, to decision of policy subcommittee, to recommendation and action of school committee, then actual posting, archiving, and distribution of policy within the school system. A draft 10-step process was shared with mention that this was generated to help the discussion. Also, steps 4 & 5 and 9 & 10 need to be developed so they work for the superintendent (sharing policies with administrators). Feedback, if received, will help the subcommittee prioritize policies discussed. A "reasonable pace" was mentioned, given there are approx. 100 student policies. Also, having one full page for each policy makes it easier to follow a grouping. TF suggested waiting for 3rd SC member before finalizing a process but agreed that a process was needed and shared examples of how other organizations handle this.

6. Sharing of Section A Foundations, H Negotiations, I Instruction and J Students.

These sections were passed out today. TF said that I and J were a decided focus at the school committee's August meeting. SH reviewed a Mayor comment about policies required from new laws? Who should identify this? JH suggested the chair. SH said there are also policies that were brought forward still on the list—e.g. Family Involvement, Facility Fees, Student Trips, and 3 or 4 from B: Governance and D: Finance. SH will try to quickly finish a review of policies discussed but not concluded during January through June 2016. JH shared Family Engagement draft proposal. Personnel policies—decision to wait until union negotiations are completed.

7. Other: 2nd meeting in September? Possibly. TF and SH will discuss. Advance sharing of policies for review—was difficult this time but a goal.

8. Adjournment: 4:32 p.m.

SHollins September 7, 2016