

GREENFIELD SCHOOLS

POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE

MINUTES OF May 5, 2016

1. Meeting called to order at 4:08 p.m.
Present: Subcommittee Members Susan Hollins (chair), Tim Farrell, and Francia Wisnewski. Also present, administrators Garand (Special Ed) and Barber (Bus. Manager).
2. The subcommittee will hold policies for 1st reading the committee believes the superintendent should review. Hollins described her meeting with the city and discussion of city financial policies and interests—suggestions for alignment. Copies of several pertinent reference documents were obtained.

Financial Policies discussed today (6):

DD FUNDING PROPOSALS AND APPLICATIONS

Decision: Go forward for 1st Reading

Discussion. Should this policy offer some guiding principles when considering applying for new funds available to the school system. After discussion, there were the four considerations added to the policy: sustainability, the needs and goals of the school system, the cost of grant setup and management vs amount of the grant, and the opportunities the grant provides the district. There was understanding that sometimes a very small grant may represent an employee's leadership initiative which might be important to support even if the grant value was small. So judgment is needed.

DGA APPROVAL OF SCHOOL BUDGET PAYROLL

Decision: Go forward for 1st reading

Discussion: Policy title changed to match city policy title. The school committee picks one member to sign payroll warrants; does not have to be chairperson. Discussion about whether or not business manager can sign payroll warrant in the superintendent's absence. Decision was that a different policy guideline is needed to cover who steps in to sign payroll warrants or anything else in a superintendent's absence.

DH BONDED EMPLOYEES AND OFFICERS

Decision: Go forward for 1st reading

Discussion: Tim shared information about "bonds" and whether or not bonds needed to name people, name positions, or name both people and positions. Either way, the city purchases a blanket bond and the school system's responsibility is to keep the city informed as to which people in the system are handling money. No significant change. Words "cover by a blanket bond" changed to "covered by the city bond."

DI FISCAL ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING

Decision: Go forward for 1st reading

Discussion: Words “will be ultimately responsible” to “is responsible.” Discussion was how the school department as part of a “city” uses the city’s accounting system. “Special monies” changed to “grants.” Change “will receive quarterly financial statements” to “no less than quarterly financial statements.” A few wordsmithing changes.

DIE: AUDITS

Decision: Hold and bring up again next meeting.

Discussion. The subcommittee discussed the various audits that fall to the school department in addition to the annual city audit. Some wordsmithing about audit recommendations going to the school committee (TM—“the most important part of the audit”). Discussion was, should there be a question or concern about the district’s accounting, should the auditing firm that knows the district’s books and financial system well be called before an outside firm

DJ: PURCHASING

Decision: Hold and bring up again next meeting.

Discussion: The subcommittee agreed to new wording but thought the superintendent should see this before it goes to school committee for 1st reading. Key additions to this policy are two control features that, if followed, will help assure contracts are managed well—1) encumbering contracts and financial obligations to assure the amount needed is known by September 1st and 2) reviewing and adjusting these same purchasing commitments prior to the end of the year to release encumbered funds that are not needed by April 1st.

3. Other: Subcommittee meeting schedule. The first Wednesday of the month will continue to be the policy subcommittee’s meeting time, but meetings will be posted and start at 3:30 p.m. so there is more time. Also, there is agreement to have 2 meetings a month with the 2nd meeting being an evening meeting but not in the 2nd week of the month. TF and FW will notify SH of possible dates. SH will share possible dates with administration for feedback.

S. Hollins 5.4.16