

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES: Wednesday, April 8, 2015**
GCTV Studios, 393 Main Street, Greenfield MA
Approved 05.13.15

Present: Margaret Betts (arrived 7:06) (MB); Maryelen Calderwood (MC); Jeff Comenitz (JC); Donna Gleason (DG); Jordana Harper, Superintendent (JH); William Martin (WM); Adrienne Nunez (AN); Francia Wisniewski (FW).

Also present: William Bazyk, Director of Student Services and Special Education; Andy Paquette, Management Solutions; Peter Smith, School Attorney; other school staff, parents, citizens and the press.

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (MC, JC, DG, WM, AN, FW), Chair Calderwood called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

II. Public Hearing on FY16 Budget

no comments

III. Approval of Draft Minutes

AN moved to approve minutes of March 11, March 17, March 25, 2015. WM 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Public Comment

- Verne Sund, resident, spoke in favor of artificial track at GHS and of dedicating track to Peter and Patty Conway.
- Scott Cote, parent and director of Suburban Basketball, spoke on proposed policy on use of school facilities. Need for greater community participation. Concern that policy removes discretion from school leaders/supt., and that proposed fees will be prohibitive to community organizations like Suburban Basketball, Pop Warner football, Little League baseball.
- Mike Kuchieski, athletic director, spoke to need for more discussion on school facilities policy. High demand for athletic facilities. Compare policies shared by area athletic directors.

V. Reports

A. Chairperson

MC reported that contract negotiations are continuing with new business manager. JH's new supt. induction program continues. Good communication. Focus on budget.

B. Superintendent

JH provided overview of:

- staffing report
- school events, including 5th annual film festival; April 30 walk-to-school; high school graduation June 6
- grade 4 configuration planning
- Newton School repairs and need for 3 classroom spaces
- Central Office continues search for new quarters.

D. Subcommittees

1. Health & Safety

AN announced next mtg to include discussion with Jay Lord, Just Roots community farm.

2. Negotiations

DG reported negotiations concluding with executive secretaries; negotiations with custodians continue.

3. Finance

DG explained that draft budget prepared with discussions with supt, former business manager, all principals. Subcte recommends granting top request of each principal – GHS: additional custodian; GMS: part-time librarian; elementary schools: additional adjustment counselor; Math & Science: 1 additional teacher. Recommends new position, assistant supt. for K-12 curriculum alignment.

FW made a motion to move Pioneer Valley Excellence in Teaching Award Winners next on agenda. DG 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Pioneer Valley Excellence in Teaching Award Winners

JH announced 4 award winners, nominated by colleagues and selected by administrators; noted variety of roles and experience of those honored. Honorees introduced, to much applause:

- Maria Scotera, GMS music teacher (presented by Gary Tashjian, principal)
- Barbara Ouellette, Federal Street reading teacher (presented by Nancy Putnam, principal)
- Jessica Pollock, GHS librarian (presented by Donna Woodcock, principal)
- Anna Marchefka, Math & Science Academy teacher (presented by Heather Evans, principal)

4. Policy Subcte

FW introduced proposed policies re: community use of school facilities.

MC closed public comment. AN moved to re-open public comment; WM 2nd. Motion passed unanimously. AN asked Mike Kuchieski for recommendations: reduced fees for organizations that serve Greenfield residents (e.g., camps). Discussion to continue at next policy subcte mtg.

There was a reading of outdated policy KF in error.

WM moved to table and send to subcommittee policies KF, KF-R, KG-R2. DG 2nd, send to policy subcommittee. WM called the question. FW 2nd. Motion on calling the question passed. Motion failed (1-5).

Members provided first reading of KF-R, Community Use of School Facilities.

Discussion:

- 2. “private or commercial” purpose excludes groups (e.g., some summer camps). Atty Smith: Yes, needs to be changed.
- Use of tobacco products: Redundant of state law; or remove last “or permitted to supervise or participate in activities or events.”
- Members of the Greenfield School Committee. Atty Smith: outside of scope of School Cte member roles, law. Change to Supt. or her designee?
- Atty Smith: Policy should include ban of controlled substances, illegal drugs.

- Using computer labs, contradicting deadlines: 2 business days' notice vs. general requirement for 14 days prior to date of use.
- Should outsiders' use of computers be allowed? JC: benefit to educational groups; school technology staff supervises, may involve additional fee.
- Atty. Smith: 14-day notice is impossible (e.g., sports schedules change due to weather)
- Atty. Smith: If open to one group, must be open to all groups.
- Atty Smith: Advises against splitting policies; look at them as a whole.
- MC asked Atty Smith to review policies. FW to send policies to him.

MC closed public comment at 8:22 p.m.

MG moved to table Community Use of School Facilities policies pending further consultation with our attorney. WM 2nd. Motion passed 5-2.

V. Business Topics

A. Public Hearing – FY16 Budget

Because this public hearing already happened earlier in the mtg., MC moved to amend agenda to remove Item V.A. AN 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Communication Survey Results and Action Steps

JH provided overview of survey results. Redesign of website by Sept. 1, 2015; Collaborative selected as vendor.

D. Superintendent's Report of Entry Findings

JH asked members to review draft report and offered highlights of themes:

- Exceptional educators are key to the success of our students.
- Greenfield is committed to providing a well-rounded academic experience to all students.
- Greenfield Public Schools has recovered significantly from the financial distress and enrollment decline of 2008; however, structures and systems are needed to support long-term growth of the district.
- The community has steadfastly supported the schools and remains committed to all children in Greenfield having access to safe and rigorous learning environments that prepare them well in today's 21st Century Learning environment.

E. FY16 Budget Vote

DG shared revised budget schedule and staffing changes.

DG moved to accept the 2015-16 school budget submitted by the superintendent. MB 2nd.

Discussion:

- Is budget adjusted for 4th grade reconfiguration? No need: move is cost-neutral.
- WM: costs for Newton School roof repair, permanent modulars in town budget; also funds to move Davis St to alternative site. \$740K from town.
- Budget is posted on website for community review.
- Increases: WM noted increase: 7.6% over last fiscal year, 3.75% increase due to new costs.
JH: \$1 million increase represents recurring costs. Goal of being transparent, avoiding need for additional funds at midyear shortfall.
- JH summarized goals: student safety; curriculum; staff retention; arts education
- Addition of assistant supt is cost-neutral.
- DG praised priority goal-setting by principals; praised Supt's scheduling to increase access to arts (cost-neutral).

Motion passed 6-0-1 (WM abstain).

JC moved to consider next G. Vote to Approve Job Description for Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. MB 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

G. Vote to Approve Job Description for Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

MB moved to approve creation of the position of Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development. DG 2nd.

Discussion: \$90-\$100K salary includes funding from Title IIA. Who hires? School Cte., on recommendation by Supt. Process similar to business manager hiring.

Motion passed unanimously.

F. School Choice

MC clarified no vote tonight; decision at May mtg. June 1 must submit choice-in student openings (if any) to state.

Discussion:

- If more applicants than seats, selection is by lottery.
- Much choice-out happens at transition (to middle school or high school)
- Review of choice-in and choice-out data.
- Class size maximums
- Provision for Newton 4th-grade students going to other elementary schools?
- Existing policy bars choice-in at high school.
- Why are 8th grade statistics separate from GHS?
- Clarification that 8th grade/GHS choice-in students were admitted prior to choice-in ban.
- Greenfield students who move out of town: students allowed to stay via choice-in.
- Homeless students who come to Greenfield, then move away, are allowed to choice-in.
- Need to have flexible # of seats reserved for homeless students coming to Greenfield.
- WM: Changes in recent school years show loss of students (October to April). Not long-term pattern of growth. JH: Greenfield enrollment holding steady while declining enrollments in neighboring towns. Reduction of charter choice-out.
- Use of choice-in funds
- MC: Greenfield is "significant victim" of school choice.
- Choice-out does not include tech school.
- Change in state leadership = reduction in homeless students coming to Greenfield
- JC: \$13-14K average cost to educate child in Mass. (Greenfield cost = average). District receives only \$5K per choice-in student. Triggering additional classroom means district loses \$.
- JH: Vote to approve choice-in is up-to, not an obligation to fill choice-in seats.
- Intra-district choice happens primarily at Kindergarten registration.

H. Presentation by Jeff Comenitz

JC moved to table until May mtg. MB 2nd. Discussion: Presentation to be first on agenda. **Motion passed unanimously.**

I. Executive Session

DG made motion to go into executive session for purposes of collective bargaining with non-union personnel. JC 2nd. Roll call vote: Yes: MB, MC, JC, DG, WM, AN, FW. Motion passed unanimously. Moved into executive session at 9:48 p.m.

DG moved to return to public session. 2nd DG. Yes: MB, MC, JC, DG, WM, AN, FW. Motion passed unanimously. Public session resumed at 10:36 p.m.

VII. Adjournment

MB moved to adjourn. 2nd WM. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 10:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary