

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES: Wednesday, April 13, 2016**
GCTV Studios, 393 Main Street, Greenfield MA
Approved 05.11.2016

Present: Jordana Harper, Superintendent (JH); Susan Hollins (SH); William Martin (WM) (arrived 6:42 p.m.); Adrienne Nunez (AN); Nathaniel Tripp (NT); Cameron Ward (CW) (left 8:09); Francia Wisnewski (FW). Student representatives Amy O'Sullivan and Sarah O'Sullivan.

Absent: Timothy Farrell (TF);

Also present: Howie Barber, GPS Business Manager; Adam Garand, Director of Student Services & Special Education; GHS Leadership Team representatives: Andrew Bowersox, Siobhan Fitzgerald, Lukas Martin, Karin Patenaude; Suzanne Sullivan, Principal, Discovery School at Four Corners; Verne Sund; other school staff, citizens, and the press.

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (SH, AN, NT, CW, FW), Vice-Chair Wisnewski opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

II. Approval of Draft Minutes:

AN moved to approve draft minutes of March 9, 2016. NT 2nd. Motion passed.

III. Public Comment

None

IV. Reports

A. Student Representatives

Amy O'Sullivan and Sarah O'Sullivan reported on upcoming AP exams; trip to Spain; Western Mass. Association of Student Councils conference; drama club plays; spring sports; French Club talent show; blood drive.

B. Subcommittees

1. Budget, Finance & Negotiations

AN reported that Subcte is working on Unit C and Unit A contracts.

2. Personnel

NT reported on Supt. evaluation process.

3. Building

CW reported on continued plans for moving Davis Street to GMS. Awaiting final budget and move schedule. Priority is students' safety/learning. Discussion: Changes in Davis Street senior center plans do not affect schedule; add flexibility.

4. Collaborative for Educational Services

CW attended first meeting, summarized purposes/goals of CES. Good to have Greenfield represented. Funded through state taxes.

5. Health, Safety & Facilities

FW summarized recent discussions:

- Subcte will change meeting time from current 5 p.m. to increase public participation.

- Restorative Justice program at high school. JH summarized program, now in 2nd year of development. 80% focus on community-building, social skills; 20% on traditional discipline. Staff being trained. Request for info packets to be sent electronically to full Committee. Plan to expand later to other schools.
- Work continues on draft MOU with police dept. and district attorney's office, to be reviewed at next Subcte meeting. Explained training and role of School Resource Officer Brook as both police officer and school staff member. Continued improvement on safety for students, families, staff.
- At Subcte mtg, Attorney Peter Smith presented new/updated Mass. laws re: discipline, exclusion.
- Special Education Parent Advisory Council

Discussion: Parking shortage during events at GHS/hockey rink, parking tickets issued. Need for better coordination of events, overflow parking. Request for Subcte to discuss.

C. Superintendent's Report

JH highlighted her written report:

Music telethon raised over \$4K; Drama Club performances in new GHS theater; GHS environmental lab; Chamber of Commerce breakfast at GHS; \$1,000 award for Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) at GHS; Eagle Scout project built outdoor classroom at MSA; "Breakfast in the Classroom" expanding to Federal Street School; Newton School: dental fair, "Cooking Matters" class, receiving Healthy Start state award; 6th annual Film Festival (June 17); compost program expanding to GHS; Grinspoon Excellence in Teaching awards: Janice Fuller AEL; Jami Witherill Newton; Bharati Winston 4 Corners, Patrick Garland GHS. Discussion: Invite award winners to School Cte meeting for formal recognition; GCC "Walk to College" with Federal Street 1st graders, May 10; African Dance and Drum program for GHS, GMS, MSA students.

V. Business

A. High School Track Dedication Event

JH summarized process of naming GHS track in honor of Peter Conway. Dedication ceremony May 12. Verne Sund expressed appreciation for everyone involved, invited all to ceremony.

B. GHS Schedule Change for 2016-2017

GHS Leadership Team representatives Andrew Bowersox, Siobhan Fitzgerald, Lukas Martin, and Karin Patenaude presented proposal for and benefits of hybrid extended-block schedule to begin 2016-17 academic year.

Pros include in-depth learning; schedule includes TEAM (advisory) and "circling up"; less passing time, fewer transitions; builds time management skills needed for college,

Discussion:

- This 7-class schedule (vs. 4x4 block) is easier for students transferring in.
- Core courses full-year; electives one-semester long. Block schedule includes 8th grade. Cross-grade programs (e.g., band) continue. Improved academics: science labs, greater variety in instruction methods.
- How will GHS measure success? Important to include student feedback.
- "Contractual language tweaks": Currently, contract requires prep period equal to one class period. Will need to adjust contract, likely via MOU. No fiscal impact.
- Block schedule will not reduce electives.
- Early release days, testing schedules
- Effect on substitute teachers

- Request to monitor effects on low-skilled readers, special education students

AN made a motion to endorse change of schedule at GHS for 2016-17 school year to a 7-block schedule. CW 2nd.

Discussion:

- SH suggested “subject to review and agreement about GEA contract language changes needed and assurance that special education services are carefully considered.”
- JH clarified authorization by School Cte necessary to go forward with GEA. Summarized goals.
- Need to clarify sequence: MOU with union first, then implementation?
- Request for special education administrator to present at next mtg re: block schedule.
- Support for students to adjust to change

Motion withdrawn.

AN moved to direct the Budget, Finance and Negotiations Subcommittee to enter into conversation with the GEA regarding any contracts that may be affected by a schedule change at GHS for the school year of 2016-17. NT 2nd. Motion withdrawn.

SH moved to support the GHS schedule change for 2016-2017 as proposed, subject to review of considerations with the GEA contract and assurance that special education services have been considered. CW 2nd.

Discussion:

- Need for and what constitutes assurance from special education director
- Time constrictions for GHS scheduling and PD
- Impact on other unit contracts
- Unanimous support for block scheduling
- Dr. Garand: Foresees no significant negative impact; IEP changes handled through easy amendment process.

Motion passed unanimously.

AN moved to next consider Four Corners Anticipated Vacancy. SH 2nd. Motion passed.

G. Four Corners Anticipated Vacancy

Suzanne Sullivan, Principal of Discovery School at Four Corners, is leaving, will be principal of Parker Elementary School, Billerica; needs to be closer to family. Discussion: Grateful for her excellent leadership, “hard shoes to fill.”

C. District Governance Program Future Dates

JH presented dates for professional development for School Committee members: May 17 (6:00-8:30), June 6 (5:30-8:00). AN suggested training include MASC certification for new members.

D. Update on Davis Street Move

Next steps: P3’s updated project schedule at next move committee mtg; projects going out to bid; Supt. to hold public information sessions. Suggestion to post information on website, as was done for high school construction.

E. Budget Update

Business Manager Howie Barber reported that 99.1% of budget expended. <\$500K remains for fiscal year. Budget “not abundant but in adequate shape” to last the year.

Discussion:

- Aligning school cost centers with city’s budget. Barber and AN to discuss.

- Transportation: Special education transportation outsourced, saving \$. Researched multiple vendors, routes. Increase in out-of-district placements required additional routes. Dual-sourced with Gill-Montague school district.
- GPS holding to current funding request to Town Council
- Mayor's budget reduced school funding by \$250K. WM sees \$300K savings in efficiencies; transportation; litigation/attorney fees. When considering new hires, include benefits in cost. Consolidate school/town services (e.g., HR, payroll).
- Chap. 70 state funding increasing?
- JH defended lean budget request.

F. 1st and 2nd Reading of Policies

SH presented 2nd reading of four policies:

- BBA, School Committee Powers and Duties
- BBBA, School Committee Qualification for Office
- BBBC, School Committee Member Resignation
- BDB, School Committee Officers

No changes from prior presentation to School Cte.

Discussion:

- BBA: Dates are current (1993); reviewed, updated by SH.
- BBA: Remove first sentence of paragraph 2. Strike: "~~The Department of Elementary and Second Education views the school committee as the publicly elected or appointed equivalent of a board of directors of a corporation, which in this case is a school system.~~"
- Clarify role of School Cte Secretary (BDB) cf. Supt's executive secretary and School Cte recording secretary

NT moved to adopt these four policies as presented and amended at the 2nd reading. AN 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

AN moved to table first reading of policies BEDB, BAA, BDG, BJ, BEC, DA and DIE until next full Committee mtg. 2nd. Motion to table passed 4-0-1.

VI. Other Business

Discussion of Superintendent's Report

- Instructional Leadership: Request for information on specific initiatives; who is overseeing; need for resources.
- Weather closings of school day: consider not cancelling evening events.
- Request to make School Committee meeting postings, information more prominent on website
- JH reports that this year teachers working in subject area groups to create curriculum maps. Next year: What are best practices?

VIII. Adjournment

WM moved to adjourn. AN 2nd. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary