

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES: Wednesday, November 9, 2016
GCTV Studios, 393 Main Street, Greenfield MA
Approved 12.14.2016**

Present: Don Alexander (DA); Timothy Farrell (TF); Beth Pratt, Assistant Superintendent (BP); Susan Hollins (SH); William Martin (WM); Adrienne Nunez (AN); Nathaniel Tripp (NT)

Absent: Cameron Ward (CW)

Also present: Howard Barber, GPS Business Manager; Adelle Ferreria, MSA parent; Student Representatives Amy O'Sullivan and Sarah O'Sullivan; Jake Toomey, Principal, Discovery School at Four Corners; Atty. Peter Smith; other school staff, citizens, and the press.

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (DA, TF, SH, WM, AN, NT), Chair Farrell opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

II. Approval of Draft Minutes

AN moved to approve draft minutes of Oct. 12, 2016. 2nd DA. Top of p. 2, top line: Replace first sentence with: "Howie Barber reported on prior years' decisions to move Math & Science Academy to GMS." **Motion passed unanimously.**

IV. Reports

A. GHS Student Representatives

Amy O'Sullivan and Sarah O'Sullivan reported on GHS club activities and sports, including National Honor Society induction, Spanish Club, Student Council, field hockey finals, XC championship meet, Drama Club, Key Club sports clinic, Spirit Week Nov. 17-23.

B. Superintendent Report

Beth Pratt, Assistant Superintendent, reported on behalf of Supt. Harper (on parenting leave):

- Professional Development day for all teachers
- Budget monitoring for FY17
- FY18 budget preparation by principals and dept. heads
- Visiting classrooms
- Participating in MSBA survey/site-visit in mid-November

III. Public Comment

Adelle Ferreria, MSA parent, suggested the proposed food allergy policy (JHCDA) specifically mention PTOs and outside groups coming into schools; consider including food-allergy bullying in JHCDA or bullying policy.

IV. Reports (continued)

C. Subcommittees

1. Personnel Subcommittee

NT reported that Subcte is reviewing contracts of School Cte's direct hires; have notified Supt Harper of intent to renew contract, as voted at School Cte Oct. 12 mtg. Supt evaluation process delayed due to Supt's leave; goals were to be set by Sept. 30. Consider School Cte setting independent goals for itself (Melrose model).

2. Budget, Finance & Negotiations Subcommittee

AN distributed detailed minutes, reviewed recent mtgs, including:

- FY17 budget shortfall, including out-of-district special education costs. Discussions continue among Subcte., school and town leadership. Request for accurate reporting.

- Launch of FY18 budget cycle, first look at enrollment data. Enrollment is steady. Support for administrators' review of elementary staffing for FY17-18 budgets; for maintaining current level of integrated arts, special programs; for capital funding for bus.
- Capital requests: support for comprehensive 5-year capital improvement request. Capital funding for bus; order/purchase takes up to 1 yr. Freeze on capital spending re: transportation because Mayor is reviewing city transportation system.
- Special education, out-of-district placement costs: requests to Town Council for \$250K supplemental funding for this fiscal yr, \$250K special education prepayment for next yr, creation of special education stabilization account
- Potential to modify transportation offerings for cost savings
- Dianne Ellis reviewing out-of-district placements for best practices
- Budget calendar: Dec. 1 = presentation of first draft of FY18 budget

Discussion:

- Support for stabilization approach, including pre-payment, for out-of-district tuition
- Suggestion for task force to review alignment of staffing, program, policies
- Asst Supt Pratt to investigate status of "big bus." Battery is on order. Ready for schools to use?
- Civics/government course recommended by School Cte
- Timing of funding requests to Town Council

V. Business

A. FY17 Budget Update

Business Manager Barber reported on causes for increase in out-of-district tuition; potential sources to cover expense. Barber to draft proposal for Subcte review, to send to Mayor, in December.

Discussion:

- Clarification of out-of-district tuition prepayment; prepayment account not funded last year.
- Increase in circuit breaker \$ from state
- Challenges to town budget; freeze on town hiring
- School costs increasing while enrollment steady

WM moved that Superintendent and Business Manager provide a brief white paper, no more than two pages, on condition of out-of-district costs. AN 2nd. Discussion: Purpose to request state legislature to change funding formulas. Take leadership role for Greenfield and county benefit. "Devastating impact on all students." School Cte policy allows for appointment of legislative ambassador. **Motion passed unanimously.**

AN moved to direct administration to prepare and present proposed plan for MSA [Math & Science Academy] for 17-18 school year, and how compatible or incompatible it is with the STAR recommendations and the strategic plan, at Dec. 14 School Committee meeting, to be available for review by members by Dec. 9. WM 2nd. Discussion: Intent to learn what MSA was, what it's meant to be, overview entire program, fiscal impact. Concern that MSA move may contribute to students leaving. **Motion passed 4-1 (No: SH).**

B. Enrollment Report

Discussion: Congratulations to GHS, only 2 dropouts. More families with school-age children moving to Greenfield. Decrease in # of students in GPS: due to state placement of homeless families in prior years? Need better marketing of 8th grade program? Give parents choices inside public schools. Recent vote reflects community preference: no additional charter schools.

C. Capital Request Vote

Capital requests for FY18-FY21 submitted in October. Process: Barber gathered capital improvement requests (\$25K+) and priorities from building principals.

Discussion:

- Food service appliances
- Correction: Newton parking lot is FY19. Need for increased parking at Newton stymied by brook/wetlands/stormwater.
- Need for additional classrooms at Four Corners
- Wifi at Four Corners, Federal Street schools covered by state funding, grants. WM requests consolidated technology discussion, consideration of corporation's offer of free wifi.

SH moved to support the capital improvement program request for FY 2018, as presented this evening. AN 2nd. Motion passed. 4-0-1 (abstain: WM).

D. Grants update

HB reported on awarded grants (Nov. 7 memo: "Updated Grants Awarded to GPS")

\$41K – Title VI-B, for educational technology

\$22K – Special Ed Improvement, speech pathology

\$6K – EOS, for Breakfast in the Classroom

E. Policy for First Reading and Vote

KBAA – Title I Family Engagement

WM moved to accept KBAA, Title I Family Engagement, as written. AN 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

F. Policies for First Reading

SH provided first reading of and commentary on these policies:

KBA – School & Parent Relations

DIE – Audits

JHCDA – Life-Threatening Food Allergies

IJOA – Field Trips

IJOA-R – Guidelines for Field Trip Planning

WM moved to accept first reading of these policies. DO 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

G. Policies for Second Reading & Vote

SH reviewed purpose, updates to financial policies (Section D). No changes from first readings.

DJ – Purchasing

DJA – Purchasing Authority

DJE – Bidding Requirements

DJG – Vendor Relations

DK – Payment Procedure

DKC – Expense Reimbursements

WM moved to accept policies. DA 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. Other Business

A. Future agenda items

- For Dec. 14: Info session/discussion on innovation schools, Discovery School at Four Corners. Law requires School Cte vote to continue. Members to receive supporting materials no later than Dec. 9.
- Presentations on Newton and Federal Street: not formally innovation schools but offering innovative programs, including ELT
- Continued collaboration with city re: HR

- “Field trip” walk-through to look at capital request issues. Asst Supt Pratt to organize, post.
- Standardized testing scores, perhaps at working session in December
- School nurses – staffing, pay, Mayor’s idea for community health nursing, role in screening. Health, Safety & Facilities Subcte is continuing discussion, search for solutions.
- Civics education, role of public schools in supporting democracy, critical/creative thinking

VII. Executive Session

WM made a motion to enter into executive session [for the reason MGL c 30A, §21, (3) To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares]. AN 2nd. Roll call vote – Yes: DA, TF, SH, WM, AN, NT. Moved into executive session at 9:19 p.m.

WM moved to return to public session. AN 2nd. Roll call vote – Yes: DA, TF, SH, WM, AN, NT. Motion passed unanimously. Public session resumed at 10:03 p.m.

VIII. Adjournment

WM moved to adjourn. AN 2nd. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 10:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary