

GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES: Wednesday, July 9, 2014
GCTV Studios, 393 Main Street, Greenfield MA
Approved 08.13.14

Present: Margaret Betts (MB) (arrived 6:40); Maryelen Calderwood (MC); Jeff Comenitz (JC); Donna Gleason (DG); William Martin (WM); Adrienne Nunez (AN); Francina Wisnewski (FW). **Absent:** none.

Also present: William Bazyk, Director of Student Services & Special Education (WB); Tom Bevacqua, GEA chair (TB); Paul DeMarco, Mass. Teachers Association (PD); Elizabeth Gilman, GPS Business Administrator; Jordana Harper, Superintendent (JH);) Carol Holzberg, Technology Director; Peter Smith, School Attorney (PS); Ann Valentine, GMS teacher; other school staff, 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 6:38 p.m.

II. Approval of Draft Minutes

FW moved to approve minutes of July 2, 2014, and to table consideration of minutes of June 11. MB 2nd. Motion passed.

III. Public Comment

Deborah Keisch, parent, explained her opposition to PARCC.

Ann Valentine, teacher, expressed concerns that teachers not involved in PARCC discussions.

Tim Scott

IV. Reports

A. Chairperson

MC shared vision for coming year and School Cte's role.

C. Superintendent

JH affirmed key goal – do what's best for students. Goal of involving staff. Family meetings July 21.

Motion to move V.C. Subcommittee Appointments to follow Supt Report. DG 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

V. Business Topics

C. Subcommittee Appointments

MC announced the following, for consensus of Cte:

- Negotiations, Finance, and Budget Subcommittee: DG chair, MB, JC
- Health & Safety Subcommittee: AN chair, MC, WM
- Policy & Curriculum Subcommittee: FW chair, DG, JC

WM as mayor and MC as chair are ex-officio members of all subcommittees.

Concern that quorum of 3-member subctes is 3.

MB moved to include a 2nd Public Comment session. JC 2nd. Motion passed 6-0-1.

DeMarco clarified subctes have power to stipulate whether quorum is required.

V. Business Topics

A. Registered Nurse Appointment

Bill Bazyk provided background to current request to appoint Marilyn Erickson: Aug. 2013 School Cte appointed 2 nurses but Erickson not included, by oversight. Erickson was school nurse at Green River last year, currently summer programs nurse.

Discussion:

- Law says School Cte appoints “one or more” Registered Nurses. Supt also has authority to appoint. Past practice: GPS School Cte appointed all nurses. What is proper role of School Cte?
- Concern that Erickson is not DESE-qualified school nurse (requires 4-yr degree). Need DESE waiver.
- Dr. Sola-Gomez, pediatrician, is GPS physician. Was he appointed by School Cte? WB will research.
- DeMarco: District has lowest nurse pay in Mass.
- Recommendation of 1 nurse per 500 students max. Need to adjust for # of special-needs children.
- Concern that recent postings for school nurse jobs did not specify DESE-certified

Consensus: **Refer to Health & Safety Subcte for further study.**

B. MCAS/PARCC

JH provided overview of PARCC as next-generation assessment of Common Core, more rigorous than MCAS. Two decisions: grades 3-8; and grades 9 and 11. Grades 10 to continue MCAS through 2019 as graduation requirement. PARCC available on-line or paper. This year PARCC districts “held harmless” if level decreases; would count in subsequent years. Waiting next yr. puts more pressure on results.

Discussion included:

- Political future unclear. Possibly Mass. will opt-out?
- Carol Holzberg described district’s tech-capacity for on-line testing. Grade 3 easiest; middle school (grades 4-7) would be difficult.
- Four Corners interested in piloting on-line version; district must decide one test for all grades 3-8
- Recommend high school continue with MCAS since 10th graders must take
- Other tests being adopted by other states (e.g., Smarter Balanced).
- On-line offers quicker results, allowing for adjustments to instruction.
- Concern for on-line glitches.
- No PARCC for science
- Town of Greenfield’s strategic plan for technology, Phase 1: city gov’t offices. Phase 2: schools.
- Are teachers “held harmless” for scores? Effect on teacher evaluation? Atty Smith: Would not affect teacher contract or evaluation.
- Stress on students. Can Study Island reduce on-line test anxiety?
- Can we split tests – part on-line, part on paper?
- Do 3rd graders have keyboard skills? Concern for writing component: keyboard might hinder children from writing up to true skill level.
- Parents opting out. Concern re: data mining.
- “Hold harmless” clause suggests there is harm.
- Technology cost, no reimbursement from state.
- Decision deadline October, giving time for forum to hear from families, teachers; collect information on nationwide discussion, research.

MB made a motion to table MACSS/PARCC vote until Cte has heard from the general public, and direct chair to find a date and site, and post. FW 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. Other Business

A. Playground at Federal Street school not completed. Work has been rescheduled.

B. School Building Committee (oversees construction at high school): FW nominated DG to be School Cte representative on School Building Cte . WM 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Sick Leave Bank: DG nominated MB and FW to be on Sick Leave Bank Committee. AN 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. Executive Session

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

FW moved to return to public session. 2nd WM. Yes: MB, MC, JC, DG, WM, AN, FW. Public session resumed at 11:24 p.m.

VI. Adjournment

FW made a motion to adjourn. 2nd AN. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 11:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary