

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES  
CHENERY MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ROOM  
SEPTEMBER 11, 2012**

Present: Ms. Laurie Graham, Chair  
Mr. Daniel Scharfman, Secretary  
Ms. Laurie Slap  
Mr. Kevin Cunningham  
Ms. Anne Lougée  
Ms. Pascha Griffiths  
Dr. Thomas Kingston, Interim Superintendent  
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent  
Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Business, Finance and Operations

1. **OPENING BUSINESS**

1.1 Call to order

Ms. Graham called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Graham led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Citizens' Concerns

No raised concerns.

1.4 Adjustments to the Agenda

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

1.5 Chairman's Report

Ms. Graham reported on the following items:

The Finance Subcommittee met several times over the summer. The group discussed the possibility of creating a curriculum subcommittee.

The School Committee and Leadership Council participated in a retreat in August. They discussed goals for the coming year, implementation of the new strategic plan, and the new educator evaluation process.

Ms. Graham announced that David Kale is the new Town Administrator and began his work on August 20.

Ms. Graham welcomed Tomas Reimers and Austin Heye, two of the new student representatives to the School Committee.

Ms. Graham updated the Committee on the issue of potential transfer of sports field lands to the library. On July 31 the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, Mark Paolillo and the Chair of the Board of Library Trustees, Matt Lowrie, met with the School Committee to discuss the two options being recommended for the replacement of field space. One option is to move the fields to the incinerator site and the other is a new plan to reconfigure the Underwood Pool area so the pool would be relocated up the hill from where it currently is. The existing fields would move across the street to where the pool currently is. The Board of Selectmen met on September 10 along with the Town Administrator to issue an RFP to investigate further the feasibility of the Underwood Pool site. Ms. Graham stated that the School Committee would provide a decision to the Board of Library Trustees as soon as possible when more specific information is available.

Ms. Graham announced that the School Committee would be meeting with Glenn Koocher, Executive Director of Massachusetts Association of School Committees on September 21 to discuss plans for the Superintendent search.

#### 1.6 Superintendent's Report

Dr. Kingston stated that the opening of school was relatively smooth. He reminded people that there are strict traffic patterns at the Wellington and thanked Chief McLaughlin and the Belmont Police Department for their help with traffic.

Dr. Kingston explained that he is concerned about larger class sizes at Wellington School and Belmont High School and administrators will be watching closely to see how class sizes look in the next few weeks as enrollments shift.

Dr. Kingston announced that the Butler Playground is now a work in progress. He stated that if things go according to schedule the land will be ready to build on by October 30 although he could not guarantee it. As soon as the site is prepared, community members will be invited to help build the playground.

Dr. Kingston announced that a new set of attendance procedures will be instituted in the elementary and middle schools. This new system will require parents to notify the school when their student will be absent. If a student does not arrive at school and is not listed on the absence list, a series of robo calls will be made to the phone numbers listed at the school. This is particularly intended to insure student safety.

Dr. Kingston updated the School Committee on the Memorandum of Agreement agreed to as part of the Unit A contract negotiations last year. The MOA relates to study groups and task forces. The groups will provide updates to the School Committee and Belmont Education Association late in the fall.

Dr. Kingston announced that Amy Wagner, Principal of Wellington School, has announced her retirement. The position will be posted next week and a screening committee will be set up to screen

applicants. The committee will be made up of citizens, a member of the School Committee, a designee from the Belmont Education Association, Wellington staff, and a principal. He stated that his hope is to have a replacement by November.

Dr. Kingston announced that two iPad pilot programs will be implemented in the district this fall. One program will provide Butler 2<sup>th</sup> grade students with iPads. The iPads will be kept at the school. An anonymous donor provided funding for this program. The project costs approximately \$20,000. The pilot project at Belmont High School will be part of the American Studies program. The students will be provided iPads which they will keep for the year. Dr. Kingston has sought grant funds to cover the cost of the high school pilot, but in the interim they have been paid for from FY12 operating funds.

Mr. Scharfman suggested that it might be helpful for the School Committee to have a longer conversation at a future meeting regarding the use of iPads in classrooms.

Dr. Kingston announced that Ms. Darias would be going to Finland in October to learn more about their educational system and how they were able to rebuild the system both to promote broad student development and have such high achievement on international scales.

Dr. Kingston announced that Belmont Public Schools is in full compliance with the new Emergency Medical Plan law.

Dr. Kingston announced that he will have a Superintendent's Blog on the Belmont Public Schools website. He invited comments from the public.

Ms. Darias announced that a training session for teachers on the new educator evaluation system had been held the previous week. The educators came to the high school auditorium for an introduction and overview of the evaluation system and a closer look at the first two steps of the system which are the self assessment and goal setting. Following the whole group presentation, teachers divided into 13 smaller groups for a workshop on how to write a SMART (specific and strategic, measurable, achievable/attainable, rigorous and realistic, and tracked and time-bound) goal. The next step of the training which will be held September 12 will be looking at the observation process.

Ms. Darias updated the Committee on the changes in math programs and curricula. There will be two pilot curriculum series implemented this fall. The first product is "Envision" and the second is "Think Math". Teachers in all four elementary schools and grade 5 at the Chenery are piloting one or the other of the series. Feedback from these pilots will inform the choice of which curriculum to adopt system-wide.

#### 1.7 Director of Finance, Business and Operations' Report

Mr. DiCologero explained that the Town is in the process of closing out the year 2012 in the MUNIS system. The School Department will be ending the year with a small positive balance which will be reverted back to the Town. Mr. DiCologero stated that he would have the final FY12 reports at the next School Committee meeting.

Mr. DiCologero updated the Committee on the Solar Panel Project. Proposals have been solicited and a site visit has been done. Three companies have submitted proposals and the committee involved has been reviewing those proposals. Interviews with the companies will take place next week.

2. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

2.1 There was no unfinished business.

3. **MAJOR BUSINESS**

3.1 Superintendent's Evaluation – self assessment and timeline – Exhibit A1 – A7

Ms. Graham explained that the School Committee would be conducting the Superintendent's evaluation in public and on camera. Dr. Kingston has provided his self assessment as well as a timeline, summary and several artifacts. Ms. Graham asked the School Committee and public to review the documents which have been posted to the Belmont Public Schools website. Comments can be made regarding the Superintendent's evaluation can be submitted to the School Committee by September 24.

3.2 Curriculum Sub-committee Charter – Exhibit B

Ms. Graham explained that the Curriculum Subcommittee will be charged with the following tasks:

Understanding the Belmont Public Schools Curriculum Review Cycle, the work of the Curriculum Directors and the Curriculum Steering Committees, and the timeline for curriculum review across the seven programs in the district.

Ms. Darias explained that the district has had a cycle in which the 7 curriculum areas (English Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Foreign Language, Fine and Performing Arts, and Physical Education) are staggered to review programs. The work is led by the each Curriculum Director in collaboration with members of a program-specific Curriculum Steering Committee. The Curriculum Steering Committee consists primarily of teachers in the program but can also include some parents and an administrator.

3.3 School Committee Assignments and Liaisons for 2012-2013 – Exhibit C

Chairman Graham provided the list of assignments which are posted on the Belmont Public Schools website.

3.4 iPad Proposal 1 – Exhibit F

Dr. Kingston provided information in his Superintendent's Report.

3.5 iPad Proposal 2 – Exhibit G

Dr. Kingston provided information in his Superintendent's Report.

4. **REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES/LIAISONS**

4.1 Wellington Building Committee

Ms. Graham announced that members of the Wellington Building Committee met with the Planning Board to ask for an extension of the occupancy permit. The Committee is still in the process of getting the green certification. Work on the floors was done over the summer.

#### 4.2 Finance Subcommittee

Mr. Cunningham stated that the Finance Subcommittee has an ongoing list of open items such as long term planning, response to the Warrant Committee recommendations, and the SPED stabilization fund. Mr. David Kale, Town Administrator, attended a meeting of the Finance Subcommittee and communicated that the Board of Selectmen would like to continue the joint meetings of the School Committee and Board of Selectmen. There have been continued conversations about the balances in the revolving accounts. There has been some discussion of whether or not to have a family cap on fees.

#### 4.3 Task Force on Athletics and Extracurricular Activities

Ms. Graham, thanking Task Force members for their work, time, and results, suggested that the Task Force be disbanded because its conclusions had been turned over to the School Committee and School Department for further assessment and implementation. Ms. Lougee stated that the task force members have information about what a family cap might be. Mr. Scharfman stated that parents are still concerned about fees.

#### 4.4 Student Representative Update

Tomas Reimers stated that the start of school went smoothly and he would likely have more to report at the next meeting. Austin Heye stated that he felt Mr. Richards has done a good job of putting a face to the principal by greeting students in the morning and arranging assemblies for each grade at the beginning of school.

### 5. OTHER BUSINESS

#### 5.1 Consent Agenda

#### 5.2 Personnel Items – Informational

Personnel Status Updates – Exhibit D  
New Hires – Exhibit E

#### 5.3 Business Items – None

#### 5.4 Approval of Minutes

June 19, 2012  
July 31, 2012  
August 22, 2012  
August 23, 2012

On a motion offered by Ms. Lougee and seconded by Ms. Slap, it was

**VOTED** 5-0-1 to approve the minutes of June 19, 2012 as amended.

On a motion offered by Ms. Slap and seconded by Ms. Lougée, it was

**VOTED** unanimously to approve the minutes of July 31, 2012.

On a motion offered by Ms. Lougée and Mr. Cunningham, it was

**VOTED** unanimously to approve the minutes of August 22, 2012 and August 23, 2012 with one amendment to August 23, 2012.

6. **FUTURE BUSINESS**

September 21, 2012  
Work Session  
SAB Conference Room

September 25, 2012  
Finance Subcommittee Meeting  
SAB Conference Room  
8:00 a.m.

October 2, 2012  
School Committee Meeting  
CMS Large Community Room  
7:30 p.m.

7. **ENCLOSURES**

September 5, 2012 Enrollment

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:47 p.m. on a motion offered by Mr. Scharfman and seconded by Ms. Slap, it was

**VOTED** unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by



Daniel Scharfman, Secretary