

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
CHENERY MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ROOM
MAY 7, 2013**

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

Also in attendance: Mr. James Davis, Director of Athletics
Library Board of Trustees

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

There were no citizens' concerns.

1.4 Adjustments to the Agenda

Consent agenda item held till next meeting

1.5 Chairman's Report

Ms. Graham updated the Committee on upcoming community and sports events.

Ms. Darias announced that the Professional Learning Team Conference would be held on May 22. The conference will showcase the work that teachers have done with their individual PLTs during the year. There are 71 PLTs and each is focused on a particular area. There will be 57 exhibits and 14 presentations in and around the Belmont High School Field House from 12:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

1.6 Superintendent's Report

Dr. Kingston stated that he and other administrators have been preparing for the budget hearing and Town Meeting on June 3.

Dr. Kingston discussed the May 1 class size report which was included in the School Committee packet. He stated that he plans to continue the enrollment freeze at the Wellington School for the foreseeable future. He explained that he will be discussing population trends and a long-term solution to the class size issue with the School Committee and Board of Selectmen.

Dr. Kingston stated that a letter has been sent to grade 8 parents and guardians regarding a proposal to use iPads with the freshman class this fall. The letter is asking for feedback from parents and guardians. The iPad program would be funded with help from the Foundation for Belmont Education.

Dr. Kingston announced that the Butler Playground is open. He explained that there are some cracks that have to be repaired but the repair cost will be covered under warranty.

1.7 Director of Finance, Business and Operations' Report

Mr. DiCologero gave a summary of 3rd quarter expenditures. He stated that the School Department is projecting a year-end positive balance of \$8,500 in the General Fund.

2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

3. MAJOR BUSINESS

3.1 a. Presentation of Library Land Transfer Proposal – Exhibit A

Mr. Matt Lowrie, Chair of the Belmont Library Board of Trustees, presented a proposal requesting the School Committee to transfer school department controlled land to the Town for the construction of a new library. As an alternative to siting a replacement field on the former incinerator land, Mr. Lowrie also presented a new proposal, which the School Committee had not previously reviewed, to locate the field on a combination of the current Hittinger Street field and a portion of the high school parking lot.

Mr. Lowrie explained that if the School Committee voted against transferring the land, the library trustees would be forced to refuse the 7.5 million dollars in grant money. Belmont would not be able to apply again for grant money for at least 5 to 7 years.

3.1 b. Facility Change Guiding Principles – Exhibit B

Mr. Cunningham read aloud the Facility Change Guiding Principles – Exhibit B document.

Any significant change of facilities that are controlled by the Belmont School Department should be congruent with the long-term plans of the Department, and in any case should not create an obstacle with respect to those plans. Any decision about a facility change should consider the impact on the flexibility of the Department with respect to options for future development of the system as a whole.

In general, any change of facilities should allow the Department to maintain service comparable to, or enhanced relative to, the current service, with regard to, but not limited to:

- furthering the educational objectives of the system*
- compliance with state, federal, and other laws and regulations*
- safety of the facility*
- accessibility for emergency responders, maintenance staff, facility users*
- the provision of relevant equipment, services and facilities*
- program costs*
- maintenance costs*
- other recurring costs*
- maintenance of the same or greater effective usable space*
- control of programming by the School Department*
- impact on services indirectly related to the facility (e.g., impact on adjacent campus use, effect elsewhere on the campus or in the system, etc.)*
- minimizing the displacement of non-school programs who use the facility.*

Notwithstanding the above, a temporary reduction of services may be necessary during the process of transition; best efforts should be taken to minimize downtime during construction.

In addition to these considerations, if a request to transfer control of land comes from agents beyond the School Department (e.g., for the schools to release control of some parcel, either on its own or part of a "land swap"), additional considerations would apply:

- The costs for the transition should not fall on the School Department, either capital outlay or one-time or ongoing operational costs incurred as a result of the transition.*
- If land is exchanged and the use of the new parcel is shared by multiple agencies, the School Department should retain full control of the new parcel, and not merely "program input" to some other controlling agency.*
- The transfer of land should satisfy a vital community need, to a degree not available without the transfer, in the assessment of the School Committee.*

Mr. Jim Davis, Director of Athletics joined the School Committee at the table where he discussed his concerns regarding the proposal for the new site on Hittinger Street. His concerns included parking and the field's close proximity to the road.

Members of the audience asked questions and offered comments.

3.1 c. School Committee Discussion of Land Transfer and Vote

School Committee members discussed their position regarding transferring the field that is currently used for softball and other sports. Dr. Kingston recommended that the School Committee vote no. Ms. Shuster and Ms. Slap stated that they did not approve of the language in the motion. Ms. Shuster stated that she would abstain from the vote.

Moved that, pursuant to General Laws Chapter 40, Section 15A, the School Committee declare that the parcel of land at 345 Concord Avenue, consisting of 91,785 square feet, more or less, and shown on the plan entitled "Partial Existing Conditions Plan, 345 Concord Avenue, Belmont, Mass." Dated January 24, 2011 by Harry R. Feldman, Inc., Land Surveyors, and being a portion of the land shown on the plan recorded in the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds as Plan No. 114 of 1937 (Belmont Assessor's Parcel No. 35-40), is no longer needed for educational or Belmont School Department purposes, and that the Belmont Town Meeting may transfer the care, custody and control of said parcel to another municipal board or officer for another purpose.

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

VOTED 0-5-1 not to transfer the parcel of land referred to in the above motion.

4. **SUBCOMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES (as needed)**

4.1 Student Representative

There was no Student Representative in attendance.

4.2 Finance Subcommittee

Mr. Cunningham stated that the Finance Subcommittee has been previewing the 3rd quarter results to prepare for the presentation to Town Meeting.

4.3 Policy Subcommittee

Ms. Graham stated that the Policy Subcommittee met with High School Principal Dan Richards to review the new breathalyzer policy and attendance policy for the Belmont High School Handbook. Mr. Richards will present the handbook to School Committee at the May 21 meeting.

4.4 Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee

Ms. Darias stated that the Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee met to discuss mid-year exam schedules and the new iPad program. They also discussed changes to the grade 7 geography course.

4.5 Capital Budget Committee

Ms. Lougée reported that the Capital Budget Committee would be meeting at 6:00 the following evening to finalize its recommendations to Town Meeting.

4.6 Warrant Committee

Ms. Slap stated that the Warrant Committee is working on having the report for Town Meeting ready for the upcoming deadline.

4.7 Wellington Building Committee

Ms. Graham stated that the results from the recent noise tests have not yet been received.

5. **OTHER BUSINESS**

5.1 Consent Agenda

The de-accession of Butler attic items – Exhibit C was removed from the agenda and will be discussed at a future meeting.

5.2 Personnel Items

There were no personnel items.

5.3 Business Items

There were no business items.

5.4 Approval of Minutes

Ms. Graham announced that the April 23, 2013 minutes would be voted on at a future meeting.

6. **FUTURE BUSINESS**

Upcoming Meetings:

May 8, 2013
Wellington Building Committee
SAB Conference Room – 7:30 a.m.

May 14, 2013
Finance Subcommittee Meeting
SAB Conference Room – 8:00 a.m.

May 21, 2013
School Committee Meeting
CMS Large Community Room – 7:30 p.m.

7. **ENCLOSURES**

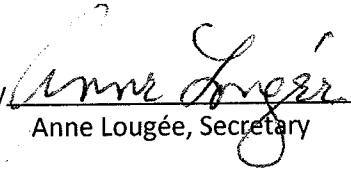
There were no enclosures.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

At 10:44 p.m. on a motion offered by Ms. Slap and seconded by Ms. Griffiths, it was

VOTED unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by


Anne Lougée, Secretary