

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
CHENERY MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ROOM
NOVEMBER 19, 2013**

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

Also present: Max Davidowitz, Student Representative

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

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

1.5 Chairman's Report

Ms. Graham updated the Committee on recent and upcoming events throughout the town.

1.6 Superintendent's Report

Dr. Kingston announced that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has released data about the new Educator Appraisal System describing the percentages of teachers and schools whose rating indicated "needs improvement". He stated that although he is not excited releasing the data, it is required by law. Dr. Kingston explained that there is a tendency to presume or predict that you can draw conclusions about schools based on statistics that are not reliable.

Dr. Kingston referred to a packet enclosure titled Comparative Average Salaries (DESE 2012 Comparisons) which compares average salaries, per pupil expenditures and pupil/teacher ratios for towns comparable to Belmont, as a point of reference for the School Committee.

Dr. Kingston updated the Committee on the proposal to install solar panels on the Wellington School roof. The proposal needs to be approved by the Planning Board and they have asked the contractor for more information. The state has extended the tax credit period to June 30, 2014 so the contractor should have more time to respond to additional information requested by the Planning Board.

Ms. Darias announced that the 2013 report card announced by the DESE on their website includes information on enrollment, licensing and MCAS scores for each school district. She explained that the Belmont district is responsible for disseminating this information to families.

Ms. Darias explained the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College Careers (PARCC) has selected Belmont as one of the districts to test the PARCC assessment for English Language Arts and Math. The testing is to be completed by students either online or on paper depending on the school. The DESE has stated that school districts can choose to be exempt from MCAS if they use the PARCC assessments. Ms. Darias stated that after discussing it with directors and principals, a decision has been made not to take the exemption because it would create a gap in the data the school district would have on students in the grades using the PARCC assessments.

1.7 Director of Finance, Business and Operations' Report

Mr. DiCologero explained that the Leadership Council is continuing to work on the first draft of the FY15 budget. He stated that one of the nuances of the FY15 budget will be the consolidation of the Buildings and Grounds Department for the schools and town.

2. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

3. **MAJOR BUSINESS**

3.1 PLT Presentation: Promoting 21th Century Skills – Exhibit A

Ms. Beth Manca and Ms. Danette English, teachers of foreign language and art, respectively, presented the work of their PLT – Promoting 21st Century Skills through Small Group Collaboration. They explained that the PLT group – which includes Sara Fraser, Lianne McCann, Dori Pulizzi and Chandrika Vittal – has reviewed research on Cooperative Learning. They have assessed students' current cooperative learning skills through observation, self assessment, and/or peer review in order to identify the target group. They have chosen to use the *Habits of Mind* curriculum to begin teaching students 21st century skills. Ms. Manca and Ms. English explained that the *Habits of Mind* curriculum (accessed through its website, cards, and lesson plans) can be adapted to fit activities related to various disciplines.

3.2 Rain Garden Proposal – Exhibit B

Ms. Anne-Marie Lambert, a director of the Belmont Citizens Forum, gave a presentation on a proposal being developed for a rain garden at Belmont High School (BHS). The proposal focuses on identifying funding for the project and seeks the permission from the School Committee to approach the Conservation Commission with a notice of intent once funding is identified. The Conservation Commission would then respond with certain stipulations pertaining to the Wetlands Act. The goal of the project is to slow down rain water as it runs off the BHS parking lot so it can be filtered and cleaned before it goes into Clay Pit Pond. Currently, toxins from the parking lot rush into the storm drains and then into the pond. The rain garden would make the water quality healthier for wildlife. It would also reduce the risk of flooding downstream.

Mr. DiCologero stated his concerns regarding the possibility of additional expenses that may arise during the project. He stated that if the estimated cost of the project (\$170,000) is raised that he would want assurances that the actual cost would not exceed that amount. Mr. DiCologero also expressed concern about future ongoing maintenance if the project were to go forward

Ms. Graham stated the Committee had not had a chance to discuss the project and would need more time to do so.

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

4.1 Student Representative

Max Davidowitz updated the School Committee on recent events at BHS. Many BHS students recently attended a screening of the film *Girls Rising* and found it to be very inspirational. Belmont Idol auditions will be held November 21 and November 22. The musical to be performed next spring will be announced November 22.

4.2 Finance Subcommittee

Ms. Slap stated that the next meeting of the Finance Subcommittee is December 3.

4.3 Policy Subcommittee

Ms. Graham stated the Policy Subcommittee will meet on Thursday to continue discussions on Anti-Bullying Policies.

4.4 Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee

Ms. Shuster stated that the Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee met with Mr. Steve Mazzola, Director of Technology, to discuss how Google Apps are being implemented in the School Department. They also met with Ms. Colleen Foley, Director of Foreign Languages, to discuss the flipped classroom.

4.5 Capital Budget Committee

Ms. Lougée stated that the Capital Budget Committee has not met since the last School Committee meeting.

4.6 Warrant Committee

Ms. Slap stated that the Warrant Committee has not had any recent meetings.

4.7 Wellington Building Committee

Ms. Graham stated that the Wellington Building Committee has not had any recent meetings.

5. **OTHER BUSINESS**

5.1 Consent Agenda

5.2 Personnel Items - None

5.3 Business Items – None

5.4 Approval of Minutes

There were no minutes to be approved.

6. **FUTURE BUSINESS**

Upcoming Meetings:

November 21, 2013
Policy & Procedure Subcommittee Meeting
SAB Conference Room – 9:00 a.m.

November 22, 2013
School Committee Executive Session
SAB Conference Room – 8:15 a.m.

December 3, 2013
Finance Subcommittee Meeting
SAB Conference Room – 8:00 a.m.

December 3, 2013
School Committee Meeting
CMS Large Community Room – 7:30 p.m.

7. **ENCLOSURES**

Comparative Average Salaries (DESE 2012 comparisons)

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:30 p.m. on a motion offered by Ms. Lougée and seconded by Ms. Slap, it was

VOTED unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by *Anne Lougée*
Anne Lougée, Secretary