

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES  
CHENERY MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ROOM  
DECEMBER 2, 2014**

Present: Ms. Laurie Slap, Chair  
Ms. Anne Lougée, Secretary  
Mr. Thomas Caputo  
Ms. Laurie Graham  
Ms. Elyse Shuster  
Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent  
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction  
Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Business, Finance and Operations

Absent: Dr. Lisa Fiore

Guests: Belmont High School Student Representatives: Max Davidowitz, Sarah Stewart,  
Daniel Vernick, Beth Young, and Thomas Zembowicz

1. **OPENING BUSINESS**

1.1 Call to order

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

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Slap led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Citizens' Concerns

There were no citizens' concerns.

1.4 Adjustments to the Agenda

Ms. Slap announced that the Compensation Modeling Group Report would be added to Major Business.

1.5 Chair's Report

Ms. Slap updated the School Committee on recent and upcoming events in the Town and Schools.

Ms. Slap announced that School Committee member Tom Caputo has agreed to serve on the Finance Subcommittee. He will also serve as the liaison to the Winn Brook School PTO and she will be the new liaison to the Butler School PTA. Ms. Slap also mentioned that the School Committee plans to move the start time of its meetings to 7:00 p.m. beginning with the December 16 meeting.

## 1.6 Student Representative Report

The Belmont High School Student Representatives reported on the following items:

- Belmont High School spring musical auditions are currently taking place.
- A coffeehouse will be held on December 19. Proceeds will help to fund an overnight trip of Performing Arts Club students to New York City.
- The cafeteria food has improved since a greater variety of locally grown vegetables have been added to the menu as well as the addition of "Meatless Mondays."
- Last week was spirit week and each day had a theme – Winter Wonderland (Monday), Clone Day (Tuesday), and Class Pride Day (Wednesday). A pep rally was held Wednesday before early dismissal for the Thanksgiving break with students and staff taking part in various activities and competitions.
- The first annual Model Marauder awards were presented at the pep rally to three students and one faculty member. The award, recognizing innovative leadership, was presented to a member of each of the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grades.
- The Belmontian Club raised approximately \$15,000 for the Making Strides Boston walk.
- The Club's annual Snowflake Sale begins this week. The money raised will be used to provide needy families with holiday gift baskets.
- The level of student stress at Belmont High School continues to be high and the steps provided to help combat this such as homework free weekends are a big help. The students suggested having more presentations on depression and anxiety to increase public awareness.

## 1.7 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Phelan updated the School Committee on the work that is being done to deal with the potential budget deficit. He presented a draft list of budget reduction strategies which has been shared with the Leadership Council and Central Office Administrators. He stated that he and the Central Office Administrators are cognizant of the obligation they have to the Town and Warrant Committee. Superintendent Phelan explained that the next step in the process will be to provide the list of budget reductions to the Warrant Committee and to continue to monitor expenses in the second quarter. The 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter update will be presented at the January 20<sup>th</sup> School Committee meeting.

Superintendent Phelan updated the School Committee on the recent visit to Belmont High School from members of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). He explained that this "Senior Study" site visit was part of the Statement of Interest (SOI) that was submitted in April 2013. He noted that the fact that the MSBA visited Belmont High School does not necessarily mean Belmont has advanced any further but is still in the SOI phase. Superintendent Phelan explained that Belmont will be notified at the end of December 2014 if the proposal will move on to the next phase. If the response from the MSBA is negative, another SOI will be submitted in April 2015.

Superintendent Phelan updated the School Committee on the analysis done by architectural firm Symmes, Maini & McKee Associates. The firm was hired to study how space is used in the six schools. The project was funded by Town Meeting last year. Superintendent Phelan stated that he will commission a task force comprised of educators across all three levels to provide input on the space issues facing Belmont Public Schools.

Superintendent Phelan and Chairperson Slap will be attending the meeting of the Foundation for Belmont Education tomorrow evening, where approximately \$22,000 in grants will be awarded to the schools teachers and staff. Also taking place tomorrow evening is the induction of over 100 students into the National Honors Society, representing the largest group of inductees at Belmont High.

2. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

3. **MAJOR BUSINESS**

3.1 Compensation Modeling Group Report

Former School Committee member Kevin Cunningham joined the School Committee at the table for the discussion of the Compensation Modeling Group Report. Superintendent Phelan explained that this report, in addition to seven other reports on important school issues, was prepared for use by the Belmont Financial Task Force as part of its assessment of the Town's overall financial and programmatic needs. This particular group was charged with the task of developing models for sustainable salary and benefits options that would inform the 2013-2014 negotiations and would project compensation that could fall within predictable 2.5% local tax revenue growth.

The group which was comprised of Ms. Slap, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Mary Pederson (Director of Human Resources) Mr. DiCologero (Director of Finance, Business and Operations), and Ms. Liz Allison (community member, former chair of the Warrant Committee, and current member of the Planning Board) began its work in the summer of 2013. The School Committee discussed the report which will be posted on the Belmont Public Schools website.

3.2 EDCO Articles of Agreement

EDCO Articles of Agreement – Exhibit A-1

Memo Re: Summary Points in Articles – Exhibit A-2

Districts Who Have Voted – Exhibit A-3

PowerPoint Explanation of EDCO Responsibilities – Exhibit A-4

Memo Explanation of Voting Language – Exhibit A-5

EDCO Articles of Agreement Amendment Approved by Board of Directors – Exhibit A-6

Superintendent Phelan explained that Belmont is a member of the EDCO Collaborative which provides support for professional development and education services. The Articles of Agreement need to be voted on by every member School Committee each year. This year one of the articles was changed so EDCO provided the updated language to all School Committees. There are two articles to be voted on tonight. The first is the actual agreement and the second is the request to develop a capital reserve fund.

On a motion offered by Ms. Shuster and seconded by Ms. Graham it was,

**VOTED** 5-0-0 to approve the EDCO Collaborative Articles of Agreement as amended.

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

**VOTED** 5-0-0 to allow the EDCO Collaborative to create a capital reserve fund to support costs associated with the acquisition, maintenance, and improvement of fixed assets, including real property, pursuant to a capital plan.

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

4.1 Finance Subcommittee

The Finance Subcommittee met this morning and discussed budget saving measures to address the potential deficit. Future work will include analysis of current fee structures and revolving account balances.

4.2 Policy Subcommittee

The Policy Subcommittee will be reviewing language and references in the policy manual at a future meeting. They will also begin discussing naming rights.

4.3 Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee

The Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee will meet on December 15 to review the 2015-2016 Belmont High School proposed program of studies.

4.4 Capital Budget Committee

The Capital Budget Committee has not met. They begin meeting towards the end of January.

4.5 Warrant Committee

The Warrant Committee will meet tomorrow night regarding available revenue.

4.6 Wellington Building Committee

The Wellington Building Committee has not met.

4.7 Financial Task Force

The Financial Task Force has not met. Mr. Phelan explained that he has been meeting with Town Administrator David Kale on a regular basis.

5. **OTHER BUSINESS**

5.1 Consent Agenda - none

5.2 Personnel Items - none

5.3 Business Items – None

5.4 Approval of Minutes - None

7. **FUTURE BUSINESS**

Upcoming Meetings:

December 16, 2014  
Finance Subcommittee Meeting  
SAB Conference Room – 7:30 a.m.

December 16, 2014  
School Committee Meeting  
CMS Large Community Room – 7:00 p.m.

8. **ENCLOSURES**

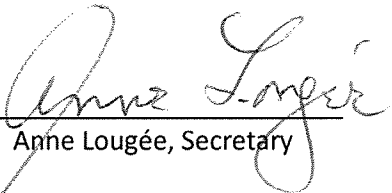
Compensation Modeling Group Report  
Budget Reduction Memo  
December 1, 2014 Enrollment  
December 1, 2014 Enrollment indicating changes

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:40 p.m. on a motion offered by Ms. Graham and seconded by Ms. Shuster, it was

**VOTED** 5-0-0 to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by



Anne Lougée, Secretary