

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
WELLINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COMMUNITY ROOM
DECEMBER 16, 2014**

Present: Ms. Laurie Slap, Chair
Ms. Anne Lougée, Secretary
Mr. Thomas Caputo
Dr. Lisa Fiore
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

Guests: Mr. Daniel Vernick, Belmont High School Student Representative
Mr. Jeff Hansell, Director, Belmont Media Center
Mr. Scott Stratford, School Appointee to the Belmont Media Center Board

1. **OPENING BUSINESS**

1.1 Call to order

Ms. Slap called the meeting to order at 7:03 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 Superintendent's report would come before the Chair and Student Representative reports.

1.5 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Phelan updated the School Committee on the ongoing electrical problems at the Chenery Middle School. Today marked the third instance whereby the electricity spontaneously short-circuited and that student dismissal was coordinated by the staff without the benefit of the intercom system. School maintenance staff, along with Director of Consolidated Facilities Gerry Boyle, have been

working to solve the problem. After two independent electrical firms were unsuccessful , an engineering firm has been engaged to find the source of the problem.

Superintendent Phelan reported that two Massachusetts education leaders – Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education Mitchell Chester and Secretary of Education Matthew Malone – visited Belmont High School (BHS) and the Daniel Butler School, respectively, this past week. Both visits included focus groups with students and faculty regarding educational programs in Belmont. Another recent visitor to BHS was Congressional Representative Katherine Clark. She joined students and staff in an “Hour of Code” (a national program designed to demystify computer science and promote interest in computer coding), to write an app for an Android small phone/device using MIT App Inventor.

At the December 2 School Committee meeting Superintendent Phelan reported that members of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) recently conducted a “Senior Study” site visit to BHS as part of the Statement of Interest (SOI) that was submitted in April 2013. Today Superintendent Phelan reported that the district has learned that the BHS renovation project was not accepted in this round of funding from the MSBA. Belmont plans to submit another application in April 2015.

1.6 Chair’s Report

Ms. Slap updated the School Committee on recent and upcoming events in the town and schools. She reported that the Foundation for Belmont Education (FBE) awarded the Belmont Public Schools (BPS) approximately \$22,000 in its first round of Learning Excellence grants this year. A list of the awards can be found on the BPS website, in the Partners section of the Home tab. Ms. Slap also noted that March 21, 2015 is the date for the FBE’s annual dinner/auction fundraiser. She thanked the FBE for all of its hard work in raising funds that so greatly benefit the teaching and learning in all of the schools.

1.7 Student Representative Report

Student Representative Daniel Vernick reported on various activities that have or will be taking place at the high school:

- The Belmontian Club’s annual snowflake sale successfully raised funds to purchase gifts for a Belmont family in need.
- A evening coffeehouse, featuring BHS students, will be held on December 19 in the cafeteria. Proceeds will help to fund an overnight trip of Performing Arts Club students to New York City in January.
- Many seniors who applied to college on an early decision and/or early action basis have begun to receive news on their applications. Mr. Vernick reported that a record number of ten students were accepted to Harvard University at this time.
- The Gay/Straight Alliance recently held a very upbeat “Everyone is Gay” assembly. Mr. Vernick also stated that the LGBT atmosphere at Belmont High is basically good.

2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

3. **MAJOR BUSINESS**

3.1 FY15 Budget Update

Superintendent Phelan reviewed the measures that are being undertaken to reduce expenditures in light of a projected \$500,000 deficit for the current year. He noted that the report of the 2nd quarter actuals, which will be presented to the School Committee at its January 20 meeting, will be helpful in determining how successful the multiple cost-saving measures have been. Superintendent Phelan tied the short-fall to the increased enrollment and the increased need for student services. Dr. Fiore expressed her hope that there by organized efforts to explore grant funding opportunities as well as other outside revenue sources.

3.2 Belmont Media Update

Mr. Jeff Hansell presented an overview of the Belmont Media Center's (BMC) work with the Belmont Public Schools (BPS) and its partners over the past eight years. Initially operating out of small room at Belmont High, programming today occurs in the BMC's state-of-the-art facility in Waverley Square, within the school buildings, and on the athletic fields. The BMC has been instrumental in connecting the activities of the BPS – televising School Committee meetings, many athletic events, and fine arts performances, among other activities – to Belmont's cable subscribers. In addition, its staff works with the BPS technology staff to support their audio-visual needs.

The BMC has worked with many BPS students over the years, training them in all aspects of video production. Mr. Hansell noted that one of the Belmont High PTO co-presidents has created his own program – "BHS PTO Presents" – by filming various guest speakers on a series of topics that will be useful to future viewers.

Mr. Scott Stratford, the BPS representative on the BMC's Board of Directors, asked the School Committee for additional programming ideas. Recognizing the challenge of obtaining parental permissions for filming students, one member wondered if there might be ways to demonstrate what classroom instruction looks like today, and to also showcase the variety of ways that classroom space is utilized. Another member suggested a "challenging topics" segment for the parent audience. Another idea involved programming that explains PARRC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career) – the primary student assessment program that will likely replace the MCAS in Massachusetts. Ms. Slap stated that she and Superintendent Phelan look forward to continuing this conversation as well as continued collaboration with the BMS.

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

4.1 Finance Subcommittee

The Finance Subcommittee met this morning to discuss budget saving measures, the revolving accounts, various fee structures, and other sources of revenue, with the overarching goal of maximizing the department's assets.

4.2 Policy Subcommittee

The Policy Subcommittee has not met.

4.3 Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee

The Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee will meet on December 19 to review the 2015-2016 Belmont High School proposed program of studies. The committee will also discuss structural changes to the instrumental music program at the elementary schools.

4.4 Capital Budget Committee

The Capital Budget Committee has not met.

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 will meet on December 19 to review town-wide draft modelling projections.

5. **OTHER BUSINESS**

5.1 Consent Agenda - none

5.2 Personnel Items - none

5.3 Business Items – None

5.4 Approval of Minutes

November 28, 2014

December 2, 2014

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

VOTED 5-0-1 with one abstention to approve the minutes of November 28, 2014

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

VOTED 5-0-1 with one abstention to approve the minutes of December 2, 2014

7. **FUTURE BUSINESS**

Upcoming Meetings:

December 19, 2014
Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee
SAB Conference Room – 9:00 a.m.

December 19, 2014
Financial Task Force
Board of Selectmen’s Room –8:00 a.m.

January 6, 2015
Finance Subcommittee
SAB Conference Room – 7:30 a.m.

January 6, 2015
School Committee
CMS Large Community Room – 7:00 p.m.

8. **ENCLOSURES**

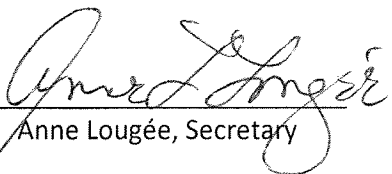
FY15 Budget Update

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:13 p.m. on a motion offered by Mr. Caputo and seconded by Ms. Shuster, it was

VOTED 6-0-0 to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by


Anne Lougée, Secretary