

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
CHENERY MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ROOM
MAY 12, 2015**

Present: Ms. Laurie Slap, Chair
Ms. Susan Burgess-Cox
Mr. Thomas Caputo
Dr. Lisa Fiore, Secretary
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

Also present: Daniel Vernick, Student Representative; Mary Pederson, Director of Human Resources

1. **OPENING BUSINESS**

1.1 Call to order

Ms. Slap called the meeting to order at 7:02 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

The policy updates were moved up to discussion under the Major Business category.

1.5 Chair's Report

Ms. Slap updated the School Committee about recent meetings and Town Meeting's approval of the SPED Stabilization Fund transfer request to help address the School Department's FY15 projected deficit. Ms. Slap noted that it is prudent to set aside money for extraordinary times when it may be needed, and important that the SPED Stabilization Fund soon be replenished when funds are available.

Ms. Slap praised the Outstanding Teacher event, noting how special it was to see so much community support, with special thanks to the Foundation for Belmont Education (FBE). This will likely become an annual event. The BSEAC is hosting awards reception on May 27th at Butler School – these are awards for people who have made a difference in the life of children with special needs. Ms. Slap

provided additional updates about events that will be occurring in town in the coming weeks, such as the final session of Town Meeting (June 1 and 3), and the League of Women Voters' information session on May 18th.

1.6 Student Representative Report

Student Representative Daniel Vernick updated the School Committee on some events at Belmont High School. The one-act plays will be presented the last weekend in May – all of these are written and directed by students. The BHS Chamber Orchestra played at the Beech Street Center on May 12. The last day of classes for seniors is Friday, May 15, and graduation is June 7.

1.7 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Phelan shared updates for many athletic events, including the annual Brendan Grant event (May 22 and 23). Fall sign-ups for sports will be held on June 11. Belmont School Staff Recognition Day was held on May 12, and individuals across the district were recognized for their years of service in the school district. Mr. Phelan thanked Mary Pederson (Director of Human Resources) and John Sullivan (President of the BEA) for their efforts in coordinating the event. May 20 will be the annual PLT conference at BHS. This annual event highlights the work of Professional Learning Teams.

2. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

3. **MAJOR BUSINESS**

3.1 Vote on School Committee Representative to Belmont Energy Committee

Mr. James Booth was introduced as a potential School Committee representative to the Belmont Energy Committee.

On a motion offered by Ms. Burgess-Cox and seconded by Ms. Shuster, it was
VOTED unanimously to elect Mr. James Booth as Representative to the Belmont Energy Committee.

3.2 Belmont High School Budget Presentation

Superintendent Phelan and Belmont High School Principal, Mr. Dan Richards, described plans to implement the 3.0 positions at BHS that are possible due to the override funding. Mr. Richards explained the extensive, thoughtful process that administrators went through to coordinate plans for most efficient, responsible, and long-term use of available funds. Highlights included:

- One full-year section of Creative Writing – a class that students and parents have been asking for in recent years. Interest and desire for enrollment has already been very high.
- Fine and Performing Arts – 2 half-year electives (Acting 1 and Tech. Theater) will be returning.

- Foreign Language Department – an extra section in one language (where the greatest need is) in order to decrease class size. The BHS staff members are in process of evaluating options.
- Library – in recent years the library has been closed after school, and now hours will be extended. Digital Citizenship seminars will be developed for Freshmen. This pilot will be assessed at the end of the year.
- Math Department – lowering class size is a priority, so sections will be added in Geometry Honors and Algebra 2 honors for 9th and 10th graders
- Science – 10th and 12th graders can take Design Technology
- Social Studies – Global Leadership enrollment has been increasing; Economics Honors – these will both be addressed.
- Wellness & PE Program – adding 6 sections within the Wellness & PE program. Moving Positive Decision Making from 11th to 10th grade. This has been a request of families for several years, and it will be a 2-year transition so that all students take the course. This will open discussion about expanded programming (e.g., Dance, social-emotional programming, yoga, aerobics). These new offerings will be available in the 2016-17 year so that teachers can thoughtfully develop the curriculum.
- Increased School Psychologist position to enable the individual to better support students' social-emotional needs.

Superintendent Phelan noted that these plans will engage many students who are currently under-engaged due to class size constraints. He expressed thanks to Mr. Richards for the care with which these allocations are being made to best utilize the available funds.

3.3 FY16 Budget Presentation and Vote

Superintendent Phelan provided a formal presentation on the FY16 budget. This will be provided to all Town Meeting members in advance of the LWV meeting on May 18. Mr. Phelan explained that the meat of the discussion is what we're doing with the override funds and the budget detail breakdown. Mr. Phelan went through the document page by page, commenting on highlights and achievements in the district, current enrollment and future projections, increased support for English Language Learners, Three-Year Fiscal Plan, FY16 School Department Initiatives and Budget Objectives.

Superintendent Phelan explained in detail several budget assumptions, cost drivers, and variables that are as yet unknown. In 4 of the last 5 years, we've had to freeze funding and ask for additional funds. The intention is to gradually build up materials and supplies to get closer to what we actually need.

Mr. DiCologero explained the FY16 budget in great detail. This included all allocations that will be made into the distinct categories, as defined by the DESE and allocations that will be made within the General Fund. He noted that there are substantial funds that the BPS rely upon and are not allocated from the Town, but come from external funding sources.

On a motion offered by Mr. Caputo and seconded by Ms. Burgess-Cox, it was

VOTED unanimously to accept and approve the Belmont Public Schools FY16 Budget for formal presentation to Town Meeting.

3.4 Policy Updates

Ms. Pederson presented proposed updates to School Committee Policies. She noted that these updates are primarily in response to policy updates mandated by the State. The policies include Criminal History record information, procedures governing fingerprint-based Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) and Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI)

On a motion offered by Ms. Shuster and seconded by Ms. Burgess-Cox, it was **VOTED** unanimously to adopt the revised School Committee Policies 0005, 00005P, and 4005, with amendment to the specific legal reference.

After the policy discussion, a Citizen's Concern was brought before the group by Judy Phelan. Ms. Phelan requested that the School Committee consider a moratorium on solicitation for funds from after-school care district-wide. Ms. Slap requested that the request be put in writing so that the School Committee can best determine which sub-committee will consider the request appropriately.

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

4.1 Finance Subcommittee

The Finance Subcommittee will meet the week of May 18. Superintendent Phelan added that there is ongoing research to determine opportunities for use of space and increase revenue accordingly. The FS will present suggestions for increased fees along with goals/measures to minimize impact on families that already pay fees. The plan is to speak with specific groups first, and to be transparent with a 3-year plan.

4.2 Policy Subcommittee

The Policy Subcommittee will meet on May 14 to continue discussing naming rights.

4.3 Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee

The Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee will meet on June 1 to discuss the proposed Digital Citizenship seminar for BHS students. Assistant Superintendent Darias shared news that Teaching Strategies Gold to upload info about students' social-emotional development – as described by concerned Kindergarten teachers in the BPS. The State has indicated that it will review requests for waivers so that teachers may continue to use ongoing assessment, but not with TSG.

4.4 Capital Budget Committee

The Capital Budget Committee has met twice 386,000 in one-time funds. Projects include BHS fire alarm system, security upgrades, basketball floor, Butler School buildlig envelope, boilers in 2 elem schools, and curbing on the sidewalks.

4.5 Warrant Committee

The Warrant Committee will meet on May 13 and will finalize the FY16 budget recommendations.

4.6 Wellington Building Committee

The Wellington Building Committee has not met.

4.7 Financial Task Force

The Financial Task Force met on May 11 and will determine the optimal meeting schedule to ensure initiatives continue momentum.

5. **OTHER BUSINESS**

5.1 Consent Agenda - none

5.2 Personnel Items - none

5.3 Business Items – None

5.4 Approval of Minutes

under 3.2 typo – sentence at end of page “increased” not “increase”
under 1.5, Chair’s report, plans for the May 12 Budget Presentation

April 28, 2015

On a motion offered by Ms. Graham and seconded by Ms. Burgess-Cox, it was

VOTED unanimously to approve the minutes of April 28, 2015 as amended.

7. **FUTURE BUSINESS**

Upcoming Meetings:

May 26, 2015

Finance Subcommittee Meeting
SAB Conference Room – 7:30 a.m.

May 26, 2015

School Committee Meeting

Service Awards – CMS Auditorium – 6:30 p.m.
Business Meeting – CMS Large Community Room – 7:00 p.m.

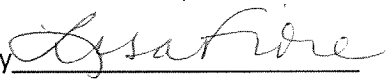
8. **ENCLOSURES**

None

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:00 p.m. on a motion offered by Mr. Caputo and seconded by Ms. Shuster, it was

VOTED unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by 
Dr. Lisa Fiore, Secretary