

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
CHENERY MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ROOM
SEPTEMBER 12, 2017**

Present: Dr. Lisa Fiore, Chair
 Ms. Susan Burgess-Cox, Secretary
 Mr. Murat Bicer
 Ms. Kate Bowen
 Mr. Thomas Caputo
 Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent
 Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction
 Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Finance, Business and Operations

Absent: Ms. Andrea Prestwich

1. **OPENING BUSINESS**

1.1 Call to order

Dr. Fiore called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

Dr. Fiore led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Citizens' Concerns

There were no citizens' concerns.

1.4 Adjustments to the Agenda

1.5 Chair's Report

Dr. Fiore welcomed everyone back after the summer break. She thanked the School Committee and school administrators for all the work that was done over the summer to prepare for the new school year.

1.6 Student Representative Report

There was no student representative in attendance.

1.7 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Phelan updated the School Committee on the start of school. The first day back for staff was September 5th and a great success. Staff and school administrators were joined by members of the Town administration for a breakfast and convocation at Belmont High School. Superintendent Phelan thanked the facilities staff for their work over the summer preparing the schools for the new year.

Superintendent Phelan noted religious holidays listed on the back of the 2017-2018 school calendar explaining the reason to list all religious holidays is to show respect for all religions. Belmont Public Schools no longer closes school on religious holidays. However, students are encouraged to celebrate such holidays with family and teachers are expected to allow the work to be made up if a student is not in school due to a holiday.

Fall sports are in full swing and Superintendent Phelan noted the excitement in seeing athletes practicing toward the end of the summer. He expressed best wishes to all student athletes for a successful year.

Superintendent Phelan thanked the Capital Budget Committee for funding the purchase of chrome books which will help meet state testing requirements. He also thanked the Foundation for Belmont Education (FBE) for their continuing support of the Belmont Public Schools.

Superintendent Phelan noted he will be meeting with all Aftercare Program Directors in the near future to discuss enrollment issues and to try to problem solve any issues they may be having.

Superintendent Phelan updated the School Committee on upcoming events around the schools and town including the Belmont Boosters Golf Tournament on September 25th, the Fifth Annual Dan Scharfman Memorial Run on Sunday, October 1st, and the Foundation for Belmont Education's (FBE) annual spelling bee on November 4th.

2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

3. MAJOR BUSINESS

3.1 Acceptance of Donations

➤ Donation from BHS Class of 1949 – Exhibit A-1

Jane Marsh, member of the Class of 1949 Reunion Committee called over the summer to offer the Belmont Public Schools a donation from funds left in their account for use at the district's discretion. It was determined that the money could be used for athletic equipment. The total amount donated was \$1000.

➤ Donation to Community Education from Belmont Savings Bank – Exhibit A-2

Belmont Savings Bank provided a \$2500 donation the Belmont Community Education Program for the printing of the Fall 2017 brochure.

➤ Donation from BHS PTO – Exhibit A-3

In June 2017, the Belmont High School PTO Wish List donated \$20,868 to Belmont High School. Funds were deposited into the HS Donation Revolving Account to supplement the cost of educational supplies for BHS.

➤ Donation to Butler Elementary School from IBM – Exhibit A-4

International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) offers a grant to schools to help support student acquisition of keyboarding. The \$1000 grant was awarded to Butler Elementary School in recognition of the volunteer service of Karen Lilla (pronounced Leela) who is a former Butler parent.

➤ Donation from Belmont Food Collaborative – Exhibit A-5

The Belmont Food Collaborative provided gift cards to distribute to Belmont Public School families in need. Dustin O'Brien assists in the selection of families and cards are delivered with help from the principals, guidance counselors and/or nurses. The gift certificates can be used at the Belmont Farmers Market.

Superintendent Phelan explained that the School Committee is required to formally accept the donations listed above which were received over the summer.

On a motion offered by Murat Bicer and seconded by Kate Bowen, it was

VOTED unanimously to accept the donations shown as Exhibit A-1, Exhibit A-2, Exhibit A-3, Exhibit A-4, and Exhibit A-5

3.2 Opening of School Update

➤ Enrollment – Exhibit B

Superintendent Phelan shared the most recent enrollment numbers with the School Committee explaining that the official enrollment figures will be reported to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and available as of October 1st. The current total enrollment is 4540. Superintendent Phelan projects that official figures reported on or before October 1, 2017 will show more than 135 new students to the district. The administration is balancing class sizes by reserving the right to send new students to elementary schools outside their district.

Superintendent Phelan thanked Christine Trischitta and Kristine Murphy for their work over the summer with registration and enrollment.

➤ Transportation

Anthony DiCologero provided an update on busing for the first week of school. The district currently has a total of 8 buses this year. This is the second year in a row that the district has added an additional bus due to expanding enrollment. The district has 313 students registered to ride the bus. Adjustments are being made to the routes and times for the buses serving the Chenery Middle School. It is customary to wait a week or so after school begins to make changes as traffic patterns level off. The Business Office expects to have data related to arrival times by the end of the week.

Mr. DiCologero noted school districts are required to provide buses for students in grades K-6 who live 2 or more miles from school. Students in grades K – 2 must be met at the bus stop by a parent or other adult. If there is no adult present when the bus arrives at the stop, the protocol is to keep the

child on the bus and return him/her to the school where the parent will be called to pick up their child. If for some reason there is no one at the school, the child will be taken to the Belmont Police Station.

Superintendent Phelan thanked Mr. DiCologero, Gioia Rizzo and Donna Pini for all their work setting up the bus routes over the summer.

➤ Hiring – Exhibit C

Superintendent Phelan announced that 39 new educators were hired over the summer and there are currently no openings. The Belmont Public Schools also welcomed three new administrators this year.

3.3 Strategic Plan – Exhibit D

Assistant Superintendent Darias updated the School Committee on the changes to the Strategic Plan for the 2017-18 school year. She announced the continuation of work that began last year with Rachel Poliner regarding social and emotional learning as well as new work to address student achievement gaps.

➤ Achievement Gap – Exhibit E

Assistant Superintendent Darias discussed the achievement gap between African-American/Black students and white students. A survey given last year showed responses from black students as below that of their peers regarding feeling cared for and understood in the Belmont Public Schools. The information gained from the survey will help staff to think about how they can help students in class especially those who feel they don't have a place at the table.

3.4 Belmont High School Building Committee Update

Superintendent Phelan updated the School Committee on the ongoing work of the Belmont High School Building Committee (BHS-BC). The BHS-BC is exploring different grade configurations for the new high school – 7-12, 8-12, and 9-12. Visioning meetings will be held on September 19th and 20th as well as several community meetings during the school year. Superintendent Phelan stressed the importance of keeping everyone informed going forward. Once a grade configuration is determined, the architects will create a schematic design to present to the town.

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

4.1 Finance Subcommittee

The Finance Subcommittee met earlier in the day to discuss enrollment updates, space challenges, and a proposal for modular units to present to Town Meeting this fall. They also discussed topics to address going forward such as fees, long-term financial plans, and full-day kindergarten. Mr. DiCologero noted that he is still working on the FY17 closeout.

4.2 Policy and Procedure Subcommittee

There was no report from the Policy and Procedure Subcommittee.

4.3 Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

There was no report from the Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee.

4.4 Capital Budget Committee

There was no report from the Capital Budget Committee.

4.5 Warrant Committee

The Warrant Committee will meet next Wednesday.

4.6 Belmont High School Building Committee

There was no additional report from the Belmont High School Building Committee other than the presentation under 3.4.

4.7 Community Path Committee

The BHS-BC invited the Community Path Committee to a meeting to discuss the Belmont High School Building Project and they will come to a future meeting with the BHS-BC design architect to offer input on what they would like to see for their project as it relates to the high school project.

4.8 Library Long Range Planning Committee

There was no report from the Library Long Range Planning Committee.

5. **OTHER BUSINESS**

5.1 Consent Agenda

5.2 Personnel Items - none

5.3 Business Items – None

5.4 Approval of Minutes

- June 20, 2017

On a motion offered by Tom Caputo and seconded by Kate Bowen, it was

VOTED 4-0-1 to approve the minutes of June 20, 2017, as amended.

- July 6, 2017

On a motion offered by Kate Bowen and seconded by Tom Caputo, it was

VOTED 4-0-1 to approve the minutes of July 6, as amended.

- August 30, 2017

On a motion offered by Murat Bicer and seconded by Kate Bowen, it was

VOTED unanimously to approve the minutes of August 30, 2017, as amended.

6. **FUTURE BUSINESS**

Upcoming Meetings:

September 26, 2017
Finance Subcommittee Meeting
SAB Conference Room – 7:30 a.m.

September 26, 2017
School Committee Meeting
CMS Large Community Room – 7:00 p.m.

7. **ENCLOSURES**

2017-2018 School Calendar

8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 8:22 p.m. a roll call vote was taken for the School Committee to enter Executive Session without the intention of returning to Open Session for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with union personnel given that a discussion in Open Session may have a detrimental impact on the School Committee's bargaining position.

Respectfully submitted by 
Susan Burgess-Cox, Secretary