

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
CHENERY COMMUNITY ROOM
NOVEMBER 12, 2019**

Present: Ms. Susan Burgess-Cox, Chair
Ms. Andrea Prestwich, Secretary
Ms. Kate Bowen
Ms. Amy Checkoway
Mr. Michael Crowley
Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Finance, Business and Operations

Absent: Ms. Tara Donner

1. OPENING BUSINESS

1.1 Call to order

Susan Burgess-Cox called the meeting to order at 6:59 p.m.

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

Susan Burgess-Cox led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Citizen's Concerns

The School Committee welcomed a significant number of community members in attendance.

The following community members stated concerns regarding the decision not to provide tennis courts at the new Belmont High School campus.

- Kathryn Stievater
- Donna Ruvalo
- Brett Stievater
- Ann Paulsen
- Mary Ann Scali

Community members stated their concerns about the decision to not include tennis courts on the Belmont High School campus. They collected signatures from other concerned citizens. Tennis has been an important sport in Belmont for many years for both young and old. The Boys and Girls Tennis Teams have had some very successful seasons. The suggestion of teams using other tennis courts in town for practice and games will cause the courts to be unavailable for community members. Concerned citizens would like to set a date where they can have a full discussion at the School Committee meeting. Superintendent Phelan will let them know when a date is available.

1.4 Adjustments to the Agenda

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

1.5 Chair's Report

Susan Burgess-Cox announced upcoming events including several SEPAC information sessions and coffees and Chenery concerts.

1.6 Student Representative Report

There was no report from the Student Representatives.

1.7 Superintendent's Report

In the interest of time, Superintendent Phelan postponed his report.

2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

3. MAJOR BUSINESS

3.1 YRBS Results – Exhibit A

Lisa Gibalerio and Anne Wang provided some highlights from the 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). The survey was administered as a collaborative effort with Middlesex League Schools (Arlington, Belmont, Burlington, Melrose, Reading, Stoneham, Wakefield, Watertown, Wilmington, Winchester, Woburn). There were approximately 670 middle school and 1070 high school students who took part in the survey. Data was collected on vapor use, alcohol use and marijuana use in the last 30 days among middle school and high school students. Comparisons were then made between Belmont and Middlesex League Schools.

Questions were asked about student perception of risk and harm from E-cigarettes, binge drinking, regular alcohol use and marijuana use. The survey also looked at mental health issues such as depression in high school students, self-harm and thoughts of suicide. Questions regarding bullying and hours of sleep each night were also asked. It was noted that numbers for risky behaviors such as vaping and alcohol use tend to go up slightly from middle school to high school. Belmont is lower than Middlesex League for marijuana use. The detailed results of the YRBS will be posted on the Belmont Public Schools website.

Superintendent Phelan explained the YRBS was created in part with a grant from Lahey Clinic. He thanked Lisa Gibalerio and Anne Wang for their work on this project.

3.2 Chenery Middle School Schedule

Chenery Principal Michael McAllister provided an overview of the new Community Block at Chenery. The idea behind Community Block is an effort to make a big school seem small and to allow students to have access to adults outside an academic setting. Community Block takes place on Wednesdays. Each teacher has 8-12 students and after a welcoming ritual which might include sharing an interesting event that recently took place in a student's life, the group does something fun that is outside academics. Community Block allows teachers to enjoy and learn more about their students. It

also allows every child to be known by at least one teacher. Community Block enables students to feel valued, known and it helps to decrease stress.

3.3 Town Meeting Discussion

Susan Burgess-Cox led a discussion on three Town Meeting articles that would be voted on at the November 13th Town Meeting.

Stabilization Fund Article: The School Committee discussed the request from the Town to put 2.5 million dollars into the stabilization fund. It is being recommended by the Town Treasurer who believes it is necessary for bond rating agencies to know the funds are there when it comes time for a new round of construction for the high school project in February. Susan Burgess-Cox asked the Committee if they would like to take a position on it. The Committee decided it was not necessary to vote on the specific number but agreed they support putting money into the stabilization fund.

Minuteman Article: The School Committee had voted to recommend favorable action to rescinding the withdrawal of Minuteman. Susan Burgess-Cox explained the Committee put out a statement earlier in the day to Town Meeting members explaining why they voted favorable action.

On a motion offered by Mike Crowley and seconded by Kate Bowen, it was, **VOTED** unanimously to approve favorable action to rescind vote to withdraw from Minuteman.

3.4 Review of Rink RFP/Lease in preparation for voting on release – Exhibit B

Superintendent Phelan explained the revised timeline for the rink RFP has been submitted by Town Planner Jeffrey Wheeler. The reason for the revision is to allow some flexibility if the decision is made to include tennis courts somewhere to the west of Harris Field. If the decision is made to include tennis courts, there will be the need to eliminate a baseball field or softball field which could cause a ripple effect between all the sports including youth sports. Superintendent Phelan suggested Jeffrey Wheeler be invited to attend a future School Committee meeting in order to answer any specific questions related to the RFP.

4. SUBCOMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES (as needed)

4.1 Finance Subcommittee

The Finance Subcommittee has been discussing SPED balances, circuit breaker and where they could afford to spend down some of those to help the town get through FY21.

4.2 Policy and Procedure Subcommittee

There was no report from the Policy and Procedure Subcommittee.

4.3 Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

The Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee met recently to discuss issues around the math placement process that has become unsustainable.

4.4 Capital Budget Committee

The Capital Budget Committee met two weeks ago to discuss Town Meeting Articles and will meet Thursday before Town Meeting. They will also meet with the Select Board to discuss the Long Range Capital Budget Committee.

4.5 Warrant Committee

The Warrant Committee spent the last two meetings discussing articles for Town Meeting. Two weeks ago they had a discussion on the Minuteman article and voted 5-8 in favor of the article which means 8 members of the Warrant Committee voted against it.

4.6 Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee

The Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee recently reviewed 90 percent of the construction documents. They also reviewed the types of budget updates they would be receiving on a periodic basis. The High School project is on budget.

4.7 Community Path

Members of the Community Path Committee will be taking a site walk with the designers soon. They will also be planning stakeholder meetings in the next month or so. Kate Bowen will be meeting with High School Principal Isaac Taylor to discuss ways to connect with students on ideas for the path.

4.8 Financial Task Force II

There was no report from the Financial Task Force II

4.9 High School Traffic Working Group

At their last meeting, the High School Traffic Working Group discussed public hearing proposals related to School Street, Orchard Street and Grove Street areas. They will review what is left on their list and what to do for the last intersections around town to help walkers and bikers get safely to the high school campus.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 Consent Agenda

Vote on disposal of surplus technology items – Exhibit C

On a motion offered by Andrea Prestwich and seconded by Michael Crowley, it was **VOTED** unanimously to approve the disposal of surplus technology items – Exhibit C

Vote on acceptance of \$10,000 donation from B.A.R. for METCO Support Fund – Exhibit D

On a motion offered by Michael Crowley and seconded by Amy Checkoway, it was **VOTED** unanimously to accept the \$10,000 donation from B.A.R.

5.2 Personnel Items - None

5.3 Business Items - None

5.4 Approval of Minutes

September 24, 2019

On a motion offered by Michael Crowley and seconded by Kate Bowen, it was **VOTED** unanimously to approve the minutes of September 24, 2019.

October 15, 2019

On a motion offered by Michael Crowley and seconded by Amy Checkoway, it was **VOTED** 5-0-1 to approve the minutes of October 15, 2019.

October 29, 2019

On a motion offered by Michael Crowley and seconded by Kate Bowen, it was **VOTED** 5-0-1 to approve the minutes of October 29, 2019.

6. FUTURE BUSINESS

November 12, 2019

Finance Subcommittee Meeting
SAB Conference Room – 8:00 a.m.

November 13, 2019

Town Meeting Discussion
CMS Room 101 – 6:00 p.m.

November 13, 2019

Town Meeting
CMS Auditorium – 7:00 p.m.

November 14, 2019

Town Meeting Discussion
BHS Room 103 – 6:00 p.m.

November 14, 2019

Town Meeting
BHS Auditorium – 7:00 p.m.

November 18, 2019

School Committee Executive Session
SAB Conference Room – 6:00 p.m.

November 18, 2019

School Committee/Select Board/Warrant Committee Joint Meeting
BOS Meeting Room – Town Hall – 7:00 p.m.

November 26, 2019

School Committee Meeting
CMS Community Room – 8:00 p.m

7. ENCLOSURES

Strategic Plan
School Committee Goals
November 1, 2019 Enrollment
Upcoming School Committee Meetings

8. ADJOURN

At 9:30 p.m. on a motion offered by Michael Crowley and seconded by Andrea Prestwich, it was **VOTED** unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted by Andrea Prestwich
Andrea Prestwich, Secretary