

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES  
CHENERY COMMUNITY ROOM  
JANUARY 7, 2020**

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

**1. OPENING BUSINESS**

1.1 Call to order

Susan Burgess-Cox called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

Susan Burgess-Cox led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Citizen's Concerns

There were no citizen's concerns.

1.4 Adjustments to the Agenda

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

1.5 Chair's Report

School Committee Chair Susan Burgess-Cox noted the following upcoming events:

January 13 – Grade 5 Chorus Concert  
January 15 – Grade 5 Band Concert  
January 16 – Grade 5 Orchestra Concert  
January 20 – MLK Breakfast

1.6 Student Representative Report

There was no student representative in attendance.

### 1.7 Superintendent's Report

There was no report from the Superintendent.

## 2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

## 3. MAJOR BUSINESS

### 3.1 Vote on 2020/21 School Calendar – Exhibit A

The School Committee reviewed the 2020/21 school calendar at their previous meeting. School Committee members asked for clarification on if the vote is for just the calendar or the religious holidays listed on the back. Superintendent Phelan explained the vote is on the calendar only. The Superintendent's Office does receive feedback on the list of holidays which is appreciated. Any corrections that need to be made can be made since the calendar is printed over the summer. He also noted the calendar represents the School Committee policy regarding the start date prior to Labor Day because Labor Day falls on September 7<sup>th</sup> which is after September 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Another question was asked regarding the homework policy on religious holidays. Superintendent Phelan explained teachers and students communicate in advance to arrange for students to complete assignments before or after the holiday.

On a motion offered by Tara Donner and seconded by Michael Crowley, it was **VOTED** unanimously to approve the 2020/2021 Belmont Public Schools calendar.

### 3.2 Tennis Update – Exhibit B

Superintendent Phelan presented an update on the topic of removing tennis courts from the high school campus. There has been a lot of input and feedback from parents, students, and community members regarding this topic. The Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee addressed the challenge of creating a layout to include tennis courts on the limited space available at the high school. It was decided after several meetings and discussions that it was not feasible to include the tennis courts on the site. Superintendent Phelan met with member of the tennis community and agreed to study to topic further. He also met with members of other sports communities to learn what impact it would have on those particular sports if tennis courts were placed at the high school campus. The determination was made to continue with the original site design that did not include tennis courts. Superintendent Phelan and Assistant Town Administrator Jon Marshall both agreed to continue to find a solution by applying for CPA funding to place tennis courts at the Winn Brook School. With the new underpass that is planned, the walk to the courts would be minimal for high school students.

Community members in attendance thanked Superintendent Phelan for his work in trying to solve the issue of the elimination of tennis courts from the high school campus. They also expressed their disappointment with the decision. School Committee members thanked Superintendent Phelan and Assistant Town Administrator Jon Marshall for their efforts in trying to find a solution and agreed the work to find space for additional tennis courts at another location should continue.

### 3.3 School Committee/Select Board Vote on Rink RFP – Exhibits D1, C2, C3

Town Planner Jeffrey Wheeler along with Select Board members Tom Caputo, Adam Dash and Roy Epstein joined the School Committee at the table to discuss the latest revision of the Rink RFP. They explained the document was revised based on comments and suggestions they had received from community members. There was discussion on what changes were made and why. Members of the Select Board discussed some additional minor changes with the School Committee.

The School Committee and Select Board listened to a few questions from audience members.

On a motion offered by Tara Donner and seconded by Andrea Prestwich, it was **VOTED** unanimously to approve the RFP and lease agreement for the rink.

#### 3.4 2020/21 BHS Program of Studies – Exhibit D

Belmont High School Assistant Principal Dan O'Brien introduced administrators and teachers who would provide the School Committee with an overview of some new classes being added to the 2020/2021 Belmont High School Program of Studies.

Director of Science Liz Baker explained the new *AP Computer Science Principles* course for grades 10-12. This course will help students develop computational thinking skills and effective communication and collaboration skills by working individually and collaboratively to solve problems. They will then be able to discuss and write about how the solutions to these problems will impact the community, society and the world.

Math Educator Lisa Carlivati provided an overview of *The Beauty of Math* for grade 12 students. The course will explore the math behind art and music. Topics will include Greek ratios, Baroque music, fractals and origami. The hope is to engage students who don't necessarily consider themselves "math people." Another new course is *Game Theory* for grades 11-12. Students will learn the formal science of decision-making, supported by mathematical analysis. They will study games of competition and cooperation through matrices and game trees.

Director of Fine and Performing Arts Arto Asadoorian provided an overview of the new course titled *Beginner Instrumental Skills* for grades 9-12. This course will provide students an opportunity to learn a musical instrument and a potential gateway into the BHS Band and Orchestra Programs.

*Latin Percussion Ensemble* is a course for beginners and experienced musicians in grades 9-12. The course will focus on the music of Latin America and students will learn to play a variety of percussion instruments and music from Latin cultures.

*Media Arts 3* is a continuation of Digital Art and Animation course for grades 11-12

*American Pop Culture* is a collaborative course taught by one Social Studies teacher and one VPA teacher. The course will focus on American Popular Culture from the early 10<sup>th</sup> century to current day. The course is designed for grades 10-12.

Belmont High School Principal Isaac Taylor noted some courses that will no longer be offered in the 2020/2021 BHS Program of Studies as well as name changes to current courses.

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

4.1 Finance Subcommittee

There was no report from the Finance Subcommittee.

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 will meet on January 28<sup>th</sup> for a discussion on homework.

4.4 Capital Budget Committee

The Capital Budget Committee will meet on Thursday.

4.5 Warrant Committee

The Warrant Committee will meet on January 15<sup>th</sup> and will likely discuss the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter finances for the school department.

4.6 Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee

The Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee met earlier in the day and reviewed the progress for the building project. They reviewed proprietary items and will review bids on February 7<sup>th</sup>. The steel will be delivered to the site next week.

4.7 Community Path Committee

The Community Path Committee will meet on January 9<sup>th</sup> in the evening and January 13<sup>th</sup> in the morning.

4.8 Financial Task Force II

The Financial Task Force II Committee will meet on January 9<sup>th</sup> in the morning.

4.9 High School Traffic Working Group

The High School Traffic Working Group will be forwarding topics to the new Transportation Advisory Committee.

**5. OTHER BUSINESS**

5.1 Consent Agenda

5.2 Personnel Items - None

5.3 Business Items – None

5.4 Approval of Minutes

December 10, 2019

On a motion offered by Tara Donner and seconded by Michael Crowley, it was **VOTED** unanimously to approve the minutes of December 10, 2019 as amended.

**6. FUTURE BUSINESS**

**7. ENCLOSURES**

Strategic Plan

School Committee Goals

January 1, 2020 Enrollment

Thank You Letter - Donation

**8. ADJOURN**

At 9:23 p.m. on a motion offered by Tara Donner and seconded by Andrea Prestwich, it was **VOTED** unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted by Andrea H. Prestwich  
Andrea Prestwich, Secretary