

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
CHENERY MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ROOM
JANUARY 19, 2016**

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

1. OPENING BUSINESS

1.1 Call to order

Ms. Slap called the meeting to order at 7:00 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 the Facilities Update would be removed from the agenda and addressed at a future meeting.

1.5 Chair's Report

Ms. Slap asked the School Committee to take note of the Warrant Article that would be presented at the February 8th Special Town meeting. This article will address the possible formation of a building committee if the Massachusetts School Building Authority votes in favor of a new high school for Belmont.

Ms. Slap announced several upcoming events in town:

- January 20th – Shop at Wilson Farms Day and 20% of the purchase price will be donated to Belmont Public Schools.

- Chenery Winds ensemble has been invited to perform at the Massachusetts All-State Conference.
- The Chenery Middle School Talent Show will take place on January 28th and proceeds will go towards the 8th Grade Washington, D.C. trip.
- The Foundation for Belmont Education (FBE) Spring Auction will take place on March 19th.

1.6 Student Representative Report

There was no student representative in attendance.

1.7 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Phelan thanked everyone involved in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast. He stated the event was well attended and a great success.

Superintendent Phelan spoke about the recent bomb threats that have been made to area school districts. He assured families that the School Administrators and Police Department have been working closely together on safety topics in general. He also stated he had reached out to Principals and asked them to review procedures with the administrative assistants in the event Belmont were to receive a threat.

2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

3. MAJOR BUSINESS

3.1 Presentation of BHS Program of Studies – Exhibit A

Mr. Dan Richards, Principal of Belmont High School provided an overview of the Belmont High School Program of Studies for 2016-2017. He explained that each course reflects Belmont High School's Core Values, Beliefs, and College and Career Readiness Student Skills – collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and communication. Mr. Richards then invited Curriculum Directors to provide updates on the specific modifications to the Program of Studies.

Ms. Deborah McDevitt, Director of Social Studies, described the Global Certificate Program Capstone, which is a collaborative, project-based class that deepens students' understanding of global issues while developing strong 21st century skills. She also noted that Economics Honors will now serve as a precursor to AP Economics, providing more support for students who wish to take an AP level class.

Ms. Lindsey Rinder, Director of English, provided an overview of the new course titled Newcomer American History. The course is geared towards English Language Learners (ELL) who may not be familiar with the American form of government. The course covers the Colonial period up through the Civil Rights Movement, and will help students understand events that have shaped American society today. She also explained the new course titled Making Public Policy CP/H, which encourages students to research local issues, hold public hearings, and draft a policy recommendation.

for local government. The League of Women Voters and other town officials have agreed to partner with the students in this class.

Mr. Jim Davis, Director of Athletics, provided an overview of some new courses within the Physical Education program. He explained that Mindful Movement is a course that includes yoga, pilates, and dance. The course is designed to enhance students' mental and physical health. Mr. Davis also discussed the Outdoor Pursuits course, which offers adventure education, wilderness interaction, and outdoor sports activities. This course will help to enhance students' interpersonal skills through social-emotional learning, among other elements.

Ms. Patty Soliozy provided an overview of the Algebra 2-CP level 2-year plan. She explained that the course will offer the same curriculum as the Algebra 2-H2 level but will be taught at a slower pace. She also described additional math course level changes. The following CP level courses will now become Honors level:

- Algebra 2
- PreCalculus
- Surveys, Statistics and Data Analysis
- Matrices and Probability

The changes will allow for a faster-paced curriculum, increased demand for critical thinking, and problem solving.

3.3 School Calendar Update

Superintendent Phelan explained the School Committee voted last year to have a pilot school calendar for 2015-2016. The calendar included the traditional start date of the first Wednesday in September, early release on Good Friday, as well as no school on Yom Kippur. Superintendent Phelan announced the creation of a parent survey, which has been drafted by teachers, administrators, and community members. The survey will offer options for the 2016-2017 calendar, such as whether community members prefer that school begins before or after Labor Day and which holidays are priorities. The survey will be sent out within a couple of weeks.

3.4 Space Challenges Update

Superintendent Phelan updated the School Committee on the efforts to deal with numerous space challenges facing the Belmont Public Schools. He provided information on the modulars that the district is looking into leasing or purchasing for the Chenery Middle School, as well as the modulars that are currently in use behind Belmont High School. He thanked the members of the Space Task Force for their work.

4. SUBCOMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES (as needed)

4.1 Finance Subcommittee

The Finance Subcommittee met on 1/19/16 and discussed the FY17 budget. They also reviewed the list of capital budget requests and discussed revolving accounts.

4.2 Policy and Procedure Subcommittee

Ms. Graham suggested the Policy and Procedure Subcommittee meet with Superintendent Phelan to bring him up to speed on the work that has been done to date.

4.3 Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

The Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee will meet in March to discuss the Middle School course proposals.

4.4 Capital Budget Committee

The Capital Budget Committee met on January 6 and reviewed the status of all capital projects, including the public library and high school.

4.5 Warrant Committee

The Warrant Committee met last week and discussed the upcoming special Town Meeting.

4.6 Wellington Building Committee

There was no report from the Wellington Building Committee.

4.7 Financial Task Force

There was no report from the Financial Task Force.

4.8 Community Path Update

There was no report on the Community Path.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 Consent Agenda - none

6.2 Personnel Items - none

6.3 Business Items – None

6.4 Approval of Minutes

- o December 15, 2015
- o January 5, 2016

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

VOTED unanimously to approve the minutes of December 15, 2015 and January 5, 2016.

Ms. Slap reminded everyone that this would be Laurie Graham's last meeting as School Committee member. She expressed her appreciation to Ms. Graham for her many years of service to the town and schools.

7. **FUTURE BUSINESS**

Upcoming Meetings:

February 2, 2016
Finance Subcommittee Meeting
SAB Conference Room – 7:30 a.m.

February 2, 2016
School Committee Meeting
CMS Large Community Room

8. **ENCLOSURES**

- o Strategic Plan

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:26 p.m. on a motion offered by Ms. Burgess-Cox and seconded by Ms. Graham, it was

VOTED unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by



Dr. Lisa Fiore, Secretary