

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES  
CHENERY MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ROOM  
FEBRUARY 5, 2019**

Present: Ms. Susan Burgess-Cox, Chair  
Ms. Andrea Prestwich, Secretary  
Ms. Kate Bowen  
Ms. Tara Donner  
Dr. Lisa Fiore  
Ms. Jill Norton  
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction  
Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Finance, Business and Operations

Absent: Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent

**1. OPENING BUSINESS**

**1.1 Call to order**

Susan Burgess-Cox called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**1.2 Pledge of Allegiance**

Susan Burgess-Cox led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**1.3 Citizens' Concerns**

There were no citizens concerns.

**1.4 Adjustments to the Agenda**

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

**1.5 Chair's Report**

Susan Burgess-Cox announced several upcoming concerts as well as the Patriots Trivia Night on February 8<sup>th</sup>. She also noted the Foundation for Belmont Education annual fundraising gala "The Roaring Twenties" will be hold on March 16<sup>th</sup>.

## 1.6 Student Representative Report

There was no report from the Student Representative.

## 1.7 Superintendent's Report

Assistant Superintendent Janice Darias announced the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Parent Lecture Series.

March 20, 2019 – *Dr. Adriana Umana-Taylor Supporting Healthy Ethnic-Racial Identity Development in All Youth: What Families Can Do and Why this is Critical for Student Success*

April 10, 2019 – Debby Irving – author of *Waking Up White*

May 1, 2019 – Kalise Wornum – *How to Talk to Kids about Race, Culture, and Racism*

## 2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

## 3. MAJOR BUSINESS

### 3.1 Class Size Working Group (BEA / Admin) Report Out – Exhibit A

Assistant Superintendent Janice Darias invited members of the Class Size Working Group to update the School Committee on the findings. She explained the group was created as a result of a side letter of agreement in the last Unit A contract. The group was charged with looking at the issue of class size; what is going well and what challenges we face. The following people served on this committee.

Tricia Clifford – Burbank School Principal

Janice Darias – Assistant Superintendent

Cliff Gallant – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher

Jon Hartunian – Chenery Middle School Assistant Principal

Brenda Johnston – 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher

Marc Lefebvre – BHS Physics and Tech Engineering Teacher

Theresa Milstein – Chenery Middle School Special Educator

Dan O'Brien – BHS Assistant Principal

The group met several times over the past few months. They began by looking at the 2017/19 enrollment and class size presentation to the School Committee on October 10, 2017. They also looked at the 2018/19 enrollment and the class size presentation to School Committee on December 4, 2018. In 2018/19 there were 82 classrooms in kindergarten through grade 4 which was an increase from 76 in 2015/16. Currently only 7% of elementary classrooms exceed the class size guidelines. The average class size has also decreased in the last few years at the middle school and high school.

A challenge facing the district is the overall caseload for educators. At the middle school there are over 120 students per team and it is especially high for encore teachers because of the many sections they teach. Another challenge is the increase in the complexity of student needs at all grade levels. Classroom teachers need more resources to support students. Having more social workers would also have positive impact since it would alleviate some of the responsibilities of the special educators, school psychologists and guidance counselors who currently tend to fill that role.

The Class Size Working Group also had recommendations to help deal with the middle school and high school challenges around scheduling. Some suggestions are reconfiguring the schedule to reduce class size and reduce the caseload for teachers. The hiring of an additional FTE would eliminate the need for a teacher to have to be shared by more than one building.

### 3.2 District Configuration Education Plan Presentation – Exhibit B

Assistant Superintendent Janice Darias provided an overview of the district configuration education plan for the new high school. She and Superintendent Phelan have been giving this presentation to the staff at each of the schools over the last couple of months.

January 2016 the application was accepted by MSBA for funding for a new high school. In January 2017 a building committee was formed, educational visioning sessions took place. During the summer of 2017 the building committee hired a Design Team and in the fall of 2017 the BHSBC and Design Team entered into the feasibility phase. During the winter of 2017 the School Committee voted the BHSBC voted for the grades 7-12 option for the new high school. In the summer of 2018 the schematic design was submitted to and approved by the MSBA and funding was approved for the project in November of 2018.

During the 2018/19 school year the design for the building was approved. Groundbreaking will take place during the summer of 2019 on phase one of the project which is the 9-12 portion of the building. During the summer of 2021 students in grades 9-12 will move in to the new school and phase two of the project will begin. Phase two is the construction of the 7-8 portion of the building. During the summer of 2024 grade 4 students will move into the 4-6 upper elementary at the middle school pending configurations discussions.

On Opening Day of the 2018/19 school year feedback was requested from educators and staff regarding the building project. Over fifty responses were received which were analyzed by the Leadership Council. Using the feedback information a conceptual map along with a timeline was created. District Configuration Education Plan Steering Committees are planned to look at the following topics:

- Configuration: K-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-12
- Teaching and Learning; Professional Development
- Facilities, Operations, Logistics
- Start Times
- Technology
- Schedule
- Staffing
- Culture

### 3.3 Rink Proposal Update

Susan Burgess-Cox stated the School Committee had not had any discussion on the rink proposal since the community forum on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. She noted based on information from the forum and subsequent messages from the community it will likely take more meetings before a location for the rink is chosen.

The School Committee discussed issues related to the high school site and the incinerator site. The Board of Selectmen is looking into the correct type of cap to be placed on the incinerator site. They may also choose to use the incinerator site for a different purpose. There was discussion around concerns that community members have with the high school site and a suggestion was made that some of the issues could be addressed in the RFP. The incinerator site could be very expensive depending on the work it would take to prepare the site for a building. The School Committee agreed it would be helpful to have more information from the Selectmen as well as the Belmont High School Building Committee who will be presenting to the School Committee at an upcoming School Committee meeting.

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

### 4.1 Finance Subcommittee

The Finance Subcommittee met this morning to discuss finances going into the next fiscal year.

### 4.2 Policy Subcommittee

The Policy Subcommittee will set a date to review the start times survey results.

### 4.3 Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee

There was no report from the Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee.

### 4.4 Capital Budget Committee

The Capital Budget Committee will meet on February 7<sup>th</sup>.

### 4.5 Warrant Committee

There was no report from the Warrant Committee

### 4.6 Belmont High School Building Committee

The Belmont High School Building Committee has been meeting every week. The Committee members are curious what the School Committee's thoughts are about names for both wings of the high school. The last couple of meetings involved conversations about planning for subcommittee participants roles going forward. There are concerns about the Planning Board's request to move the building a small number of feet and the impact of that.

4.7 Community Path Update

Leslie Lee – School Committee Liaison to the Community Path Committee will attend the March 12<sup>th</sup> School Committee meeting to update the Committee on the Community Path.

5. **OTHER BUSINESS**

5.1 Consent Agenda - None

5.2 Personnel Items – None

5.3 Business Items – None

5.4 Approval of minutes

- January 8, 2019
- January 22, 2019

On a motion offered by Jill Norton and seconded by Kate Bowen, it was

**VOTED** 4-0-1 to approve the minutes of January 8, 2019 as amended.

On a motion offered by Tara Donner and seconded by Jill Norton, it was

**VOTED** unanimously to approve the minutes of January 22, 2019 as amended.

6. **FUTURE BUSINESS**

**Upcoming Meetings:**

February 12, 2019  
Finance Subcommittee Meeting  
SAB Conference Room – 8:00 a.m.

February 26, 2019  
Finance Subcommittee Meeting  
SAB Conference Room – 8:00 a.m.

February 26, 2019  
School Committee Meeting  
CMS Community Room – 7:00 p.m.

7. **ENCLOSURES**

Strategic Plan  
February 1, 2019 Enrollment

8. **ADJOURN**

At 8:40 p.m. on a motion offered by Lisa Fiore and seconded by Jill Norton, it was

**VOTED** unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by Andrea H Prestwich  
Andrea Prestwich, Secretary