

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**CHENERY COMMUNITY ROOM**  
**MAY 21, 2019**

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 7:00 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

Susan Burgess-Cox reported on the ceremony the School Committee attended prior to the meeting. The event acknowledged students receiving community service awards for the number of community service hours they performed. The total number of hours totaled over 4000. Chair Burgess-Cox congratulated the students and Community Service Director Alice Melnikoff for the hard work and dedication.

The following are upcoming events in Belmont:

- Memorial Day Exercises – May 17 at Belmont High School, Chenery and Winn Brook
- BHS Groundbreaking Ceremony – May 28 at 10:45 a.m. – BHS Auditorium
- Ongoing Art Show at the Homer Building with a reception on May 29 at 6:00 p.m.
- Concert – May 29 at 7:00 p.m. – Chenery Middle School for grades 4 and 5
- SEPAC meeting on May 25 at 6:30 p.m. – Burbank to discuss Minuteman

## 1.6 Student Representative Report

There was no report from the Student Representative.

## 1.7 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Phelan thanked Alice Melnikoff for once again organizing the Community Service Award Ceremony. He noted how impressive it is to witness how students can learn outside the classroom when you give them the agency to explore something they are excited about.

High School Graduation takes place on June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 3:00 p.m. in the Belmont High School Field House. The Senior and Underclass awards are coming up, as well as several concerts in the district. Superintendent Phelan thanked the many volunteers who work hard all year to help make these events run smoothly.

## 2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

## 3. MAJOR BUSINESS

### 3.1 High School English Capstone Project – Exhibit A

English Director Lindsey Rinder and the following members of the English Department presented an overview of the English Senior Capstone Project Pilot: Anne Marie Fant, Kim Masterson, Anne Guastella, Nate Markley and Mark Reynolds. In past years students have been required to write a thesis about literature during their senior year. The thesis satisfies the additional sixth credit required for senior English. Over the last three years, the English Department has worked on creating a new English project that will satisfy the same requirements but allow students to have more choice in the subject matter and mode of expression. The English Department is now recommending students be given the choice of writing the traditional thesis or a capstone project. This new Capstone Project will provide students with the ability to be more creative while doing their project on a topic that interests them.

The Capstone Project idea came out of PLT work over a period of two years. It was presented to the Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee and School Committee in May of 2018. The Capstone Project was piloted during the 2018-19 school year with 80 students from 12CP and 12H.

The goal of the Capstone Project is to allow students to do their research in several different genres about a particular inquiry question. The students then create a portfolio of their work.

Belmont High School students Mousha Babroudi, Phoebe Derba and Flynn Leeb spoke about their Capstone Project explaining how they chose the topic they chose and expressed great enthusiasm for their work. On April 25<sup>th</sup>, students, faculty/staff and parents were invited to view the many projects the students would be presenting on May 15<sup>th</sup>. The feedback provided after was all very positive.

For the 2019-20 school year, all 12CP and 12H students will complete a capstone and 12SAP student will write a senior thesis.

### 3.2 Configurations Working Group Vote – Exhibit B

The School Committee received the report from the Configurations working Group at their meeting on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. The group determined the best grade configuration once the new high school is

built is K-3 and 4-6. Some discussion took place prior to the vote regarding the fact there were only two meetings of the Configurations Working Group. Superintendent Phelan explained there will be continuing discussion on grade configuration.

On a motion offered by Tara Donner and seconded by Amy Checkoway, it was **VOTED unanimously** to approve the K-3 / 4-6 grade configuration as recommended by the Configurations Working Group.

#### 3.4 Superintendent Evaluation – Exhibit C

Superintendent Phelan presented an overview of his 2018-19 Year End Summative Evaluation. He shared the following goals:

##### **Goal #1: Effective Strategic Planning**

*Topic: Strategic Long Term Planning on Space and Enrollment Challenges*

Goal – To lead the district through the strategic planning of our space and grade configuration work. This work will be conducted through the Belmont High School Building Committee (BHSBC), and the Educators Steering Committee with a successful 7-12 vote or through Alternative Planning Committee if debt exclusion does not pass.

##### **Goal #2: Student Learning Goal**

*Topic: Utilization of classroom Walk-throughs with Principals*

Goal – To impact the instruction in our classrooms as it relates to our strategic plan initiatives in SEL and CRT through the use of consistent school-based “walk-throughs” with Principals.

##### **Goal #3: Professional Practice Goal**

*Topic: Evaluation Calibration – observation and feedback*

Goal – During the 2018-19 school year, we will work with district leaders and educators to improve calibration and consistency with a focus on the observation and feedback component of the evaluation system in order to strengthen relationships between evaluators and educators and increase productive conversations that improve teaching and learning outcomes for students.

Superintendent Phelan explained the key actions and benchmarks for each goal and provided an evaluation performance narrative for each goal as well. The School Committee will be provided with a form for comments which will then be sent to Chair Susan Burgess-Cox. She will create a summary of the evaluation and comments for the next School Committee meeting.

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

##### 4.1 Finance Subcommittee

The Finance Subcommittee was scheduled to meet on May 28<sup>th</sup> but after a brief discussion, the School Committee decided to cancel the meeting since it was the same morning as the Belmont High School Groundbreaking Ceremony.

##### 4.2 Policy and Procedure Subcommittee

The Policy and Procedure Subcommittee met on May 16<sup>th</sup> and discussed recent capital projects. There was considerable discussion about the boilers and how long those systems have been in place. They discussed the extent to which purchasing this kind of equipment now might interfere with getting

more carbon neutral energy systems in the future. The discussion extended into the issue of whether or not we have a strategic plan for the eventual replacement of buildings.

There was discussion about the RFP for the rink. The School Committee will meeting jointly with the Board of Selectmen on May 30<sup>th</sup> to discuss going forward with the RFP process.

#### 4.3 Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

The Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee met on Friday. Director of Social Studies Deb McDevitt and two teachers spoke about curriculum changes as a result of the frameworks; particularly in the area of civics. They will share their work with the School Committee on June 4<sup>th</sup>.

#### 4.4 Capital Budget Committee

The Capital Budget Committee met on May 16<sup>th</sup> regarding the replacement of boilers at Burbank, Winn Brook and Chenery. In recent years, boilers were replaced using funding from a Green Communities grant. Town Meeting will be taking up the issue of replacing boilers and it was suggested the School Committee discuss whether or not they would choose for Town Meeting to vote favorable action on the replacement of the boilers without the grant money. There was discussion among School Committee members about the pros and cons of voting favorable action.

On a motion offered by Tara Donner and seconded by Michael Crowley, it was **VOTED 5-0-1** to approve a favorable action vote by Town Meeting regarding the purchase of new boilers for Burbank, Winn Brook and Chenery.

#### 4.5 Warrant Committee

The Warrant Committee met on May 8<sup>th</sup> to provide final edits to the Warrant Committee report. They also discussed Part B of the Town Meeting Articles. They will meet again tomorrow. One agenda item is a discussion of the school department's third quarter financials.

#### 4.6 Belmont High School Building Committee

The Belmont High School Building Committee met today from 8:30 – 1:30. The meeting included teachers along with members of the design team who looked at specific spaces for robotics, physics, and coding labs. Members of the High School Special Education team also met with the design team to discuss space related to Special Education classes. Members of the Middle School Special Education team will meet tomorrow and next week discussions on athletics, technology, music and art will take place. Information has been sent to parents regarding when high school office hours during the summer.

#### 4.7 Community Path

Leslie Lee, School Committee Representative to the Community Path Committee reported to Chair Burgess-Cox that the RFP is out. They are meeting each Monday to respond to questions from potential designers. There are currently 47 potential applicants who have requested information about the RFP. They committee is in the process of developing an evaluation matrix for the review of the proposals.

#### 4.8 Financial Task Force II

The Financial Task Force II will meet on May 30<sup>th</sup> to review recommendations from the Collins Center. They are working on planning around a capital inventory for the purpose of long term financial planning.

4.9 High School Traffic Working Group

The High School Traffic Working Group met last week to review preliminary recommendations from the BSC group on traffic calming mitigations and directional changes to some of the feeder streets around the Belmont High School campus. There were concerns that the recommendations exceed the funds available and may eliminate improvements at some of the other school sites. The group will meet again and review the recommendations for Underwood Street and Trowbridge Street.

**5. OTHER BUSINESS**

5.1 Consent Agenda  
None

5.2 Personnel Items  
None

5.3 Business Items  
None

5.4 Approval of Minutes

May 7, 2019

On a motion offered by Tara Donner and seconded by Amy Checkoway, it was **VOTED 5-0-1** to approve the minutes of May 7, 2019 as amended.

**6. FUTURE BUSINESS**

Upcoming Meetings:

May 30, 2019  
School Committee/Board of Selectmen Joint Forum on Rink  
Beech Street Center – 7:00 p.m.

June 4, 2019  
Retiree Reception  
CMS Cafeteria – 6:15 p.m.

June 4, 2019  
Retiree Recognition Ceremony  
CMS Community Room – 6:45 p.m.

June 4, 2019  
School Committee Meeting  
CMS Community Room – 7:00 p.m.

June 5, 2019  
Policy Subcommittee Meeting

BHS Room 103 – 6:00 p.m.

June 11, 2019

Finance Subcommittee Meeting

SAB Conference Room – 8:00 p.m.

June 18, 2019

School Committee Meeting

CMS Community Room – 7:00 p.m.

**7. ENCLOSURES**

Strategic Plan

School Committee Goals

Thank You Letter to Wilson Farm

Thank You Letter to Thornburg Corporate Communications

Important Dates for School Committee

**8. ADJOURN**

At 8:50 p.m. on a motion offered by Tara Donner and seconded by Amy Checkoway, it was **VOTED unanimously** to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted by Andrea Prestwich  
Andrea Prestwich, Secretary