

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
CHENERY MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ROOM
MARCH 25, 2014**

Present: Ms. Laurie Graham, Chair
Ms. Anne Lougée, Secretary
Mr. Kevin Cunningham
Ms. Lisa Fiore
Ms. Elyse Shuster
Ms. Laurie Slap
Dr. Thomas Kingston, Interim Superintendent
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction
Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Business, Finance and Operations

Also present: Max Davidowitz, Student Representative
Amy Zhang, Student Representative
Thomas Zembowicz, Student Representative

1. **OPENING BUSINESS**

1.1 Call to order

Ms. Graham called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Graham 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 Chairman's Report

Ms. Graham updated the Committee on recent and upcoming events throughout the town.

1.6 Superintendent's Report

Dr. Kingston acknowledged the first experience of the canine searches at Belmont High School. He explained that there was a modified shelter in place while the dogs walked through the building.

They checked lockers and the only “hit” was on an item that was deliberately planted for the search. Dr. Kingston explained that Belmont Public Schools will continue to work with the Belmont Police Department to carry out these events.

Dr. Kingston explained that he has received a letter from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) stating that Belmont High School will remain on warning until all concerns regarding facilities issues at Belmont High School are resolved.

Dr. Kingston announced that Dr. Jeff Shea, Belmont High School social studies teacher, has become a semi-finalist for Massachusetts Teacher of the Year. Dr. Kingston stated that the district is very honored and proud of Dr. Shea. Dr. Kingston also acknowledged the induction of Chenery Middle School music teacher John McClellan into the Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors Association (MICCA) Hall of Fame.

Ms. Darias provided the School Committee with an update on Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) testing. She stated that the district is preparing to administer the first test at the Butler School in grade 4. The testing will take place over 3 days and students will take the test on computers. She noted that the Technology Department has devoted a lot of effort to ensure that the computers are ready to go. Following the completion of the computer-based testing, a paper-based test of English Language Arts will be given to 8th grade students. In addition, grade 7 Math students and grade 9 English Language Arts students will be given a paper-based test in May. Ms. Darias reminded everyone that no reports will be received from these tests.

1.7 Director of Finance, Business and Operations’ Report

Mr. DiCologero stated that he continues to review the FY15 budget with the Finance Subcommittee and will be submitting the Statement of Interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in April. He also noted that his office is currently undergoing an audit of the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013. He explained that this audit is required by every district and the results are submitted to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

2. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business

3. **MAJOR BUSINESS**

3.1 Student Representatives Report

The student representatives – Max Davidowitz, Amy Zhang and Thomas Zembowicz – updated the School Committee on upcoming events at Belmont High School: Jazz Night on March 31st; Asian Cultural Night on April 5th; the Performing Arts Club one-act plays on May 2nd and 3rd; and a student benefit concert being organized by the Help the Homeless Club on May 22nd. Proceeds from the concert will go to local homeless shelters. The students also reported that there will be multiple events, including a hunger banquet, during Global Awareness week starting April 14th.

3.2 Plan of Action – 5th Grade Recommendation – Exhibit A

Principal Kristen St. George, Assistant Principal Chris Fleming and Director of Social Studies Deb McDevitt explained the plan to change the structure of grade 5 from an Elementary to a Middle School model. Currently, grade 5 instructors teach English Language Arts (ELA), math and either social studies or science to their homeroom students. The students switch teachers for either social studies or science four of the six days in the cycle. The new structure would have teachers in grade 5 teaching either ELA/social studies or math/science and the students would be part of a two-teacher team. Some of the benefits to the students of the new model would be fewer transitions and having two teachers who know them equally well. Becoming part of a larger team also helps the students to build community and will prepare them for the transition to the 4-person team in grade 6.

3.3 Solar Panels

Dr. Kingston explained that his recommendation on the solar panel project would have to wait until the next School Committee meeting because the BPS's Counsel reviewing the issue has been out of town.

3.4 MSBA Statement of Interest – Exhibit B

Mr. DiCologero explained the process for submitting the Statement of Interest (SOI) to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). He stated that the SOI is very similar in scope and content as the SOIs from prior years. The MSBA requires a School Committee vote on the SOI. If voted on favorably, it will be advanced to the Board of Selectmen for their vote and then submitted to MSBA. Dr. Kingston thanked Mr. DiCologero and Mr. Gerry Boyle, Facilities Director for all the work they have done to prepare this SOI.

On a motion offered by Ms. Slap and seconded by Ms. Shuster, it was

Resolved: having convened in an open meeting on March 25, 2014, prior to the closing date, the School Committee of the Town of Belmont, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated on or before April 11, 2014 for the Belmont High School located at 221 Concord Avenue, Belmont, MA which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority categories for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future.

Priority 3 – Prevention of the loss of accreditation – based on facilities-related conditions cited in the most recent report from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), dated February 22, 2013;

Priority 4 – Prevention of severe overcrowding expected to result from increased enrollments;

Priority 5 – Replacement, renovation or modernization of school facility systems, such as roofs, windows, boilers, heating and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility;

Priority 7 – Replacement of or addition to obsolete buildings in order to provide for a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirements;

And hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Town or the School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

VOTED unanimously to approve the Statement of Interest (SOI) to the MSBA for the renovation of Belmont High School – Exhibit B

3.5 2014-2015 Belmont Public School Calendar – Exhibit C

On a motion offered by Ms. Lougée and seconded by Ms. Fiore, it was

VOTED unanimously to approve the 2014-2015 Belmont Public Schools calendar

3.6 Vote on School Choice for 2014-2015 – Exhibit D

Ms. Graham explained that the School Committee is required to vote each year on whether or not to accept school choice. Belmont has not participated in this program for several years and Dr. Kingston recommended that we continue to opt out of School Choice.

On a motion offered by Ms. Shuster and seconded by Ms. Slap, it was

VOTED unanimously not to offer School Choice in Belmont for the 2014-2015 school year.

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

4.1 Student Representative

The Student Representative Report was provided at the beginning of the meeting.

4.2 Finance Subcommittee

The Finance Subcommittee met this morning for ongoing budget discussions. The group has concluded its review of the budget book and is preparing for the upcoming public budget presentations on April 7 and April 9th. The Subcommittee, along with Dr. Kingston and Mr. DiCologero, will be meeting with the members of the Education Subcommittee of the Warrant Committee on April 16th to review the FY15 budget.

4.3 Policy Subcommittee

There was no report.

4.4 Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee

The Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee met last week.

4.5 Capital Budget Committee

The Capital Budget Committee met recently to review capital budget requests from the Police Department, Fire Department and the Library. They will meet again on April 4th.

4.6 Warrant Committee

The Warrant Committee will meet tomorrow to discuss the Underwood Pool Project.

4.7 Wellington Building Committee

There was no report from the Wellington Building Committee.

5. **OTHER BUSINESS**

5.1 Consent Agenda

5.2 Personnel Items - none

5.3 Business Items – none

5.4 Approval of Minutes

March 11, 2014

On a motion offered by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Ms. Fiore, it was

VOTED unanimously to approve the minutes of March 11, 2014.

7. **FUTURE BUSINESS**

Upcoming Meetings:

March 31, 2014

Finance Subcommittee Meeting

SAB – 8:00 a.m.

April 7, 2014

Budget Discussion

Wellington Community Room – 7:30 p.m.

April 8, 2014

School Committee Meeting

CMS Large Community Room – 7:30 p.m.

April 9, 2014
Budget Discussion
Board of Selectmen's Meeting Room – Town Hall – 9:00 a.m.

8. **ENCLOSURES**

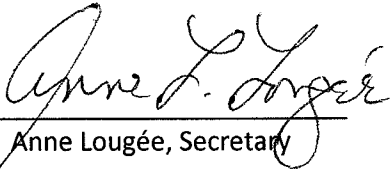
NEASC Letter dated March 14, 2014

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:08 p.m. on a motion offered by Ms. Lougée and seconded by Ms. Shuster, it was

VOTED unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by


Anne Lougée, Secretary