

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES  
CHENERY MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ROOM  
FEBRUARY 28, 2017**

Present:

Dr. Lisa Fiore, Chair  
Ms. Susan Burgess-Cox, Secretary  
Mr. Murat Bicer  
Mr. Thomas Caputo  
Ms. Andrea Prestwich  
Ms. Elyse Shuster  
Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent  
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction  
Mr. Anthony DiCologero

1. **OPENING BUSINESS**

1.1 Call to order

Dr. Fiore called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

Dr. Fiore led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Citizens' Concerns

Several parents and community members expressed concern about the elimination of instrumental music for grades 3 and 4. They spoke about the need to get children interested in music at a young age. They also stated their support for the Saturday Morning Music Program. Superintendent Phelan suggested getting a cohort of parents to meet with him and Director of Visual and Fine Arts, Arto Asadoorian to discuss the issue and then report back to School Committee.

Two Belmont High School students expressed their concerns about the interest in possibly having a later start to the school day. They presented a petition with over 100 signatures from other students who have the same concerns. If a later school start time is implemented, they feel it will leave less time for homework and afterschool activities such as sports. They also noted the science in favor of early school start times is not based on long term studies and so it may change over time.

1.4 Adjustments to the Agenda

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

## 1.5 Chair's Report

Dr. Fiore reminded everyone of the Foundation for Belmont Education (FBE) Annual Fundraiser on March 18, 2017.

## 1.6 Student Representative Report

There was no student representative in attendance

## 1.7 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Phelan noted that a number of Belmont High School Teams are in post-tournament plan and reminded community members to check the Belmont Public Schools website for dates and times of post-tournament games as well as upcoming concerts at the High School and Middle School.

## 2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

## 3. MAJOR BUSINESS

### 3.1 BHS Wellness Update – Exhibit A

Jim Davis, Director of Physical Education, Health and Athletics introduced Stacie Marino, Joe Reynolds, Sarkis Asadoorian and Nichole Bukowsk of the Physical Education Department who provided an overview of the new Mindful Movement and Outdoor Pursuits program at Belmont High School. The Outdoor Pursuits course includes adventure education, camping/backpacking, orienteering, and wilderness sporting. In addition to learning about the outdoors, students learn how to work together as a group. The new course has received a lot of positive feedback from students.

The Mindful Movement course encompasses relaxation/mindfulness, yoga, dance, pilates, and tai chi. Mindfulness meditation has helped students with school related stress, sleeping and provides a better ability to focus.

### 3.2 Butler Update – Exhibit B

Butler Principal Danielle Betancourt shared some initiatives happening at the Butler School. She began by providing an overview of the increase in enrollment and the number of students that enter and leave the school during the year. Having so many students arrive at different times during the year takes a lot of resources to meet their needs.

Principal Betancourt spoke about the work teachers are doing with Social Emotional Learning (SEL) including inclusive schooling, growth mindset, and mindfulness. Butler has a guidance counselor who has trained to be an educator of mindfulness techniques.

Butler students in grades 1, 2 and 4 have iPads and students in grade 3 have chrome books. Principal Betancourt thanked the Foundation for Belmont Education (FBE), Butler PTA, and the Technology Department for the funding and installation of the new technology.

### 3.3 FY17 Quarter 2 Budget Update – Exhibit C

Mr. DiCologero, Director of Finance, Business and Operations provided an update on the FY17 Quarter 2 budget. The School Department is projecting a total general fund year-end deficit of approximately \$31,000 primarily due to additional costs in out of district tuitions. A placeholder amount of \$100,000 in State Circuit Breaker funds is reflected in the current budget to offset this projected year-end deficit.

While some teacher salary accounts project year-end balances, others project deficits. Mr. DiCologero projects to break even on several budget lines including Instructional and Support Expenses, Transportation and Special Education Expenses. Beginning in FY17, all non-salary general fund budget amounts for school building utilities and maintenance were included in the Facilities Department budget rather than the school budget.

### 3.4 FY18 Budget Update

Mr. DiCologero provided a brief FY18 Budget update noting the difference from Draft 1 to Draft 2 is a decrease of \$167,251 in the line for Special Education Tuitions. The decrease in this allocation results in a 5.7% increase to the general budget from FY17 to FY18 rather than the originally projected increase of 6%.

### 3.5 Space Task Force/BHS-BC Update – Exhibit D

Superintendent Phelan provided an update on work of the Space Task Force and Space Task Force Steering Committee. Enrollment is increasing by approximately 100 students each year. Forty-two percent of classes at the elementary level are above the School Committee's recommended class-size. Over the last two years, fifteen classrooms have been added across the district. A total of 12 modular classrooms are used at Belmont High School and Chenery Middle School.

Superintendent Phelan visited each of the elementary schools to provide Space Task Force updates to the staff. Space needs at the elementary level impact the FY18 budget including planning for the possibility of adding modular classrooms at the elementary level for the 2018-19 school year.

### 3.4 Start Times Follow-up Discussion

Dr. Fiore made note of the comments during citizens' concerns and a previous discussion on school start times. The School Committee discussed forming a task force to study the possibility of changing school start times. Ms. Prestwich thanked the students who presented their concerns and stated they were valid concerns. Superintendent Phelan will work on forming a task force between now and June with work taking place in the fall and an update to the School Committee during the late fall of 2017. There was discussion on who from the community might sit on the task force. Superintendent Phelan agreed to provide a proposal at the next School Committee meeting.

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

4.1 Finance Subcommittee

There was no report from the Finance Subcommittee.

4.2 Policy & Procedure Subcommittee

The Policy & Procedure Subcommittee is working on policy changes related to the school calendar.

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 Thursday, March 2, 2017 at 8:00 AM.

4.5 Warrant Committee

The Warrant Committee will meet on Wednesday, March 1, 2017 at 7:30 PM.

4.6 Belmont High School Building Committee

The High School Building Committee formally selected the Owner Project Manager. The name will not be released until a contract has been signed.

4.7 Space Task Force

There was no report from the Space Task Force.

4.8 Community Path Update

There was no report from the Community Path Committee.

4.9 Library Long Range Planning Committee

There was no report from the Library Long Range Planning Committee.

5. **OTHER BUSINESS**

5.1 Consent Agenda – None

5.2 Personnel Items – None

5.3 Business Items – None

5.4 Approval of Minutes

- ❖ February 7, 2017
- ❖ February 13, 2017

On a motion offered by Mr. Caputo and seconded by Ms. Prestwich, it was

**VOTED** unanimously to approve the February 7, 2016 minutes.

On a motion offered by Mr. Caputo and seconded by Ms. Prestwich, it was

**VOTED** 5-0-1 to approve the minutes of February 13, 2017.

6. FUTURE BUSINESS

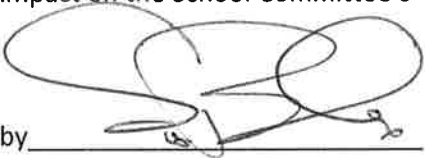
None

7. ENCLOSURES

- ❖ Strategic Plan

8. EXECUTIVE SESION

At 9:00 p.m. on a motion offered by Mr. Bicer and seconded by Ms. Burgess-Cox, a roll call vote was taken and the School Committee agreed to enter Executive Session with no intent to return to Open Session for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with union personnel given that a discussion in Open Session may have a detrimental impact on the School Committee's bargaining position.

Respectfully submitted by   
Ms. Susan Burgess-Cox, Secretary