

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
CHENERY COMMUNITY ROOM
FEBRUARY 4, 2020**

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 7:08 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 noted the following upcoming events:

February 6 – Jazz Night at Belmont High School

February 7 – Patron's Trivia

February 13 – Chenery Middle School Symphony and Parent/Teacher Chorus

February 17 – 21 – School Vacation Week

February 25 – Belmont High School Concert

1.6 Student Representative Report

There was no Student Representative Report

1.7 Superintendent's Report

There was no Superintendent's Report.

2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

3. MAJOR BUSINESS

3.1 Social Justice by the Numbers – Exhibit A

The School Committee welcomed Belmont High School History Teacher Jamie Shea and Belmont High School Math Teacher Dan Moresco who provided an overview of the pilot course Social Justice by the Numbers. The following Belmont High School students joined Ms. Shea and Mr. Moresco: Matt Fiore, Shea Brams, and Tory Meringer.

Social Justice by the Numbers is an interdisciplinary class taught by two teachers at the same time. Mathematical reasoning and quantitative analysis is used to explore social justice issues. Students conduct research and design a project that affects a community in a positive way.

Algebra II CP is a pre-requisite for this full year, 5-credit course and is intended for juniors and seniors. The Units of Study include the following: Criminal Justice, Untold Stories, Economic Justice, Education in America, Reproductive Justice.

Students provided feedback to the teachers on what they enjoyed about the course and what they might like to change. A particular challenge has been lack of a large enough space to enable 52 students to work together. Students also suggested having shorter units in order to cover more topics.

3.2 Financial Task Force Update

The Financial Task Force II was created as a follow-up to the Financial Task Force. The group is looking at the FY21 budget. Each town department is tasked with determining what their needs will be over the next five years. Each department is using the same rubric to justify the work they hope to do in town. The School Committee will receive regular updates on the work of this new committee.

3.3 FY21 Budget Report out – Exhibit B

Superintendent Phelan provided an overview of draft 1 of the FY21 School Department budget. The School Department expects to finish the year with a balanced budget.

Based on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) data from FYFY18, regarding per pupil spending, Belmont is number 26 out of a cohort of 27 towns. Belmont spent \$14,246 per pupil. Superintendent Phelan showed per pupil spending comparisons with Belmont and cohort districts and Belmont and state average.

Enrollment continues to be an issue in Belmont. There has been an increase of 733 students in Belmont from October 1, 2011 to October 1, 2019. Primary cost drivers include the need for additional staff due to increasing enrollment, increase need for Special Education and English Learner services, maintaining the level of purchases of supplies such as text books, technology, furniture, etc. Some external cost drivers include health insurance premiums, out-of-district tuition increases, transportation increases.

The School Department General Fund Budget for FY21 is \$62,506.441. After review by the School Committee, the budget will be presented at a joint meeting of the School Committee, Select Board, Warrant Committee and Capital Budget Committee on February 10, 2020.

4. SUBCOMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES (as needed)

4.1 Finance Subcommittee

There was no report from the Finance Subcommittee.

4.2 Policy and Procedure Subcommittee

The Policy and Procedure Subcommittee created a new policy regarding service animals in schools. The School Committee voted to approve the new policy at their last meeting.

4.3 Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

The Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee met last week for a discussion on homework. There was discussion on getting more input from teachers and other staff on existing challenges related to homework.

4.4 Capital Budget Committee

The Capital Budget Committee will meet on February 6th at 8:00 a.m.

4.5 Warrant Committee

The Warrant Committee met with two members of the Board of Assessors at their last meeting. The discussion involved the process for how the assessing process works.

4.6 Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee

The BMHSBC will meet on February 5th and 6th. The February 6th meeting will include a bid package report out.

4.7 Community Path Committee

There was no report from the Community Path Committee.

4.8 Financial Task Force II

There was no additional report from the Financial Task Force II Committee.

4.9 High School Traffic Working Group

There was no report from the High School Traffic Working Group.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 Consent Agenda

Disposal of Surplus Property – Piano – Exhibit C

Tony DiCologero, Director of Finance, Business and Operations explained the Department of Fine and Performing Arts has three pianos that need to be de-commissioned. Once decommissioned Arto Asadoorian, Director of Visual and Performing Arts will work with company used for purchasing pianos for trade in value.

On a motion offered by Andrea Prestwich and seconded by Tara Donner, it was **VOTED** unanimously to approve the disposal of three surplus pianos.

5.2 Personnel Items - None

5.3 Business Items – None

5.4 Approval of Minutes

January 21, 2020

On a motion offered by Tara Donner and seconded by Amy Checkoway, it was **VOTED** unanimously to approve the minutes of January 21, 2020 as amended.

6. FUTURE BUSINESS

7. ENCLOSURES

Strategic Plan

School Committee Goals

BPS Animal Service Policy: 6025

Important Dates for School Committee

February 1, 2020 Enrollment

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a unanimous roll call vote at 8:42 p.m., the School Committee entered Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations 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 Andrea H Prestwich
Andrea Prestwich, Secretary