



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

School Committee

Date: 2016-09-26

Time: 6:30 PM

Building: School - Memorial High

Location: Superintendent Conference Room

Address: 82 Oakland Road

Session: Open Session

Purpose:

Version: Draft

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Jeanne Borawski, Chuck Robinson, Elaine Webb, Linda Snow Dockser, Gary Nihan, Julie Joyce

Members - Not Present:

Others Present:

Superintendent John Doherty, Assistant Superintendent Craig Martin, Director of Finance Gail Dowd, Director of Student Services Carolyn Wilson, Student Representative Alex Nazzaro, Student Representative Mario Cutone, Al Sylvia, Reading Chronicle, members of the SEPAC, Paula Tucci, Karen Severitch and Diana Vlamis Koster of Understanding Disabilities

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Linda Engelson on behalf of the Chair

Topics of Discussion:

I. Call to Order

Chair Borawski called the School Committee to order at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Robinson moved, seconded by Mrs. Joyce, to enter into executive session to discuss strategy with respect to pending litigation and to return to open session at approximately 7:00 p.m. The roll call vote was 4-0. Mrs. Borawski, Mr. Robinson, Mrs. Joyce, and Dr. Snow Dockser.

The meeting went into recess at 6:31 p.m.

The meeting was called back to order in open session at 7:31 p.m.

II. Recommended Procedure

A. Public Input

Chair Borawski asked for public input on items not on the agenda.

There was none.

B. Consent Agenda

Mrs. Borawski asked the Committee if there were any consent agenda items that they would like removed. Dr. Snow Dockser asked that the Football donation be removed.

Dr. Snow Dockser moved, seconded by Mr. Robinson, to remove the donation from the Friends of Reading Football be removed from the consent agenda. The motion carried 6-0.

Mr. Robinson moved, seconded by Mrs. Joyce to approve the consent agenda as presented with the exception. The motion carried 6-0.

- Approval of RMHS Field Trip – Swiss Exchange, Model United Nations & METCO
- Accept a Donation to RMHS – Volleyball & Cheer
Approval of Minutes (August 29, 2016)

Chair Borawski welcomed Tom Connery, President of the Friends of Reading Football to present the donation.

Mr. Connery provided details of the donation which included Guardian Helmets and Tackle Rings for the football team as well as a donation to support the coaching assistants for the team.

Mr. Robinson moved, seconded by Mrs. Joyce, to accept the donation of \$7,118.25 for equipment and \$3,940 for coaching assistant stipends from the Friends of Reading Football. The motion carried 6-0.

C. Reports

Students

Student representative Alex Nazzaro reported on the new schedule at the high school which includes office hours with teachers on Tuesday mornings and Flex Blocks on Thursday which is a homeroom block. Seniors are currently meeting with their guidance counselors regarding colleges.

The Volleyball team will be holding its annual Volley for the Cure Fundraiser to benefit breast cancer research.

Student Representative Mario Cutone reported that there is concern among the high school students that parking passes have been given to students that do not have their licenses at this time.

D. New Business

Understanding Disabilities Presentation

Chair Borawski welcomed Paula Tucci and Karen Severitch of Understanding Disabilities who will report on the highlights of UD's 2015/16 program year and outline the changes to the curriculum.

Mrs. Severitch outlined the operational aspects of UD. Units taught include physical, learning & developmental disabilities, emotional and behavior disorders, autism spectrum disorders, hard of hearing/low vision and food allergies. The focus on the lessons is inclusion and respect instilling that we are all the same inside.

Mrs. Tucci indicated the focus this year is on the social emotional well-being of kids. She added that children need to feel safe in the school. UD has been a fabric of this community for 32 years. UD received a Cummings Foundation grant that has allowed them to update their curriculum. The group is also working with other communities that wish to create similar programs. UD increases compassion with their lessons taking it beyond teaching. The lessons apply to all disabilities reinforcing that we are all the same inside. UD will be celebrating Food Allergy, Dyslexia and Autism Awareness in the next few months.

Mrs. Tucci pointed out that this program would not be possible without the over 200 volunteers, 60 of which are new this year and funding support from the community.

Mrs. Tucci outlined the next steps which include the focus on the social emotional well-being by incorporating these standards into the curriculum reinforcing the positive attitudes and school culture.

The School Committee thanked Understanding Disabilities for sharing tonight.

Special Education Update

Mrs. Wilson provided the School Committee with the Fall Report. She quickly reviewed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and what is required by districts. She went onto point out that regular education teachers have an important role in ensuring that the general education environment is a rich and responsive educational environment that seeks to have teachers prepared for the diverse student learners they are encountering on a day to day basis. Mrs. Wilson reviewed the IEP, evaluation and Team processes used in the district. She went on to review the disabilities categories which are driven by the state. Categories include autism, developmental delay, intellectual impairment, neurological, emotional, communication, physical, specific learning, health and sensory.

Mrs. Wilson explained the role of the building principal in special education which is to assist the Administrator of Special Education to coordinate the delivery and supervision of special education within each building. The principals recommend the hiring of staff and are responsible for the evaluation of the special education staff in their buildings. Mrs. Wilson reviewed our in-district programs and current staffing challenges. Goals for the year include increased communication through the updated website and continued work with SEPAC, have a full staff of qualified professionals meeting the needs of our students, to continue the PLC work to help our teachers continue to reflect on their practice and improve their work with our students and continue to provide targeted professional development based on the needs in each building. She reviewed professional development opportunities that will occur this fall.

Lastly, she reported the change of vendor for our special education software, continued monitoring of transportation and a successful extended school year this past summer.

E. Old Business

Superintendent's Evaluation

Student Representatives Nazzaro and Cutone left the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

Mrs. Borawski reviewed the evaluation process and turned the meeting over to Mrs. Webb.

Mrs. Webb reviewed the Superintendent's evaluation and read several School Committee member comments from each standard.

Dr. Nihan thanked Mrs. Webb for taking on the task of putting together the information.

Mrs. Borawski thanked Dr. Doherty for his service to our students and community.

Mr. Robinson moved, seconded by Dr. Nihan, to approve the Superintendent's End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluation Report for the 2015-16 school year.

Dr. Doherty said that the past year was busy and challenging. Four current and past staff members passed away and the administration has dealt with budget concerns. He went on to thank his strong administrative team.

Dr. Doherty thanked the Committee for their feedback.

The motion carried 6-0.

FY18 Budget Preparation

Mrs. Borawski felt it was important that the Committee take a position on the Board of Selectmen's position on the amount recommended for the override.

The Committee members agreed. Mr. Robinson pointed out that the amount of \$7.5M is a sustainable amount.

Mr. Robinson moved, seconded by Mrs. Joyce, to support the Board of Selectmen's ballot question of a \$7.5 million override.

Mrs. Borawski pointed out that a lot of time has been spent on this subject and a no vote will have a damaging impact on kids.

Dr. Doherty added that over the life of the override \$5M will be dedicated to the school department budget.

The motion carried 6-0.

F. Reports (continued)

Liaison's Report

Mrs. Webb reported on the RCASA annual meeting on Thursday night as well as the "In Plain Sight" display that will be in October.

Dr. Snow Dockser updated the committee on the HRAC. The next meeting will be on Oct. 6th at Town Hall. The HRAC has been planning the MLK Day Breakfast.

She next reported on the SEPAC meeting held last week. She said there was an animated Q & A. She thanked Alicia Williams and Carolyn Wilson.

The annual METCO BBQ and Pool Party was held on September 10th. She thanked all that attended.

Dr. Snow Dockser went on to share that the high school recently hosted students as part of the Spanish Exchange program. She thanked all the teachers that hosted visiting teachers to observe in their classrooms.

Mr. Nihan reported that there will be a walkathon to benefit a scholarship in memory of Wood End Teacher Sally Mucica. It will be on October 15th at Wood End.

Chair Borawski shared that she and several committee members have been approached regarding their stance on Question 2 – Charter Schools. The School Committee would not be taking a position on ballot question 2 because of the importance of the upcoming override election, the potential impact on the FY18 budget, and other critical, time-sensitive local matters.

Assistant Superintendent

Mr. Martin shared information on the recently released MCAS/PARCC data. He will give a full report at a future meeting.

Dr. Nihan was pleased to see that RMHS has moved from a Level 2 to a Level 1 school. He congratulated Mr. Bakr and the high school staff and thanked them for their hard work.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Doherty handed out the School Committee calendar of topics.

The Superintendent will share information regarding the recent trip to Washington D.C. to attend a conference at the White House. He, Ms. Burd and Mrs. Wilson attended this event on Social Emotional practices. Fourteen states were represented and it was quite an honor to be asked to attend. This trip was funded through the grant and the district did not accept until they received approval that the grant could be used to support this trip.

Dr. Doherty recognized Mr. Zaya for the recent recognition from the MIAA for hosting high quality state tournaments.

III. Routine Matters

a. Bills and Payroll (A)

Warrant S1710	9.1.16	\$139,483.63
Warrant S1711	9.8.16	\$89,040.60
Warrant S1712	9.15.16	\$276,093.62
Warrant S1712E	9.14.16	\$800.00
Warrant S1713	9.22.16	\$211,793.83
Warrant P1704	8.12.16	\$1,050,471.89
Warrant P1705	8.26.16	\$1,039,262.99
Warrant P1706	9.9.16	\$1,374,559.78

b. Calendar

IV. Information

V. Future Business

VI. Adjournment

Mr. Robinson moved, seconded by Mrs. Joyce, to enter into executive session to discuss strategy with respect to salary negotiations for non-represented personnel and the approval of minutes and to return to open session at approximately 9:45p.m. The roll call vote carried 6-0. Mr. Robinson, Mrs. Joyce, Dr. Nihan, Dr. Dockser, Mrs. Joyce and Mrs. Borawski.

The meeting adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

Open session was called back to order at 10:02 p.m.

Superintendent's Salary

Mrs. Webb moved, seconded by Dr. Nihan, to approve the Superintendent's salary increase of 2 ½% which is an annual amount of \$183,067 for the 2016-17 school year. The motion carried 6-0.

Adjourn

Mrs. Joyce moved, seconded by Dr. Nihan, to adjourn. The motion carried 6-0.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

NOTE: The minutes reflect the order as stated in the posted meeting agenda not the order they occurred during the meeting.

Handouts: School Committee Topic Calendar

Special Education Presentation