



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

School Committee

Date: 2016-05-09

Time: 7:00 PM

Building: School - Memorial High

Location: Superintendent Conference Room

Address: 82 Oakland Road

Session: Open Session

Purpose: Open Session

Version: Final

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

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

Members - Not Present:

Others Present:

Superintendent John Doherty, Assistant Superintendent Craig Martin, Student Representative Alex Nazzaro, Chronicle Reporter Al Sylvia, RTA President Chris Copeland

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

Topics of Discussion:

I. Call to Order

Chair Robinson called the School Committee to order at 7:00 p.m.

Public Hearing on School Choice

Mr. Robinson opened the public hearing at 7:01 p.m.

Dr. Doherty recommended that the School Committee opts out of School Choice for the 2016-17 school year citing district enrollment concerns.

There was no public input.

Chair Robinson closed the public hearing at 7:03 p.m.

Mrs. Borawski moved, seconded by Mrs. Joyce, pursuant to the provisions of G.L.c. 76 & 12B that the School Committee of Reading, following a public hearing, hereby withdraws from its obligation to enroll non-resident students in Reading Public Schools during the 2016-2017 school year for the following reason: General District Enrollment. The motion carried 6-0.

II. Recommended Procedure

A. Public Input

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

There was none.

B. New Business (out of order)

RMHS Robotics Team Presentation

The RMHS Robotics team updated the Committee on the happenings of the team this year.

The group shared information on the path that took the team to the World's in St. Louis recently. We held a regional event in Reading at which the team finished 4th out of 40 teams qualifying them for the New England's in Hartford.

The group reviewed the make-up of the team and challenges they face moving forward.

This year the team collaborated with Burlington in some outreach programs. They found this collaboration very helpful during the competitions as a means of support.

The team is seeking ways to make communication between the business group and the builders more effective. The business group works upstairs away from the space where the builders work. The committee suggested using a Skype like option. Mrs. Borawski attended the Science Expo and said it was a great event.

When asked if the team was able to learn from their competition experiences they said they have. From a technology standpoint the team will take features from other bots and adapt them to their robot. From the business end they discovered it is important to have as much information regarding the team in their pit area.

Dr. Snow Dockser commended the students on the presentation and speaking skills, both of which will carry them throughout their lives.

C. Consent Agenda

Mr. Robinson reviewed the consent agenda and asked if any members would like any items removed from the consent agenda.

- Accept a Donation to RMHS Drama - PSST – Playwriting Position Stipend
- Accept a Donation to RMHS Drama - PSST – Purchase equipment not to exceed \$8,000
- Accept a Donation to Joshua Eaton – Arbella Insurance Group
- Approval of Minutes April 26, 2016

Mrs. Borawski moved, seconded by Mrs. Joyce, to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried 6-0.

D. Reports

Student

Ms. Nazzaro reported on the following:

- RMHS Scholastic Awards Night Thursday night
- Drama Production – An Evening with Edgar Allan Poe this weekend
- RMHS Band and Choral Concerts coming up
- Winter Band and Color Guard held their banquet recently

Liaisons

Mrs. Webb reminded the community that the RMHS Jazz Band will be playing at the Hatch Shell on May 15th.

Dr. Snow Dockser attended the recent the recent Coolidge Science Team Community Yard Sale. She said it is a great community event. She also attended the Parker Chorus rehearsal and thanked Jenny DiMuzio to bring in a Holocaust survivor to speak to the students. One of the numbers the group will be performing is a compilation of poems that were written by inmates on the walls of Terezin. The speaker was able to put the meaning of the number in perspective.

E. Old Business

F. New Business

Superintendent's Evaluation Process – Goals Update

Chair Robinson asked if any members had questions on the documents in the packet.

Superintendent Doherty has made a conscientious effort to align School Committee presentations to his goals this year. These presentations provided information on how the district/Superintendent have been in moving these goals forward.

He referred to the continuing MTSS initiative and referenced a document with data on Tier 1 fidelity, test scores, attendance rates, etc. that will become a dashboard for District Capacity Assessment. This data will be useful for administrators and teachers to evaluate progress in many areas.

The next step in the Evaluation Process will to begin the summative evaluation.

Approve FY16 Town Meeting Amended Budget

Mrs. Borawski moved, seconded by Dr. Nihan, to approve the FY16 Town Meeting amended budget with the addition of \$150,000.

Dr. Doherty pointed out that no free cash has been used in the FY16 budget to fund the \$150,000 for the first installment of funding for the Science curriculum

implementation. The funding is coming from savings like from snow & ice etc. and transfers.

The motion carried 6-0.

FY17 Budget Update

Approval of FY17 Town Meeting Amended Budget

Mrs. Borawski moved, seconded by Mrs. Joyce, to approve the FY2017 Town Meeting Amended Budget in the total amount of \$40,697,666 consisting of the following cost center amounts:

- **Administration: \$963,694**
- **Regular Day: \$24,710,947**
- **Special Education: \$12,223,473**
- **Other: \$1,608,042**
- **School Facilities: \$1,191,510**

Mr. Robinson pointed out that reduction of \$150,000 is reflected in the regular day cost center.

The motion carried 6-0.

FY18 Budget Preparation

Dr. Doherty began the presentation with a summary of the FY17 budget reminding the community that the budget is aligned with the five district goals. This budget contains some teaching reductions and reflects a \$658,193 reduction from a level service budget. The main driver of the budget continues to be salary and budget obligations, special education transportation costs and regular day mandatory transportation costs. He then reviewed the restructuring, collaboration and cost savings measures in the FY15 – FY17 budgets. He went onto review the total funds needed to operate the School Department and pointed out there is approximately \$400,000 from PTO and outside donations that are not included in the total funding needed. Dr. Doherty once again reviewed the per pupil spending and Reading falls below most of the comparable communities. Another comparison shared was district and school instructional leadership. Reading is ranked 26 out of 30 amongst our comparable communities.

Dr. Doherty reviewed the cuts that have been made in the FY17 budget. The reductions that have been taken were based on class sizes, enrollment and course selection at the high school. The math and business departments have been consolidated and the Superintendent and Mr. Bakr met with all affected staff prior to vacation to review all changes.

Mrs. Liberman asked about the impact down the road of cutting teachers. Superintendent Doherty reminded her that he was discussing the FY17 budget only. She then asked how class sizes would be determined. Mr. Bakr has worked

diligently balancing class sizes and reminded the community that we were not eliminating courses just eliminating sections.

Student Representative Alex Nazzaro thanked the committee and administration for listening to the students (Latin) and have come up with a reasonable solution.

Michele Sanphy asked what some of the instructional leadership positions other districts have that we lack. Many districts have curriculum directors and coaches, elementary assistant principals, technology directors and assistant special education directors.

The Superintendent next reviewed the building per pupil allocations. Each building principal is given an allocation of funds based on the current school year's October 1st enrollment. The building principals develop their budgets based on this allocation.

The Superintendent handed out the latest elementary enrollment and pointed out that 75% of incoming kindergarten students are enrolled in full day.

Challenges faced as we move forward to FY18 include retaining and attracting staff, and developing well balanced and prepared students for college and career. We also need to support teachers and administrators as we transition to more rigorous standards and curriculum and continue to improve our special education services and in district programs. These two points work together to lessen the impact on special education services. We also must address our long term space needs to address program changes and continue to remain competitive with area schools.

Dr. Doherty continued the presentation by saying his objective is to provide a 30,000 foot view of where we want the district to be in 2020. The information used to support the direction includes the community and staff forums held in the spring and fall of 2015, the communication audit, district and school improvement plans, state assessments, administrator common measures and collaborative visioning exercise with the District Leadership Team.

The goal in 2020 is to have the multi-tiered system of supports fully implemented in Tier 1, 2 & 3, vertically align math, literacy and science standards-based curriculum, to have PLCs that focus on analyzing student data to identify lagging skills and student growth models, a five full day elementary schedule, common planning time for grade level teachers, revised middle school schedule with later start time and longer instructional blocks, a high school schedule with a later start time, intervention times in daily schedules and new graduation requirements. The district will also update the student information data management system, address the long-term space needs including a renovation plan for Killam, special education programs that will allow for more flexibility to best support the individual needs of students in inclusionary settings, have an adequately staffed administration to lead and support our schools and district and have a greater ability to retain and attract staff.

Dr. Doherty reviewed the components by level beginning with elementary. A five full day model allows for an additional 120 minutes of time on teaching per week. Students would receive extra minutes of instruction in specialties such as

art, music, physical education and Library/Technology as well as recess. Teachers would gain planning time while the students are in these classes. Beginning next year a 10 week health unit will be introduced in grades 3 – 5 which will be taught by the physical education teacher outside of physical education time. Each building will have a full time art, music and physical education teacher and the current regular education paraeducator hours will be increased by 2.5 per week to provide adequate supervision for lunch and recess. The key outcome from these changes is allowing for common planning time which allows for more opportunities for collaboration in grades K – 5 and scheduling will be more student focused with the additional hours of staffing.

Middle School restructuring will include expansion of the health curriculum, review the current schedule and explore options to create dedicated intervention blocks for student, advisory period at both middle schools and additional instructional time for some courses. Additional staffing would include 2.0 FTE Health teachers and increasing the physical education teacher at Parker by .5. This will allow for equal physical education time between middle schools.

Discussion switched to the high school schedule which is still being discussed but could include advisory at all four grades, a school-wide block for interventions, makeups, activities, enrichment, etc. and an improved 9th grade transition. The high school administration is discussing a 9th grade academy model. They are also reviewing graduation requirements which will allow for more flexibility for students to pursue interests, expanding the AP course offerings and availability at earlier grades and possible certificate programs. Expanding and exploring more opportunities for Senior Internships and improved community service opportunities are also being looked at.

Discussion continued on how these proposed changes would affect the RMHS community. For the students it will allow for more flexibility in course selection, possible reduction in stress and anxiety with new schedule, provides a greater selection in community service and internship opportunities and greater transition support in their freshman year. The staff will have more opportunities for interdisciplinary planning opportunities with members of other departments.

The presentation moved to the district discussion. Dr. Doherty started with the additional curriculum and instruction leadership and support that is needed to move the district forward. There is a need for additional instructional and leadership support for administration and teachers. Many districts similar to Reading have district level curriculum directors, level curriculum coordinators, an assistant director of student services, director of technology, elementary assistant principals and instructional coaches by level and content area. These positions are critical to ensure consistency in K-12 curriculum implementation. He pointed out that these positions are the norm in many districts. The Superintendent reviewed the demand that is put on principals because the number of staff they supervise and evaluate. We have struggling teachers in every building and the principals cannot assist because of other responsibilities. The evaluation process becomes a compliance issue rather than a growth activity. The proposed plan to address these concerns includes creating two PreK – 8 Curriculum Coordinator positions; one for STEM and one for Humanities, restructuring of the RMHS Department Head positions to create greater supervision and evaluation responsibilities. Adding evaluation responsibilities to the Department Head roles

will alleviate some of the pressure of the principal and assistant principals to evaluate all staff. Dr. Doherty pointed out that the Department Head model doesn't work and is a common problem in many districts.

The creation of a .5 Assistant Director of Student Services position to support program coordination and alignment, transportation, and ELL would allow the Director to focus on improving and expanding programs.

The last item reviewed was staff exit survey data for 2015.

III. Routine Matters

a. Bills and Payroll (A)

Warrant S1641E	4.4.16	\$25,610.00
Warrant S1642	4.14.16	\$241,288.03
Warrant S1644	4.28.16	\$66,125.64
Warrant S1645	5.5.16	\$225,743.95
Warrant P1622	4.22.16	\$1,524,466.01

b. Calendar

IV. Information

V. Future Business

VI. Adjournment

Mrs. Borawski moved, seconded by Mrs. Joyce to enter into executive session to discuss strategies with respect to non-represented personnel, collective bargaining and the approval of minutes and not to return to open session. The roll call vote carried 6-0. Mr. Robinson, Mrs. Joyce, Mrs. Borawski, Mrs. Webb, Dr. Snow Dockser and Dr. Nihan.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

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

John F. Doherty, Ed.D.