

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
January 20, 2015
Bedford High School - Large Group Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 7:30 p.m., Mr. Hafer called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Seibert, Ms. Guay, Mr. McAllister and Mr. Pierce. Sophia Kyrour, student representative, was absent.

2. Comments from Public

Mr. Rich Daugherty, resident, was in the audience and addressed the School Committee. He said he was here tonight because he was concerned about the budget process. He said at Town Meeting, the School Committee budget is wrapped up into one line item. He would like to see that school department budget discussions and decisions are more transparent to residents.

Mr. Daugherty also expressed concerns that the new State testing, PARCC, may require the School Committee to make budget decisions that would negatively affect existing programs. Mr. Daugherty indicated that this was the type of discussion that is lost at Town Meeting.

Mr. Daugherty also asked that recent School Committee minutes be posted on the website.

Mr. Hafer thanked Mr. Daugherty for coming tonight and responded to his comments. Mr. Hafer noted that the School Committee is in the midst of its budget process. He said that PARCC testing is an issue that has been and will be discussed. He is not sure it will come to cutting operating programs in order to move to PARCC testing. Mr. Hafer also reminded Mr. Daugherty that the School Committee meetings are televised on Bedford Cable TV.

Mr. Sills said that he is writing a news article about PARCC and he hopes Mr. Daugherty will find it interesting.

3. Personnel Report

Mr. Sills asked for approval on the following field trip proposals:

Ms. Faulstich asked for permission for 15 music students to travel to UNH on January 31, 2015 to participate in the UNH Choral Gala.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip request for 15 music students to attend the University of New Hampshire Choral Gala to be held on January 31, 2015 at no cost to the school department.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. O'Toole and Mr. Felker asked for permission for the 5 (or more) music students to travel into Boston and stay the night (with chaperones) in order to participate in a state-level festival at Symphony Hall.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip for approximately 5 music

students to attend the state music festival at Symphony Hall on March 19-21, 2014 at no cost to the schools.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay

MOTION APPROVED: 4-1

Mr. McAllister expressed concerns about students missing school for field trips. He said that it appears that many of the field trips that have come to the School Committee's attention have been for the music department. He said he did not really understand why they needed to spend the night in Boston.

Mr. Sills responded to Mr. McAllister's concerns and said he would summarize the number of field trips – those requiring School Committee approval (overnight and out-of-state) and those that do not.

The Middle School 6th grade Team requested permission for the annual school trip for sixth graders to Nature's Classroom in Freedom, NH on October 21-23, 2015. Mr. Sills commented that this would be the third year that the 6th graders would participate in this field trip. It has been very successful in the past.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip request for the students in 6th grade travel to Nature's Classroom on October 21-23, 2015 at no cost to the school department.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

Mr. Pierce asked if there was any parent concerns about having this trip for 6th graders and then having another big trip in 8th grade to Washington DC. Mr. Sills said no and noted that there are scholarships available for families for both trips.

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Sills announced the following appointments:

Meagan Asp	1.0 Special Education Teacher	Bridge Program	JGMS
Darin MacDonald	.6 Skill Center Teacher		JGMS
Elyse Purchia	1.0 Teaching Assistant		JGMS
David Mieu	1.0 Teaching Assistant		JGMS

Mr. Sills explained to the School Committee that he needs to appoint a full time Teaching Assistant at the High School for the remainder of this year. The Bridge Program needs additional support due to the current student profile. He said that a separate program is needed right now at the high school for 6 students. The new program will have an existing Special Ed Teacher and the new Teaching Assistant. The program will be a hybrid program and will use some online curriculum.

Mr. Pierce asked what would happen if we did not move forward with this plan. Mr. Sills said that potentially six students would have to go out-of-district at a cost of approximately \$50-55,000 each (prorated for the last few months of the school year) plus transportation costs. Mr. Sills noted that it is difficult to send students out of district and then expect them to come back to the high school.

Mr. Pierce said that it makes sense from a cost perspective to hire the additional Teaching Assistant but hopes that the hybrid program meets the needs of the students.

Ms. Guay asked about the teacher to student ratio in the Bridge Program and whether we used online programming before.

Mr. Sills said that the ratio is approximately 1:12 with additional teaching assistants and an adjustment counselor. Mr. Sills said some students in the program cannot focus on learning during the class time and some students cannot even make it to school on a regular basis. Mr. Sills feels that online schooling may help these students. Mr. Sills explained that we are using a new, robust online provider and each course will be supplemented by a BHS graded project. Mr. Sills will share information on the online courses with the School Committee.

Ms. Guay commented that chances are, we would not be able to find five out-of-district placements at this point in the year.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve adding a full time, benefit eligible, teaching assistant position to the Special Education Department at a cost not to exceed \$12,500 for the remainder of the school year.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

4. FY'16 Budget Discussion

Mr. Sills reviewed the FY'16 budget discussion to date:

Date	Maintenance of Service	Superintendent's Request
Dec. 2, 2014	\$36,523,672	\$36,890,178
Dec. 16, 2014 adjusted	\$36,498,672	\$36,890,178
Jan. 6, 2015 adjusted	\$36,147,837	\$36,477,341
Jan. 20, 2015 adjusted	\$36,063,337	\$36,320,993

Mr. Sills reviewed the proposed changes for the Jan. 20th number:

- Remove request for 1.0 Special Ed teacher due to tonight's approval of adding a full time Teaching Assistant for the hybrid Bridge program.
- Reduce facilities supplies by \$10,000 and summer help by \$10,000
- Use \$55,000 in offset funds

Mr. Pierce asked for some help reconciling some of the FTE changes in the various budget requests. Mr. Coelho agreed to help him.

Mr. McAllister said he was very surprised to see the plan to use \$20,000 from the Food Services account since two years ago the forecast for Food Services revenue was so poor. Mr. Coelho explained that last year, Food Services ended up having a profit and is expected to see one again this year. Mr. Whittier has contracted with EDCO to do some catering for their lunches which has helped the department's bottom line. Mr. Coelho does not believe that having \$20,000 available to use as an offset will be sustainable in the future. Mr. Coelho said all offset funds are difficult to maintain year after year.

Mr. McAllister congratulated Mr. Whittier, Food Services Manager, for turning around the program.

Mr. Pierce said he recommends establishing standards for using the School's offset accounts. Mr. Sills reported that the Leadership Team has been very diligent and deliberate in looking at a new program for Autistic children at Davis School. The team has visited a couple of programs and will deliver a decision on moving forward or not with such a program at Davis next year.

Mr. Hafer said he would like to discuss the next steps in the budget process. He noted that the current budget options – maintenance of service or superintendent's request are both over Finance Committee guidelines. He is wondering what the Committee can do to move closer to the guideline without changing the existing programs.

Mr. Pierce said that he does not want to cut back on existing programs. He noted that enrollment has pretty much remained the same. He believes that the teacher contract is in line with the rest of the town's contracts except for the "steps". He also noted that supplies have been held at zero percent increase for years and he is not surprised to see a need for a little more this year. Special Education demands are apparent and that is where the proposed budget increases are.

Mr. Pierce said he believes that there is some unused capacity that the Finance Committee can use rather than bringing in the community to discuss cutting programs. Mr. Pierce recommends continuing to chip away at expenses wherever we can.

Ms. Guay agreed. She believes that the School Committee always reevaluates its programs and it should continue to do so and chip away at expenses wherever possible.

Mr. McAllister said we are not in a position as a town to begin chipping away at employee salaries.

Ms. Seibert agreed and does not want to look at drastic changes to our programs right now. She said that there is no evidence that our town cannot fund this budget.

Mr. Hafer reminded the Committee that a vote on a final budget request will be held at the next School Committee meeting. He said he hopes Mr. Sills and Mr. Coelho can find more areas to reduce spending without big changes to the programs.

Mr. Sills had given the School Committee some additional information on the large cost centers in the school budget. Committee members agreed to look at these and be ready to vote next week.

Mr. Sills made a final comment. He said that during these discussions, he has eliminated some positions and hired some new people making it appear as if the school has a lot of flexibility in personnel. He said the fact of the matter is that the schools really do not have flexibility in this area because the changes are based on the changing needs of the students.

Mr. Pierce agreed that the nature of our business is change.

5. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Sills reported that Bedford's homeless population is growing again despite the efforts of the State not to place new families in Bedford. He said that the State has been back filling bigger families to Bedford due to closure of some hotels in other towns. Right now, Bedford has 26 homeless students enrolled in our schools – up from 19 in November. He is expecting four more students to enroll in the next few days. Mr. Sills also reported that we are transporting 26

students back to their home school district. He said student acclimation to Bedford schools can be difficult especially when there is a language barrier.

Mr. Sills said that the entire faculty (Teachers, support staff etc) participated in last Friday's Facing History professional development.

Also:

- The district brochure will soon be mailed to every household in Bedford
- The high school's Program Of Studies will be reviewed at the next meeting

6. Liaison Reports

Mr. Hafer said that the Capital Expenditure Committee revoted the capital budget and the school's IT proposal was favored. They will propose this budget to Finance Committee on Thursday.

Mr. Hafer also noted that the Fields Committee is still meeting and looking at a variety of options. He hopes they will soon present to the School Committee.

7. Minutes

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the December 16, 2014 meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

8. Future Agenda

Next meeting on January 27, 2015 will have the Budget, HS Program of Studies and the District Calendar on its agenda.

9. Adjournment

Ms. Seibert made the following motion.

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:15 p.m.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Pierce	Yes
Ms. Seibert	Yes
Mr. McAllister	Yes
Ms. Guay	Yes
Mr. Hafer	Yes

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

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Exhibits/Document

- Superintendent's FY 16 Budget Amended
- Draft of December 16, 2014 School Committee meeting minutes