

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF
December 17, 2013
Bedford High School - Large Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 6:15 p.m., Mr. Pierce called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Seibert, Mr. Hafer, Mr. McAllister and Ms. Guay.

2. Adjourn to Executive Session

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOTION: Move to adjourn to Executive Session

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

3. Return to Open Session

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

4. Comments from Public

Several parents were in the audience and asked the School Committee to consider keeping the policy that allows Bedford teachers to tutor Bedford students if they choose. The parents did not want to rely on strangers or large organizations to tutor Bedford students who may need extra help.

Ms. Kerri Rackey said she was concerned about not allowing former teachers tutor children. She said that former teachers know what is best for the child. She does not see a conflict of interest and trusts that Bedford teachers would not perform poorly so they could be hired as a tutor. She said certain children need one-on-one tutoring.

Ms. Laurie Newman sent a letter to the School Committee describing how her children needed and benefited from tutoring from former teachers. She feels very strongly that tutoring by Bedford teachers can be very helpful to certain students.

Mr. Pierce thanked the parents for coming to the meeting and voicing their concerns.

5. Policy Presentation: Tutoring for Pay

Mr. Sills explained that after the discussion on the Tutoring For Pay policy at the last School Committee meeting, he reviewed comments and concerns with the school's attorney. He said that the State does issue advisories so he proposed that the policy reflect the belief that Bedford does not need a more restrictive policy but teachers do need to do the right thing when entering tutoring arrangements. He shared proposed language with the school committee.

School Committee members read the proposed proposal and agreed to delay voting on the proposal until the next School Committee meeting in case more parents wanted to comment and were unable to come to the meeting tonight due the inclement weather. Members agreed.

6. Personnel Report

Mr. Sills reported that Gene Amico will be retiring from BHS.

7. NEASC Letter

Mr. Sills explained that Bedford has been working with a number of other local districts to try and change the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation process. Mr. Sills and many other Superintendents believe that the current process is too expensive and time consuming. The NEASC has recently agreed to review the current accreditation process but will still require cities and towns to continue to participate in the process during this review process.

Mr. Sills said that this two-year process has become very prescriptive and inflexible especially in light of today's mandated environment. He would like to suspend Bedford's participation in the process, but continue to pay NEASC dues.

Mr. McAllister commented that several years ago, the NEASC played an important role in overseeing schools. However he believes times have changed and the need for oversight has lessened. He thinks that the NEASC needs to reform. He knows conversations regarding this change have been underway for a long time. He believes Bedford should withdraw all together but would be willing to agree to pay the dues (only).

Ms. Seibert and Mr. Hafer said they agree with Mr. Sills's proposal.

Mr. Pierce said he is dismayed that the NEASC warning status is what helped rebuild the high school and now he learns that many colleges and universities do not really need high schools to have this accreditation.

Mr. Sills said that in good faith, the School Committee and School Administration represented the importance of having NEASC accreditation to the community. He does not want to walk away from the NEASC all together because many districts do need the accreditation process. He further explained that NEASC was always more than an oversight agency. They were leaders in helping schools become more reflective and mission driven. "NEASC still has an important role to play – to help schools obtain a more innovative culture." Mr. Sills said that the organization needs to change and he hopes it will.

Mr. Pierce asked whether the School Committee needs to vote on this change. Mr. Sills said no, but a consensus would be warranted.

Mr. Pierce said that the School Committee is in agreement that Bedford Public Schools will withdraw from the NEASC accreditation process but will continue to pay NEASC dues.

8. FY'15 Budget Proposal

Mr. Sills handed out charts highlighting FTE data and enrollment data and a "waterfall" chart. The School Committee reviewed this information and took a macro look at the FY'15 budget request to date. The Committee looked at what the school budget would look like at level services and at the Finance Committee guideline increase.

Mr. Sills pointed out that from FY'04 to FY'14, enrollment increased by 14.8%. However during the same time period, core regular educational services FTE increased by 10%, ELL FTE increase by 430% and Special Education FTE increased by 83%.

Mr. Pierce asked Mr. Sills to prepare a budget that was equal to the recommended increase by the Finance Committee. Mr. Sills agreed to do this in increments.

Ms. Seibert said she would like to understand more fully where cost savings in technology are as a result of the iPad purchases. Is there a reduction in the number of new PCs required? Is there a reduction in the number of new laptops?

Mr. Sills said that the Technology Department is preparing an inventory and he will ask them to notate overlap usage.

9. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Sills said he is impressed with how faculty and students are helping families in need as we approach the holiday break.

Mr. Sills pointed out that National Geographic has published an article that shows that iPads have become a valuable learning tool.

In February/March, there will be an open house at all schools that showcase the great work being done using technology.

10. Liaison Reports

Ms. Seibert reported that the CEC is trying to figure out funding sources for \$9.1 million in total capital requests.

11. Minutes

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the October 8, 2013 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

12. Future Agenda

Mr. Sills needs a formal vote on the rewording of some of his goals. Also, the press box replacement needs to be revisited as does upgrading the fitness center at the high school.

13. Adjournment

Ms. Seibert made the following motion.

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:03

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Pierce Yes

Mr. Hafer Yes

Ms. Seibert Yes

Mr. McAllister Yes

Ms. Guay Yes

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

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Exhibits/Documents

- **Draft of Tutoring for Private Pay Policy File:GCRD**
- **Draft of the October 8, 2013 School Committee meeting minutes.**

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