

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
February 10, 2015
Bedford High School - Large Group Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 7:40 p.m., Mr. Hafer called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Mr. Pierce, Ms. Seibert, and Mr. McAllister. Ms. Guay and Miss Sophia Kyrrou, student representative, were absent.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Mr. Sills presented two field trips for consideration by the School Committee. (He was going to present three but decided to hold-off on one until he had more information.)

Mr. Sills reported that Mr. Zellner and Mr. Hebert would like to take interested students in grades 10 & 11 to South Africa during July 2016. The trip will give students the opportunity to explore and learn the history, culture, and wildlife of South Africa. The cost per student is estimated to be \$4,800. Mr. Sills noted that the high school has been and will continue to do fundraising for scholarships for students who would like to attend these trips but are not financially able to do so.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip to South Africa during July 15-25, 2016 for approximately 30 grade 10 and 11 students at a cost of \$4,800 per student and at no cost to the school department.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Ms. Seibert said that this trip seems very expensive. Mr. Hafer agreed and said he did not want to see these trips get too exclusive due to high prices.

Mr. Sills agreed but noted that any trip abroad is very expensive and expects to see a lot of fundraising in order to help those in need.

Mr. McAllister asked Mr. Sills if he had any concerns about safety with this trip or any overseas trip. Mr. Sills said that he is prepared to make a decision to cancel a trip if security and safety issues warrant such a decision.

Mr. Sills then presented a field trip request from Mr. Daley for the students in the Bridge Program to travel to Whispering Pines Campground in May. The trip is designed for the 16 students to attend this trip rather than go to school on May 13 –15, 2015. The goal is for the students to develop resilience, improve teamwork, improve independent living skills, and strengthen student-teacher communication.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip to Whispering Pines Campground in New Hampshire on May 13-15, 2015 for the Bridge students at a cost of \$1,000 to the school department.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

Mr. McAllister noted that he did not like to see students miss any school for field trips.

MOTION APPROVED: 3-1

Mr. Sills announced the following:

Retirement:

Catherine Johnstone	Art Teacher	Lane School
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Resignations:

Estelle Chase	.4 Reading Teacher Long-term Sub	Lane School
Stephen McCarthy	.6 English Teacher	High School

Leave of Absences:

Katherine Suduiko	.6 Skills Teacher	Middle School
Kimberly Alexander	.8 Latin Teacher	High School

Appointments:

Hailey Drummond	1.0 Art Teacher	Lane School
Sarah Leonard	.8 Latin Teacher	High School
Michelle Wagner	.6 English Teacher – sub	High School
Sophia Grammenos	.4 Teaching Assistant	High School

4. FY'16 Budget Discussion

Mr. Coelho reported that there has been a significant change in State aid to Bedford that will require the School Committee to revote the FY'16 budget request.

Mr. Coelho said that State had recently written a law that made reimbursement to Bedford for educating students from Hanscom AFB a permanent, annual budget item. The money was expected to come from the State directly to the Town of Bedford who would in turn appropriate the money to the schools. However, funding this item has been cut by the State.

The State had originally agreed to fund approximately \$516,283 to the Town of Bedford and the schools in turn would have used this money as an offset for FY'16 operating expenses. Since the State is no longer funding this law, the Town and the Schools need to adjust budget assumptions for FY'16.

Mr. Hafer noted that if the FY'16 budget is re-voted to account for this loss, then the FY'16 school budget would be approximately \$1.1 million higher than the financial guideline set by the Finance Committee.

Mr. Sills also reported that the Fiscal Planning Committee asked the School Committee to use the balance in the High School building renovation fund towards the capital budget request. The School Committee members agreed to do this and said they would vote on it at their meeting before Town Meeting in March.

The School Committee decided to look at School Committee funds balances to see if they could use more money as offsets for FY'16. The Committee established a guideline to help them with this process. The general guideline they decided to use was that a fund should have approximately three months of projected offset balances and that any money over this balance could be used towards FY'16 budget.

After careful discussion of each fund, the School Committee agreed that there is another \$40,000 in offsets that could be accounted for in the FY'16 budget request. This would make the total offset amount to be applied to the FY'16 budget \$275,000.

The School Committee agreed to use \$275,000 as offsets for FY'16 budget but agreed that this number may not be sustainable in FY'17.

Mr. Pierce said he would like to more fully understand the Integrated Preschool account since this is the first year that this fund has been rolled into the School budget.

The next step the School Committee took was to review, line by line, the budget for FY'16 to see if there was anything they could eliminate or reduce. They gave Mr. Sills several items to go discuss further with Principals to see if there was a true need or whether something may be cut out.

The School Committee ended up with reducing the FY'16 budget by approximately \$59,000.

Mr. McAllister commented that it costs parents a lot of money to buy supplies for the elementary schools. He said he would like this to be reconsidered if the FY'16 budget calls for adding money to the supplies at the elementary schools.

Mr. McAllister also said that he thinks that the Teachers As Scholars Program is a great program but is not really classroom focused and is not widely used.

Mr. Pierce asked what the ramifications would be if the new Technology teaching position for JGMS did not go through. Mr. Sills said that we would not be able to share a PE person with Davis and the FAMCO reduction at the high school would be smaller.

Ms. Seibert asked Mr. Sills if there were any unanswered questions about the new Special Education program planned at Davis. Mr. Sills said no and that everyone is prepared to move forward with the program.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee revoke the FY'16 operating budget request to \$36,201,993 but asks that the warrant publish the FY'16 School budget as \$36,718,276 to account for the application of State military impact aid funding which will be coming through the town budget directly rather than to the schools based upon legislative change.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

5. 2015-2016 School Calendar Vote

Mr. Sills reminded the School Committee that they had several options to consider for the 2015-2016 calendar. He also noted that Friday, September 4th (before Labor Day Weekend) is a contracted day off for teachers.

After a brief discussion of the various options for starting school in September 2015, Mr. McAllister made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the 2015-2016 School Calendar with the following start dates:

August 27 & 28, 2015 – all new teachers

August 31 – All Teachers

September 1st – All students

Friday, September 4th – no school.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 3-1-0 (Mr. Pierce opposed the motion because he does not believe students should start school in Bedford before Labor Day holiday.)

Mr. Pierce suggested approving the 2016-2017 School Calendar this year to help families plan accordingly.

6. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Sills said that the new self-contained special education program seems to be doing well at the high school.

7. Liaison Reports

None

8. Minutes

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the January 6, 2015 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. McAllister

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the January 20, 2015 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

9. Future Agenda

The next School Committee meeting will be February 24, 2015.

10. Adjournment

Ms. Seibert made the following motion.

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 11:15 p.m.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. McAllister

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Pierce Yes

Ms. Seibert Yes

Mr. McAllister Yes

Ms. Guay Absent

Mr. Hafer Yes

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
February 10, 2015
Exhibits/Documents

- Draft of School Committee meeting minutes dated Jan. 6, 2015
- Draft of School Committee meeting minutes dated Jan. 20, 2015