

**DRAFT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM
Monday, May 12, 2008
7:00 P.M.**

Members attending: Keith Cheveralls, Virginia Justicz, Stu Sklar, Patty Wenger, Willie Wickman, and Thomas W. Jefferson

Call to Order – Stu Sklar, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes

VOTED Keith Cheveralls made the motion and Virginia Justicz seconded to accept the minutes from the April 28, 2008 meeting as amended.
(5/0) to accept the motion. (Keith Cheveralls (Yes), Virginia Justicz (Yes), Stu Sklar (Yes) Patty Wenger (Yes), Willie Wickman (Yes).

VOTED Willie Wickman made the motion and Virginia Justicz seconded to accept the minutes from the April 28, 2008 executive session meeting, not to be released.
(5/0) to accept the motion. (Keith Cheveralls (Yes), Virginia Justicz (Yes), Stu Sklar (Yes) Patty Wenger (Yes), Willie Wickman (Yes).

VOTED Willie Wickman made the motion and Patty Wenger seconded to accept the minutes from the May 1, 2008 meeting as amended.
(5/0) to accept the motion. (Keith Cheveralls (Yes), Virginia Justicz (Yes), Stu Sklar (Yes) Patty Wenger (Yes), Willie Wickman (Yes).

VOTED Willie Wickman made the motion and Keith Cheveralls seconded to accept the minutes from the May 5, 2008 meeting.
(5/0) to accept the motion. (Keith Cheveralls (Yes), Virginia Justicz (Yes), Stu Sklar (Yes) Patty Wenger (Yes), Willie Wickman (Yes).

Student Report

Samantha Leahy reported that seniors have only six days left, the Senior Citizen Luncheon was a success, the Barnum plan is this coming weekend, AP tests end this week, the Physics field trip to Six Flags is scheduled for Friday, Middle School Drama received gold at their Drama Festival as well as many acting awards, the Prom is scheduled for May 23rd, and students had received their invitations from Celebration.

School Committee Reports

Keith Cheveralls discussed the Special Education Task Force's recommendation that school cultures be analyzed and that it be dovetailed with the vision of the Strategic Plan. Willie Wickman informed him that the Bromfield School Council was working on it.

The Committee agreed to put this as an agenda item for the next meeting for further discussion.

Stu Sklar reported that the Stipend Committee had met and will be making a recommendation to Principal O'Shea next week. He informed the Committee that user fees will rise slightly to cover the increase in stipends, but this would also align the stipends with surrounding communities.

Virginia Justicz and Tom Jefferson reported that the Strategic Planning Committee held a forum for the faculty and the community to present the final plan. The Committee encouraged the public to visit the school's website to review the plan in depth. Dr. Jefferson also informed that the Committee that the Harvard Press will be doing an article.

Willie Wickman reported that the Capital Planning Committee recommended that four warrant articles be funded through stabilization.

Superintendent Report

Tom Jefferson reported on the Strategic Plan forum. He said it was a thoughtful discussion. Faculty representatives spoke to the various goals. They are in the process of forming the committees to begin implementation of the plan. He also reported that the film "Two Million Minutes" was shown.

Dr. Jefferson informed the Committee that the finalist interviews for the Director of Special Education were in process. There are four outstanding candidates. He had begun reference checks on each finalist. The search committee will decide on one or two finalists by the end of the week, and he will make a recommendation at the next meeting.

He also reported on the School Start Time Committee. Dr. Mehta from Emerson Hospital made a presentation on the affects of sleep deprivation. The program will air on cable access. The survey will be emailed to parents and staff later this week. Dr. Jefferson stated that if it was decided to make a time change, it would not occur for the Fall of 2008, and there would be many months to make the necessary preparations for parents, students and staff.

Policy JLB – Student Allergy Policy

The Committee conducted its second reading of the Student Allergy Policy. Keith Cheveralls questioned whose responsibility it was to ensure that procedures were implemented correctly to address the policy. Dr. Jefferson stated that he holds administration responsible and that annual trainings occur at the beginning of each school year.

Virginia Justicz made the motion and Willie Wickman seconded to accept the policy as written..

VOTED (5/0) to accept the motion. (Keith Cheveralls (Yes), Virginia Justicz (Yes), Stu Sklar (Yes) Patty Wenger (Yes), Willie Wickman (Yes).

Dr. Jefferson agreed to provide copies of the procedures to the Committee as implemented.

Budget FY09

Lorraine Leonard gave an update of the revised FY09 Budget. The report reflected the changes for a \$200,000 override resulting in a \$11,214,886 Omnibus Budget. She stated there had been some minor changes in revenues. Stu Sklar suggested that the number of FTE's be included for each position listed in the budget in an effort to make line items clearer to the public. Keith Cheveralls questioned discretionary funding with respect to the Special Education position. Willie Wickman questioned if the Learning Center teacher would remain special education certified. Tom explained that it would not as cost savings would be achieved with a non-certified aide. The Committee discussed that the budget was built on \$400,000 in School Choice money being factored in. The Committee asked Tom what his recommendations for priority reinstatements would be if additional funds were realized. He said 1) Virtual High School 2) Grade 5 Teacher 3) Math Tutor 4) Writing Lab Assistant and 5) Learning Center.

Stu Sklar asked Debbie Ricci from FinCom if the School Committee needed to prepare its own separate mailing. She said they did; however, she would include a one paragraph summary in FinCom's mailing regarding the schools. Stu asked her to email the paragraph to him and the Superintendent for review before mailing.

The Chair also reminded that the School Committee was holding a Question and Answer Public Forum on Monday, May 19th from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Volunteer's Hall.

Budget FY08

Lorraine Leonard gave an update of the FY08 Budget through the end of April. There is currently a \$27,000 deficit, which the Committee considered good news considering the previous year was approximately \$250,000. She also said that it may be possible to decrease the deficit amount further and will keep the Committee apprised. The Reserve Fund of \$175,000 for FY09 will help with projected special education placements.

School Choice

Dr. Jefferson presented a historical development of School Choice funding to the Committee. He stated that the budget was originally developed with \$425,000 in School Choice equaling 85 students. There were 70 returning students resulting in 15 new slots. The Committee had voted to eliminate the Grade 5 students leaving the School Choice revenue amount at \$400,000. He also said the key grades with no risk were grades 2 and 11. Patty Wenger questioned if the district received reimbursement for special education costs. Charles Horn explained that we did similar to the circuit breaker method. Keith

Cheveralls suggested a broader disbursement of students throughout the elementary school. He further recommended waiting to vote until after the FY09 Budget and Devens RFP were settled. Virginia Justicz commented that there were few opportunities for broad disbursement in the grade levels given the current enrollment. Patty Wenger questioned how other communities balance their budgets without using School Choice.

VOTED Willie Wickman made the motion and Virginia Justicz seconded to fill a total of ten (10) School Choice slots (3-first grade, 3-second grade, 4-eleventh grade). (5/0) to accept the motion. (Keith Cheveralls (Yes), Virginia Justicz (Yes), Stu Sklar (Yes) Patty Wenger (Yes), Willie Wickman (Yes).

Debbie Ricci from FinCom informed the Committee that the FinCom would like the School Committee to reconsider using Shaw Trust money in the amount of \$7,800.00 to fund the fans for the elementary school. The Committee agreed that the Shaw Trust needed to be saved for emergency equipment needs and that they would keep the fans on a warrant article. Debbie stated that FinCom would be meeting tomorrow night to finalize their recommendations.

Gifts

The Harvard PTO submitted the following two) 2 donations:

1. \$600.00 HES Field Day
2. \$1,000.00 Bromfield Video Program

VOTED Willie Wickman made the motion and Virginia Justicz accept the gifts. (5/0) to accept the motion. (Keith Cheveralls (Yes), Virginia Justicz (Yes), Stu Sklar (Yes) Patty Wenger (Yes), Willie Wickman (Yes).

The Committee asked that a thank you letter be sent.

VOTED Willie Wickman made the motion and Virginia Justicz seconded to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations for the MassDevelopment RFP and not to return to regular session. A roll call vote was taken. (5/0) to accept the motion. . (Keith Cheveralls (Yes), Virginia Justicz (Yes), Stu Sklar (Yes) Patty Wenger (Yes), Willie Wickman (Yes).

Minutes submitted,

Jackie Smith
Recording Secretary