

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES  
TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM  
Monday, January 12, 2009  
7:00 P.M.**

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

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

Dr. Jefferson introduced Maureen Babcock, the new DEAC representative, to the Committee.

**Minutes**

VOTED Willie Wickman made a motion and Keith Cheveralls seconded to accept the Minutes from the December 8, 2008 meeting as amended.  
(5/0) to accept the motion. . (Virginia Justicz (Yes), Stu Sklar (Yes) Patty Wenger (Yes), Willie Wickman (Yes), Keith Cheveralls (Yes).

VOTED Virginia Justicz made a motion and Willie Wickman seconded to accept the Executive Session Minutes from the October 20, 2008 meeting as presented to be released.  
(4/0) to accept the motion. . (Virginia Justicz (Yes), Stu Sklar (Yes), Patty Wenger (Yes), Willie Wickman (Yes), Keith Cheveralls (Abstain).

VOTED Willie Wickman made a motion and Keith Cheveralls seconded to accept the Executive Session Minutes from the December 8, 2008 meeting as presented not to be released.  
(5/0) to accept the motion. . (Virginia Justicz (Yes), Stu Sklar (Yes), Patty Wenger (Yes), Willie Wickman (Yes), Keith Cheveralls (Yes).

The Committee asked Patty Wenger, Committee Secretary, to prepare minutes from the budget meeting.

**Student Report**

Jacquie Holmes stated that the School Council wished the Committee a Happy New Year. She said that there was a smooth transition on the return to school, Drama Festival was holding tryouts, the Yearbook planning deadline is January 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Snowflake is scheduled for January 23<sup>rd</sup> with a 70's theme and the Snowball is scheduled for January 24<sup>th</sup> with a Jungle theme, and the Littleton-Bromfield Hockey Team is undefeated.

## **School Committee Reports**

Keith Cheveralls with the assistance of Fire Chief Mignard provided background information to the Committee on the oil tank replacement at both schools. Chief Mignard received a recommendation that the tank at the Elementary School be replaced with an external tank. The Committee did not believe an external tank would be feasible, and they discussed containment vessels, vaulted or double walled. The Chief stated that underground tanks require more regulation, and the approximate cost of remediating a leak would be \$30,000.00. Soil tests are required after a tank is removed. The Elementary tank just passed a pressure test. It is approximately \$70,000.00 per tank to remove and replace it without remediation. Keith discussed an annual grant program which offers a potential of 50% costs excluding any remediation. The Committee discussed investigating the feasibility of using the new gas line. This would require a new dual burner boiler. Keith recommended a side by side comparison of the costs. Chief Mignard recommended the Elementary school tank be replaced as soon as practical. Lorraine Leonard will determine the costs for capital planning. Chief Mignard thanked Mark Force and his department for their assistance during the ice storm, and Dr. Jefferson thanked Chief Mignard for his leadership and efforts as well.

Keith Cheveralls updated the Committee on the Capital Planning Committee. He stated that the Board of Selectmen appointed two residents, Deb Ricci and Cindy Russo, and George McKenna was appointed from the Finance Committee.

Willie Wickman presented an update on the Getty land. A meeting is scheduled for Thursday to discuss recommendation for a Town forum. Willie is working with Lucy Wallace to prepare a handout. Willie confirmed the Committee's stance on the possible land usage, and the Committee was comfortable with the usages of housing and recreation.

Virginia Justicz presented an update on the Special Education Audit Committee. They had received a draft report from Jim Early and Gagliardi Associates. The report will be presented at a public forum in January, at a Tri-Board meeting and at Town Meeting.

Maureen Babcock advised that DEAC elected two new members so there is a new board. They parents are very active. They are planning for the transition to the Elementary School. Residents of Devens had received Dr. Jefferson's mailing and were responding. A meeting is scheduled for January 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

Virginia Justicz further reported that the Policy Subcommittee met on Wednesday and finalized Section G. This section will be included in the next School Committee packet for review.

Stu Sklar reported on the PTO meeting. The PTO is having a SmartBoard fundraiser. The goal is to have a SmartBoard in every elementary classroom and where requested at the high school.

## **Superintendent Report**

Dr. Jefferson thanked Mark Force and his department, Chef Paul, and Nurse Colleen Nigzus for their efforts during the ice storm. He further thanked the PTO for funding the ConnectEd system which was instrumental in keeping the public informed during the state of emergency. Tim Bragan is looking into a reverse 911 system for the Town to utilize.

Tom presented updated enrollment information. He informed the Committee that Annual Town Report submissions were fast approaching, and the Committee asked him to draft them. He discussed the Small and Rural Schools Task Force Report, and the Committee requested that he prepare an executive summary with back up of the data to give to FinCom and BOS to assist in the regionalization discussion.

## **Old Business**

### **FY09 Budget**

Lorraine Leonard and Dr. Jefferson provided an update on the FY09 Budget. There is a \$40,000 surplus less the state local aid reduction and excise tax reduction which are undetermined. The budget is in limbo until those amounts are determined. Lorraine also presented an Outside Fund Report. Discussed the costs associated with the ice storm. Lorraine advised that FEMA may reimburse 75% of those expenses.

### **FY10 Budget**

Dr. Jefferson discussed the draft FY10 Budget which includes a 2% increase over the FY09 allocation. Discussed further reductions to absorb health care offset costs and local aid reductions. Tom presented a Q & A Overview. The Committee also discussed NEASC accreditation which requires a certified high school librarian and instituting a student parking fee. The Committee discussed whether a working budget necessitated a vote.

VOTED Willie Wickman made the motion and Virginia Justicz seconded to accept draft FY10 Budget as a working budget to present to FinCom and the BOS.  
(4/1) to accept the motion. . (Virginia Justicz (Yes), Stu Sklar (Yes) Patty Wenger (Yes), Willie Wickman (Yes), Keith Cheveralls (No).

The Chair requested that the secretary post the Tri-Board Meeting for February 11, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. at the Town Hall Meeting Room.

## **New Business**

### **0809 School Calendar**

Dr. Jefferson advised that he was scheduled to meet with the Commissioner of Education tomorrow to discuss meeting the 180 day requirement. He further advised of potential ways to meet that requirement if necessary. Discussed requesting to move the MCAS date back in order to prepare students and requesting a waiver for graduation. It was suggested that early release days be changed to full days to also prepare for MCAS. Tom will email a summary of tomorrow's discussion to the Committee after the meeting. The Committee will revisit at the Tri-Board meeting scheduled for January 21<sup>st</sup>.

The Committee discussed a request from Janet Vellante, Town Clerk, to change the early day of May 6<sup>th</sup> to May 5<sup>th</sup> due to Town Election.

Keith Cheveralls made the motion and Willie Wickman seconded to change the early release date of May 6<sup>th</sup> to May 5<sup>th</sup>.

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

The Chair requested the change be posted on-line and emailed to the PTO and staff.

### **Gifts**

The Harvard Schools Trust submitted the following gift:

1. Proceeds from Ducky Wucky Fundraiser - \$449.00

Virginia Justicz made the motion and Willie Wickman seconded to accept the gift.

VOTED (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.

Willie Wickman suggested the Committee work on a newsletter and the following members will work the following topics: Dr. Jefferson-ice storm, Strategic Plan, Virginia Justicz – Special Education Audit, Patty Wenger – Energy Initiative, Dr. Jefferson and Willie Wickman – Devens.

### **Adjournment**

Virginia Justicz made a motion and Willie Wickman seconded to adjourn the meeting.

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Minutes submitted,

Jackie Smith  
Secretary