

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
HARVARD TOWN HALL
Monday, August 25, 2008
7:00 P.M.

Members Present: Keith Cheveralls, Virginia Justicz, Stu Sklar, Patty Wenger, Willie Wickman, and Thomas Jefferson (Superintendent)

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

Minutes

VOTED Willie Wickman moved and Keith Cheveralls seconded to approve the minutes from the 7/08/08 meeting as amended. (Approved 5-0)

VOTED Willie Wickman moved and Keith Cheveralls seconded to approve the minutes from the 7/08/08 Executive Session. (Approved 5-0)

Open Comments:

Kathleen Doherty spoke about the opening of the school and that the staff is very positive and enthusiastic about the year. She also gave information on the Question 1 ballot and volunteered to speak to anyone interested if they would like more information.

Leo Blair spoke about an initiative to create an endowment for the Harvard Public Schools. Would like to try to set a goal of \$5 million to be raised over the next 5 years. Other towns have been successful with this idea and it would be worth looking into the options for Harvard.

He also is interested in looking at options for use of the Hapgood Library that would include the students at the Bromfield. He proposed an after school study center that could be monitored by adults or older Bromfield students who may be part of the Peer tutoring system. Other suggestions made and the committee opted to place this on their next agenda for further discussion.

Student Reports:

The committee welcomed the new student representatives who shared reports about fall sports and a student memorial for Gary Fernandez.

School Committee Reports:

Keith Cheveralls reported on a workshop he recently attended from the Office of Campaign and Finance. The committee expressed interest in participating in attending a similar seminar with other town boards. Keith also updated the committee on the work of the Policy Subcommittee. The group is finalizing their revision of Section J (Students).

Patty Wenger reported on the work of the Harvard Energy Group. Several items were discussed, and information on a site visit for the 16th of September was shared. It was reported that the solar project is on hold, pending upcoming changes in regulations and eligibility.

Stu Sklar reported that the Suburban Coalition is crafting a position statement encouraging defeat of Question One (elimination of the state income tax) on the upcoming ballot. Members unanimously supported the idea that the School Committee might formally adopt a position that could be expressed through a letter sent in collaboration with other interested town boards and groups.

Superintendent Report:

Dr. Jefferson reported to the committee on the tragic death of Bromfield Guidance Counselor Gary Fernandez. Details regarding services will be distributed through the website and local papers.

Tom also provided updates on the opening of school preparations and enrollment.

Old Business:

MassDevelopment Contract

- Dr. Jefferson reviewed the MassDevelopment contract and the Committee discussed considerations regarding use of the early childhood facility at Devens and recommended forming a task force.

VOTED: Virginia Justicz moved and Willie Wickman seconded that the School Committee form a task force as outlined in the agenda (amended to include one **parent** from the HES Council). Approved 5-0

2008-09 Meeting Schedule

- The committee reviewed the proposed 2008-09 meeting schedule. It was recommended to adopt the schedule with the following revisions:

- Consider scheduling the October 27 meeting at Monty Tech
- Hold a business meeting on November 10 and an open forum on November 17 @ 10:00 a.m.
- The March 22 meeting, which is also the budget hearing, should be March 23.
- A suggestion was presented and will be followed up on to obtain a list of meetings going on in town which 1 or 2 members of the school committee could attend to offer information or answer questions as needed.

Letters from Office of Campaign and Political Finance

- Stu Sklar shared correspondence he received ruling on and clarifying restrictions on future messages. Copies of the letter can be obtained from the Superintendent's Office.

New Business:

Management Letter from Auditor

- The committee reviewed the letter which had been received from the auditor. No specific recommendations for the school department were noted other than considering a triennial audit of the student activity account.

New Staff Reception

- The committee agreed to host a reception for new staff on Wednesday, September 10 @ 4:00 p.m. at the Bromfield House.

Coordinated Program Review

- Dr. Jefferson shared action items being addressed in response to the recent Coordinated Program Review.

School Committee Goals

- The School Committee scheduled a meeting to revise/establish goals for the 2008-09 year for Tuesday, September 2 @ 8:45 a.m.

VOTED: Moved at 9:17 p.m. by Willie Wickman, seconded by Virginia Justicz to enter into executive session for purposed of reviewing pending litigation and negotiations. Roll call: Cheveralls (yes), Justicz (yes) Wenger (yes), Wickman (yes), Sklar (yes). 5-0

Reconvened into open session at 9:48 p.m. (Wickman, Wenger, Justicz, Sklar)

VOTED: Moved by Willie Wickman, seconded by Virginia Justicz to approve the HTA stipends recommended by the stipend committee. (Approved 4-0)

Keith Cheveralls recused himself from the vote.

Motion to ajourn: Moved by Patty Wenger, seconded by Willie Wickman (approved 4-0).

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.