School Committee Minutes

Upper Town Hall

Monday, November 14, 2016

6:00 p.m.

Members attending: Mary Traphagen, Nancy Lancellotti, Jon Green, Patty Wenger, Maureen   
Babcock, Peter Rowe, and Linda Dwight.

SusanMary Redinger called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Mary Traphagen read the vision statement.

**Public Commentary –** None

**Superintendent Report** – Dr. Dwight reported to the Committee the following:

\*Perspective architect/design firms walked through HES to gain insight into the project and scope. They were allowed to ask questions and take pictures.

\*Seven of the firms submitted formal applications.

\*The School Building Committee members received either electronic copies or paper copies of the 7 applications to review and provide feedback.

\*A meeting is set for November 22nd.

\* On Tuesday, November 8th, the faculty participated in a Professional Development Day of cross grade curriculum review, sharing student work, and curriculum mapping. Those curriculum activities were followed by a presentation of legal updates from our special education attorney. The feedback showed how meaningful the opportunities were to the teachers.

\*A team of teachers visited Oak Meadow Middle School in Shrewsbury to see their 1:World program in action and learn from the teachers who are teaching with the tools. The feedback afterwards confirmed the value of this type of collaborating together. Another team of teacher and district leaders attended the Innovation Summit in Boston.

**Grant Approval**

Dr. Dwight presented for approval the following grants from the Harvard School Trust:

1. Em Wave, $803.58
2. West African drumming, $850
3. Bromfield Debate, $750
4. Mosaic math “games”, $200
5. Breakout box, $89
6. 6,000 lumens projector & short throw lens, $2,529

Mary Traphagen made the motion and Nancy Lancellotti seconded to accept the grants from the Harvard Schools Trust as presented.

VOTE 5/0

**Financial Report**

School Business Manager, Peter Rowe reported on the FY17 spending for the Harvard Public Schools as of October 31, 2016. The projected spending for the year would yield a small deficit for the year of $20,894. The major factors affecting spending are the custodial services contract which exceeded the budget by $50K, snow removal which is projected at an additional $35K, the regular transportation contract increase of $33K , Out of District Placement costs at $59K over budget and the loss of the state funded Kindergarten grant at $20K . These overages are largely offset by approximately $157K in salary savings from staff turnover and a projected surplus of $24K in the Special Education transportation account. In addition the Special Education 240 Grant Award for FY17 is $10,014 higher than budgeted and a $60K offset of Technology Hardware was included in the “Devens Technology” line rather than in the Sub total line. It is important to note that current information indicates that the Circuit Breaker Reimbursement will be $391,085 rather than $460K and School Choice Reimbursement at $285K rather than $320K. Each of these shortfalls may be made up by appropriating the FY17 shortfall from the existing fund balance, as each of these accounts contains available reserves. Going forward for FY17 the Out of District Student Placements are expected to present the greatest challenge to remaining within the budget, as certain cases are pending review and/or adjusted placement during the current school year.

**Budget timeline and review process**

Cost Center Managers will present their budgets at the November 28th School Committee meeting and at an off schedule School Committee meeting on Wednesday, December 7th at 5 p.m. at the Bromfield School teacher’s lounge. The Committee should have all budget information and be ready to vote on the FY18 budget at the December 12th meeting.

**Devens Survey Results**

Maureen Babcock presented the results of the 2016 DEAC Educational Survey dated September 2016. The survey was emailed to one email address per household. There were 61 respondents, 38 had children and 23 had no children in school. The question that continues to hold the most importance and received a 95% approval rating is “Are the students of Devens being well served educationally by our education contract with the Harvard Public Schools?” In general people are happy with the educational arrangement. Maureen Babcock will bring the survey back to a DEAC meeting to dial down on some specific areas. Dr. Dwight will share the survey results with the administrative team.

**Review the BOS offer re: space at the Old Library**

SusanMary Redinger received an email from Marie Sobalvarro dated November 8th asking town departments if they had any interest in space at the Old Library. SusanMary reviewed the process the School Committee has used to try to make a decision as to which of the two building would best serve the School’s Administrative Offices. While the cost of making the Bromfield House ADA compliant remains an unsettled issue, the Committee recognizes the importance of the Bromfield House as an important historic property to the town and feels it is important to retain town land adjacent to school property. The CASE Collaborative is interested in leasing the Old Library to house the Colebrook School. CASE Collaborative would pay the costs to bring the Old Library up to code. SusanMary Redinger read a letter she drafted to the Board of Selectman making them aware that the School Committee is not interested in using the Old Library for Administrative Offices and supports the CASE Collaborative leasing the Old Library to house the Colebrook School. In addition, the School Committee has authorized a request for funding to develop architectural plans to bring the Bromfield House up to code in the most fiscally responsible way possible.

Mary Traphagen made a motion and Patty Wenger seconded to move that the Harvard School Committee supports the letter that was read endorsing the CASE Collaborative using the Old Library.

VOTE 5/0

**Clarification of “harassment” vs “bullying” in policy and student handbooks**

The Committee reviewed for clarification the definitions of harassment versus bullying in policies and in the student handbook. Dr. Dwight explained that harassment can be a one- time thing where bullying happens over time. Dr. Dwight suggested that the Policy Subcommittee read through the bullying and harassment policies and cross reference all of the policy and the language used and the consequences defined for clarification. It will be useful to develop a flow chart that can be used as a resource for students and parents. The Committee discussed how we apply hate speech to our bullying and harassment policy and how it would be defined. SusanMary Redinger suggested asking our lawyer, Liz Valerio, if there is anything definitive that we should be including in our policies relative to hate speech.

**HEAC update on Ntl. Grid project and Capital** **requests** – Tabled

**Review meeting minutes**

With no objection SusanMary Redinger made a motion and Patty Wenger seconded to approve the minutes of the October 25, 2016 meeting as presented.

VOTE 5/0

**Liaison/Sub-committee Reports**

Nancy Lancellotti reported that the Bromfield School Council is breaking into two groups. One group will be looking at the student handbook and the other will be looking at climate.

Mary Traphagen reported that the Policy Subcommittee will meet tomorrow. Mary Traphagen will continue as the liaison to the HES School Council. HES School Council is discussing ways to improve homework. The hope is to come up with a change in the way homework is crafted.

SusanMary Redinger reported that the building meeting with NV5 was very and we are looking forward to working with them.

Patty Wenger met with Pam Alexander and Peter Rowe regarding user fees. The Athletic Advisor meeting is scheduled to meet on November 28th. Patty Wenger will meet with SusanMary Redinger and Dr. Dwight to prepare answers to the CIPIC questions for the meeting Thursday night.

Jon Green reported that he met with Dr. Dwight and Dr. Harrington regarding SEPAC and they were able to move things forward and plan to send out a survey in the next week or so.

Maureen Babcock reported that there is an open election at Devens for two DEAC seats and two candidates are on the ballot. Both candidates are incumbents which will be good for continuity. The Emerson Green Development has one more house occupied. Currently 3 out of 18 homes are occupied. Phase 2 of the development project is expected to start in the spring.

**Suggest Future Agenda Items**

Technology

TBS Parent Survey

Policy

Budget

Student Assessment and Achievement

Student Participation

**Open to Interested Citizens Commentary**

None

The School Committee will be meeting in executive session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Harvard Teacher’s Association because an open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the committee.  The committee will reconvene into open session for the purpose of adjournment.

SusanMary Redinger made a motion and Mary Traphagen seconded to go into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Harvard Teachers Association and Dr. Dwight.

Green (Aye), Lancellotti (Aye), Redinger (Aye), Traphagen (Aye), and Wenger (Aye).

Patty Wenger made the motion and Jon Green seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 p.m.

VOTE 5/0

Respectfully submitted: Mary Zadroga