

Minutes

PRESENT: Ms. Betsy Bilodeau
Ms. Nicole Burkel
Mr. Michael Fitzgerald
Ms. Jan McGinn
Ms. Rebecca Shannon
Mr. Jerry Wedge

PRESENT FROM ADMINISTRATION: Dr. Brenda Finn, Superintendent
Mr. John Flaherty
Ms. Diana Rigby

ABSENT: Mr. Patrick Sinnott

I CALL TO ORDER AND GREETING

The meeting was called to open session by Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Wedge at 6:36 p.m.

II READING OF THE MINUTES

A MOTION was made by Ms. Burkel and seconded by Ms. Bilodeau for CCSC and a MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Ms. McGinn for CSC to approve the minutes from the Joint School Committee meeting held October 25, 2005. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

A MOTION was made by Ms. McGinn and seconded by Ms. Bilodeau for CSC to approve the minutes from the CSC meeting held October 11, 2005. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

A MOTION was made by Ms. McGinn and seconded by Ms. Bilodeau for CSC to approve the minutes from the CSC meeting held October 25, 2005. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

III CORRESPONDENCE

Dr. Finn received correspondence from David Holdorf regarding his comments at the July 26, 2005 School Committee meeting. The minutes have been amended to more accurately reflect what he said.

IV RECOGNITION

Dr. Finn recognized two CCHS students in receiving the Superintendent's Certificate of Academic Excellence. Both students are outstanding members of the CCHS community. Dr. Finn recognized Katherine Swanson and Katherine DeGuglielmo and read testimonials by Mr. Dulong. Dr. Finn stated this is an extraordinary award. Students are selected by educators over the course of four years.

Dr. Finn recognized the Willard staff and students for their production of The Beanstalk. There were over 124 contributors to the production.

Mr. Dulong recognized David Anderson and the custodial and maintenance staff at the high school for working to keep sidewalks and parking areas cleared during the Friday snowstorm. An event was scheduled for that evening, and they made extraordinary efforts.

Mr. Flaherty recognized custodial and maintenance staff at Sanborn for a similar extraordinary effort.

VI REPORTS AND ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

A. Discussion: Surplus of Strawberry Hill Property

Chris Whelan stated the purchase price of the Burke Land would be \$2.5M. He requested the School Committee to consider to vote their intent to declare the 19.3 acre property as surplus for educational needs.

Mr. Wedge asked when would we vote our intent. When would we vote to surplus. Mr. Whelan stated at town meeting after the town agrees to the financing plan.

Ms. Shannon asked if the property would be sold at the market rate. Mr. Whelan stated it has been suggested a public hearing be held. It would begin with a public discussion. If it were proposed to sell without restrictions, Town Meeting could authorize something different.

Ms. Bilodeau stated the graphic produced in the package is different than the agreed upon easement configuration.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Ms. McGinn for CCSC for the School Committee to intend to surplus 19.29 (+/-) acres of land presently designated as educational use at 14A Strawberry Hill Road, Parcel # 1986-6 at such time of the transfer of custody of the Burke Land property, Parcel #4185-2 at 129 Old Bedford Road. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

V ACTION ITEMS

A. Vote to Approve: Use of Cameras for Safety and Security

Dr. Finn stated this was a second reading. A MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Ms. McGinn for CCSC and a MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Ms. Shannon for CSC to accept the policy, "Use of Cameras for Safety and Security" as written.

Mr. Wedge stated any time new cameras are brought to the school, the School Committee will be notified.

The MOTION was unanimously approved.

B. First Reading: Revision of Advertising on School District Property

Dr. Finn stated this is a first reading.

Tom Schnitzer asked if athletic groups do some sort of advertising, do they have to run it by the principal. Procedurally, students do not have to run it by the principal. The hope is that teams would use discretion.

Mr. Wedge stated we would not allow permanent signs. After the game, the advertising would be covered up. The softball team fence has three years to comply with the policy.

C. Vote to amend: Mileage reimbursement for CPS and CCRSD

Mr. Flaherty stated we adopted the IRS rate which was different from the town. This amendment will put us in line with the town's rate.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Ms. McGinn for CCSC and a MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Ms. McGinn for CSC to vote to match the mileage reimbursement rate that the Town of Concord uses for employee mileage reimbursement requests, effective January 1, 2006. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

D. Vote to approve School Calendar 2006-07

Kelly McCausland stated the calendar committee met three times. They looked at professional development days, Veteran's Day falls on a Saturday this year. There have been no changes related to instructional time which is an issue for CPS.

Mr. Wedge stated this is the third year the committee had high hopes for changing professional development days. If this is deemed important, he suggested looking at this over the summer.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Ms. McGinn for CCSC and a MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Ms. McGinn for CSC to approve the calendar as presented. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

E. Vote to approve budget transfer

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Ms. Burkel for CCSC to transfer \$23,532 from account 1-201-20501 to account 1-201-22501. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

F. Vote to approve Revised Preliminary Warrant Article List

Mr. Flaherty stated this is different from the previous package. There are language changes for design funds at Willard. There is also a language change on the Willard School renovation article.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Ms. McGinn for CCSC and a MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Ms. McGinn for CSC to approve the revised preliminary Warrant Article List. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

H. Gift Acceptance – Donation from Concord’s Home for the Aged to Adult & Community Education

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Ms. McGinn for CCSC to accept the \$2,000 donation from Concord’s Home for the Aged to Adult & Community Education. The MOTION was unanimously approved with gratitude.

I. Gift Acceptance – Donation from Mahoney’s Garden Centers

A MOTION was made by Ms. McGinn and seconded by Ms. Shannon for CSC to accept a donation of \$600 by Mahoney’s Garden Centers to the PTG’s at Willard, Thoreau, Alcott and Concord Middle Schools. The MOTION was unanimously approved with gratitude.

J. Gift Acceptance – Donation from West Concord Family Festival Committee

A MOTION was made by Ms. McGinn and seconded by Ms. Shannon for CSC to accept a donation of \$1,000 by The West Concord Family Festival Committee to the three elementary school libraries. The MOTION was unanimously approved with gratitude.

K. Gift Acceptance – Donation of books from Sue Pommers

A MOTION was made by Ms. McGinn and seconded by Ms. Shannon for CSC to accept a donation of \$5,000 worth of books to the Concord Public Schools. The MOTION was unanimously approved and Ms. Pommers was publicly thanked for her donation.

VI REPORTS AND ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

C. CPS FY-07 Budget

Mr. Flaherty presented the budget. He stated he took the existing budget and rolled it forward a year. The preliminary request was this with the escalation factor. After this the levy limit was issued as well as the FinCom over-ride

guideline. He detailed the reductions in order to get to the levy limit and the FinCom guideline.

Mr. Wedge asked if unemployment were a school issue. Mr. Flaherty stated it is a town issue.

Ms. Shannon asked if not having the behavioral specialist will have a negative effect on the schools. Ms. Rigby stated we have only had this position for three years. The funding for this has been cut from the federal level. Ms. Rigby stated that the behavioral specialists were funded through a three-year federal grant that will expire and not be renewed. During their time in our schools, the specialists have trained the teachers to better handle behavioral difficulties in the classroom.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Ms. McGinn to adopt the FinCom over-ride guideline budget level of \$25,460,285.

Ms. Bilodeau stated at coordination meetings, there have been changes, there are significant tax increases and we are also trying to make capital improvements. The FinCom has heard the school needs and has been cooperative, this budget meets the needs of the school and considers the needs of the taxpayer. We provide a great budget at that level.

Mr. Wedge stated we can't be complacent and think over-rides will pass every year. He thanked Mr. Flaherty and Dr. Finn for making such a tight budget.

The MOTION was voted and unanimously approved.

D. CCRSD FY-07 Budget

Mr. Flaherty stated the same scenario for the regional budget. He detailed the reductions necessary to get to the FinCom over-ride limit and the levy limit. Mr. Flaherty stated the student/teacher ratio would go from 90/1 to 95/1, there would be more of those large classes. Dr. Finn stated we have to provide a budget at the levy limit by Massachusetts law.

Ms. Burkel stated the list of what to cut really declines, there isn't a buffer at the high school.

Mr. Fitzgerald noted the reduction in the Step program. Mr. Dulong stated some operational aspects are currently running on a shoestring budget and are for next year as well. Step serves disadvantaged students. Last year there were eight students, all but one graduated. This year there are fewer students, but next year we are up to eight or more. The risk is that students won't be able to access the program and will most likely drop out or go to outside placement.

Mr. Flaherty stated there is a target number of revenue if we impose a fee for clubs, we risk not getting participation but would offer scholarships. Fees would cover \$36,000.

Mr. Dulong stated we could charge a single fee for clubs and a family maximum. We could assign fees according to clubs, some more than others. Mr. Fitzgerald asked if he worried about attrition. Mr. Dulong stated in sports we have not lost students, we have liberally scholarships and sports participation has risen. Clubs are tougher to predict, there is more passion around sports.

Leigh Davis stated there would be a high risk of losing students, there would be freshmen who just wouldn't try the club to begin with.

Ms. Burkel is opposed to the fee, there is very little offered for kids to interact with each other. The bus fee of \$100 was not worth the cost to administer it.

Ms. Bilodeau is opposed to charging fees. She stated it puts up barriers and we want to create more healthy activities for students to meet each other.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated we could try to get another \$35K out of E & D this year to build up the Step program. The ratio this year is out of skew and hopefully next year we will get back on track.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Ms. McGinn for CCSC to adopt the CCRSD budget of \$19,189,282.

An amendment was made by Ms. Shannon to accept a budget of \$19,378,154. It was not seconded.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated there is \$1.2M in capital requests, he is concerned if we add another \$188K to that.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated we are voting the assessment not the budget. Mr. Wedge asked if Concord and Carlisle FinCom guidelines match. Carlisle will meet the over-ride with the levy limit.

Mr. Schnitzer stated he is concerned to see the senior project on the cut list, this is a curricular option.

The MOTION was voted:

Aye: Bilodeau, Burkel, Fitzgerald, McGinn, Wedge

Nay: Shannon

V

ACTION ITEMS

M. Vote to approve Town/CPS cost allocation methodology and Memorandum of Agreement

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Ms. McGinn to authorize the chair of CSC to sign cost allocation methodology as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding dated December 6, 2005. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

Consortium Request

A MOTION was made by Mr. Wedge and seconded by Ms. Shannon for CCSC to approve the right for up to three CCHS students to participate in the History Consortium and authorize travel to N. Ireland as necessitated by the program. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

VI REPORTS AND ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

B. Vendor Request for Cell Tower Proposal

Mr. Wedge stated the School Committee has been approached by a wireless provider to build a 15 X 15 site tower. This has popped up in the past. There is a state restriction of 1,000 foot restriction on school property. Mr. Wedge asked if there was the desire to explore this as a potential revenue source.

Mr. Flaherty stated we have not worked with the town on this. We could expect \$30-35K per year. Ms. Bilodeau stated Mr. Flaherty is overloaded, let's draw upon the work the town has done. We have nothing to lose by looking into it. She stated let's have one conversation with Chris Whelan to see where the Board of Selectmen stands. If they are willing to do the work, it's worth cost sharing.

E. Reports from Subcommittees

Facilities

Mr. Wedge stated the Leadership for School Buildings Initiatives is the group working on the Willard article. They are working on a presentation and have asked to come to the first January meeting. They are here to improve buildings in Concord, not just Willard. They are a great asset.

Policy

Ms. Bilodeau stated the policy committee continues to meet periodically.

VII OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Wedge stated the Thoreau School is on schedule, by February 20 it will be substantially complete. The potential move date is at the end of the year. The move will be coordinated as soon as school ends.

Dr. Finn stated several unions are ready for negotiations. Ms. Shannon will work with the building service workers. Ms. Shannon will work with the bus drivers and Ms. Bilodeau will work with the maintenance workers.

VIII SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Public Budget Hearing and SC meeting scheduled for February 28, 2006

There are two meetings scheduled on February 28. Do we want to reschedule? It was decided to meet at 6:30 for one hour.

IX CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Arthur Dulong commented on three items on the CCHS reduction list. The guidance/social worker position deals with students with a variety of needs. It is an important piece. The 2.25 FTE staff will increase class size and there is a chance certain courses will be cut, it diminishes the quality of the program. The department chair reduction will change the principal and assistant principal roles, they will assume more duties. There is a misconception that the department chair is not 100% occupied with work. They are in all summer and work late every day. This will cause a change in structure at the high school. He stated it is important to understand what these reductions mean.

A member of the audience commented he supports building the high school first. If we do Willard and then the high school, there is a group of kids who are disrupted for several years. It's cheaper to build the high school first, it is not a good facility for Concord.

A member of the audience asked if there was talk of the Old Alcott being turned into Senior Housing. No, there has been no talk of that.

X ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Ms. McGinn for CCSC and a MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Ms. McGinn for CSC to adjourn the Joint School Committee meeting at 8:59 p.m. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura O'Sullivan
APPROVED: 1/24/06