

Approved: March 1, 2010

## BROOKLINE SCHOOL BOARD

JANUARY 19, 2010

### MEETING MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Brookline School Board was held on Tuesday, January 19, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. at the Captain Samuel Douglass Academy.

Chairman Dave Partridge presided:

Members of the Board Present:     Beth Lukovits, Vice-Chair  
  Forrest Milkowski, Secretary  
  Marcia Farwell  
  Wanda Meagher

Members of the Board Absent:

Also in Attendance:                 Susan Hodgdon, SAU41 Superintendent  
  Mark McLaughlin, Business Administrator  
  Bob Kelly, Director of Special Education  
  Lorraine Wenger, Principal, Captain Samuel Douglass Academy  
  Kristina Henry, Assistant Principal/Special Education Coordinator, CSDA

### **AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS**

### **PUBLIC INPUT**

### **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

#### **Principals**

#### **RMMS – Early Matriculation**

Chairman Partridge spoke of a request received for a student who will not be at the cut-off age to start first grade. He was hesitant to move forward due to the absence of Principal Desrochers and Assistant Principal Doig. Ms. Lukovits stated the parents were promised an answer. Superintendent Hodgdon stated she has not had the chance to meet with Principal Desrochers. Ms. Lukovits stated the parent had been told there would be a meeting and she would be given an answer. Chairman Partridge explained he had stated a meeting would be held and the request would be discussed.

Ms. Lukovits remarked the child misses the deadline by one day. The parent is looking to enroll her child in private kindergarten this year and is hopeful she would be able to enroll in first grade next year. Ms. Meagher stated another option would be for the child to be enrolled in readiness rather than first grade. Ms. Lukovits suggested the child be screened prior to entering first grade, which is done anyway, and if she doesn't screen toward the first grade she would have to agree to go to readiness. Superintendent Hodgdon stated her desire to have a conversation with Principal Desrochers.

Ms. Meagher felt the board should stick with the cut off date established, and in fact felt the date should be moved back.

Chairman Partridge was of a different opinion. He felt children are capable of much more than they are allowed to do. He had no issue with a child that is one day outside of the set deadline, provided he/she passes the screening.

A brief discussion ensued with regard to whether the board has allowed an exception in the past. Principal Wenger stated it has not been allowed. Ms. Meagher stated she was aware of a child, now in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, who was not allowed early admittance. Superintendent Hodgdon stated she had a personal experience along those lines. She followed the policy, and gladly so because she had been in middle school for a long time and observed, over the years, how tough it was by the child they got to middle school in terms of being emotionally and academically ready.

Chairman Partridge remarked there is a valid point to a deadline being a deadline. Ms. Lukovits questioned whether there was a deadline for first grade. Superintendent Hodgdon reiterated she has not had a conversation with the Principal. Chairman Partridge felt the issue needed to be tabled. Ms. Farwell suggested the Superintendent and Principal discuss the issue. If they believe there to be a reason to override the policy, the issue should be brought back to the board.

### CSDA

Chairman Partridge asked and was told there was no additional information beyond what was included in the monthly report.

### Director of Special Education

Director Kelly informed the board the SAU-wide RTI (Response to Intervention) committee met January 12<sup>th</sup>. The eleven-member committee reviewed all building intervention programs and identified current assessment instruments for both initial screenings and progress monitoring. Advantages and disadvantages were discussed regarding all present assessment instruments.

The committee also reviewed building level forms used to document referrals, initial screening data and progress monitoring. At their next meeting the committee will be working on standardizing these respective forms for consistency across all grade levels and buildings across the SAU.

The RTI steering committee members will also be researching best practices regarding screening and progress monitoring assessment instruments as well as research-based intervention programs.

All SAU RTI building level teams will be collecting data to document the number and types of referrals, number of students discharged from interventions programs verses number of students referred to special education and the number of these students identified under IDEA. Building level RTI teams will be meeting with administration and staff to assess best practices for providing level II supports outside of the classroom.

With regard to Medicaid reimbursement, the procedures are changing to electronic. That will transition over the next several months. Staff training will be conducted.

Chairman Partridge questioned whether any committee members had questions for Director Kelly regarding his report or his department's budget. As no questions were posed, Director Kelly departed.

*Mr. Milkowski departed.*

### Superintendent

*Staffing - None*

*09/10 Calendar*

Superintendent Hodgdon spoke of a yearly event associated with the teaching of Shakespeare where the middle school attends a production at the North Shore Musical theatre. As that venue can no longer be used,

the intent is to attend a showing of Romeo & Juliet at the Colonial theatre in Keene, NH. The only showing is scheduled for April 13<sup>th</sup>. Transportation home would not be possible unless they were on the early release schedule.

As a result and due to the desire to have the same early release days across the SAU, she requested the early release date planned for April 14<sup>th</sup> be changed to April 13<sup>th</sup>.

**MOTION BY MEMBER FARWELL TO MOVE THE APRIL EARLY RELEASE DAY FROM APRIL 14, 2010 TO APRIL 13, 2010**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER LUKOVITS  
4/0**

RIF POLICY

Chairman Partridge informed the board of a request from teachers to change the RIF Policy. He provided copies of the COOP's newly adjusted policy for review. He stated the request from the teachers included the striking out of Item #3, which in fact had been misinterpreted. They have said the request to strike out that language can be disregarded. The main request is that there would be no grouping. Basically it would be entirely and purely on a seniority basis.

**An unidentified speaker** remarked the PTA recognized that a person who is a music teacher, who doesn't have elementary certification, would not be put into a classroom teaching position. Chairman Partridge noted the addition on the second page of the words "for which she/he is certified". Ms. Meagher questioned why the word "seniority" had to be included. Chairman Partridge stated that is the actual description of what they asking for. Ms. Meagher did not have the same opinion. Ms. Farwell also stated her concern. Ms. Lukovits questioned whether the decision was to be made by the board or administrators. Superintendent Hodgdon responded it would be the superintendent working with the building principal.

Ms. Meagher commented the policy states the need for school board approval. Chairman Partridge clarified it states "decision to implement the reduction in force" and not the actual reduction of force. Ms. Lukovits commented on the wording "may it be necessary the school board shall use the following factors..." and commented it sounds like the board would debate the issue. Chairman Partridge responded it probably should say the following factors shall be used rather than saying the school board will.

*Mr. Milkowski was noted to be in attendance.*

Chairman Partridge reiterated the teachers' request to move away from the various groupings to seniority. He remarked the COOP recently updated their policy. They separate by classification of the areas they teach and layoffs occur within the classifications. He suggested the board might want to visit the groups. He was unsure he was in favor of eliminating the groups and going to a single list. If an instance such as the eliminating a sixth grade position occurred he would not believe it appropriate to lay off a current first grade teacher due to seniority. He did not believe removing all discretion from the policy to be appropriate.

Ms. Meagher did not believe it would remove all discretion. Chairman Partridge stated it calls for there to be a single seniority list and you would go right down the list. Ms. Meagher commented it states later in the policy "after probationary, the school board shall use the following factors.....". She stated if the word "seniority" were taken out of the list this wording describes the next step. Chairman Partridge agreed he had a misunderstanding. What was being requested was for the wording to be that once they got down the list of factors to an equal standing, seniority would apply.

Chairman Partridge posed the question if the job classifications were removed from the listing and what was left was "classified area" then if you have two teachers of equal standing, you are reducing a 6<sup>th</sup> grade position and you have a 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher and a 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher who has less seniority, how would you justify laying off the 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher? Ms. Meagher remarked the policy states evaluation/experience so you could use experience in teaching first grade as a justification. Chairman Partridge stated it says "in certified area". They

would both be certified as elementary teachers and job classifications would have been removed from the policy. He felt there was nothing that would allow you to take into consideration the experience in a particular area. Ms. Meagher stated she didn't really object to that. She felt if the district had a superb first grade teacher they could be a superb 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher.

Mr. Milkowski questioned the opinion of the administration. **An unidentified member of the public** remarked there are some people who don't believe they are able to work with any other age level but what they are comfortable with, and there are a few that are happy to work with any grade level and are good at it. Chairman Partridge commented the way it is currently written, if a 6<sup>th</sup> grade position were to be eliminated a 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher could not be laid off in favor of keeping the 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher. He questioned the view of the administration.

Principal Wenger remarked Item #3 gets muddled when you take out the experience and certification. She was unclear on the classifications. Superintendent Hodgdon stated she has typically seen two classifications; one is the classroom teacher and the other the specialist. Chairman Partridge commented if all groups were removed you could, for instance, remove a specialist style position (non-generic classroom teacher position) and have to layoff a classroom teacher and move the person who occupied that position into the classroom. There would be no discretion on that. Ms. Meagher stated if you went solely on seniority that would not be the case. Chairman Partridge commented if you went by the other criteria you have to be able to justify them. Superintendent Hodgdon added, having done this several times, it is helpful to have the other criteria.

The discussion continued with regard to justification and possible scenarios. Ms. Meagher did not object to the two classifications of teacher and specialist. Chairman Partridge asked the administration to provide a proposed new list of classifications.

It was the general consensus of the board that Item #3 should reference the administration "use or consider the following factors" rather than the school board.

Mr. Milkowski asked whether the requested information could be provided in time for the contract negotiation meeting January 28<sup>th</sup>. Superintendent Hodgdon felt it could be. Ms. Lukovits stated complaints existed last year about being laid off because of categories being eliminated. Superintendent Hodgdon stated material was generated from the research done last spring for support staff, which can be drawn upon.

#### FY11 Budget

##### Fourth review of the proposed FY11 Budget

Speaking with regard to the Change Summary sheet, Mr. McLaughlin stated there were 6 adjustments dated 1-19-2010 for transportation, building repairs, and transfer to expendable trust as well as some changes as to where the budget is compared to the original 12-8-09 proposal. He verified the change sheet equals the by line item budget. He also went back through the minutes of the 12-22-09 to review the changes, questions, etc.

PowerSchool - has now been reallocated based on the assessment percent: COOP 50.37%, HSD 31%, and BSD 18.63%. The \$22,000 that was being assessed and charged from technology is the correct increase, primarily driven as a result of the PowerSchool, server replacement, and a few other smaller items.

The Preschool budget reduction/adjustment of \$3,750 has been made.

Alert Now and Destiny Library software are budgeted in line 10.1169.650.01/02. The 10.2225.650.00 account is zeroed out. Ms. Meagher questioned why the Destiny library software is being budgeted again for next year even though it was budgeted for this year. Mr. McLaughlin was unsure if that included a license or maintenance fee.

Principal Wenger remarked Destiny would have a yearly fee. Ms. Meagher felt the amount was too high. Mr. McLaughlin stated the Alert Now as \$2.50 per student. There may be something else built into that line, but these were the only two items for software he could zero in on and find out that was in there. Chairman Partridge stated the concern to be that they did not knowingly approve a recurring \$8,000 a year expense for Destiny software.

Principal Wenger stated, although she could not speak specifically to the Destiny software, the district has paid for software support in the library each year (over \$5,000). Ms. Meagher explained the reason she questioned it was because it was new last year. She had thought it to be a one-time expense that had been carried over. Chairman Partridge stated 10.1169.650 – computer software, is a zeroed budget item until 2009/2010 where there was \$8,900 and now again there is \$8,900 listed for both schools. He questioned how \$18,000 more was spent last year, and that it is being budgeted again for next year.

He stated the description of “support Destiny software” means the board agreed to pay \$18,000 a year for Destiny software. Alert Now counts for \$1,500 of that, which leaves \$16,500 that we are unsure where it is going. He reiterated the board did not agree to spend \$16,500 a year on Destiny software. He stated if Destiny software is truly the answer, the board needs to re-evaluate whether it should be purchased for next year. Principal Wenger touched on how the library software was accounted for. Mr. McLaughlin stated there is a line for library computer software, which is why he pointed out that line 10.2225.650.00 zeroed out in 2011.

Chairman Partridge stated \$8,902 had been budgeted in that line for a few years. Mr. McLaughlin remarked the account number ending in 00 indicates it is a district expense versus an individual school, and suggested it could have been under the I.T. Director’s control in prior years and then changed in 2010. Chairman Partridge requested the I.T. Director be asked to provide a breakdown of the \$8,900 allocation to each of the two schools.

With regard to the transportation line, 10.2700.626.01, Mr. McLaughlin stated the number was incorrect due to the way it was put together. There was a duplicate on the gasoline line.

**With regard to line 10.2600.438.01/02, building repairs/carpentry, they have paid for plywood, roof leaks, vandalism of windows, other roof repairs, miscellaneous glass and hardware, lighting fixtures in parking lot, etc. Line 10.2600.438.01 has been reduced by \$5,500 and line 10.2600.438.02 by \$1,000.**

**Last year, line 10.1100.128.01, salaries/substitutes, was budgeted at \$40,000 with year to date expenditures of \$26,904. The recommendation is to budget \$40,000. Line 10.1100.128.02 was budgeted at \$8,000 with year to date expenditures of \$12,540. The recommendation is to budget \$25,000. The consensus of the board was to allocate \$25,000 to line item 10.1100.128.02.**

**Legal expenses, 10.2318.301.00 was budgeted for \$30,000 with year to date expenditures of \$14,000. Mr. McLaughlin questioned whether the line should be reduced.**

**Line 10.1123.614.00 has been corrected. Due to a formula change in the spreadsheet, formulas don’t pull forward. Line 10.1169.113.02, computer aide, is still on the payroll. The individual performing this job is listed, for the purpose of the budget, as computer aid paraprofessional.**

**With regard to line 10.2600.432.01/02, fire alarms, Mr. McLaughlin informed the board \$6,200 has been expended for the fire panel and pull station repair, \$1,300 for fire inspection/building monitoring, and \$1,500 for miscellaneous fire extinguisher charges, etc. He felt the \$12,000 proposed budget to be realistic. It was the desire of the board to reduce this line by \$5,000.**

**Utilities are on pace to spend approximately \$42,000 for the year at CSDA with a budgeted amount of \$50,000 and approximately \$43,000 for the year at RMMS with a budgeted amount of \$51,882. Ms. Meagher stated her concern was mostly with the CSDA account as the actual spending history for 07/08 and 08/09 was \$10,000 less than what is budgeted. Chairman Partridge remarked for some reason the budget**

was increased by \$9,000 so the question was did the actuals reach that amount. Ms. Meagher felt the \$50,000 proposed budget for utilities at CSDA could be reduced. She suggested a reduction of \$5,000. The board expressed its agreement with reducing the line item for CSDA utilities, 10.2600.622.02 by \$5,000.

With regard to oil consumption, the price per gallon is not yet known as COOP purchasing/bulk purchasing are still under review.

Chairman Partridge remarked, assuming the computer aide position does not come out, the changes proposed at that point would increase the proposed budget by \$2,000. The other line to be investigated relates to the library software.

Principal Wenger questioned line 10.2900.239.0, teacher retirements. Chairman Partridge stated that should be known by January 1st. Superintendent Hodgdon stated she has not received any notifications. Ms. Lukovits remarked that is another \$21,011 reduction.

Mr. McLaughlin asked if the board wished for him to make a judgment call on reductions if the Alert Now and Destiny software lines can be reduced or if they prefer for him to seek a determination from them. The direction of the board was for him to make a judgment. It was noted the oil cost would likely increase by an approximate \$12,000.

Preparation for Budget Hearing on February 4th

The board summarized the proposed warrant articles. There were; an addition of \$10,000 to the expendable trust (from unexpended appropriations), support staff contract, and catastrophic aid funding.

Mr. Milkowski informed the board of meetings held by the Brookline Selectmen, SAU Board, Hollis School Board, COOP school board, and the Hollis Energy Committee with regard to a grant proposal that has been submitted on behalf of the school board by the Town of Brookline, which would be directed mostly at electrical usage within the two buildings. After the upgrades, the electrical would be covered by the grant. The other half of the project costs are tentatively being proposed to be covered by PSNH netting out to a zero dollar out-of-pocket expense to the school board.

The question arose as to whether up front funding would be required. Ms. Farwell stated that was the question asked at the meetings. She commented if the district has to expend funds they have to be raised.

Mr. Ernie Pistor, Chairman, Finance Committee - Informed the board it was described, at the Brookline Selectmen's meeting, as a zero out-of-pocket expense. There would be grant funding and PSNH contribution with the caveat that you lock in with PSNH for a number of years so that their costs would be covered out of your savings.

Chairman Partridge questioned whether a warrant article would be needed of lighting approval would be at the discretion of the board. Ms. Farwell stated it was discussed in the meeting that if funds are to be expended they have to be raised even though the district would expect to be reimbursed. She was not necessarily in agreement with that.

When asked, Mr. Pistor stated the LightTech representative did not make it entirely clear. He was asked to return with a maximum number so a warrant article could be prepared. Chairman Partridge questioned whether a warrant article would need to be done at the town or school level. Mr. Milkowski responded there would be two warrants - one for the town and one for the school. The specific warrant language the LightTech representative was looking to the town for would say something to the effect the voters agree that a not to exceed amount will be spent provided the grant is awarded.

Ms. Meagher reminded the board last year they had prepared a warrant article for the fuel expendable trust and passed it over as they acquired the negotiated pre-pay fuel contract at \$1.60/gallon before the meeting.

She suggested the board might want to consider a similar warrant article. Chairman Partridge suggested they wait to see the recommendation that comes back with regard to fuel costs.

Chairman Partridge questioned whether the board desired moving the start time of the budget hearing to 7:00 p.m. in the hopes of gaining greater public participation. Mr. Milkowski recommended the board meet at 6:30 p.m. and hold the public hearing at 7:00 p.m. The board agreed the public hearing start time would be posted as 7:00 p.m.

Ms. Meagher reminded the board last year they had a draft presentation prepared in time for the budget hearing. In order for her to be prepared with a presentation she would require an updated budget spreadsheet by the middle of the following week (electronic copy).

Ms. Lukovits stated she liked the presentation given by the COOP last year. She believed it a good document to review and consider for adoption.

APPROVAL OF SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES

Brookline School Board . . . . . December 22, 2009  
▪ Held

Brookline School Board – Non Public . . . . . December 22, 2009

**MOTION BY MEMBER FARWELL TO APPROVE AS WRITTEN  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MILKOWSKI  
MOTION CARRIED  
5/0**

Brookline School Board . . . . . October 27, 2009  
▪ Held

Brookline School Board – Non Public . . . . . November 17, 2009

**MOTION BY MEMBER FARWELL TO APPROVE AS WRITTEN  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MILKOWSKI  
MOTION CARRIED  
5/0**

**MOTION BY MEMBER FARWELL TO ADJOURN  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MILKOWSKI  
MOTION CARRIED  
5/0**

The January 19, 2010 meeting of the Brookline School Board was adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_