

1 Approved as amended October 27, 2009

2 BROOKLINE SCHOOL BOARD

3 SEPTEMBER 22, 2009

4 MEETING MINUTES

5
6
7 A regular meeting of the Brookline School Board was held on Tuesday, September 22, 2009 at 6:07 p.m. at the Captain
8 Samuel Douglass Academy.

9
10 Chairman Dave Partridge presided:

11
12 Members of the Board Present: Beth Lukovits, Vice-Chair
13 Forrest Milkowski, Secretary
14 Marcia Farwell
15 Wanda Meagher

16
17 Members of the Board Absent:

18
19 Also in Attendance: Susan Hodgdon, SAU41 Superintendent
20 Michael B. O'Neill, CPA, Municipal Resources, Inc.
21 Carol Mace, Director of Curriculum
22 Bob Kelly, Director of Special Education
23 Lidia Desrochers, Principal, Richard Maghakian Memorial School
24 Lorraine Wenger, Principal, Captain Samuel Douglass Academy
25 James Doig, Assistant Principal/Special Education Coordinator, RMMS
26 Kristina Henry, Assistant Principal/Special Education Coordinator, CSDA
27
28
29

30 AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

31
32 Superintendent Hodgdon introduced Michael O'Neill, the interim Business Administrator.

33
34 Ms. Meagher questioned the verbal agreement with Café Services to cover a portion of any overrun in the food services
35 account. Mr. O'Neill informed the board of discussions conducted with legal counsel, the State, and Café Services, which
36 have resulted in language being placed in the current agreement, and the assurance by Café Services to reimburse the
37 district for \$3,500 of the FY09 overrun.

38
39 Mr. O'Neill informed the board state reporting requirements have been completed, and will be sent in. Mr. O'Neill has
40 been requested to prepare a report providing the board with year-end numbers including an explanation. This information
41 will be presented at the next board meeting.

42
43 Mr. O'Neill informed the board he received a determination the damage to the front entrance of CSDA is not covered by
44 insurance. He is conducting research to better understand why the flashing was done the way it was. Mr. O'Neill has a
45 great deal of construction experience, as he has owned his own construction company. He will continue to research the
46 situation and keep the board apprised.

47
48 When questioned on the roof issues at RMMS, Mr. O'Neill stated the structure has ridge venting and the sockets are
49 vented. Unless something is impeding the airflow, air should be flowing correctly. Chairman Partridge stated his
50 understanding there are internal dividers and that the airflow to the interval dividers is blocked. Mr. O'Neill added the
51 purpose of continuous ridge venting is to alleviate problems caused by dividers. He will obtain copies of the plans and the
52 contract for further review and will provide a recommendation for moving forward.

53
54 PUBLIC INPUT

55
56 Ms. Amy Fessenden

57
58 Questioned where the funding came from to hire new people and add time onto existing employee's days. She stated her
59 understanding two new kindergarten aids would be hired, two individuals that were laid off were re-hired, and a large
60 majority of para-professionals at RMMS had time added to their day to accommodate altered start/end times to the school
61 day. She remarked she was told by an individual that her letter of hire indicates a longer day than the contract allows.

1 She suggested the individual get the letter revised. She was also informed by a kindergarten para-professional that she
2 would not be working in that area much longer as the district had more need for kindergarten para-professionals and
3 would be hiring. She also remarked there is a job posting on the bulletin board. Ms. Lukovits commented she too had
4 seen the posting, but believed it to be old. She questioned whether the para-professional was working with the class or a
5 particular child, and was informed the individual works with a particular child. Ms. Lukovits explained two para-
6 professionals were laid off last year and have been re-hired.

7
8 When asked, Director Kelly stated he is not aware of an increase in anyone's hours. Principal Desrochers stated there is
9 no authorized increase. Superintendent Hodgdon commented, had she been made aware of Ms. Fessenden's concerns
10 prior to the meeting, she could have been prepared information for a response. Ms. Fessenden stated it is very upsetting
11 for staff to have given up raises and then see new hires and some employees with additional hours added to their work
12 week (working 6 hours when contract states 5.5 hours).

13
14 Ms. Farwell questioned whether the para-professionals were being paid for 6 hours as opposed to 5.5. Ms. Fessenden
15 responded they are. Ms. Meagher commented it is not the first she has heard of a scheduling change. Ms. Lukovits
16 added she has heard of that as well due to individuals being responsible for one child that they have to get off and on the
17 bus. Ms. Fessenden asked the board to investigate. Superintendent Hodgdon requested Director Kelly look into it and
18 get back to Ms. Fessenden.

19
20 Principal Wenger explained, as the result of a resignation, one individual from CSDA was called back after being laid off.
21 Principal Desrochers stated she had the same occurrence at RMMS. Ms. Fessenden asked the board to investigate the
22 number of hours associated with the para-professionals. Ms. Lukovits questioned whether the number of hours under
23 contract coincides with the number of budgeted hours. Superintendent Hodgdon remarked since they will need to look at
24 staffing and account for each position; hours, benefits, etc. in preparation for contract negotiations, that work will be done.
25 She will schedule that work to be done so that answers can be provided.

26
27 Director Kelly asked Ms. Fessenden to provide him and Principal Desrochers with the names of the individuals involved.
28 Ms. Fessenden agreed to provide the account information via e-mail.

29
30 Janice Tremblay

31
32 Informed the board of conversations that took place at the previous evening's Finance Committee meeting concerning
33 involvement in board budget discussions. It is their desire to work hand-in-hand with the board. She requested she be
34 kept apprised of board meetings that occur outside of the regularly scheduled meetings. Chairman Partridge assured Ms.
35 Tremblay she would be kept apprised of every workshop and abreast of discussions.

36
37 Ms. Karen Pillion commented on an article that appeared in the Hollis/Brookline Journal regarding receipt of stimulus
38 funding. She stated her understanding the district has not tapped into stimulus funding and is concerned the town may
39 have the perception it has. Chairman Partridge commented he had considered preparing a written response, but wished
40 to speak first with Director Kelly to have a clear understanding of the restrictions associated with stimulus funding. The
41 general consensus of the board was that a public response be made.

42
43 Superintendent Hodgdon reiterated the district has not sought stimulus funding. Director Kelly remarked that is due to the
44 restrictions placed on the funding. He continues to research options, but, to date, has not applied for any funding.
45 Superintendent Hodgdon stated this was a topic of discussion at the Southwest Regional Superintendent's meeting as
46 there is a lot of frustration in that a number of districts have attempted to tap into stimulus funds only to have their
47 applications rejected.

48
49 Ms. Meagher commented she believes stimulus funding could be sought to address software solutions that would help
50 administratively and in the special education department. Superintendent Hodgdon responded those were the same
51 types of applications submitted by some of her colleagues, which were rejected.

52
53 Director Kelly remarked he had looked into items such as acoustical boards, and was informed those types of uses had to
54 be IEP driven, and would have to be continued in future years. As an example, if they took advantage of funding for those
55 types of equipment and the COOP did not, that expense would have to be incurred with taxpayer money when the
56 particular children moved up.

1 ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS

2
3 Principals

4
5 Principal Wenger touched on the Tiger GREEN Show, which the 4th through 6th grades helped write. Being billed with the
6 show is a new production developed with students and staff at CSDA. The premier will be at CSDA on October 16th in the
7 a.m. and RMMS in the p.m. Arrangements are being made for a performance at the middle school a few days later as
8 students from Brookline were also responsible for part of the show.

9
10 Principal Wenger spoke of the water test results at CSDA. The test results were less than 1%. The State of New
11 Hampshire requires a level of zero. She informed the board there are two pressure tanks in the building. One has broken
12 and needs to be replaced. When asked if the pressure tank was the source of the problem, Principal Desrochers
13 responded she is not sure what caused the problem. There may be a number of different things, but it is believed the tank
14 could have contributed to the problem. Ms. Meagher questioned whether bottled water is being provided, and was told
15 the water is fine. However, as required by law, the test results have been posted. An extended test period will have to be
16 conducted until the level drops. Principal Wenger stated it is believed it could be caused by the flushing of the systems
17 through the summer when water is stagnant in some places.

18
19 With regard to the water damage issue at RMMS, Principal Desrochers stated they are still in the process of determining
20 where water penetration is occurring. To date, there has not been enough rain to determine the point of origin.

21
22 Principal Wenger informed the board crowd control training has been performed at CSDA. All professional staff has been
23 trained. All training has been documented and is on file in the Superintendent's Office. Principal Desrochers informed the
24 board of plans for training to take place at RMMS before any assembly warranting crowd control takes place.

25
26 Principal Wenger informed the board the DINI plan was submitted to the State last week.

27
28 Ms. Lukovits commented on errors in the on line student handbook such as typos under the bus policy where a sentence
29 is incomplete and formatting issues. Principal Wenger replied they are aware of the errors and they will be corrected.
30 Ms. Meagher commented on the lack of new information on the web site. Principal Wenger remarked a meeting would be
31 conducted the following day to discuss the web site. However, nothing has had to go up in terms of events happening in
32 the near term. Ms. Meagher remarked the school has collected a lot of e-mail addresses with the new phone system and
33 questioned whether e-mail would be an option when sending notices home. Principal Wenger commented the conversion
34 to PowerSchool has taken a lot of staff time. They also wish to run an AlertNow test. They have put in a request for the
35 test, but have been told they have to wait until other issues are addressed as not all data from PowerSchool has
36 converted correctly.

37
38 Principal Wenger requested guidance from the board on the FY10 budget. She would like to know where the district
39 stands with regard to uncontrollable increases such as insurance rates. Ms. Meagher commented the contract is a huge
40 question, which is outstanding. Principal Wenger added she wished to know, from an administration point of view, the
41 reality for staffing as it relates to the bottom line percentage. She remarked she is aware there are questions between the
42 board and professional staff relative to where they would be placed on the pay scale for 2010/2011. Ms. Meagher
43 commented support staff is in a negotiation year, but professional staff is going into year 5 of a contract, where they didn't
44 take part of their 4th year of the contract so the assumption has to be that goes into year 5. Ms. Pillion stated they have a
45 team working on different scenarios, which is going to be presented to members for a vote on October 6th.

46
47 Chairman Partridge commented he has asked Mr. O'Neill to put numbers together and figure out the two most obvious
48 scenarios. He stated Ms. Pillion could acquire that information from him. The question is would staff move two steps on
49 the grid since they did not experience a move last year.

50
51 Principal Wenger remarked they typically have the budget inputted by the beginning or middle of October at the latest and
52 she is concerned with getting that information. They can do things in a swift way, but she does not want to put pressure
53 on those individuals who have significant input on the budget.

54
55 Chairman Partridge stated the need exists for Mr. O'Neill to provide the information to the union so their discussions can
56 move forward. Ms. Meagher asked Ms. Tremblay if she was aware of the approach the Budget Committee will be taking
57 with regard to how much of an increase would be expected and whether that increase would exclude items the district has
58 no control over.

1 Ms. Tremblay stated the advice the town has given to department heads has been a zero percent increase and to
2 assume, unless contracts are in place that include an automatic raise, there will be no raises, which primarily means merit
3 employees. She added the CPI is a negative number this year.

4
5 Chairman Partridge questioned whether the recommendation would be zero percent increase beyond those items that are
6 outside of the control of the district or zero percent increase to the overall bottom line. Stated if the intent is zero percent
7 increase to the overall bottom line, that would mean cutting back on personnel. Ms. Tremblay remarked if the budget
8 were exceeded as a result of benefits, the overage would have to be made up somewhere else. Chairman Partridge
9 responded that means we are going to talk layoffs. Ms. Tremblay remarked the question is what the district is prepared to
10 do and not prepared to do next year. She stated it would be in the board's best interest to prepare a budget that is as
11 lean as possible. All districts are faced with this issue. Understanding there is no control over such items as the increase
12 in insurance rates, retirement contributions, etc., the board is going to have to play it as smart as they can.

13
14 Mr. Milkowski commented as all boards are in the same situation, the board needs to think about whether there is an
15 opportunity to argue the point of a higher increase than zero knowing it will be against a wave of other budgets in the
16 surrounding area that are all at zero. They have to consider the environment in which they are proposing a budget.

17
18 Ms. Meagher re-stated anything not contractual is zero percent or less. Chairman Partridge remarked it would be zero
19 percent with the exception of uncontrollable increases such as healthcare, etc.

20
21 Director of Curriculum

22
23 Director Mace informed the board the Commissioner has released the results of the 2009 spring NECAP science
24 assessments. Although she has not had time to analyze the results (received today), overall they are very encouraging.
25 She provided a handout for the board to review (copy attached). The bottom of page 2 indicates Brookline's performance
26 as 76% of students proficient or above compared with the state level of 53%. Page 3 shows 76% of students proficient or
27 above compared to last year's 70% (only 2nd year of assessment but moving in right direction). The bottom of page 3
28 identifies four domains: physical science, earth space science, life science, and inquiry. As a general overview, three of
29 the four areas are very strong. Inquiry is an area where a closer look at performance is needed. The information tracks
30 the performance of the state and indicates this as a weak area for the state in general. She will provide additional
31 information at the next meeting.

32
33 She added, at this time, science is not part of the AYP as three years worth of data is needed to become part of the
34 reporting. There will be no writing results as this year is a pilot program.

35
36 Director of Special Education

37
38 Ms. Lukovits questioned the enrollment numbers for preschool. Principal Desrochers stated they are up to 11. The
39 program is going very strong and receiving positive feedback from those looking at the program. When asked, she stated
40 a total of 3 identified students.

41
42 Superintendent – Staffing

43
44 Superintendent Hodgdon informed the board the application period for the position of Business Administrator closed the
45 prior Friday. There are 7 applicants. One of the applications is very limited and likely will not receive the same
46 consideration as the remaining 6. She informed the board the search committee would meet the following day to review
47 applications and set up interviews.

48
49 One of the steps taken after meeting with the search panel was to sign up for and advertise on EdJobsNH.com. The set
50 up fee was waived (\$1,000), which has always been the stumbling block in using this resource. There is a \$1,100/year
51 registration fee, which is believed will be made up for by not advertising in the newspaper.

52
53 Other – None

1 TRANSPORTATION

2
3 • Bus Stop Request

4
5 Superintendent Hodgdon informed the board of a communication received from parents questioning a bus stop on Hood
6 Road. The communication is in response to the board's decision not to establish an additional bus stop due to the
7 condition of the road and difficulty for a full size bus to traverse the road. The parents are concerned with the distance
8 their 6-year-old child is required to travel to a bus stop.

9
10 The parents indicate they have conducted research on the state statute, which details what school districts are required to
11 do in making a determination about whether to provide service or not. They have asked the board to re-consider its
12 decision. Legal council was sought on the issue and an opinion rendered. The letter from council indicates "the statute
13 imposes the school district provide two assurances; one that pupils shall not be subject to unsafe conditions while walking
14 the required distance to a school bus stop", and "that a school bus stop is established in a safe location". He indicates he
15 did some examination of case law because a part of what the family was speaking about was the Commissioner
16 approving or disapproving the routes of a mile or less. It is quite clear the Commissioner does not approve walking routes
17 of a mile or less nor does she approve the bus stops.

18
19 He goes on to state "The board should be aware that a court is going to take this assurance sentence out of the historic
20 context of extending an assurance to the Commissioner as part of a limited approval process and construe it like the
21 parent has", i.e, to apply it to all walking distances and all bus stops. "The best practice is to assume that the duty
22 imposed on the school district is to protect children from unsafe conditions while walking and that the bus stops be
23 established in a safe location. When this statute was passed the legislative focus was on the physical safety of walking
24 along the roadway and the physical safety issues associated with location of the bus stop. The farthest thing from the
25 mind of the legislature was the presence of predators of any kind along the walking route. Unfortunately, as times change
26 so do duties and so does the statutory constricton. I cannot rule out what risk the court might impose in terms of any kind
27 of predators that might be living along a route." He also pointed out that the confound exists that, if it is not a route that a
28 bus can safely get up and down, then there is a balance that the board has to decide what is the strongest safety risk
29 between the students on the bus versus the students safety along the walking route and the bus stop. He also touched
30 on the area of homeowners and parents knowingly locating where they do, and that they have a duty as well as the board
31 to select a location from the school to their home that is a safe location as well.

32
33 Superintendent Hodgdon stated she has spoken with Ms. Ord who has said it is a full busload of children for the first
34 pickup in the morning (64) and fewer (53) on the bus in the afternoon. Chairman Partridge asked whether a parent is
35 home to meet the child when the bus arrives. Ms. Lukovits remarked the first communication received had indicated the
36 parents have to leave for work prior to the child getting on the bus. Superintendent Hodgdon stated the second
37 communication indicated a concern for instances such as vehicle problems preventing the parents from arriving home in a
38 timely fashion.

39
40 Ms. Lukovits commented it has to be understood that buses cannot get down all roads. Superintendent Hodgdon stated
41 the parents have indicated they have a dump truck that hauls a 35' trailer, which manages to travel the road. She added
42 there is a big difference between hauling a trailer and driving a bus full of children.

43
44 Chairman Partridge stated the decision of whether the road is safe for bus travel is that of Nancy Ord, and she has
45 indicated it is not. In responding to the concern expressed of a parent not being home when the child is returned from
46 school, Ms. Meagher, stated the bus driver would bring the child back to the school if no one were at the bus stop to meet
47 him/her.

9/22/09

1 Mr. Milkowski remarked the district has a professional to manage the bus routes and that professional has informed the
2 board it is not a safe road to travel. It would be prudent to follow that advice. Ms. Lukovits stated Ms. Ord has made her
3 decision, and it is one she would not feel comfortable overriding.

4
5 • Report on Routes and Rider Numbers

6
7 Superintendent Hodgdon provided the board with a copy of the bus schedule (copy attached). She reminded the board
8 included in the times and distances listed are transit time in and out of the barn. The number of students is not 100%
9 accurate in so much as after school care at a different location is not factored in, and the numbers reflect number of riders
10 on a particular day.

11
12 The a.m. ridership ranges from 50 on Rt. #2 to 69 on Rt. #8. The p.m. ridership ranges from 50 on Rt. #2 to 71 on Rt. #8.
13 Reviewing the possibility of adding students to Rt. #2 (as long as geographically feasible) to even out distribution on a
14 route that currently has larger ridership and travel time.

15
16 Chairman Partridge commented the routes are fairly balanced in that travel time ranges from 52 to 86 minutes.
17 Superintendent Hodgdon commented there were a few factors to consider; not as many requests for additional bus stops
18 this year as in last, number of stops impacts student time on bus, and students whose residences change weekly or bi-
19 weekly (separate parental homes) and switch buses.

20
21 Ms. Pat Lynch questioned what was being done about her child's bus route. Superintendent Hodgdon responded they
22 are looking at the possibly of switching students to a different bus to create a shorter route. Remarked she had spoken
23 with Ms. Ord on the issue earlier in the day. Ms. Lukovits commented the travel time does not fall outside of the 45-
24 minute limit.

25
26 Ms. Lynch stated the travel time is 45 minutes in the a.m. and an hour in the p.m. Superintendent Hodgdon reiterated the
27 times listed do not factor out the travel time back to the bus barn in Hollis, which is at least 10-15 minutes. Ms. Lynch
28 remarked her child's bus, #4, is first on and last off. She does not believe it would take the bus 18 minutes to return to the
29 barn. Superintendent Hodgdon reiterated the spreadsheet is a snapshot of a particular day. Chairman Partridge
30 commented there are no individual routes that stand out from the rest with regard to travel time.

31
32 Chairman Partridge believed the schedule to be well balanced. There is really nothing that can be done short of buying
33 more buses, which the district cannot afford (\$21,000). Ms. Lynch stated, in the afternoon, there are 5 empty buses that
34 go by her house before her child returns home. Chairman Partridge suggested her child might be able to simply take a
35 different bus. Ms. Lynch questioned when she could expect a response. Superintendent Hodgdon stated Ms. Ord has
36 agreed to look into the situation. She will check back with her on a daily basis and will respond to Ms. Lynch as soon as
37 possible.

38
39 STAFFING

40
41 • Appointment, Pre-school Coordinator/Teacher

42
43 Superintendent Hodgdon recommended the appointment of Christine Shaw to the position of Preschool
44 Coordinator/Teacher. Ms. Shaw brings to the district 7 years of daycare experience, a year as an assistant in the Head
45 Start Program at Rivier College, four years of substitute teaching in Londonderry and Hudson, and a year of involvement
46 in the RTI program in Milford. She has her Masters from Rivier College. As the position is partly administrative, the
47 recommended salary is \$55,784.40.

48
49 **MOTION BY MEMBER FARWELL TO AUTHORIZE SUPERINTENDENT HODGDON TO APPOINT CHRISTINE SHAW**
50 **AS THE PRESCHOOL COORDINATOR/TEACHER AT RMMS AT A SALARY OF FIFTY FIVE THOUSAND SEVEN**
51 **HUNDRED EIGHTY FOUR DOLLARS AND FORTY CENTS (\$55,784.40)**

52 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MILKOWSKI**

53 **MOTION CARRIED**

54 **5/0**

1 Ms. Lukovits questioned whether a part-time nurse was being hired. Principal Desrochers responded they are in the
2 process of considering applicants. As there were only three special education students, they did not hire a para-
3 professional.

4
5 Chairman Partridge requested a pre-school budget report be provided at the next meeting. Ms. Meagher remarked the
6 preschool program budget must include the cost of out-of-district placements. Chairman Partridge questioned whether
7 the overall budget was being strained due to not reaching the anticipated numbers.

8
9 APPROVAL OF SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES

10
11 Brookline School Board August 25, 2009

12
13 **MOTION BY MEMBER FARWELL TO APPROVE AS AMENDED**

14
15 *The following amendments were noted:*

- 16
17 - Page 5, motion carried "5/0" not "12/0".
18 - Page 2, second to last paragraph, the words "out-of-district" should be added after the words "of the 3"

19
20 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER LUKOVITS**
21 **MOTION CARRIED**

22
23 Brookline School Board – Non Public August 25, 2009

24
25 **MOTION BY MEMBER FARWELL TO APPROVE AS WRITTEN**
26 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MILKOWSKI**
27 **MOTION CARRIED**

28 **5/0**

29
30 Brookline School Board – Non Public June 23, 2009

31
32 **MOTION BY MEMBER FARWELL TO APPROVE AS WRITTEN**
33 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MEAGHER**
34 **MOTION CARRIED**

35 **5/0**

36
37 NON-PUBLIC SESSION

38
39 **MOTION BY MEMBER FARWELL THAT THE BOARD GO INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION PURSUANT TO RSA 91-A:3**
40 **II (c) TO DISCUSS A MATTER, WHICH IF DISCUSSED IN PUBLIC, WOULD LIKELY AFFECT ADVERSELY THE**
41 **REPUTATION OF A PERSON, OTHER THAN A MEMBER OF THE BODY OR AGENCY ITSELF**

42
43 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MILKOWSKI**

44
45 *A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:*

46
47 Yea: Dave Partridge, Beth Lukovits, Ms. Farwell Farwell, Wanda Meagher, Forrest Milkowski

48 5

49 Nay:

0

50 **MOTION CARRIED**

51 **5/0**

52
53 *The Board went into non-public session at 7:49 p.m.*

54
55 *The Board came out of non-public session at 9:28 p.m.*

1 **MOTION BY MEMBER FARWELL THAT THE BOARD, BY ROLL CALL, SEAL THE MINUTES OF THE NON-PUBLIC**
2 **SESSION UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE MAJORITY OF THE BOARD VOTES THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE**
3 **CONFIDENTIALITY WOULD NO LONGER BE SERVED**

4
5 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER LUKOVITS**

6
7 Yea: Dave Partridge, Beth Lukovits, Ms. Farwell Farwell, Wanda Meagher, Forrest Milkowski

8 5

9 Nay:

0

10 **MOTION CARRIED**

11 **5/0**

12
13 ADJOURNMENT

14
15 **MOTION BY MEMBER FARWELL TO ADJOURN**

16 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MILKOWSKI**

17 **MOTION CARRIED**

18
19 The Brookline School Board meeting of September 22, 2009 was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

20
21
22
23 Date _____ Signed _____
24
25