

GROTON-DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

High School Library
Business Meeting Minutes
May 16, 2007
(approved 6/06/2007)

PRESENT:

Ms Cindy Barrett, Secretary
Dr. Forrest Buzan
Ms Berta Erickson
Dr. Paul Funch
Ms Karen Lofgren
Mr. Chuck McKinney, Chair
Mr. Frank O'Connell, Vice-Chair

ADMINISTRATION:

Dr. Alan Genovese, Superintendent
Timothy Sheehan, Director of Business and Finance
Dr. Susan Rubel, Director of Curriculum/Staff Development
Ms Joan Endicott, Director of Pupil Services (left at 10:07 p.m.)

STAFF, PRESS, OTHERS: C. Beckert-Long , Groton Herald; P. Comtois, Groton Landmark; C. Mills, B. Lavin, P. Myerson, J. Allen, J. Mitchell, P. Fitzgerald, F. Stanley, J. Dillon, N. Wilkinson, L. Mitchell
See attached sign-in sheet

CALL TO ORDER:

C. McKinney announced the GDRSC Meeting opened at 6:00 p.m. and the Committee voted to adjourn to executive session under M.G.L. Ch. 39, Section 23B-3 for the purpose of non-union and union negotiations and a litigation update. The meeting reconvened in open session at 7:14 p.m. , with no plans to return to executive session following the business meeting, and was called to order by the chair, C. McKinney.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/SPOTLIGHT

Members read prepared announcements and a copy is attached to these minutes.

Dr. Genovese thanked Dee Transportation for transporting the kindergarten children between the PTYC and Florence Roche during today's storm.

Spotlight - Elementary Collaborative Lesson Planning Initiative

Dr. Rubel stated they concentrated their efforts during faculty meetings and in-service time on collaborative lesson planning in response to teachers' request to meet more often in grade level teams. Format and structures were put in place to help teachers focus consistently and systemically on instruction and assessment. She stated they focused on bringing them together as a "Professional Learning Community" which is a community of staff focused on learning rather than teaching, working collaboratively, and holding themselves accountable for the results. The key principles of their work are ensuring that students learn, developing a culture of collaboration and focusing on the results of student learning.

In each building, with colleagues and principals, teachers plan collaboratively for instruction and student learning. They reflect on lesson implementation, share assessments and learning results and refine the lesson plan. A lesson plan template was reviewed. A protocol on how teachers come together to talk about their lessons was also reviewed.

Teachers focus on what they tried, how it went, what challenges they encountered, what successes they experienced and what the next steps might be to strengthen the lesson. An evaluation was done last month and Dr. Rubel said the results will be shared with the teachers in June and plans for next year will be based on the feedback. She said teachers were thankful for the time but that it was not enough time. Dr. Rubel stated they are wrestling with how to provide teachers with more time and help them hone in on what is most important in terms of collaborating.

Frank Belitsky - Horticulture Scholarship

Dr. Genovese stated he met Mr. Belitsky last week and he introduced Mr. Belitsky's daughter, Ingrid. Speaking on behalf of her father, Ms Belitsky stated her parents have lived in Groton since the mid-60's and her mother has always been involved in gardening. She is an honorary member of the Groton Garden Club, was past president of the Club and was on the state board for 20 years, where they have an award in her name. Her father wants to honor his wife and has created a scholarship in her name called the Maria Belitsky Horticulture Scholarship. It is awarded to a senior going into a field having to do with soil and plants and this year, he wants to award two scholarships. She stated her father wanted to bring this to the attention of the School Committee because he feels they always hear negatives and it was time to hear something positive.

Seniors may apply through the guidance office and the Groton Garden Club has also agreed to look at the applications.

MINUTES

C. BARRETT MOVED TO APPROVE THE EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES OF APRIL 25, 2007, THE BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 25, 2007 AND THE BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 2, 2007. SECONDED BY K. LOFGREN

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

C. BARRETT MOVED TO APPROVE THE EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES OF MAY 2, 2007.

SECONDED BY K. LOFGREN

In Favor: K. Lofgren, C. Barrett, C. McKinney, F. O'Connell, B. Erickson, P. Funch

Abstention: F. Buzan

C. BARRETT MOVED TO APPROVE THE GROTON TOWN MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 30, 2007.

SECONDED BY K. LOFGREN

In Favor: K. Lofgren, C. Barrett, C. McKinney, B. Erickson, P. Funch

Abstention: F. Buzan, F. O'Connell

C. BARRETT MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUDGET ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 7, 2007. SECONDED BY K. LOFGREN

In Favor: K. Lofgren, C. Barrett, C. McKinney, B. Erickson

Abstention: F. Buzan, F. O'Connell, P. Funch

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

C. Barrett stated Dr. Funch posted on the listserv that the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee had strongly recommended to the superintendent that the JV football program not be started in FY08. She stated as a Budget and Finance Sub-Committee member, she did not make that recommendation and supports keeping the JV football program in the FY08 budget.

L. Moskow read a statement on behalf of Ms Barbo. In summary, her statement respectfully requests the Committee table discussion and vote on the superintendent's contract until after the May 21st and May 22nd elections as she feels the consequences from the election outcomes may impact discussions and decisions about his contract. She thinks new Committee members should be able to represent their positions on a

contract with the person who will be their direct report for the coming years. Ms Barbo's statement says the outcome of the override should be a factor to consider in a contract renewal and the next steps of the budget and job evaluation processes. If the presentation Lyle Kirtman and Glenn Koocher will offer on June 6th is in relation to some of what the organizing team shared with Mr. McKinney and Mr. O'Connell at their meeting, Ms Barbo feels any contract discussion and vote should wait until the information is shared publicly.

C. McKinney clarified the objective of the meeting Mr. Kirtman and Mr. Koocher had with community members was to understand concerns brought forward and to try and articulate a path to reconcile and address those concerns. He stated it was not a meeting to discuss the superintendent's evaluation.

F. Stanley feels delaying the vote on the superintendent's contract would be worthwhile until after the override vote passes or fails and until "more settles out" so people have a sense of whether they want to go forward with the same superintendent under similar terms. If the Committee decides to vote tonight, she asked if they would consider making the terms more liberal to release without large severance obligations if there is a decision to change course with the superintendent. She feels there are things that have been brought up over the winter that have not been fully discussed and sorted out and feels it is premature for the Committee to lock into a binding relationship.

While the meeting was not about the evaluation of the superintendent, L. Moskow said a number of concerns about the superintendent and other issues were shared and they had anticipated Committee members would be aware of these before their evaluation workshop took place. They were told Mr. Kirtman would be summarizing that meeting in a timely fashion and all attendees would have a chance to look at, and agree on, what was said and then it would be shared with the Committee and the public if they deemed fit. She said they would like to have this sooner than later.

Since these are action items tonight, B. Erickson asked if the Committee is going to make any response to the comments. C. McKinney said the Committee's obligation is to listen to the comments and conduct its business as members see fit.

C. McKinney stated the printed agenda has been slightly modified. When building the agenda, there is always a heavy demand for the Committee's time to raise awareness of issues and conduct its business and noting that they have been running long meetings, he stated it is important to make sure they get the order of presentations correct. The protocol has been to move administrators up so they can leave and on the other hand, some items come up late in the evening and thoughtful discussion is limited due to the late hour. He has made the decision to move the superintendent's public evaluation and contract to the beginning of the presentations.

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION

Superintendent's Public Evaluation

C. McKinney explained the evaluation process starts in November when the superintendent presents goals to be added to areas of principle accountability. The Committee discusses and accepts the goals and adds them to the evaluation document. The superintendent is required to provide the Committee with a mid-year evaluation in self-assessment in January and a year-end portfolio assessment in April. The Committee met on April 28th and put together a draft consensus document with the help of MASC facilitator Mike Gilbert. The document was reviewed two weeks ago.

Copies of Dr. Genovese's final Superintendent Evaluation Consensus Document were distributed and C. McKinney read each of the superintendent's goals as well as the Committee's findings. A copy is attached to these minutes.

Historically, the Committee has not voted on the evaluation document but C. McKinney said he will be asking them to take a vote to accept the evaluation as an outward demonstration of the consensus of the Committee.

C. BARRETT MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADVANCE FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE EVALUATION DOCUMENT. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

C. BARRETT MOVED THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THIS DOCUMENT ENTITLED DR. ALAN GENOVESE SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION CONSENSUS DOCUMENT 2006-2007, DATED APRIL 28, 2007. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Superintendent's Contract

As a representative of Personnel and Negotiations, C. McKinney asked C. Barrett to provide an overview of the contract. She stated the Personnel and Negotiations Sub-Committee did a historical perspective on the contracts they had in the past and reviewed them back to 1999 to identify any specific terms and changes that were made. A market perspective regarding the superintendent's compensation was also done. Two surveys were reviewed, one done by Human Resources Director Ms Mitchell and the other from MASS.

She stated a superintendent's salary is a "hot topic" in Massachusetts, with several recent articles discussing the supply and demand issue. The Committee needs to determine how to best balance financial concerns with market conditions and they all agree salary and compensation should not be the driving reason to work in the Groton Dunstable Regional School District nor should it be the driving reason to leave it. A slide showing a market analysis of six districts similar to Groton Dunstable was shown. When Dr. Genovese arrived three years ago, he agreed to a salary of \$135,000 for each of the three years and she noted the state average is about \$151,000.

In the current contract, they tried to address the difference in compensation. The length of the contract is for two years, FY09 and FY10, and the option clause remains for a third year. The salary increase is 7% per year and will go to \$144,450 in FY09 and to \$154,562 in FY10. C. Barrett stated this moves Dr. Genovese closer to the competitive range although it will probably be below the market. Knowing this salary increase helps them provide consistent planning numbers for budgeting.

Other changes include modifying the healthcare clause to be the same as other employees in the district, clarification of the superintendent's notice of resignation and other changes better clarified dates of when the evaluation would take place and when contracts would be reviewed. A longevity payment clause was added to the contract.

F. Buzan understands some people are feeling they should wait until after the election and votes on the override to address a contract extension for the superintendent but he thinks it is important and appropriate that this sitting School Committee, who worked with him this past year and did his evaluation, should be the one to make the determination. He stated it is their responsibility to vote on this contract and supports moving on it at this time. He stated he has some concerns about the contract because he feels there is some unease in the district at this time. He thinks Dr. Genovese has some great skills that have yet to be displayed to some community members and he looks forward to seeing this happen in the next few years. He is hopeful the communities seem willing to support the override but he does not want to give the impression they are loose with money in any way. He stated it is important they pay their employees appropriately to keep good people. F. Buzan stated it is a difficult job and is made difficult by the number of hours required and the communities' demands. He acknowledged it is a lot of money and approaches the contract with a little bit of unease and looks forward to watching Dr. Genovese taking the leadership opportunity. He supported the evaluation and Dr. Genovese's ability to take the criticism, as well as the praise, due him. F. Buzan feels Dr. Genovese can help them find sources of revenue and help them constrain their budgets.

Dr. Funch agreed with Mr. Buzan's statements. While the timing is not optimal, he said it is appropriate for this Committee to vote on the evaluation and the contract as new people coming on would not be knowledgeable about the issues. He shares concerns about performance and stated it was a tumultuous year for everyone and while the dust has not quite settled, they are bound by the contract to make a decision at this time for

extending the contract. He said they need to provide the support to the superintendent and stated they will keep an eye on the educational quality and make sure things settle down. He said it is a difficult job and he can support the contract and evaluation at this time.

B. Erickson echoed the comments made by F. Buzan and Dr. Funch and said a superintendent works very hard for their money and the scarcity is driving up the market. She said she has enjoyed working with Dr. Genovese and hopes they can continue to work together with the communities, build understanding, keep communications open and support Dr. Genovese with his new team. She supports the evaluation and the contract.

K. Lofgren said she has learned that healthy criticism, given constructively, is a valuable learning experience. She learned from Dr. Genovese and Ms Endicott that you have to create the possibility for success and if you do not create that possibility, you will never see it. She encouraged members and the communities to remember to create that possibility. Having created that possibility three years ago, and taking a leap of faith, she stated she has seen the district turn around in areas she never believed it would.

C. Barrett said it has been a year with lots of learning and learning potential and moving ahead, they all will be better at crafting goals that are measurable and they will be better at evaluating those goals. She agrees they need to create the chance to have success and the district can reach that success with Dr. Genovese's help.

C. McKinney thanked Dr. Genovese and the Personnel and Negotiations Sub-Committee for their efforts over the last four months.

C. BARRETT MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADVANCE FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT'S CONTRACT. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

C. BARRETT MOVED THE GROTON DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THIS CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT FOR DR. ALAN GENOVESE FOR THE YEARS OF FY09 AND FY10. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL

Dr. Genovese thanked members for their constructive criticism during the evaluation process and for their good recommendations that will serve the district well as they develop their strategic plan in the coming year. He said the process is humbling and self-reflecting and you always learn a lot. He is confident they have the staff and administration dedicated to improving the quality of education and they will elevate their student achievement in the coming year. He stated by putting some of the issues on the table and addressing them with Mr. Kirtman, they will strengthen the district.

Prescott School Improvement Plan

Dr. Genovese said he respects Principal Lavin's decision to retire at the end of the next school year and for addressing the transition plan in their SIP.

Principal Betty Lavin acknowledged members of her School Council and thanked Kathy McCarthy and Laurie Penny for their help in bringing this plan to fruition. She said members have seen four of their goals and one is new.

Goal 1: To enhance mathematical skills through problem solving, reasoning, communication and real world connections by strengthening problem solving and test taking strategies, resulting in improved student performance. B. Lavin said this goal has been on their SIP for a few years and they have been following the achievements they see daily as well as looking at the MCAS scores. The goal revolves around providing teachers with the resources they need to help the kids to the best they can do. Teachers found the

TERC workbooks to be terrific and they are used by students to reinforce their understanding of mathematical concepts. They have seen great results in the past three months. She stated it is important to strengthen math terminology and vocabulary and teachers will do word lists along with each unit. Teachers have focused on strategies for MCAS testing. They have found some great sites under Gamequarium that help kids practice math and a link is on the website so parents can access them at home. Selected children were invited to be in an after school math club twice a week and teachers are seeing a difference in their skills and confidence. She stated they are making a concerted effort to get information to parents on a regular basis about TERC.

Goal 2: Improve student writing in the areas of idea development, organization, word choice, sentence fluency and voice. B. Lavin said they felt they were weak on topic development and they hope the district will offer a course in Writers and Readers Workshop for the K-2 population. They want to find a way to give teachers common planning time so they can collaborate. This goal will also provide teachers with the resources they need to help students improve their writing.

Goal 3: To provide the Prescott school community (parents, staff and students) with a smooth transition from one administrator to another by fall, 2008. Norm Wilkinson said Ms Lavin will be retiring about a year from now and one of the beauties of Prescott is the sense of community she has fostered as principal and she is the reason many parents have chosen the school. He said she is exactly what an elementary principal should be and all the kids love and respect her and he thanked her for her effective leadership. He stated they need to be sure the staff and parents are involved in the selection of a new principal, both in identifying desired skills and characteristics and being part of the interviewing process. A ten day shadowing period has been built in for the incoming principal to gain an understanding of the cultures, traditions and procedures. There will be opportunities to bid Ms Lavin goodbye as well as to welcome the new principal.

Goal 4: To address the growing needs of an old building and work with the district and the town to improve the facility. N. Wilkinson said this is an ongoing goal and they will continue to bring awareness to the administration and School Committee as to the physical needs of the building and they will help prioritize those needs. He said they need to stay on top of the air quality issues and the back stairway leading from the gym to the playground will be replaced this summer. They will continue to communicate the maintenance and safety at Prescott with a monthly update in the Prescott Pipeline.

Goal 5: Provide a technology-rich environment with reliable and up-to-date equipment and software, in which students demonstrate knowledge and apply grade-appropriate technology skills.

B. Lavin said they have been working on this goal for a few years and noted that out of their twenty-five lab computers, twelve are on a OS 10.2.4 and the others are on OS 9 and the software does not cross the operating systems. This goal is about increasing their use of technology and they are in the process of making a checklist to make sure the kids are mastering the standards by doing two to three projects a year. They will be working with the district in the reallocation program of computers to be sure their lab is up to speed and that the teachers have the latest equipment they need to do what they need to do with the kids.

B. Lavin said they felt it was important to have some long term goals as the transition takes place.

Referring to strategy #3 under Goal I "teaching kids to take the test", F. O'Connell asked if kids are lacking the skills to take the MCAS test, or any test. B. Lavin said they are not test savvy at 8 years old and this is the first time they have seen it. Anything they can do to help them feel more comfortable and recognize the verbiage of a question will help them not get so overwhelmed and afraid. A lot of the support they give the math club is in reading and understanding the question. K. Lofgren agreed it is important to understand the test and that you do not get penalized for the wrong answer.

F. Buzan asked if she feels the TERC program is what they need to help with problem solving related to MCAS and the other things they need to do and B. Lavin said yes. The Investigations Program demands that kids can think, and think critically, and not at the expense of not understanding the basic facts. He asked how the computer leasing program will help with reading and math and B. Lavin said kids currently have to double up on computers. She stated the computers track each student and speed up the process as kids continue up a level and it has the ability to give out appropriate homework. He said this will help with differentiated instruction and she agreed. They will make sure the software is high level thinking and she suggested members check out Gamequarium.

B. Erickson asked if the Addison-Wesley is used in conjunction with TERC or if it is an either/or and B. Lavin said it is used at the third and fourth grade levels in areas where Investigations may not have a unit. They are both aligned with Frameworks and merge nicely. She envisions using both programs. B. Erickson asked if she envisions using something similar to supplement Investigations up to the high school. Dr. Rubel said Investigations is only a program for K-5. In any content area, a core textbook program should always be supplemented by other things.

B. Erickson asked Dr. Rubel if she sees the middle school math program merging with another program and working as well as the one at Prescott. Dr. Rubel said if they do anything, they will probably go in the opposite direction and have one core program, supplemented by other activity.

C. Barrett said the goals look good and the kids will sneak in their education while enjoying them. With respect to planning for next year, she asked that they share some of their assessment data so they can see the progress they have made. B. Lavin said they look forward to tracking the six students in the math club and knowing how they scored at the third grade level and they are hoping for a lot of improvement, not only in their scores, but in their confidence. They are also excited about working with Ms Penny.

Swallow Union School Improvement Plan

Principal Peter Myerson recognized his School Council members and thanked Ms Penny and Ms McCarthy for working with the team. He also thanked Principal Zimmaro for helping with their math goal. He reviewed their three new goals.

Goal 1: To improve student achievement in literacy

P. Myerson said they feel they have momentum in the area of literacy and some wonderful professional development has been offered in the past two years. His third and fourth grade staff participated in a course and they completely changed their instruction delivery in the area of writing. They were excited about it and saw the improvement in the kids. Teachers will continue to participate in professional development and they will develop classroom structures and schedules that support a balanced literacy program. The goal is to have an hour and a half of uninterrupted time for literacy to do reading and writing. They will provide the necessary classroom resources and for the past two years, he has allocated funds for teachers to build up their classroom libraries. He has also been allocating funds to get a book for each child in the classroom (25 kids = 25 books) and this has worked very well.

Goal 2: To improve student achievement by providing time for teachers to collaborate

Teachers have said they need time to collaborate and this year, he was unable to provide teachers with common planning time. They have some ideas on how they can give them forty-five minutes a week to work together effectively and not interfere with their prep time. P. Myerson said he visited Winchester Elementary School, the highest achieving elementary school in the state right now, where the principal has set up a schedule that works and he will have teachers visit as well. A scheduling team will be assembled to work on the master schedule that will also maximize the time on teaching and learning.

Goal 3: To improve student achievement in mathematics

P. Myerson said they are not identifying students in math early enough and they need to identify weaknesses.

They will use fall and mid-year assessments to inform teachers of student needs and provide intervention immediately. He said they have a third and fourth grade before school math club which all third and fourth grade teachers took part in and everyone found it very helpful. All teachers participate in professional development and P. Myerson stated they are going to work on training their assistants, who are very valuable, to maximize time for everyone.

P. Myerson said they feel their goals are very focused and student driven.

With so much emphasis around MCAS, K. Lofgren said she likes to see the focus is on assessment and they are not just talking MCAS, and that the K-2 are being included.

During the math forums, F. Buzan said there was a lot of discussion on how the different programs are being used and one of the needs that came up is the need for parents to understand what teachers are doing. He said parents do not realize assessments are being done or they do not know the results because there are no mechanisms for feedback. He asked if they are working, as a district, toward providing something that fits what they are doing now so the feedback to the parents matches the current curriculum. He noted his child's report card has "1993 pilot report card" on it and he assumes they have moved past the pilot stage. He asked if they need support to provide new mechanisms for parents to give feedback.

Dr. Rubel stated Ms Penny has been publishing the results of the assessments that have been taking place as a result of their fall math meetings and those will be coming out in the elementary newsletters. The elementary teachers would like to change the report card but this will be a lengthy process that will include parents. She said they are in a standards based environment but they do not have a standards based report card. She said this will take a lot of research and input from parents and teachers. F. Buzan believes there are parents more than willing to help and Dr. Rubel agreed.

B. Erickson asked if they work with Investigations and P. Myerson said yes.

Dr. Funch thanked Mr. Myerson and Ms Lavin for the nice SIP's. He said no one addressed the learning environment and being a Prescott family alumni, he knows confidence goes a long way in helping student performance and while he knows it happens, he asked why it was not a goal. P. Myerson said they had it in their previous goals but he feels it is a given that they are always building confidence, teaching students how to be polite and building character. He said it is a big part of elementary education.

C. Barrett said these goals are great and asked that they share some of their assessment data next year so they can see the progress they have made. P. Myerson said they will have the data next year.

Dr. Genovese asked if the school he visited had longer school days, a longer school year or more half days in order to create the collaboration time and P. Myerson said some of it took place during common planning time but a lot of it took place during their staff meeting time.

Dr. Rubel said administrators participated in a study group this year and in their last session, they read some research on what other districts are doing in terms of time. She stated there are many creative ways on finding time.

While watching Mr. Myerson and Ms Lavin make their presentations, C. McKinney said he felt their excitement and passion about what is going on and it gives him energy knowing they are there.

Review of High School Handbook Revisions

Members had received a copy of the handbook with red indicating changes and edits, yellow representing things taken out and blue indicating notes and comments but not being printed for 2007-2008. Dr. Genovese thanked J. Dillon for using this strategy to facilitate questions. J. Dillon gave the credit to MS Brisson.

J. Dillon stated the handbook revision is an annual process that begins with himself, Ms Brisson and Mr. Murray and then a sub-committee of the Leadership Team looks at the recommendations and revisions and come back to the administration. From there, the School Council reviews and/or revises the changes and makes recommendations. He said they did not see any substantive changes in the handbook, most of what they see as changes were "tweaking" or updating existing policies.

Dr. Funch asked about the last three pages that say "review this" and J. Dillon said they review that regularly. Dr. Funch noted the dates for SAT's need to be changed. He asked about the list of clubs that are crossed out and J. Dillon said the clubs have not been eliminated but they require an adult advisor and those crossed out need to find another advisor.

B. Erickson asked why the \$25 fine was crossed out for subsequent offenses for smoking and J. Dillon said it has not been used and incidents of smoking have decreased sharply, especially since moving to the new high school. Dr. Genovese believes there is still a town ordinance that can use a fine for smoking on school property and it would be enforced by the Board of Health. J. Dillon said he did not know about this.

Referring to the Electronic Devices Policy and the Drug and Alcohol Policy, C. Barrett said they both have "the Leadership Team to review" and asked if there will be changes to this text. J. Dillon said no, the Leadership Team has identified items they would like to look at more critically and the text, unless it is in blue, is what will appear in the handbook. Also with respect to the Drug and Alcohol Policy, she asked if any suggested changes would come to the Committee prior to being sent to legal counsel and he said yes. They cannot violate Education Reform and he noted the last time the policy was revised, it was a two year process.

Referring to the Medication Policy for Overnight Field Trips, C. Barrett said this is another policy that would be well communicated before changes are made. J. Dillon said this is a clarification as opposed to a change. She asked if students are allowed to take over-the counter medicines with them on a field trip and J. Dillon said no but they feel they need to tighten up the overnight field trip policy and include the Medication Policy so parents are signing permission forms that are clear. She said the current policy says students are not allowed to take any medication with them and the Committee has been told during field trip approvals that the nurse would hold the medicine for the student. She asked if this is the process he would like to continue to take place. J. Dillon said they have no guarantee that there will be a nurse on every overnight field trip and they have been very fortunate to have had Ms Irelan on most of their field trips. She said another adult would take over Ms Irelan's job and take care of the medications and J. Dillon said this needs clarification because not all adults are able to administer medication however, the principal can administer it.

C. Barrett stated the new section called "Protocol for Addressing Questions, Concerns or Complaints" is wonderful to have in the handbook.

K. Lofgren noted the new principal has a hyphenated name and this is not shown on the handbook.

If they do not have any questions, C. Barrett asked if they can vote on the handbook tonight and Dr. Genovese believes they can and C. McKinney agreed. Members had no objections.

**C. BARRETT MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADVANCE FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION AN ACTION ITEM. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY**

C. BARRETT MOVED THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE HIGH SCHOOL HANDBOOK REVISION DRAFT THAT THEY HAVE IN THEIR PACKET, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THERE ARE A FEW TYPO'S TO CORRECT. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON

For the record, F. Buzan said he objects to the wearing of hats in buildings.

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Dr. Genovese thanked Mr. Dillon and his administrative team for doing this in a timely manner and noted it will help in the transition

Policy: GBAE and GBEA (Possible vote)

See Policy report

Unit D Contract

C. McKinney stated the Unit D contract was ratified last Thursday. J. Mitchell thanked Dr. Genovese and Mr. McKinney for providing her with the opportunity to negotiate the contract. In the past, she has done a lot of "behind the scenes work" and this year she was allowed to get involved. C. McKinney said she was extraordinarily effective and they loved having her at the table. She stated Unit D is defined as the educational support paraprofessionals, comprised of seventy-four members - Building Aides, Applied Behavior Aides, Library Specialists, Computer Specialists and Health Services Assistants. The Health Services Assistants are new to the contract this year and there are two members.

J. Mitchell said they had specific objectives and criteria when looking at the contract and stated they look at each bargaining unit as a separate entity to see how they compare to like districts. At the forefront was the goal to retain and support quality staff.

Their objectives included negotiating a respectful yet affordable contract, providing consistent language across the district, providing a salary schedule that would remain competitive, providing a seniority protocol that was equitable across the district and aligning language in the articles that were not consistent with the Ed Reform Act of 1993.

J. Mitchell stated they negotiated a three year contract, maintaining a competitive and affordable salary schedule. In year one, they provided a 2.75% increase, a 3.25% increase in the second year and a 2.75% increase in the third year. They eliminated half days from the work year and she noted this was a union proposal and the paraprofessionals will work up to student dismissal and be compensated up to that time. This change means 5 less days of compensation at the elementary level, 4 at the middle school level and 4 at the high school level. Consistent language was added for benefits, language was updated to reflect the present laws and they created an equitable, district-wide seniority protocol so seniority is now by district instead of by building. She stated negotiations were concluded in a timely manner with both parties feeling the results were satisfactory.

J. Mitchell stated they were able to stay within their target for bargaining and were able to offer a competitive package which will enable them to retain and support their valuable paraprofessionals.

K. Lofgren said her children refer to the paraprofessionals as their "other teachers".

Dr. Genovese said he appreciates the work Ms Mitchell put into this; she did a lot of research, put together a lot of statistics and looked at language consistency and she had the knowledge. C. McKinney said sometimes there can be tension between an employee unit and the Human Resources Department and Ms Mitchell is the Department. He said she is sometimes the "bad guy" in terms of enforcement but the level of trust expressed by the unit was evident and he feels this speaks well of her working relationships.

C. BARRETT MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADVANCE FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION THE ACTION ITEM. SECONDED BY K. LOFGREN

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

C. BARRETT MOVED THE GROTON DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE RATIFY THIS

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE AND THE GROTON DUNSTABLE EDUCATOR'S ASSOCIATION, UNIT D, DATED JULY 1, 2007 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2010. SECONDED BY P. FUNCH
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL

REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

Policy - K. Lofgren reported they met last night. She stated they do not need to discuss policies GBAE (Nepotism) and GBEA (Staff Ethics/Conflict of Interest) tonight as in her haste to go through her outstanding items, she realized they did not use their new protocol. She stated revisions were made per the request of the administration. Dr. Genovese said they have a number of college students willing to substitute during the summer and this will allow people to come in on a temporary basis. They would not be under the direct supervision or in the same building as their relative. Feedback forms were distributed and she asked they be returned to the superintendent.

B. Erickson said they discussed the advertising policy in depth and noted it is a complicated issue yet timely due to their financial situation in the schools. She feels there is a little bit of movement and it is her hope that they will have a policy written by fall. Dr. Genovese said they have developed some principles of what would be okay and what would not be okay and will use these as the underpinnings of what a policy might look like. Dr. Funch asked if they would consider having a public forum and K. Lofgren said this was part of their discussion.

They worked on Policy IJOA, Field Trips/Late Night Travel. They reviewed the Tutoring for Pay policy per the request of a parent community and they found the policy did not need any revision. She stated they need to get back on track with the review of the policy handbook. She will provide a draft of an anti-bullying policy. Their next meeting is at the high school on June 19th at 6:30 p.m. Dr. Genovese said Ms Lofgren is willing to come to a couple of policy meetings to help with the transition process

Dr. Funch asked why the bottom of the Ethics/Conflict Policy is verbatim in the Nepotism Policy and if there is a reason it has to be in both places. Dr. Genovese said for convenience. Dr. Funch suggested the policies be wrapped into one and K. Lofgren advised him to recommend this on the feedback form.

Budget and Finance - PTYC Funding Plan - F. O'Connell reported they met on May 8th and discussed the PTYC roof replacement, the five year forecast and the budget presentation for town meeting. Their next meeting is at 6:00 p.m. on June 12th at Tarbell.

Report of Director of Business and Finance Five Year Budget Forecast

T. Sheehan distributed a five year forecast of the district's operating budget. This will provide some understanding of the impact of the change in the formula for the distribution of Chapter 70 aid. The spreadsheet has three parts, with each representing a distinct set of assumptions. He provided an overview of each spreadsheet.

Part I - Existing cost structure and Chapter 70 increases of 1.6%

Using the current FY08 budget figure of \$30,403,345, T. Sheehan said he estimated a 4% to 6% increase for expenses and applying these percentages over time, would result in an operating budget of \$32,406,471 in FY09. Assuming Chapter 70 aid remains at 1.6% and transportation stays at 4%, they would need to raise \$20,318,350 from assessments in FY09. Groton's minimum contribution would go up by approximately 5% each year while Dunstable's would go up by approximately 6%. Applying the part of the assessment determined by the regional agreement, Groton's total assessment would be 77.07% (\$14,300,060) and Dunstable's would be 22.93% (\$4,128,149). He stated they are looking at increases of 10% and this is beyond what the towns can support on an ongoing basis.

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Part II - Existing cost structure with annual Chapter 70 increases of 8.0%

If Chapter 70 aid continued at an 8% increase for this five year period, T. Sheehan said the towns would see annual increased assessments in the 5 ½ % to 6 ½ % range and he believes this is within the range the towns

could afford with their new revenue factors. He stated they need to go from 1.6% to 8% in order to have assessments that would not trigger a request for an override year after year.

Part III - Combination of reduced cost structures and average Chapter 70 increases of 5.7%

If they were able to achieve economies of scale, lower the cost structure of the district and receive the average Chapter 70 aid that was given out state-wide this year, T. Sheehan said they would be in the 5% to 6% range. He said there are any number of possibilities depending on the factors.

Overall, T. Sheehan acknowledged this is a sobering picture.

B. Erickson said this should be an on-going discussion and members need to be looking at some hard and innovative ways to approach education and they need to keep this as a goal. Dr. Genovese said the next step would be to schedule appointments with town officials and talk about the information and see what they think they need in a five year plan. A gentleman at the Dunstable town meeting referred to the town and school as being "one patient" not two, that needs attention. She asked when this process would begin and he said after the dust settles with their immediate financial issues. He said this is great information to use with their area legislators to say this is the impact it has.

C. McKinney said he would like to see if the ongoing cost structure numbers are on the same slope as comparable school districts and he asked Budget and Finance to look at how the administration would achieve reduced cost structure numbers. K. Lofgren said she would want to see what the impact would look like. Referring to the two scenarios for Groton, Dr. Funch pointed out they are talking about a \$700,000 gap with the top number (\$1.4M) being a "level services budget" and this would be a significant cut. Efficiencies will help but he said they are talking about significant restructuring to get that low. C. McKinney said they need to be committed to opening the dialogue to raise awareness about what that would mean.

F. O'Connell said he had asked for Part 1 and he does not want them to automatically assume they are looking at cutting programs and that they need to get to Part 2 or Part 3. He said right now, they need to focus in on Part 1 and he agrees it is not sustainable. He feels they need to have a working sub-committee to start focusing on what they can do to help themselves and how they can continue to apply pressure to the state to re-evaluate the funding formula.

F. Buzan feels they need to start this summer and connect with other school committees. He said they need to look at salaries and expenses and stated healthcare does not belong in a school district nor does in belong in a business. He stated the cost needs to be brought closer to the user and they need to get it where some other organization, that is closer to the people, can get them fees that squeezes the cost more so prices do not go up so much more than inflation. He said they should not be experts in healthcare, they should be experts in providing education.

T. Sheehan said members from industry will be familiar with, and understand, the 80/20 rule which says the way to approach reducing the cost structure is to focus on the high ticket items where the bulk of the dollars are and there would be a number of areas to look at. He said there are changes that would result in a one time savings and the rest would have to come from gradual, incremental changes in efficiencies.

PTYC Roof Replacement Funding

T. Sheehan distributed a memo regarding the financing plan for the PTYC roof. He stated there have been a number of meetings on the ways to fund this project and the outcome was a determination to bond \$250,000 over a ten year period and the bond payments would be made by diverting a portion of the PTYC rent from the general operating budget of the district. The Committee needs to vote to authorize the borrowing. The final costs will not be known until the bids are opened on May 31st but he believes this is a reasonable figure to use and if the costs are substantially different, the Committee can increase or decrease the amount.

Following the vote, according to Chapter 71, Section 16(d), they have seven days to notify the towns officially of the Committee's intent to borrow and the towns then have sixty days to schedule a town meeting to approve or disapprove the Committee's action. If the sixty days expire without town action, the district is authorized to

proceed with the borrowing. Following this scenario, the earliest they could proceed with construction would be about the 16th or 17th of July which is later than they wished to get started.

Dr. Genovese said everyone realizes they need to replace the roof and noted there were not enough buckets to protect the floor during the rainstorm a couple of weeks ago. Several months ago, town representatives were at a meeting and they discussed plans to address replacing the roof and this plan was one of them. He said the plan appears to have their support. He stated the first payment would be about \$37,500 in FY09 and payments would decline from there. With the Committee's support tonight, letters will be sent to the towns alerting them of the vote and then meeting with them to discuss what the Committee's intentions are.

Dr. Genovese stated using the rent receipts to retire the debt means the towns' long-term debt assessments will not be increased to pay for the project. However, the diversion of a portion of the rent receipts will mean the district must develop a plan to adjust for the loss of revenue and he noted that will be another challenge.

F. O'Connell asked if the towns are aware they are going to be getting a letter within seven days saying they need to schedule a special town meeting within sixty days. Dr. Genovese said he had a recent conversation with Mr. Ritter and Ms Jenkins to alert them and he will call each town tomorrow. He suspects Groton may let the sixty days pass and Dunstable has all ready scheduled a tentative town meeting for June 4th. He stated they still have to wait the sixty days regardless of whether the towns hold town meetings.

F. O'Connell asked what happens if town meetings said no and T. Sheehan said they would not be authorized to borrow the money and they would have to come back with a different plan. Dr. Genovese said the officials at the meeting felt this was a good use of the funds. Dr. Funch does not think there would be much dissention on this and said it is essential maintenance. He said they need to do it this summer and it is a roof over a great program and a great gym floor and they cannot let it go.

C. McKinney said the last discussion was with a limited number of town officials in January and he finds it distressing that the towns will be receiving a letter after the vote rather than them expecting the Committee to vote tonight.

F. O'Connell said the PTYC has advertised they would be closed for the month of July and T. Sheehan said Ms Tuomi is aware the construction date is July 17th. Dr. Genovese said Ms Tuomi will operate the program out of one of the school cafeterias.

T. Sheehan said three contractors visited the site today to meet with the architect and examine the site and they are estimating they can do this job in a week to ten days and he feels they may start on the date he indicated and not interfere with the plans at the PTYC.

At a previous meeting, C. Barrett said she was under the impression that if they did not do the roof and the HVAC at the same time, the roof warranty could be voided. T. Sheehan said the specifications and drawings as presently constructed require the bidder to remove the obsolete, non-functioning heating unit from the roof and then incorporate a pad for that in the roof structure. Based on some suggestions from the contractors on site today, the architect is going to issue an addendum to the specifications that would also have the contractors install the proper size pad for the heating unit that is intended to replace that one as part of the roof construction. The district will be spending a little more money on the roof in order to prepare the way for the PTYC to install and pay for the heating unit itself.

T. Sheehan stated the language for the bond vote in front of them has been recommended by their bond counsel and the two parts can be voted as one item. C. Barrett asked if they should say "approximately \$250,000" rather than \$250,000 and T. Sheehan said the recommendation from First Southwest is to specify the exact amount and it can be changed at a later date if necessary.

Report of the Chair - C. McKinney reported he has appointed Gary Hoglund to serve on the Facilities Task Force III and he thanked him for volunteering.

C. McKinney reported he may be required to call a School Committee meeting between now and June 6th and this is contingent upon the happenings of next week.

Report of the Superintendent -

No report

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

With respect to the vote on the PTYC, F. O'Connell said this is the type of thing they need to get better at. He said they have talked about it for a year, they have the information here tonight and have to vote on it immediately, he has questions and concerns and it is too late to adequately address. He stated they need to get better at coordinating and scheduling in the coming year.

ACTION ITEMS

VOTE: Ratify Unit D Contract

VOTE: Accept Superintendent's Evaluation

VOTE: Superintendent's Contract

VOTE: High School Handbook Revisions

See earlier votes

VOTE: Approve Policy Revisions

No action taken

VOTE: User Fees - (\$225 to \$250)

As part of the budgeting process, Dr. Genovese said the user fee went from \$225 to \$250 and it is his understanding that the Committee needs to take a formal vote on this. He is recommending they approve the change in the user fee for next year to help support the programs.

C. McKinney asked how many Committee members have children that may be participating in athletics next year as they will need to recuse themselves from the vote since it affects their personal expenditures. He, K. Lofgren and C. Barrett will not vote. C. Barrett stated the middle school fee would be a separate amount and C. McKinney agreed, stating it would be pro-rated against that number according to the number of days each of the sports is held. Assuming his son will not be trying out for any of the middle school sports, F. Buzan declared himself eligible to vote.

F. BUZAN MOVED THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE INCREASE THE HIGH SCHOOL USER FEES FROM \$225 TO \$250 PER STUDENT/PER ACTIVITY AND THE MIDDLE SCHOOL FEES WILL BE PRO-RATED, BASED ON PARTICIPATION, FOR THE 2007-2008 SCHOOL YEAR. SECONDED BY F. O'CONNELL

Dr. Funch said he is not in favor of this because it was part of the original athletics plan and then there was a cut to the budget and the override became part of the picture. He does not see that expanding the program into football is the right thing to do and increasing the user fees for that purpose does not seem right to him. If anything, he said they should be decreasing the fees and he cannot support increasing them to support an unnecessary addition of a program. Dr. Genovese said they have looked at the expenditures versus the revenues and it is not going in the right direction. Even if they were not adding new programs, he would recommend increasing the user fees and they will still need to reduce some of the spending in order to balance out. He stated this increase is not going to have a direct impact on the football program.

F. Buzan hopes in the future they can adjust the user fees so they reflect the cost of the individual activities. He is a believer in user fees and thinks it is an appropriate way to share the cost of extra-curricula activities between the taxpayer and the family of the person receiving the benefit of the activity. He feels \$250 may start

looking large but he feels this is in line with what other districts are doing and given they are asking for an override, he feels it is fair to look to the families.

Dr. Genovese said he has spoken with the athletic director and he (Dr. Genovese) may have a future recommendation to have a different user fee for a couple of sports that may be more expensive.

SO VOTED BY ROLL CALL

In Favor: F. Buzan, B. Erickson, F. O'Connell

Opposed: P. Funch

(The chair recognized Ms Moskow at this time since he thought he heard her say she did not want to speak during the QUESTIONS/COMMENTS period.)

L. Moskow thanked Mr. Sheehan for the budget forecast and hopes it will be put on the website. She thanked Dr. Funch for his comments on the user fees as she thinks it is unconscionable to be raising user fees when they are asking for an override and adding new programs and balancing new programs on the backs of the existing kids. With respect to moving agenda items up, she stated there was a discussion about policy at the December 20th meeting and it was stated that the existing policy is that there be public comments and questions before and after each action item. She stated comments were made that this was not being followed and it would bring the Committee to a halt and she agrees with that however, every time they suspend the rules to bring something to a vote without letting people have the benefit of the reports and discussions that have happened, they are depriving their constituents of commenting perceptively. She asked that they adhere to their policy or stick to their agenda and stop suspending the rules to move votes up.

VOTE: PTYC Roof Replacement

C. BARRETT MOVED THAT FOR THE PURPOSE OF FINANCING COSTS OF ROOF REPAIRS TO THE PETER TWOMEY YOUTH CENTER, THERE BE AND HEREBY IS AUTHORIZED, UNDER AND PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 71, SECTION 16 (d), OF THE GENERAL LAWS AND THE DISTRICT AGREEMENT, AS AMENDED, THE INCURRING OF DEBT ON THE FULL FAITH AND CREDIT OF THE DISTRICT BY THE ISSUANCE AND SALE AT ONE TIME OR FROM TIME TO TIME OF BONDS OR NOTES ON THE AGGREGATE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF \$250,000 AND THAT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DISTRICT, AND ANY OTHER APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS OF THE DISTRICT, ARE EACH HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO TAKE ANY AND ALL ACTION ON BEHALF OF THE DISTRICT NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT THIS VOTE

AND FURTHER

C. BARRETT MOVED THAT WITHIN SEVEN DAYS FROM THE DATE ON WHICH THE FOREGOING VOTE IS ADOPTED THE DISTRICT SHALL CAUSE NOTICE TO BE GIVEN TO BOARD OF SELECTMEN OF EACH OF THE MEMBER TOWNS OF THE DISTRICT AS TO THE AMOUNT AND GENERAL PURPOSES OF THE DEBT HEREIN AUTHORIZED, AS REQUIRED BY CHAPTER 71, SECTION 16 (d), OF THE GENERAL LAWS, AND THE DISTRICT AGREEMENT. SECONDED BY P. FUNCH

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL

C. McKinney said this is Ms Lofgren's last meeting as a Committee member and noted she has made the meetings lively, energetic and passionate and she put her heart into what she has done. He appreciates the hard work she has given to the Committee and the communities.

C. Barrett previewed their June 6th meeting - the reorganization of the School Committee, presentations by the High School Leadership Team - high school looking at student work, a conversation with the high school School Council, three SIP's and a spotlight on the Foreign Language Program.

Dr. Genovese thanked Cheryl Lee and her students for having him be in their infomercial.

ADJOURNMENT

GDRSC 05/16/2007

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F. O'CONNELL MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 10:38 P.M. SECONDED BY K. LOFGREN
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Smith
Recording Secretary

With attachments