

GROTON-DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Groton Town Hall Conference Room

Business Meeting Minutes

August 19, 2009

(Approved 9/2/09)

PRESENT:

Mr. Peter Carson

Mr. Erik Dichter

Ms Berta Erickson

Mr. Jim Frey, Chair

Dr. Paul Funch

Ms Alison Manugian, Secretary

Mr. Jon Sjoberg, Vice-chair

ADMINISTRATION:

Dr. Alan Genovese, Superintendent

STAFF, PRESS, OTHERS: C. Beckert-Long, Groton Herald; P. Comtois, Groton Landmark;

B. Sawyer, S. Willcox, S. Chilcoat

CALL TO ORDER:

The GDRSC Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. and the Committee voted to adjourn to executive session under M.G.L. Chapter 39, Section 23B-3. The meeting reconvened in open session at 7:19 p.m., with no plans to return to executive session, and was called to order by the chair, J. Frey.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Genovese thanked town officials for allowing the committee to use the town hall this evening for their meeting.

Dr. Genovese announced the names of the six high school students who received the 2009 Stanley Z. Koplick Certificate of Mastery. The certificate is awarded in recognition of the student's mastery of skills and knowledge in the fields of math, arts, science and humanities. The certificate entitles the recipients to a tuition waiver at a Massachusetts public college or university.

PRESENTATIONS

Overnight Field Trip - United Nations Youth Conference

S. Chilcoat explained the Pages for Peace Foundation, which came out of the Book Makers and Dreamers Club, was invited to participate in the United Nations International Day of Peace last year and the trip to NY was done in one day. They have been invited back this year and they would like to extend the trip to an overnight stay and include members from grades 6-10. The conference will be held on September 18th. Members received a copy of their outline. The chaperone/student ratio is expected to be 4:1.

DR. FUNCH MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADVANCE FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION THE VOTE ON THE OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIP. SECONDED BY E. DICHTER

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

DR. FUNCH MOVED TO APPROVE THE OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIP TO THE UNITED NATIONS AS DESCRIBED IN THE HANDOUT. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Donation - Groton-Dunstable Youth Soccer

Dr. Genovese stated the Groton Youth Soccer Club has agreed to continue to fund the difference between the user fees and the cost of the Groton-Dunstable freshmen soccer program, assuming there are at least 15 players on the roster for each of the teams for the 2009 season. He recommends the committee approve this donation.

School Committee Goals - 2009-2010

J. Frey reviewed the goals put together at their August workshop:

Primary:

1. Initiate, conduct and complete a search for a new Superintendent
2. Advance the Strategic Plan to an advantageous state for supporting our coming change of leadership.

Objectives include:

- Complete Core Values statement and draft Vision Statement
- Summarize results of focal group process
- Hold public hearings on focal group results
- Assemble strategic action proposals

J. Frey said it is felt the district would be best served to wait until a new superintendent is hired to complete the strategic planning process.

Secondary:

3. Focus on improved policy review and compliance
4. Improve subcommittee structure, guidance and transitions
5. Improve budget communications with town government bodies, citizen constituents and school community
6. Adopt environmentally responsible practices district-wide, including for committee business

With respect to the strategic plan, Dr. Genovese advised the administrators have been having their summit the past few days and spent a lot of time looking at the feedback from the focus groups. Five themes were developed: meeting varied student needs, community, highly qualified staff, leadership and technology. Goals were developed for each theme. Strategies were developed under each theme and the Administrative Council will pick a couple of themes, develop an action plan and work on implementation. The other strategies will be listed so the new superintendent will be able to see the theme, goal and strategies but the detail of action will be left up to the Administrative Council working with the new superintendent. Focus group presentations will be given in the fall.

Dr. Genovese said they would like to have a soft draft of a strategic plan they can begin implementing that rallies around what the community heard.

Superintendent Search - J. Sjoberg

Members had received a copy of an outline for the search process. J. Sjoberg recommends the committee guide Personnel and Negotiations to target a February decision deadline and drive the process to that target while making recommendations to the school committee. The school committee will agree on the final approach. He stated P & N would need to meet every week in the first month. The six-month schedule is relaxed when compared to other districts. Dr. Genovese agrees February is a reasonable target date.

Discussion ensued as to who should hear the consultant's presentations to decide whether or not the committee needs help. Both NESDEC (New England School Development Council) and MASC (Massachusetts Association of School Committees) will do all of the work or "bits and pieces". Members had received copies of their proposals. It is the consensus of the committee that they will be asking for outside help and that the committee needs assistance early in the process.

B. Erickson asked about using the Assessment Center Process and J. Sjoberg said their presentation should be included as well.

P. FUNCH MOVED THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE REQUEST PRESENTATIONS FROM NESDEC, MASC AND ANY OTHER CONSULTING FIRMS THAT CAN PROVIDE SERVICES TO THE COMMITTEE IN THE SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH. SECONDED BY E. DICHTER

J. Frey and J. Sjoberg feel P & N should hear the presentations and E. Dichter and Dr. Funch feel the presentations should be before the school committee. J. Sjoberg would be comfortable with school committee

members attending P & N meetings and recognizing the quorum of P & N.

In Favor: E. Dichter, P. Funch, B. Erickson, A. Manugian, P. Carson

Opposed: J. Frey, J. Sjoberg

B. ERICKSON MOVED PERSONNEL AND NEGOTIATIONS DRIVE THE WHOLE PROCESS.
SECONDED BY P. CARSON

A. MANUGIAN MOVED TO AMEND THE MOTION TO INCLUDE A COMPLETION DATE OF LATE FEBRUARY. SECONDED BY E. DICHTER

In Favor: B. Erickson, J. Frey

Opposed: E. Dichter, P. Funch, j. Sjoberg, A. Manugian, P. Carson

The amendment fails.

The committee voted unanimously in favor of the original motion:

It was announced that Dr. Funch, J. Sjoberg and E. Dichter are on the Personnel and Negotiations subcommittee.

a) Dr. Funch - Policy BDFB - Screening Committee

The major changes to this policy were highlighted. It was agreed to accept the changes except for lines 10 and 11 that say one member of the school committee would be appointed by the chairman to serve on the Screening Committee as a non voting member. This will be left open for potential amendment as they go into the process. Dr. Genovese said they would not want a school committee member to be a voting member as the process would not be pristine.

DISCUSSION

Policies - First Reading

Dr. Funch highlighted the changes to the policies.

BGB - Policy Adoption

It was agreed to accept the changes and to eliminate the word "present" in line 9 and delete line 30.

KGD and KGD-E-1 - Advertising, Sponsorships, Partnerships and Commercial Services

The policy clarifies when and where advertising is appropriate. Dr. Funch stated the sponsorships and partnerships they have now will not substantially change. P. Carson does not feel people will see a change in current behavior. It was agreed lines 81 through 84 need to be reworded.

BEDB, BEDB-E-1, BEDB-E-2 - Agenda Format

Dr. Funch recommends changing this to Meeting Agenda. It is clarified the chairman is responsible for the agendas and are prepared in consultation with the superintendent.

Exhibit BEDB-E-1 would be changed to Agenda Content. Lines 16 through 18 will be revised, *New Business* will be added before *Adjournment* and the Questions and Comments will be changed to *Questions and Comments from the Public* and be after Presentations.

BEDF, BEDF-R, BEDF-E - Voting Method

It is clarified that votes taken at a regular school committee meeting will be taken by a show of hands and all votes taken in executive session will be roll call votes. The process to use if the *Rule of Necessity* is invoked has been added to the policy. Dr. Funch said it should not be used unless absolutely necessary.

BDE - Subcommittees of the School Committee

Changes include the school committee approving membership on the standing committees. Line 28 will be reworded to say the Chairman will be an ex-officio non-voting member of the subcommittees on which he is not a sitting member.

Dr. Funch distributed a chart for Policy Section B that shows policy revisions, dates of adoption, who is responsible for the action etc.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

REPORTS

Policy Subcommittee - Dr. Genovese distributed Policy subcommittee meeting minutes.

Budget and Finance Subcommittee - Dr. Genovese distributed Budget & Finance subcommittee meeting minutes. A. Manugian reported they are recommending \$13,500 be moved from the MSN building project account to cover the installation of the middle school projectors. The FY09 audit is being fast-tracked to speed up the certification of E&D and to help set the bond rating as they move forward with the Casella bonding.

Personnel and Negotiations

Possible Ratification of Van Drivers Contract - Dr. Funch reported the committee will be voting tonight to ratify the van drivers contract. The one year contract, effective July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010, provides a 2% raise for the hourly employees and a new step was provided. Vans will be parked at Prescott or the middle school except during the period of December 1st through April 1st when it is better for the drivers to have the vans at home. A new Transportation Coordinator position has been created with a stipend of \$9500. Oversight is provided by the Director of Pupil Services.

Report of the Director of Business & Finance

High School Water Testing - Dr. Genovese reported the water at the high school has now passed two consecutive six month periods of copper and lead testing. Small Water Systems Services reports the water is now potable and safe for human consumption and the bottled water coolers may be removed. He will be posting a copy of the letter in each former bottled water location and parents will be advised of the results.

Appropriation of Funds - Dr. Genovese will be asking the committee to support a motion to take \$13,500 from the MSN project account to pay for the installation of the projectors.

Summer Projects - The list of projects completed over the summer was highlighted. Dr. Genovese reported the air conditioning unit in the high school main office is not working and he executed a \$16,000 Purchase Order today to have this addressed. A. Manugian advised a stop sign is missing at the middle school as you turn left toward the PTYC.

FY2009 Fourth Quarter Financial Report - Dr. Genovese reported the district ended the year with a modest expense budget surplus of \$213,952. This surplus was offset by a shortfall in revenue of \$87,815.

Chairman - J. Frey reported he met with Mr. Hunt, chairman of the Tyngsboro school committee. He is interested in establishing some dialogue with the committee about how they might work together to look at sharing transportation costs, SPED programs and high school curriculum. Tyngsboro recently completed a superintendent search and Mr. Hunt offered some best practices input.

B. Erickson was able to speak with Governor Patrick when he came to Groton a couple of weeks ago and asked him if the state would be developing curriculum and his answer was "next year" although it will be a tough sell. She suggested Mr. Frey postpone discussing sharing curriculum with Mr. Hunt until they know how this turns out.

Superintendent

MCAS Results - Dr. Genovese reported the administration had until 5:00 p.m. today to make any corrections and appeal to the Department of Education. Parents will receive the results in September.

Interim Business Manager Update - Dr. Genovese reported he has spoken with 6 people and met with one

individual. The committee can have him handle the day to day operations and hire an interim business administrator on a part time basis. That individual would monitor the FY10 budget and develop the FY11 budget. He noted the business office staff is very supportive. They could also hire an interim fulltime. He feels the pool of candidates for fulltime would be people without a lot of experience but have business knowledge while those interested in part time are generally retired, have a level of expertise and want specific tasks. If they hire a part time individual, he noted a consultant could be brought in to do a specific task such as assisting with the bus contract. Dr. Funch stated it is important that the new superintendent be involved in the selection of a full time business manager.

It is the consensus of the committee that Dr. Genovese focus more on finding a part time senior person.

Miscellaneous - J. Sjoberg will be addressing the staff when they return on August 31st.

A letter from Groton Police Chief Donald Palma, Jr., reaffirming the department's commitment to continue to support their partnership with the district, was read.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Communications Committee - E. Dichter reported they met last evening with Kevin Mackenzie, a school committee member for Nashoba Tech, to discuss ideas for maintaining and enhancing the district website. Mr. Mackenzie has identified a candidate from the Tech's technology department to take charge of this project and she has agreed to come to a school committee meeting to discuss ideas. B. Erickson noted they are also looking at having Groton-Dunstable students being involved in other technology areas.

Think Tank Committee - B. Erickson reported they are down to seven members and anyone with innovative ideas interested in joining the committee may contact her, J. Frey or msweeny@gdrsd.org. Information will be posted on Dunstable's website and list serve. They are concentrating on the virtual classroom, energy programs, incentive programs, an endowment fund and extra and intra-partnerships. They will be meeting at Prescott on September 3rd at 7:00 p.m.

Tarbell Committee - Dr. Funch reported a joint meeting was held with Dr. Genovese, Mr. Byrne and Groton Selectmen representatives F. Dillon and A. Eliot on August 5th. Discussion was intended to develop a common understanding of the options facing the town and district regarding the future use of Tarbell. Copies of the minutes were distributed. He reported Tarbell is in stable condition but this is not a good way to keep a building. The building has structural issues and a significant investment is required to make the building viable. A new roof is needed. B. Erickson reported the Groton Selectmen are looking at using the building for affordable housing and a walk-through was conducted today. The next meeting is scheduled for September 17th at 8:00 a.m. in Town Hall.

ACTION ITEMS

Consent Action Items

Approval of minutes was withdrawn from the Consent Action Items

OTHER ACTION ITEMS

Vote to Approve Business Meeting Minutes of June 17, 2009

P. CARSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 17, 2009.

SECONDED BY J. SJOBERG

In Favor: E. Dichter, P. Funch, B. Erickson, J. Sjoberg, A. Manugian, P. Carson

Abstention: J. Frey

Vote to Approve Executive Session Minutes of June 17, 2009 and June 29, 2009

J. SJOBERG MOVED TO APPROVE THE EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES OF JUNE 17, 2009 AND JUNE 29, 2009. SECONDED BY P. FUNCH

In Favor: E. Dichter, P. Funch, B. Erickson, J. Sjoberg, A. Manugian, P. Carson

Abstention: J. Frey

Vote to Approve Workshop Meeting Minutes of August 3, 2009 and August 5, 2009

J. SJOBERG MOVED TO APPROVE THE WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 3, 2009 AND AUGUST 5, 2009 AS AMENDED. SECONDED BY E. DICHTER
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Vote to Approve Executive Session Minutes of August 3, 2009 and August 5, 2009

P. FUNCH MOVED TO APPROVE THE EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES OF AUGUST 3, 2009 AND AUGUST 5, 2009. SECONDED BY P. CARSON
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Vote to Approve Overnight Field Trip to UN/NY

See earlier vote

Vote to Approve Donation from GD Youth Soccer Club

J. SJOBERG MOVED TO APPROVE THE DONATION FROM THE GROTON-DUNSTABLE YOUTH SOCCER CLUB OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE COST OF THE FRESHMEN SOCCER PROGRAM AND COLLECTED USER FEES. SECONDED BY P. FUNCH
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Vote to Amend Policy BDFB - Screening Committee

Postponed

Vote to Amend Policy BGB - Policy Adoption

P. FUNCH MOVED TO ADOPT POLICY BGB WITH THE AMENDMENTS AS SHOWN AND WITH THE ADDITIONAL CORRECTION OF REMOVING THE WORD "PRESENT" IN LINE 9 AND STRIKING THE SENTENCE IN LINE 30. SECONDED BY E. DICHTER
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Vote to Approve Funds for MS Projector Installation

A. MANUGIAN MOVED TO APPROPRIATE \$13,500 FROM THE MSN BUILDING PROJECT ACCOUNT TO FUND THE INSTALLATION OF PROJECTORS AT MSN. SECONDED BY P. CARSON
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

(Potential) Vote to Ratify Van Drivers Contract

P. FUNCH MOVED THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE RATIFY THE LABOR AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GROTON-DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT AND THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF OPERATING ENGINEERS LOCAL 877 FOR JULY 1, 2009 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2010 AS OUTLINED IN THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT AS PRESENTED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION TONIGHT. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

NEW BUSINESS

With enrollment that has grown in both head count and diversity, Dr. Genovese advised MSEC (Merrimack Special Education Collaborative) is requesting use of an additional classroom in the basement of the Prescott School. He noted their service benefits district students and there is no cost to the district to prepare the room. MSEC is currently charged \$6000 for use of the current space.

E. DICHTER MOVED THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHARGE DR. GENOVESE WITH PROCEEDING WITH NEGOTIATIONS WITH MSEC FOR ANOTHER CLASSROOM IN PRESCOTT AND ALLOW THEM TO USE THE FACILITY FOR THE COMING YEAR. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Dr. Genovese recommends the committee establish a Guidance Counselor position at the high school. Upon grant approval in October, approximately \$400,000 will be available to the district from the ARRA-IDEA funding

and the funds can be used to fund new positions. Some funds can be carried over to FY2011 and the new position would continue to be supported by the operating budget for the second year. The new position will reduce the average caseload for guidance counselors from approximately 290 students to approximately 200 students and will allow a more efficient provision of services to students and families.

**P. FUNCH MOVED THEY CREATE A NEW GUIDANCE COUNSELOR POSITION AT THE HIGH SCHOOL.
SECONDED BY A. MANUGIAN**

While there is concern that money may not be available for this position in a couple of years, members agree this is a needed position.

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURNMENT

P. CARSON MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 10:40 P.M. SECONDED BY E. DICHTER

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Smith
Recording Secretary