

Ashford Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes – January 8, 2015
7:30 p.m.

Note: Per C.G.S. §10 – 218, Board of Education meeting minutes are provided in a draft format within 48 hours of the date the meeting was held. With the exception of motions and votes recorded, these minutes are unofficial until they have been read and approved by a majority vote of the Board. Should edits be necessary, they will be made at a regularly scheduled meeting, noted in the meeting minutes, and so voted upon.

Call To Order

Board chair J. Rupert called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM. Present were J. Rupert, L. Donegan, J. Mozeiko, K. Warren, K. Rourke, D. Wesson (7:33) and J. Lippert (7:33). Also present were Superintendent J. Longo, Business Office staff members D. Morgan, L. SanDiego and recording secretary J. Barsaleau. Present in the audience were N. Rice, J. Bowley, S. Morytko and AEA members E. Turcotte, C. Imhoff and J. Lindsay. Chronicle reporter A. McElveen arrived at 7:42 pm.

Persons to be Heard

Resident J. Bowley read and distributed a memo (attached) stating her opposition to a motion made at the last regular board meeting concerning approval of lodging expenses for Dr. Longo. The board thanked her for the input and advised there would be a response to these concerns at or prior to its next meeting. S. Morytko stated there have been some improvements in the website but listed some items that he felt should still be addressed; webmaster email address, update Superintendent's Corner, add contact email to receive board meeting information, bus drop off times, K12 alerts, and parts of the student handbook seem outdated. He also inquired about the outcome of language arts meetings and recommendations for writing, and publicizing the Bicknell Trust scholarships. The board stated that the administration would be the contact for information on language arts, and that Bicknell Scholarships are publicized and the number of applications processed in recent years has increased considerably.

K. Warren made a motion to add to the agenda a discussion of the Selectmen's meeting concerning lighting near the school on Route 89.

Motion second by J. Lippert and carried unanimously. The item will be addressed before next meeting date and agenda items.

a. FY 16 Board of Education Public Budget Input

The chair asked for any input from the audience. S. Morytko felt that some professional development should be used to address instructional improvements in writing.

Communications

D. Wesson received follow up communication from the Capital Expenditure committee concerning the Board's five-year capital improvement plan. More detail supporting the FY 16 request is needed and Dr. Longo is awaiting quotes for one of the projects. FY 16 capital requests will include telephone and paging system replacement, acoustical ceiling installation in library and some primary wing classrooms, safety doors near the gym/lobby area and purchase of a school bus or bus and van pending an update from the mechanic on the condition of the current school vans. Bullet resistant film installation has been on hold due to quality control issues, and will resume once addressed satisfactorily. Dr. Longo had prepared a memo concerning these items. Once finalized it will be sent to the committee chair with the appropriate estimates. Projects for the remaining four years of the plan have been identified, however, the plan will be revisited annually and edited as necessary.

a. Distribution of Administrative Reports

No reports.

Approval of Minutes: 12/03/2014

Motion to approve the special meeting minutes of 12/18/2014 made by K. Warren, seconded by K. Rourke and carried unanimously. It was noted that the exit time from executive session was omitted. J. Barsaleau will review and add the time the board exited. The chair asked for a vote to approve the minutes as amended, motion carried with one abstention (J. Lippert).

Board Worksession – FY 16 Budget

The Superintendent's initial budget narrative represents a 5.2% increase over FY 14. The narrative and spreadsheets within the document were created from actual and accurate spending information to date. The draft "*Superintendent's Planning Details*" was reviewed and it includes the addition of a writing teacher, providing for additional support for the arts in a "STEAM" centered curriculum, world language instruction in the lower grades and technology funding, as well as other detailed information used to create the Superintendent's Budget.

Extensive discussion followed, it included, but was not limited to inclusion of a school social worker and how that differs from what the current youth services office employee can work with our students; the addition of a writing teacher or applying the services of a writing coach, creating a committee to investigate the approach to integrating writing instruction into the curriculum in all subjects; creativity in the assignment of staff based on enrollment numbers and curricular need, changes in the schedule need to be made and all should be prior to making any decisions to add staff. The board sought explanation of the benefit of adding an after school program coordinator which led to Dr. Longo being asked to encourage the existing staff to think about creativity, innovation and ways to make change occur within our current structure; and to seek their understanding of the problems faced by the board in presenting an increased budget with lower enrollments in difficult economic times.

J. Mozeiko left the meeting at 8:55 pm.

Second Opportunity for FY 16 Public Budget Input

S. Morytko appreciates the focus on writing and likes the idea of a writing coach and further stated the problem is broad based and he likes the idea of embedding it in the classroom, and it seems to be coming together based on what he is hearing. There is some clarification needed in the planning document, the staffing information on page 1 could be misunderstood. L. San Diego will add clarifying text before it is added to the minutes. Dr. Longo added that philosophical changes have evolved slowly, but they are now coming together.

CABE Conference Report (K. Rourke)

Mrs. Rourke gave a summary of her attendance at the CABE Convention in November. She distributed a document to fellow members concerning Budget Philosophy and Strategies. There were several key points that she found could be helpful to our board during this budget process and going forward.

Discussion of Selectmen's Meeting

K. Warren attended the selectmen's meeting Monday evening. Signage and lighting on Rt. 89 near the school were discussed. There is a lack of speed limit and school zone signage on the road. With the limited visibility at the school driveway entry and exit, the selectman has contacted the DOT numerous times with no response. Sen. Guglielmo will be contacted to assist in addressing the issue.

Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items

The next meeting date is January 22, 2015. Agenda will include public budget input and budget work session, second policy reading, FY 14 year-end object budget transfers, 15-16 school calendar approval, capital improvement committee report.

Superintendent Evaluation (Executive Session Anticipated)

Motion to enter into executive session made by L. Donegan (9:30 pm) for the purpose of evaluation of the Superintendent and inviting Dr. Longo to attend. Motion seconded by J. Lippert and carried unanimously. Present: J. Rupert, L. Donegan, K. Rourke, K. Warren, D. Wesson, J. Longo

The board exited the session at 10:41 pm.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting at (10:44 pm) made by D. Wesson, seconded by K. Rourke and carried unanimously.

Recorded by:

Jennifer Barsaleau
Recording Secretary

Approved by the Ashford BOE:

Unapproved