School Committee Minutes

Hapgood Room, Old Library

Monday, November 9, 2015

6:00 p.m.

Members attending: SusanMary Redinger, Jennifer Bedford, Nancy Lancellotti, Mary Traphagen, Kirsten Wright, Linda Dwight, Lorraine Leonard and Maureen Babcock.

SusanMary Redinger called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Kenneth Lin read the Vision Statement.

**Open to Interested Citizens’ Commentary**

The following people spoke with concern about the recent fires at The Bromfield School and how the installation of cameras may help.

Roxana Trabulsi – 73 Whitney Road

Robert Kearn – Slough Road

**Club Approval**

Bromfield Seniors Amy Hunt and Kate Toll presented a new club proposal to form the Bromfield Spanish Club. This club will provide an environment where students can practice conversational Spanish and explore cultural topics outside of the curriculum. Ms. Rosal and Ms. Fraser will serve as advisors. Student leaders will guide discussions and prepare possible conversation topics and other activities.

Kirsten Wright made a motion and Mary Traphagen seconded to approve the Spanish Club as presented.

VOTE 5/0

**Student Report**

Kenneth Lin reported the following:

* Student Council wants to survey students on the use of technology at TBS. They are especially interested in students’ opinions with regard to the use of iPads versus personal computers.
* Students are concerned and would like more information about the fire related incidents that have occurred at TBS over the last few weeks. Students are not clear about what the situation is and are curious to hear more about.

**Student Achievement Presentation by Principals**

Principal O’Shea and Principal Frederick gave a joint presentation on student achievement at Hildreth Elementary and The Bromfield School. The presentation included:

* A summary of MCAS test results for both HES and TBS.
* 4th Grade students ranked fourth in the state on the Math MCAS test.
* 5th grade students ranked seventh in the state on the Science MCAS test.
* 10th grade students ranked fifth in Science and English and sixth in Math on the MCAS test.
* US News ranked Bromfield a Gold Medal recipient and 14th in the state.
* HES students are offered many ways to excel beyond academics and can be part of the Peer Leader Program, Recycling Program, Band, Robotics, and Jump Rope for the Heart and 5th Grade Enrichment during recess in music, art, health and physical education.
* At TBS a high number of students take band, chorus and art courses, 284 students participated in fall sports, over 50 cast and crew members are involved in the drama production of “Les Miserables”. Bromfield took three league titles last spring in Girl’s Lacrosse, Track and Tennis. In addition there is high participation in Crew, Drama, Model UN, Math Olympiad, Bromfield Cares, The Green Team, World of Difference, Tri-M, Youth in Government and Business Professionals of America to name a few.
* TBS has been recognized for excellence in the Elizabeth Haskins Math Competition, High School Band Central District, Junior High Drama Festival, New England Music Festival, Mass All State Music Festival, Youth and Government Convention, Boston Globe Art Awards and Model UN.

Future work will be to look at data to see where we can grow at the same time balancing achievement with personnel well-being. SusanMary Redinger thanked Sue and Jim for their presentation and wished them luck on their focus of where they want to tweak things.

**Power School Presentation**

Dr. Julie Horton presented to the Committee instructions on how parents will access the parent portal to Power School. She showed how parents can set up their account and link their account to their student or students. Dr. Horton logged in as a test parent to show the Committee how parents can view progress reports, student absences, grades and comments. Any feedback regarding Power School should go to the main office and any questions regarding access and logging in to Power School should go to Kellie Carlucci or Julie Horton.

**Technology Visioning**

Dr. Dwight presented on the direction of technology for the district after the pilot programs. Dr. Dwight and Jim O’Shea met with teachers by grade level and departments to get their feedback on technology tools that might work best for them. Seventh grade is very interested in moving forward with iPads using a wireless keyboard to accommodate writing assignments. Eighth grade would prefer MacBooks which are more powerful and would have connection to Word and Excel. Grades 9-12 overwhelmingly prefer laptops. Dr. Dwight shared a spreadsheet showing the cost to lease devices for all students in grade 5-12. With licensing, training, apps, keyboards, battery packs and professional development the total cost is $319,449. The Committee discussed the different lease options. The Committee questioned how many students are bringing in devices and may not want to be locked into using a school device. The lease may not need to include a device for every student and they could opt out. SusanMary Redinger suggested polling the students to see how many students are bringing in their own devices. The Committee discussed Mac vs Dell and the benefit of going to Mac. Funding for this technology initiative would come from the Devens account. There are still some questions that need to be answered before a decision can be made. The Committee will need actual numbers for the November 16th meeting. Dr. Dwight will work on giving the Committee additional information on the plan and approach for moving forward with grades 9-12.

**School Choice Allocation**

The School Committee discussed School Choice to determine the offset for the FY17 budget. Maureen Babcock shared that construction is underway for the Grant Road development which will add 16 single family homes. SusanMary Redinger suggested that as Choice goes down Devens will go up. After discussion the Committee decided to add five Choice students for the 2016/2017 school year for a total of 62 School Choice students.

Jennifer Bedford made a motion and Mary Traphagen seconded to move to add 5 school choice positions to the budget for next school year for a total of 62 students.

VOTE 5/0

**Science Lab Update**

Dr. Dwight reported that George O’Neil had responded to the questions regarding the conditions of the air handlers at TBS. His response is that deeper investigation is needed in order to answer questions regarding the air handler units. Dr. Dwight will send Mr. O’Neil’s responses to the Subcommittee who will need to meet to sort through to see what the next steps would be. It is very disappointing that GRLA didn’t have better answers. SusanMary Redinger asked Lorraine to attend the next meeting to review the contract to understand what our legal obligation would be if we did not pursue working with GRLA. Lorraine Leonard suggested contacting the technician used by GRLA directly to see if he could answer the questions. A future meeting will be planned.

**Financial Report**

Lorraine Leonard reported departments are using the purchase order system. In the Pupil Services transportation line the subsidy from Devens has increased from $30K to $60K due to placement changes. There are no other significant changes. The current FY 16 budget has a surplus of $1,368.

**Superintendent Report**

Dr. Dwight shared the following:

* Several School Committee members attended the joint conference in Hyannis last week.
* Cost center leaders met with Lorraine, School Committee members, and Dr. Dwight for an initial review of their detailed budgets. They are prepared to share the entire budget with all School Committee members on November 16th.
* Veterans will be honored at the elementary school with an assembly on Tuesday at 9 a.m. You are all invited to attend.

Dr. Dwight shared with the Committee that the school administration continues to collaborate with the Fire and Police Department on the fire incidents of the past week. Administration has communicated with families in hope that someone who heard or saw something comes forward with information. Dr. Dwight discussed with the Committee the idea of installing surveillance cameras as a safety measure at The Bromfield School. The cost would be $1,000 a piece with a minimum purchase of 10 cameras. Additional cameras could be purchased for $650 each. The police as well as administration would be given access to reviewing the film. Kirsten Wright brought up that School Committee would need policies put in place regarding the use of cameras. Chief Denmark agreed to craft a joint statement with the schools in support of the cameras. The Committee agreed that communication to the families is important. The Committee agreed that if administration was in favor of the cameras as a deterrent and safety measure they would like to support the purchase of some cameras now with the remainder of cameras to be purchased through the Capital Plan request in two years.

Jennifer Bedford made a motion and Kirsten Wright seconded to move to proceed with the purchase of approximately 10 cameras for The Bromfield School to be funded by Shaw Trust.

VOTE 5/0

**Presidential Election/School Closing Request**

The Committee received a request from the Town Clerk to use The Bromfield School for voting. The request to schedule September 8th (State Primary) as an early release day and November 8th (Presidential Election) as a no school day will be brought forward to the 2016/2017 Calendar Subcommittee.

**Approve Minutes**

SusanMary Redinger made a motion with no objection to approve the minutes of the October 26th School Committee meeting as amended.

VOTE 5/0

**Report Out of Liaisons**

Kirsten Wright reported that SEPAC is having their first meeting of the year Thursday, November 12th from 6:30 to 8:00 at the Bromfield Library.

Maureen Babcock was interested to learn about the survey on “Next Door Harvard”. Maureen is familiar with “Next Door Devens”. She plans to add her Devens address as a Harvard address to Next Door Harvard to be able to access the website to stay informed.

Nancy Lancellotti reported that School Committee had met with Student Council and she thought Kenneth did a good job explaining the discussion and happy to hear they are going forward with the technology survey. The Charting the Course workshop was very informative.

SusanMary Redinger reported that CPIC met and went through the school related questions. There is tentative support for the K-Wing project. CPIC had questions about the cost of the Bromfield parking lot project and whether it had to be co-presented with the town. The Master Plan Steering Committee will host the Devens forum at the town library from 7 to 8:30 p.m. to educate people on the impact to Harvard if it was to take jurisdiction over Devens. SusanMary reported that she met with Ron Ricci, Deb Ricci and Alice VonLoesecke about the use of the old library and The Bromfield House. Ron Ricci agreed to get figures on what it would cost to bring the town hall into ADA compliance. SusanMary Redinger was asked to get the fair market value of the Bromfield House should it be sold or leased. They would like to get together in December and go over the information collected.

**Future Agenda Items**

Science Lab

User Fees

MassDevelopment – Thatcher Keezer

Student presentations

Trip Approval

Bromfield House

Cameras/School Security

Budget

**Open to Interested Citizens’ and School Committee Commentary**

None

**Closing Commentary**

Kirsten Wright – appreciated hearing from Roxana and Robert coming tonight. Appreciated hearing from the perspective of a student about the fire incidents at Bromfield.

Linda Dwight - appreciates the responsiveness of the School Committee to things that happen and ways we can increase student safety.

**Adjournment:**

SusanMary Redinger made a motion to adjourn with no objections at 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: Mary Zadroga, Recording Secretary