



**BELCHERTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
FINANCE & BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
May 4, 2015**

- PLACE:** Swift River Elementary School Library
TIME: 5:00 pm
- SUBCOMMITTEE:** Dr. Michael Knapp, Chair (present); Ms. Dawn French, Member (present)
- ADMINISTRATION:** Karol G. Coffin, Superintendent of Schools Chair (present), Edward Dunn, School Business Manager Chair (present)
- VISITORS:**

Minutes

- I. Call Subcommittee Meeting to order
Dr. Knapp called the subcommittee to order at 5:00 PM.
- II. Public comment regarding items on the agenda
There were no public comments regarding items on the agenda.
- III. Subcommittee meeting minutes for approval
 - A. Minutes of March 31, 2015
Motion: Ms. French moved to accept the March 31, 2015 minutes as presented.
Second: Dr. Knapp
Vote: 2,0,0
- IV. Items for discussion and action
 - A. Develop 5-year projection for school spending and enrollment
Dr. Knapp discussed the need for a view into the future and potential to discuss with Town government. What are our long range needs; he used Northampton as an example. Mr. Dunn and Superintendent Coffin noted two things; 1. At present it would be guess work, and 2. Presenting to the town "This is where we are going" and then what is presented is not accurate, would the town question future plans.
Currently we are trying to do multiple things for next year. Mr. Dunn noted that it should be explained to the town that it is a revenue problem and not a spending issue. Mr. Dunn also noted there are many variables to project out 5 years and many changes make that difficult, examples would include personnel contracts expiring in 2016, energy price fluctuations, SPED costs, and health insurance costs. These amounts can change even from the budget making process to the beginning of the school year. Dr. Knapp noted the

school choice reserves are pretty much spent with none available for next year. The committee discussed capacity numbers.

Dr. Knapp questioned whether it would be possible to project 2 years ahead?

Superintendent Coffin noted that might be possible next year at this time. Contract negotiations will be settled and the school plan will be set. Superintendent Coffin and Mr. Dunn summarized the history of past budgeting. Dr. Knapp suggested putting off discussion until next year? Ms. French noted she is comfortable waiting until contract negotiations are done. Mr. Dunn noted the need for capital improvements and technology should be done. We have plans but they are not funded. Mr. Lachance removes and adds to the capital improvements as necessary each year.

B. Pros/Cons of offering free preschool

Dr. Knapp questioned the Chapter 70 money for preschool, where is the district on that question? Superintendent Coffin noted that there is no money the first year of operation, only some the second year. Mr. Dunn noted that currently there is a charge for peer students and no charge for SPED students. Ms. French questioned whether Chapter 70 money would ever cover the costs of the program completely. Mr. Dunn noted that it would never be fully funded. Dr. Knapp questioned whether there would be a financial benefit? Mr. Dunn noted that the money is capped to 2 role model students for every SPED student enrolled. Mr. Cameron noted historically there is trouble finding peer students to attend. Mr. Dunn noted it could potentially add ~~\$15-20,000~~ to the budget. ^{\$15-20,000} _{affect}

C. Preparation for town-wide capital plan

Dr. Knapp posed the question of whether the committee should encourage a town wide capital improvement plan. Ms. French agreed that the committee should encourage the town to have a town wide plan, it would benefit all departments. Dr. Knapp questioned what would be school capital improvements. Superintendent Coffin noted we have a plan developed by Mr. Lachance. We can look at that to determine what would fall under a town plan. All town departments could make a list as well and then the town would prioritize the list. Ms. French noted that a town plan should cover building needs, any building owned by the town. Mr. Dunn noted a town capital plan is worthwhile and the committee should talk to the town select board about forming a committee to develop a plan.

D. User Fees discussion

Motion: Ms. French moved to recommend to the School Committee an increase in User fees for next year from \$125 to \$135.

Second: Dr. Knapp

Vote: 2,0,0

Discussion: Dr. Knapp questioned a reasonable way to update user fees? Ms. French agreed they need to be adjusted. Should user fee be changed per sport? Ms. French noted she did not agree with a change in fee based on the sport. Dr. Knapp recommends a user fee of \$150; the current fee is \$125. Superintendent Coffin noted there may be

some justification needed regarding a \$25 increase. Superintendent Coffin suggests a graduated rate increase. Dr. Knapp noted a \$10 increase this year and \$15 increase the following year. Mr. Dunn suggested the increase over a 3 year period. Ms. French noted the potential for a discount for multiple children in the same season.


- V. Subcommittee correspondence
 - A. Agenda May 4, 2015
 - B. Minutes March 31, 2015


- VI. Adjourn
 - Motion: Ms. French moved to adjourn at 6:05 PM
 - Second: Dr. Knapp
 - Vote: 2,0,0

Respectfully submitted by,

Ramona Griffin
Non-Confidential Recording Secretary to the School Committee

Personnel & Policy Subcommittee members' signatures:


_____, Dr. Michael Knapp, Chair


_____, *Dr Thomas Laughner*
Ms. Dawn French, Member

The mission of the Belchertown Public Schools is to ensure that every student meets with success every day. To that end, we pledge to ensure that we have rigorous, standards-based curriculum; instruction designed to meet the needs of diverse learners in every classroom; and access to the global learning community via state-of-the-art technology in schools that are communities of respect and civility for all.

2011-2015 Strategic Plan Goals (adopted by the Belchertown School Committee, 3/1/11):

Goal #1: To have guaranteed (standards-based and implemented by all), viable (doable and accessible to every student), seamless K-12 curriculum in every content area.

Goal #2: To have rigorous (standards-based), relevant (grounded in 21st Century skills), differentiated instructional practices with the ability to access the global learning community via technology available to every learner.

Goal #3: To implement a plan to ensure that our students understand the importance of acceptance, tolerance, and respect supported by all adults in the community.

The Belchertown Finance & Budget Subcommittee conducts its business in open session pursuant to Chapter 30A, Section 21 of the Massachusetts General Laws. The public is welcome to comment only on items on the agenda for this meeting as noted above. If you wish to address the School Committee regarding an item not on the agenda for this meeting, please contact the Superintendent of Schools, at 413.323.0423 or via email at superintendent@belchertown.org to determine the best way to address your concerns.