

GROTON-DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

High School Library
Business Meeting Minutes
November 5, 2008
(Approved 12/03/08)

PRESENT:

Mr. Peter Carson
Ms Berta Erickson (Arrived at 8:08 p.m.)
Mr. Jim Frey
Dr. Paul Funch, Chair
Mr. Chuck McKinney, Vice-Chair (Arrived at 7:05 p.m.)
Mr. Frank O'Connell
Mr. Jon Sjoberg, Secretary (Arrived at 7:03 p.m.)

ADMINISTRATION:

Dr. Alan Genovese, Superintendent
Timothy Sheehan, Director of Business and Finance
Dr. Susan Rubel, Director of Curriculum/Staff Development

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:

Rafael Glod (Left at 8:30 p.m.) and Brianna Riposa (left at 9:02 p.m.)

STAFF, PRESS, OTHERS: P. Comtois, Groton Landmark; A. Elliot, K. Riggert, B. Sawyer, Student representatives from the Book Makers and Dreamers Club, B. Chilcoat, A. Wilcox, J. Riggert, C. Hills, See attached sign-in sheet

CALL TO ORDER:

The GDRSC Meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by the chair, P. Funch

ANNOUNCEMENTS/SPOTLIGHT

Town Manager - Mark Haddad

Dr. Genovese introduced Groton's new Town Manager, Mark Haddad. Mr. Haddad said he has been meeting with department heads and wanted to stop in to say hello. He is looking forward to working with everyone.

John and Abigail Adams Scholarship

Dr. Genovese announced fifty-three students qualified for the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship

Rafael Glod and Brianna Riposa read prepared announcements and a copy is attached to these minutes.

B. Riposa announced the girls varsity team made districts.

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION

UN Presentation - Betsy Sawyer

Ben Chilcoat and Amory Wilcox read the presentation they made to over 900 middle and high school students at the UN on September 19th for International Peace Day. They represent the Bookmakers and Dreamers Club and their mission is to carry a world altering message of peace to the hearts and minds of children world-wide by creating and displaying the world's biggest book on peace.

Four years ago, seven fifth graders and their teacher, Mrs. Sawyer, formed an after-school book club and they convinced her to let them try to break the record listed in the Guinness Book of World Records for the largest book and they chose the topic of world peace. They sent thousands of letters to people around the world, asking their ideas on world peace, and received responses from Nobel peace prize winners, past presidents, local and national politicians, veterans, celebrities and sports figures. Each letter will be represented in their

book. The club now has 82 members in grades 5 through 9.

The book will be 12' wide and 10' tall with 500 double-sided pages and weigh over one ton. Club members took a field trip to UniGraphic in Woburn, to learn how the book will be put together. A finished design page was displayed. The company is giving them a discount but it will cost \$30,000 to complete the book. A slide show highlighting the students' experiences was shown. They have many fundraising ideas and those interested in helping can visit www.pagesforpeace.com or contact them at bsawyer60@aol.com.

Boys and Girls Varsity Basketball Trip

The boys and girls varsity basketball trip to The Cove at Yarmouth will take place December 5th through December 7th and is the same as previous years.

Strategic Planning - Chris Jones

Members had received a copy of the draft version of the process currently being used to create a strategic plan. C. Jones distributed a copy of the focus group questions. He gave an overview of the process they will be using, explaining there are four phases:

- 1) Creation of questions for topics** - Each topic will be guided by general questions, headed up by 2 to 3 members of the Administrative Council and topics comply with several EQA standards.
- 2) Focus Group sessions** - These will be small groups based on types of participation, each run by trained administrators/staff.
- 3) Focus group session summaries** - Data from each focus group will be compiled and summarized.
- 4) Large group feedback sessions** - These will be topic specific, open to the public and advertised.

People who participated in the smaller focus groups will be advised that results received from their individual groups will be included at the public sessions.

J. Frey asked if there will be an opportunity for constituents not falling under the listed groups to participate in Phase 1 and C. Jones said no. J. Frey noted they need to embrace people who are critical of the current situation and they need to over-communicate the process is going on. The Administrative Council will be sure they have a wide range of participation and C. Jones said they want to be as inclusive as possible. Advertising will include signs in the stores, using the newspapers, postings in public buildings and Connect Ed calls. J. Frey said they will want to align the FY10 budget planning process with the elements of the strategic planning process that touch on financial and asset management.

C. Jones reviewed how the focus groups will be run. There will be twenty-three groups, with twelve to eighteen participants in each group, that will review all the areas and will include businesses, clergy, students, parents and faculty. It was noted the assignments of the focus groups do not correspond to the expertise of the people. This was done so there would be as little slant as possible and as much objectivity as possible, especially for the feedback sessions.

J. Sjoberg said they have not codified the public's values and Dr. Genovese said these will come out of comments people make and are pulled out when collecting qualitative data. J. Sjoberg would like to be able to look at them to know whether or not they missed a value.

F. O'Connell asked where the school committee weighs in and Dr. Genovese said when they are all done, the report will be presented to the committee for approval. F. O'Connell does not want the committee to be in a vacuum at the end because they were not aware of everything that took place and then cause a roadblock. B. Erickson feels not having their input would be a mistake. He suggested the committee should be a focus group and the members agreed. It is the consensus of the members that there be a fair representation in the groups and that people have the opportunity to volunteer. B. Erickson said they need to avoid the impression that any of the group participants are being "handpicked". Dr. Genovese agreed and said they need to hear the good, the bad and the ugly to get a comprehensive report.

Information about the strategic plan will be going out in the district newsletter.

MASC Resolutions - Discussion postponed to the November 12th meeting.

Superintendent Evaluation Instrument

Members had received a copy of the evaluation instrument. P. Carson noted "and other assessments" was added to Goal #5 - Raise the level of achievement for all students as measured by MCAS. This year's MCAS data will be used as a measurement. It was noted Goal 3 listed on the Part 1 Annual Goals sheet differed from Goal 3 listed under Superintendent's Goals for 2008-2009 (the correct goal) and this will be changed. It was agreed the rating scale will be 1-9 for both the goals and performance areas.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

S. Prescott stated she would like to see the existing four third-grade teachers and classrooms kept at Swallow Union. Members had received a copy of Ms Prescott's letter in their packets. Dr. Genovese said there are significant budget challenges ahead and they understand parents are concerned about class sizes. J. Frey wants to see an initiative on class size as part of the strategic plan.

N. Bugbee read a letter on behalf of Sped Pac, thanking the committee for supporting the allocation of dedicated space at Prescott. They are in the process of collaborating with GDEF and GDAY. She said Principal Silverman will be hosting a discussion about Turning Points tomorrow night at 7:00 p.m. in the Black Box Theater and they hope to tape it.

B. Erickson would like members to get the subcommittee meeting schedules to the Administration secretary in a timely manner and be consistent with the meeting schedules. She would also like people to know the committee members are available to help them in anyway they can.

J. Sjoberg said he shadowed his daughter at the middle school and it was a great experience.

B. Riposa said they discussed beautification, outreach and environmental and lifestyle situations at the October 29th Leadership meeting.

REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

Policy - P. Carson reported they met and brainstormed a list of examples for the exhibit for the advertising policy. They will be meeting next Tuesday.

Budget and Finance - C. McKinney deferred to Mr. Sheehan's report.

Communications Committee - J. Frey reported they met this morning. He distributed an updated draft charge and would like the school committee to approve it at the next meeting. They will meet on the second Thursday of every month at 9:00 a.m.

Personnel & Negotiations - P. Carson reported they have no plans to meet.

Think Tank Committee - B. Erickson reported they met on October 16th and many ideas were discussed. A report will be included in the district newsletter. Their next meeting is tomorrow night at 7:00 p.m. in the MSN library.

Retirement of Facilities Update - Tarbell

C. McKinney distributed a draft report that includes data gathered from other reports in existence. The subcommittee is focusing its time on what some other alternative uses of the building might be and he noted the building inspector has given him a list of capital improvements that may need to be made to the building, depending on the use. A draft report will be ready for the November 15th walk-through and public hearing. The ultimate decision on how the building will be used will be made by the Groton BOS.

Additional Date Gathering

November 15, 2008 Walk-through of Tarbell Facility at 9:00 a.m./Public Hearing at Groton Senior Center at 11:00 a.m. - Members received a copy of the letter sent to West Groton residents inviting them to visit Tarbell and discuss why the decision was made to move to Prescott. C. McKinney said they will report what they heard at the public hearing and that will be their full and final report. The walk-through and public hearing are open to all residents and since several committee members will be present, although not deliberating, it will be posted.

Report of Director of Business and Finance - T. Sheehan reported the elevator will be installed at Swallow Union on November 10th and it will take three to five days to complete the work. Mr. Byrne met with the contractor's representative and the Dunstable fire chief and they, and Principal Myerson, are comfortable with the emergency egress plans that will be in place while construction is going on.

With respect to building security, Mr. Byrne met with the Groton and Dunstable police and fire chiefs and they would like a digital key pass on Swallow Union and Florence Roche to allow emergency access to the front door. Steps will be taken to comply with their recommendation.

The business staff will be opening bids at 2:00 p.m. tomorrow for the three year contract for waste disposal. Their contract with Allied Waste expires November 30th. The district is bound to accept the lowest bid from the responsive, responsible contractor. It will take about a week to evaluate references and make a final decision.

Their auditors from Melanson & Heath were at the district office this week preparing for the FY08 audit and they have agreed to a speedier process than they had last year. The auditors complimented Ms McGrath for being very organized.

He reported a major effort is underway to prepare an RFP for consulting services to assist the district with the move to the GIC insurance services. He and Ms Mitchell hope to have this ready by November 10th for publication in the Food and Services Bulletin. It will be a two year contract with a possible extension to three years. With respect to the GIC, Dr. Genovese said other districts have been asking for a copy of the documents put together by the district.

B. Erickson asked what the water situation is at the high school and Dr. Genovese advised samples have been sent in.

Report of the Chair - Dr. Funch reported the school committee will meet next Wednesday since the MASC annual conference is on November 17th.

He reported he attended the Division 1 meeting in Lynnfield last week and was impressed with Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester's willingness to address everyone's concerns. He noted they are moving slowly but deliberately on new Charter Schools and taking a cautious approach. At this point, Mr. Chester sees relatively minor changes to Chapter 70 funding for this year. His focus is on 21st century skills.

Groton's Sustainability Committee would like school committee representation and P. Carson has expressed an interest in being on the committee. Anyone else interested can contact Dr. Funch and an appointment will be made at the next meeting.

Joint BOS/School Committee Meeting - November 17, 2008 - The Groton Board of Selectmen will be meeting on November 10th to discuss whether or not they want to do an RFP for Prescott. If the vote is in the affirmative, a joint meeting would be held on November 17th to discuss what should be included in the RFP. J. Sjoberg and Dr. Funch have been appointed as the school committee representatives.

Report of the Superintendent

Donation of \$250 from the Squannacook River Runners - Dr. Genovese reported the Squannacook River

Runners have donated \$250 to the PTYC in recognition of the services they provide every year.

Update of the Transportation Subcommittee Meeting - They met on October 20th and members received a copy of the minutes. C. McKinney noted the convenience transportation has been eliminated and Dr. Genovese advised there is next to no availability at Swallow Union and this is not equitable. Transportation will be provided on an emergency basis or if a child goes to a babysitter on a regular basis. A Connect Ed call went out and letters will be going home.

J. Frey asked if the redistribution of students alleviated the overcrowding on the busses and Dr. Genovese said it did on a few of them. A bus was added to provide some relief as some of the busses had to travel too far away, resulting in late arrival at the school. He asked if this policy also applies to the middle school and Dr. Genovese said he believes so but will check. P. Carson said the transportation policy needs to be reviewed and Dr. Genovese agreed this change should be in the policy. J. Frey would like the minutes posted on the website and it was noted information is not being posted in a timely manner due to the lack of resources. This will be a topic the Communications subcommittee will be discussing.

Superintendent's Evaluation - As part of the evaluation process, Dr. Genovese was asked about his networking and what types of conferences he attends. He attended a technology conference last week on integrated technology and how it makes a difference. A presentation was given by Dr. Willard Daggett on rigor and relevance and these are words Dr. Genovese used in the vision statement. Dr. Genovese said relevance makes rigor possible and kids are willing to learn a lot of things if they are interested in what it is and if it has relevance in their world. He reviewed the Application Model of the Rigor/Relevance Framework and stated they want to move their classroom instruction to application to real-world predictable and unpredictable situations. He attended a roundtable meeting today with superintendents and they discussed financial problems. This was followed by a meeting with MARS (Mass Association of Regional School Committees) and they discussed E & D and regulations being worked on that may change and govern how those funds can be used. They are crafting a position paper to help guide that conversation. He will be attending the upcoming MASS/MASC conference.

ACTION ITEMS

Non Consent Action Items

P. CARSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 15, 2008.

SECONDED BY J. FREY

In Favor: J. Frey, C. McKinney, P. Funch, J. Sjoberg, P. Carson, B. Erickson

Abstention: F. O'Connell

VOTE: Consent Action Items

J. SJOBERG MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS TO ACCEPT THE \$250 DONATION FROM THE SQUANNACOOK RIVER RUNNERS, TO APPROVE THE GIRLS VARSITY BASKETBALL OVERNIGHT TRIP AND TO APPROVE THE BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL OVERNIGHT TRIP.

SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

VOTE: To Approve the Superintendent Evaluation

C. MCKINNEY MOVED THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE SUPERINTENDENT'S EVALUATION INSTRUMENT AS PRESENTED WITH THE THREE AMENDMENTS DISCUSSED.

SECONDED BY P. CARSON

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

(For clarification, the amendments made tonight are adding "and other assessments" to Goal #5, capturing the correct wording of Goal #3 and the scoring rubric for the goals will be 1 through 9, not 1 through 3).

VOTE: To Appoint a School Committee Delegate for the MASC Delegate Assembly

J. FREY MOVED TO APPOINT DR. FUNCH AS THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE DELEGATE FOR THE MASC DELEGATE ASSEMBLY. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON

Dr. Funch declined the nomination at this time as he would like Mr. Frey to have the experience.

The motion was withdrawn and a vote will be taken at the November 12th meeting.

VOTE: To Approve the Strategic Plan Process

F. O'CONNELL MOVED TO APPROVE THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS.

SECONDED BY C. MCKINNEY

F. O'Connell feels the committee should support the plan, not approve it, as he does not want the committee to be a roadblock if something comes up. Members agree with the collaborative process put in place to develop the strategic plan. The motion was withdrawn.

C. MCKINNEY MOVED THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PASS A RESOLUTION THAT EXPRESSES CONSENSUS FOR THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS ARTICULATED THIS EVENING AND THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE FURTHER ENCOURAGES THE ADMINISTRATION TO CONSIDER THE IDEAS DISCUSSED THIS EVENING AND INCORPORATE THEM TO THE BEST OF THEIR ABILITY INTO THE PROCESS IN AN ONGOING BASIS. SECONDED BY J. SJOBERG

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURNMENT

P. CARSON MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 10:07 P.M. SECONDED BY J. FREY

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Smith
Recording Secretary

With attachments