

WEST BOYLSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
WEDNESDAY September 11, 2013

LOCATION: West Boylston Middle/High School Media Center

PRESENT: SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

John Owanisian, Chairman
Jennifer Breen
Richard Shaw
Erin Palumbo
James Pedone, Jr.

ADMINISTRATORS

Elizabeth Schaper, Superintendent
Lawrence Murphy, Principal Middle/High School
Christopher LaBreck, Associate MS Principal
Richard Meagher, Elementary Principal
Roger E. Pontbriand, Jr., Business Administrator
Sherri Traina, Special Education Administrator

COMMUNITY

Faculty & Staff: 18

Guests: 2

Student Advisors: 2

Press: 1

Mr. Owanisian opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone to September 11, 2013 School Committee Meeting.

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Shaw made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular School Committee Meeting of June 12, 2013; Ms. Palumbo seconded. Motion approved. **Voted 5-0-0.**

Ms. Breen made a motion to approve the minutes of the School Committee Special Meeting of August 16, 2013; Mr. Pedone seconded. Motion approved. **Voted 5-0-0.**

Community Input

There was no community input this evening.

Student Advisory Council

Tyler Armev and Amanda Benson stated there were several interesting events taking place in the West Boylston Middle/High School such as: The National Art Honor Society is currently working to support Worcester's "One City One Library" project as well as the Christmas Auction, Drama Club auditions, Dickinson's Ribbons, and Homecoming week (theme- Hollywood Now and Way Back Then.)

Acknowledgment Of Camera Crew

Mr. Owanisian thanked Mr. Bokankowitz for his work filming the School Committee Meeting.

Introduction of New Staff

Dr. Schaper introduced Mr. Richard Meagher as the new principal of Major Edwards Elementary School. She provided details about his background in education and welcomed him to the district. Mr. Richard Meagher introduced new staff at Major Edwards Elementary School including: Candace Johanson, Brian Stefanelli, Jillian O'Connor, Marion Karsina, Natasha Dziokonski, Caitlin Casammassa and Christal Bello.

Mr. LaBreck introduced new staff at the Middle School including: Brian Stefanelli, Alicia McHugh, Colby Harvey, Danielle Cody, Renee Pellegrino and Andre' Pare'.

Mr. Murphy introduced new staff for the High School: Erin Klemm, Stephanie Madrigal, Julia Sweet, Kevin Gray, and Kristin Tokarz.

Approval of Donations

Dr. Schaper asked that the Committee accept two donations; several cases of paper from the Lowell Corporation and a \$5,000.00 donation in the memory of Ann Marie Richardson to be used for the purchase of library books for the Major Edwards Elementary School. That donation was made by Ann Marie's husband Mr. Clifford Richardson. Mr. Richard Shaw made a motion to accept the donations and to formally thank those responsible, Ms. Breen seconded; **Voted: 5-0-0.**

Review of School Committee Targets 2013-2014

Mr. Owanisian stated that the School Committee Targets had been reviewed and revised for the 2013-2014 school year.

Mr. Owanisian stated that with regard to Target #2 – the language is exactly the same with the exception that they added “town administrator”. He stated that with regard to Target #7 – it is an entirely new target. Mr. Owanisian stated that last year there was a target that focused on the development of a strategic 5 year plan with goals and agendas. That target has been developed and completed; therefore it was removed from the targets. Ms. Palumbo made a motion to approve the 2013-2014 School Committee Targets, Ms. Breen seconded; **Voted: 5-0-0.**

Approval of Cafeteria Employees and Paraprofessionals Contracts 2013-2016

Dr. Schaper requested approval of the cafeteria employees contract and the paraprofessionals contract. Mr. Shaw made a motion to accept the West Boylston Public Schools Cafeteria Employees Contract for 2013-2016, Ms. Palumbo seconded; **Voted: 5-0-0.** Mr. Shaw made a motion to accept the West Boylston Paraprofessionals Contract for 2013-2016, Mr. Pedone seconded; **Voted: 5-0-0.**

Subcommittee Reports

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Budget Subcommittee Committee: No meeting, no report.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Chapter 74 subcommittee: no meeting, no report.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Communications Subcommittee. Ms. Palumbo stated she did not have anything specific to report although she stated, the School Choice campaign was very successful this year. She also stated that the student(s) of the month would be published this year in the Banner. She said that we should expect a picture and or a write up each month on that particular student. Mr. Owanisian said that he would continue his “Spotlight on Schools” program this year and was looking forward to interviewing some interesting guest.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Negotiations Subcommittee. Mr. Shaw indicated there was nothing new to report.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Policy Subcommittee. Ms. Breen indicated that she, Ms. Palumbo, and Dr. Schaper were in the process of updating the Homework Policy. Ms. Breen stated that about 280 parents responded to a homework survey. The data is being reviewed and the subcommittee will meet next week to discuss a new homework .

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the School Building Subcommittee. Mr. Pedone indicated the media center had been refurbished over the summer along with the repair of windows in that area. Mr. Shaw thanked Mr. Pontbriand for his efforts this summer as there were many, many items that needed attention. Mr. Pontbriand stated that the goal was to create a safe and healthy working environment within the schools. Three major items were accomplished over the summer 1) Door lock project, 2) Video Recording System in both buildings and 3) Regular maintenance in both schools such as: redoing the STEAM rooms, patching walls, repairing picnic area outside of media center for students, new furniture for teachers' classrooms, and working on the fire alarm system. Mr. Pontbriand indicated that all of the windows in the Media Center were to be repaired; however, the funds had to be cut back due to the cost of repairs and will be fixed at a later date.

Mr. Owanisian asked about the status of the natural gas update. Mr. Pontbriand stated that that was still in process.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Technology Subcommittee. Mr. Pedone stated the new website was up and running and was much better than the previous website. Mr. Bokankowitz indicated the district was able to: 1) Get a fully loaded iPad cart for the elementary school, 2) At the Middle/High has swapped out old CRT monitors for LCD's, thereby reducing the amount of energy needed. He also indicated Google would be sending more Chrome Books for the Middle/High School (210 in total). Mr. Bokankowitz explained that all of the computers in the media center and the library have been replaced this year.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Transportation Subcommittee and Mr. Shaw indicated there was nothing new to report at this time.

Mr. Owanisian stated that an ad hoc School Committee was formed, as former School Committee member – Peter Desy – passed away. The ad hoc committee will be doing something within the next few months to recognize Mr. Desy for his accomplishments.

Communication and Reports

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the elementary school principal. Mr. Meagher stated the staff at Major Edwards had done a tremendous job acclimating students to their new classrooms and schedules. Some upcoming events on Major Edwards' calendar include: September 11th – picture day, September 13th – “new student” breakfast and September 19th – open house.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the middle school principal. Mr. LaBreck expressed his appreciation to the parents, staff and students for a smooth opening to the school year. Upcoming events for the Middle/High include: Magazine Drive – to be kicked off on September 6th through September 16th, open house – September 12th and the first Middle School Council Meeting – October 2nd. Mr. LaBreck stated the STEAM Academy was up and running for the year with a total of 24 students.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the high school principal. Mr. Murphy stated that some of the things that have made the start of this school year exciting are: welcoming new students/freshman, opening of the Library/Media Center, and hiring of new staff. Mr. Murphy indicated the theme for this school year is “Courage.”

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Director of Special Education and Ms. Traina indicated there was nothing to report at this time.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Business Administrator. Mr. Pontbriand indicated there was no financial report this month. He stated that for the October School Committee meeting he would have the normal detailed report for FY 14. Mr. Pontbriand stated that all of the new staff had to be set up on the teachers' retirement system and with the town.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Schaper commented on the smooth start to the school year.

Dr. Schaper explained how the requirements of the New Educator Evaluation are being implemented in the district.

Dr. Schaper stated that Secretary of Education Matt Malone will visit West Boylston Middle High School on Thursday, September 19th.

Dr. Schaper presented the information for September's Data Dashboard to the School Committee. Mr. Owanisian asked Dr. Schaper a question relative to the Educator Evaluation System – he asked if it was overwhelming/manageable or too early to tell at this point. Dr. Schaper stated it is manageable.

Ms. Palumbo asked Dr. Schaper if she could elaborate on the information provided in the Data Dashboard. Dr. Schaper indicated that she could provide a more detailed analysis of any of the elements in the dashboard at the committee's request.

Ms. Palumbo asked if Dr. Schaper if she was happy with the figure of 74% of the students "plan" on going to college last year. She asked if Dr. Schaper felt that was a good number. Dr. Schaper stated that the data show that 74% plan to attend a four-year college and another 16% plan to attend a 2 year college.

Mr. Murphy stated that they are really interested in making sure each student has a plan for what they want to do after graduation; whether it's to enter the military or to enter a two to four year college.

Mr. Shaw mentioned that the data might include two and four year colleges, which are state run, and that the data is combined.

Ms. Breen indicated that there is a high of 96%, so there is definitely more than 74%.

Ms. Palumbo asked about the data referring to SAT's and ACT's. She said it looks to her like we're running about the state average on those two tests. She asked Dr. Schaper what she felt with regard to that data.

Dr. Schaper stated that we run at the state average on most of our scores. She said that our aim as a school district is to exceed the state average, and that is always our goal. She indicated that the district has taken steps in the last several years to raise the academic bar by offering fewer options that are not academically challenging. She stated that the elimination of some of those options has caused students to be placed in courses that are more challenging, and that should help to improve these scores.

Ms. Breen stated that if you look at growth over the years; that is very important.

Ms. Palumbo stated that she would like to see a trend where we are consistently above the state average, and Dr. Schaper indicated that would be her goal as well.

Dr. Schaper explained that her intention in providing the data was to help the School Committee members have a more comprehensive picture of what is going on in the district to allow the school committee to chronicle the district's data over time.

Dr. Schaper indicated that the best data we have about college-going does not come from the SAT or AP Exams but rather from college admission data. Our job as a school district is to prepare students to be successful at the next level. .

Mr. Shaw stated that he has learned over the years that education is far more than just numbers;

the school climate is also important, it's also the warmth and the general overall experience that's important.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the School Committee members. Ms. Breen indicated the open house at Major Edwards is on September 19th with PTA meeting following. Also WestBEST is going to be at the Fall Fest which is happening on October 5th. She stated that WestBEST is also hosting an alumnae breakfast on October 19th. Ms. Breen also indicated that on professional development days, the after school program is no longer able to provide a program. Therefore, the Rec Department will be providing a program for all 6 professional development days (open to anyone), and flyers will be going home with students.

Mr. Owanisian stated we will have a two page school update to which Mr. Gaumont will add a chapter and that will be presented at the town meeting.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Shaw at 9:08 p.m., seconded by Ms. Palumbo; **Voted: 5-0-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Johnson
Recording Secretary