

Marlborough Board of Education

Regular Meeting

November 17, 2016

Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School Library/Media Center

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Ruth Kelly called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

BOE Members Present:

Present and seated were Ruth Kelly, Betty O'Brien, Wes Skorksi, Theresa Brysgel, Louise Concodello, Mimi LaPoint, Susan Rapelye, Dr. Judithe Kaplan, and Patrick Pabouet.

Administration Present:

Dr. David Sklarz, Superintendent
Dan White, Principal
Kim Kelley, Vice Principal

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Celebrations

CAPSS Superintendent Awards-Jake Pantelone and Grace Whitmore, both sixth grade students, were present with their families and recognized as the recipients of the CAPSS Superintendent Award.

Vice Principal Kelley showed a video highlighting the following events; 3rd grade book club, security camera installation, Halloween, Superintendent's Award, Veterans Day presentations and celebration, both presented by the 6th grade, Fitness Day preparations, usage of robots by students.

4. Public Comments

Richard Shea, Bull Hill Road, member of the Board of Selectmen, but speaking as an individual, expressed appreciation for the Veteran's Day Celebration that was presented by the school.

5. Election of Officers

Theresa Brysgel made a motion that the Superintendent chair the meeting for the sole purpose of electing a Chairperson. The motion was seconded by Mimi LaPoint and carried by a unanimous vote.

Dr. Sklarz called the Election of Officers to order.

Louise Concodello nominated Ruth Kelly for Chairperson of the Marlborough Board of Education. The Board elected Ruth Kelly as Chairperson of the Marlborough Board of Education with a unanimous vote.

Theresa Brysgel made a motion that the Board elect a Vice Chairperson and Secretary in accordance with Board policy. The motion was seconded by Mimi LaPoint and carried by a unanimous vote.

Betty O'Brien nominated Wes Skorski for Vice Chairperson of the Marlborough Board of Education. The Board elected Wes Skorski as Vice Chairperson of the Marlborough Board of Education with a unanimous vote.

Dr. Judithe Kaplan nominated Louise Concodello for Secretary of the Marlborough Board of Education. The Board elected Louise Concodello as Secretary of the Marlborough Board of Education with a unanimous vote.

6. Additions to the Agenda

There were no additions made.

7. Consent Agenda

7.1 Minutes of 10/27/16 regular business meeting (Encl. 7.1A);

7.2 Personnel Actions-none;

7.3 Reports-receive and file the following document: monthly enrollment report (Encl. 7.3);

7.4 Grants-2016-17 District Consolidated Application for ESEA Federal Title I and Title II Grants (Encl. 7.4);

Dr. Judithe Kaplan made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Susan Rapelye and carried by a unanimous vote.

8. Oral Reports

8.1 Advisory Groups

PTO-Mr. White noted that they met on November 16, 2016, and noted that Tracy Corey will now be serving as Co Vice President. He noted that they discussed the Educational

Enhancement opportunities for each grade level and how the PTO can support them. Mr. White noted that the PTO will be assisting with the Gathering on the Green on December 3, 2016. He noted that the PTO is currently putting together an order to restock the playground carts. Mr. White noted that Multicultural Day is being slated and planned for April, 2017. He noted that the Treasurer's Report showed a current balance of approximately \$20k. Mr. White noted that the PTO expressed their gratitude towards Theresa Brysgel for heading up Trunk or Treat, which it was noted was very successful, approximately \$3700 raised. It was noted that next year will be Ms. Brysgel's last year chairing the event. He noted that the Election Day Bake Sale was a success, with approximately \$1000 raised in funds. Mr. White noted that donation to "Funds for Fun" continue to come in, noting that they are at approximately \$950 in donated funds now. He noted that additional volunteers are needed for the upcoming book fair. Mr. White noted that the PTO did a great job on the conference dinner, noting that 35 teachers signed up. Mr. White noted that the PTO discussed different ideas for rewards for the winning class of the box tops contest, noting that they are looking at non-food related ideas. It was noted that Wolfpack Night is slated for January 6, 2016. He noted that positive feedback was shared at the PTO meeting regarding the recent BOE Forum.

Operational/Health/Wellness Committee-Mr. White noted that they welcomed new parent representative members. He noted that water purity testing is good. Mr. White noted that cafeteria ordering issues were discussed. Mr. White noted that the illness/accident report was reviewed and noted that information regarding head lice went home to parents in a recent Thursday letter. Mr. White noted that the Lions Club completed their vision screening and that results were mailed to all parents. He noted that Ms. Mecca sent approximately 25 referrals for further screening home to parents based on the results of the screenings. He noted that the hearing screening is being completed right now, and he noted that parents will only be contacted if there is a concern. Mr. White noted that school safety and security was discussed, and noted the recent unexpected fire drill, which he noted was the result of a wiring issue. Mr. White noted that Mr. Underwood noted that he wants to ensure that students have the proper footwear for gym class and he noted that a note will go home via the Thursday letter to remind students and parents. Mr. White noted that extra sneakers will also be kept in the gym for those students that forget. It was noted that Mr. Underwood is currently seeking sneaker donations for gently used sneakers.

8.2 Subcommittees

Policy- Ms. Concedello noted that Policy met on November 17, 2016, and she noted that they reviewed new policies which will come before the Board for a first reading at the December 2016 meeting.

8.3 Chairperson –

Committee Assignments-Chairperson Kelly asked the Board Members to contact her directly if they would like to be added or moved off a committee. She asked for two liaisons to volunteer to rotate attendance at the Board of Finance meetings. Ms. Concodello and Ms. Rapelye volunteered.

8.4 Superintendent and Administrative Team-

a. NESDEC 2016-17 Enrollment Projections (Encl. 8.4)

Dr. Sklarz noted that the projected enrollment for 2017-18 year is 516, with a kindergarten enrollment number of 66 students. He noted that these enrollment projections assist in determining the number of sections, which assists with building the budget.

b. REAP Grant-It was noted that the school is slated to receive this grant in the same amount as last year. Mr. White provided a handout and an overview of how the REAP Grant funds are slated to be spent for the 2016-17 year. He noted that they are proposing to continue with the PASS Program (\$15k) for 4-6 grades. He noted that they look to maintain a ratio of 3-4 students/teacher. Ms. Brysgel commented that she has heard positive feedback regarding the PASS Program. Mr. Skorski commented that he is glad the PASS Program will be continuing. Ms. O'Brien questioned if the Administration has considered after school activities that would allow for usage of the bus that is used for the PASS Program as transport for these other activities. Mr. White noted that they continue to explore this opportunity and noted some of the obstacles include how to pay the teachers for after school activities. Mr. White noted that they are proposing to purchase 4 Epson Projectors (\$10,400). He noted that they will look to purchase LLI Reading materials for 3-4 grades. Ms. O'Brien questioned why this material was selected. Vice Principal Kelley commented that it has been reliable and trustworthy material that they have already had experience working with. Ms. Kelley noted that this is a Literary Program that focusses on the reading needs of students in their different tier levels. Ms. Brysgel questioned why these two grades were selected. It was noted that the material can be spanned for usage in the lower and higher grades. Mr. White noted that they also plan to purchase Science materials for all grade levels (\$7,301). He noted that they also intend to purchase Curriculum E-Materials for all grades, noting that they are currently piloting e-materials at the 6th grade level (\$5k). He noted that they will also look to purchase Switches (\$2,400) to support the security cameras as well as Document Projectors (\$2k), which will be a newer version, USB driven.

c. Maintenance Update-Dr. Sklarz commented that he believes there needs to be a continuous maintenance plan in place. He noted that he reached out to the First Selectman for information regarding how the new role will assist the school with developing such plan. Dr. Sklarz commented that with an upcoming shift to a new

water system, they need to understand how the current self-maintained system may change. Dr. Sklarz commented that there is currently no Facilities Manager in place to assist the school and noted his concern regarding the role the Principal and Vice Principal have been asked to play to ensure the facility is maintained. He commented that the school is the largest town facility and the most expensive to maintain. Dr. Sklarz questioned the Board if they feel it would be beneficial to separate the Facilities Budget from the Education Budget. Ms. Brysgel commented that she feels they should be separated so the public can see the split out of the costs. Ms. LaPoint commented that she agreed. Ms. Concodello noted that a Capital Improvement Plan was put in place in 2006 and suggested that a simplified plan could be developed based on that. Ms. O'Brien commented that she feels the Facilities Budget and Education Budget should be separate.

- d. Pre-Budget Update-Dr. Sklarz noted that CABE will be hosting a workshop for the Board.
- e. Technology Plan Update-Vice Principal Kelley gave an overview of the current view of technology at the school and how it continues to be incorporated into the everyday education curriculum. She noted that there is a focus on the four C's; Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, Creativity. She noted the importance of embracing technology as literacy and noted that it is important to teach students that they must be critical of the information provided by technology. Ms. Kelley also noted the importance of teaching media literacy, noting that it is important to teach students how the media influences using technology. Ms. Kelley also noted the importance of teaching students about what it means to have a digital footprint, and noted how important it is to teach students to be socially responsible when using technology. Ms. Kelley noted the benefit of being able to utilize technology for testing, noting the ability of tests to be adaptive to different skill levels. Ms. Kelley showed the timetable for testing and noted the importance of balancing testing and usage of technology. She noted that when technology is being utilized for testing, it is not available to be utilized for learning. Ms. Kelley also noted the usage of the robots through the STEAM Room and their great benefit. She noted the introduction of SMART Music, which allows students to play their music and interact with the teacher online. Ms. Kelley reviewed the current availability of computers at the school and noted that the 2015-16 Tech Grant (approximately \$13k) and a portion of the REAP Grant were utilized for tech purchases. Ms. Kelley noted that it is important to ensure that there are services in place to support the increased usage of technology. She noted that they continue to increase the depth of the devices utilized and ensure that quality materials are being used. Ms. Kelley referenced Public Act 16-189 which highlights the responsibility of the school to monitor students' data safety.

9. Unfinished Business

- a. Class Size Discussion and Possible Action-Dr. Sklarz referenced the October 21, 2016, letter that was sent to Board and asked if the Board agreed with adding the additional paragraph to the guidelines. Mr. Skorski noted that he agreed with adding the additional paragraph to the guidelines. Ms. LaPoint commented that it is important to remember that they are guidelines either way. Ms. Brysgel commented that she believes in the importance of smaller class sizes and noted that what she has seen through her research is that small class sizes have a significant impact on Kindergarten through Grade 2. Ms. Brysgel commented that she thinks the current class size guidelines are a little high for grade K-3, particularly Kindergarten and Grade 1. The current guidelines were shared.

Kindergarten and Grade 1- 16-20 students

Grade 2-Grade 4-18-23 students

Grade 5 and Grade 6-20-25 students

Theresa Brysgel made a motion to change the current class size guidelines for Kindergarten and Grade 1 to 15-18 students. The motion was seconded by Mimi LaPoint.

Discussion:

Ms. Brysgel emphasized her belief in the importance of smaller class sizes and noted that the individual time, the safety and the security that these smaller classrooms would provide has been shown to carry with them throughout the later years. Ms. Concodello commented that a paraprofessional is added to a classroom when they are at the top of the classroom guidelines amount. Ms. Kelly commented that she feels that the current guidelines allow for the flexibility required to keep the classrooms small and feels that there should be no change now. Ms. LaPoint commented that the paraprofessional was not included in the original outline when the class guidelines were proposed. Ms. Kelly commented that a part time para has been a part of these classrooms. Ms. Rapelye commented she agrees with the suggested guideline of 15-18, noting that she thinks 20 students is too many at this grade level. She commented that it is important to do what is best for the children. Ms. O'Brien commented that she thinks the current guidelines are good.

Theresa Brysgel, Mimi LaPoint, Susan Rapelye, Wes Skorski, and Dr. Judithe Kaplan voted in favor of the motion. Louise Concodello, Patrick Pabouet, Ruth Kelly, and Betty O'Brien were opposed to the motion. The motion carried.

Theresa Brysgel made a motion to change the current class size guidelines for Grades 2 and 3 to 18-21 students. The motion was seconded by Mimi LaPoint.

Discussion:

Ms. LaPoint commented that it may be beneficial to just set a top guideline amount, noting that sometimes having a bottom number can cause concern. Ms. Brysgel noted that she did not include Grade 4 in the change because what she found in her research

was that small class size was most beneficial in the lower grades. Ms. Kelly suggested that maybe 4th grade could be included with 5th and 6th grade guidelines. Ms. Rapelye commented that she would rather see the 4th grade guideline set the same as Grades 2 and 3.

Theresa made a motion to amend her original motion to change the class size guideline for Grades 2, 3, and 4 to 18-21 students. The motion was seconded by Mimi LaPoint.

Discussion:

Dr. Judithe Kaplan questioned what Dr. Sklarz viewpoint is on this level. Dr. Sklarz commented that there are good arguments for both sides, and commented that he feels the current guidelines are reasonable and that they work. He commented that the range was set to ensure that they are being fiscally responsible. Ms. LaPoint commented that there were some concerns about class size at the first grade level this year. It was noted that they continue to monitor these classrooms. It was noted that currently the second-grade class sizes are 21, 21, 21. Ms. Concodello commented that this year two first grade classes are below the guidelines. Ms. Kelly commented that she thinks it is important to listen to the Administration, noting that they know the clientele of the classrooms, etc. Mimi LaPoint, Theresa Brysgel, Susan Rapelye and Dr. Judithe Kaplan were in favor of the motion. Ruth Kelly, Betty O'Brien, Wes Skorski, Patrick Pabouet, Louise Concodello were opposed to the motion. The motion did not carry.

The consensus of the Board was to add the additional paragraph to the Class Size Guidelines, as outlined in the October 21, 2016 letter to the Board from Dr. Sklarz. Ms. Rapelye commented that she does think it is important to meet as a Board when class sizes reach the top of the guideline noting that she thinks it is worth having at least a discussion as a Board.

10. New Business

10.1 Approval of Board Meeting Dates for Calendar Year 2017

Louise Concodello made a motion that the Board approve the meeting dates for the calendar year 2017 as presented in Enclosure 10.2, except for the August, 2017 meeting, which will be held on August 31, 2016. The motion was seconded by Wes Skorski and carried by a unanimous vote.

10.2 Review November Financial Report (Encl. 10.2)

Dr. Sklarz reviewed the report noting a deficit in line item 112 Paraeducators, noting that there was an unexpected need for student support. He noted that the 112 Substitute Teachers deficit will show as a savings in teacher's salaries. He noted that the deficit for 112 Custodians is due to the need to hire additional help, which he noted has been highly beneficial. He noted a reallocation of funds from the Town under line item

200 Workers' Comp. Dr. Sklarz noted the deficit under 590 Webhosting/Email Service, noting that the CT Education Network rates have changed. He noted the deficit under 730 New/Rep Equip-Instructional, noting the need to install an air conditioner to meet a student need and noted that this will be a part of the ongoing maintenance plan.

11. Public Comments

Greg Krynick, Finley Hill Road, noted his concern that the class size guidelines for second grade were not changed, noting that he feels the younger grades is when the students need the most guidance. He noted that he currently has a child in the second grade. Mr. Krynick noted his concern regarding the decreased funding to education at the local level and its impact on the school. He noted his concern that there is currently no maintenance person in place. He noted his concern regarding the possible purchase of a new building by the Town and commented that he does not feel enough money is being funded to the school.

Stephanie Billiel, 114 Jerry Daniels Road, encouraged Dr. Sklarz to put together projected enrollment for preschool and noted the possible need to put class size guidelines into place at the preschool level.

Richard Shea, a member of the Board of Finance, but speaking as an individual, commented that the Town continues to search for a replacement for Chris Corsa's position, noting that they do have applicants for each of the split roles of the position that they are considering. He commented that they are hoping to have someone in place by mid-December. Mr. Shea noted that, as a member of the Board of Selectmen, he will work to ensure that the new position's role in the school is the same as it was in the past. Mr. Shea also noted that he was impressed with the presentation on technology and raised the question if the increase of technology may allow for an increase in the class size numbers going forward.

Karen DeCorleto, Denler Drive, stated she attended her 3rd and 6th grader's Parent/Teacher conferences this week. Her 6th grader was doing very well and excited about the Sixth Grade Academy. Her 3rd grader has been having a difficult time due to all the testing that grade level is doing. The data was shared and Karen was worried about all the testing. The PE class is testing a lot also and she noted that gym used to be fun. Karen also mentioned that the water system construction in town during school hours should have been handled by others and not our Principal and Vice Principal.

12. Communications

12.1 Staff Vacancy Summary

UNAPPROVED DRAFT

13. Future Meetings & Topics

- 13.1 Holiday Concert, Wednesday, December 14, 2016, 1:30pm and 7:00pm
- 13.2 Policy subcommittee meeting, tbd
- 13.3 Next regular business meeting, Thursday, December 15, 2016, 7:00pm
- 13.4 Sing-A-Long Mini Concert, Wednesday, December 23, 2016, 10:00am

14. Adjournment

Louise Concodello made a motion to adjourn meeting at 9:25pm. The motion was seconded by Betty O'Brien and carried by a unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen DeCorleto
Board Clerk