

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF
December 14, 2010**

Bedford High School - Large Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 7:30 p.m., Mr. Hafer called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Seibert, Ms. O’Gara, Mr. Pierce and Ms. Bickford. Miss Ashley Nagy, student representative, was also in attendance.

2. Comments From Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Dr. LaCroix requested an approval for an additional Teaching Assistant at Lane School to support a student. She explained that the staff at Lane has been collecting data using RTI and have concluded that a one-to-one assistant is needed in order to have the student remain at Lane School. Dr. LaCroix said a Teaching Assistant is critical to this student’s success and that it will be more economically feasible to do this rather than an out-of-district placement. The cost for FY’11 is estimated to be \$13,222.

Dr. LaCroix clarified that the position will be for this one student and will continue only if the need persists. This need will be re-evaluated. She also estimated that it would cost approximately \$54,000 plus transportation costs to place this student in the appropriate out-of-district special education school.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the addition of a Teaching Assistant at Lane School for the rest of the 2010-2011 school year at a cost of approximately \$13,222.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

4. Discussion: FY’12 School Budget

Dr. LaCroix explained that the budget discussion tonight would focus on the reductions proposed for the 2011-2012 Athletic/Extracurricular programs. She said it was very difficult to come up with these proposals. She began by giving a quick review of the FY’12 budget process to date.

On November 30, 2010, Dr. LaCroix presented a FY’12 “Maintenance of Services” budget request of \$33,608,820. Then on December 7, 2010 she presented a FY’12 “level” budget request of \$31,968,135. On January 4, 2011, Dr. LaCroix will present another budget request. This one will be based on Finance Committee Guidelines which is a 1.65% decrease from the FY’11 budget (actual). The January 4, 2011 budget will be \$2,167,306 less than the November 30, 2010 budget request.

Dr. LaCroix reviewed the budget reductions proposed to meet the \$1.6 million cuts. She noted that these were all tough decisions. Tonight, she went into details about the proposed \$200,000 reductions in athletics and extracurricular activities.

Dr. LaCroix explained the guiding principles used when making decisions for these extracurricular cuts. They include:

- High School programs are a priority since middle school students have recreation department options.
- Consider the overall impact on students.
- Recognize this is a process with differing opinions

Recommended eliminations at JGMS include:

- All sports
- Math League
- After school instrumental music
- Jazz band
- Vocal
- School play
- School newspaper
- Science league
- Academic recognition program

Dr. LaCroix commented that the above represent 90% of all JGMS after school programs.

Recommended reductions/eliminations at the High School include:

- Drama Club
- Spring play
- NYC drama trip
- Scenery stipend
- Marching band/drill instructor
- Music instruments
- Interact Club
- Science League

Recommended reductions/eliminations in High School athletics include:

- Indoor track, track invitational
- Hockey
- Freshman field hockey
- Skiing
- Golf
- JV Tennis
- Freshmen Girls Lacrosse
- Freshmen boys' baseball

Dr. LaCroix cautioned everyone that more reductions would be announced at the January 4, 2011 School Committee meeting since she has to present a budget that will be \$2.1 million less than the Maintenance of Services budget.

Dr. LaCroix reminded everyone that budget discussions would continue on January 11th and the School Committee would vote on the budget recommendation on January 18th. This budget will be presented to the Finance Committee on January 20th and will be voted on at Town Meeting in March.

Dr. LaCroix asked the School Committee members for comments and/or questions.

Mr. Pierce asked Dr. LaCroix to try to figure out if the proposed reductions are the only sport or activity some students participate in. Dr. LaCroix said she would try to do this.

Mr. Pierce said overall he feels that a lot of students will lose their after school focus and may end up getting into trouble.

He asked for the total athletic budget and the number of participants. Dr. LaCroix said the budget is \$591,000 and that there are 482 participants.

Ms. O’Gara said she is very concerned that cutting extracurricular activities will cut into student’s motivation and will have a negative social impact too. In the big picture, the athletic/extracurricular budget is small. She said it is very painful to listen to these potential cuts.

Ms. Bickford said that it is very painful to look at and to comment on. Yet, she recognizes that it is a process that the School Committee must go through. She said that these budget cuts go to the heart and soul of what Bedford is all about. She also commented that the Middle School play involves more than the 65 kids reflected in the number. She believes that 1/3 of the entire school is somehow involved in that production.

Ms. Bickford then looked at the Fee Memo dated December 7, 2010. She noted that fees have always been distasteful to the School Committee but agrees they must be revisited.

The School Committee reviewed the memo which gave various scenarios and estimated revenues for Transportation Fees, High School Athletic Fees, High School Activity Fees and Middle School Activity fees. The School Committee did not discuss parking fees because any revenue raised would go to the DPW or police department per state law. The total revenue raised from the various fee options is estimated at \$395,000. Administrative costs would also have to be taken out.

Ms. Bickford said she would also like to look at reductions in textbooks as they are educational tools in the same vein as computers. She feels that having updated technology is very important and there maybe possibilities in textbooks lists that will enable restoration of computers.

Ms. Bickford also asked to review lunch revenues versus projections. She also suggested revisiting the Mudge Account and its requirements.

Ms. Bickford would also like clarification on moving or not moving some of the Special Education positions into the Operating budget.

Ms. Seibert commented that it seems unusual to cut indoor track because there are a lot of participants and it has a very low cost. Mr. Keith Mangan, Athletic Director, explained that this decision was made because there are similar options in the fall and spring.

Mr. Mangan noted that 70% of BHS students participate in sports. He noted that Middle School also has a high participation rate.

Ms. Seibert said she has a very difficult time accepting fees. Paying for public education is not right. Mr. Mangan said he agrees that it is not fair to have a pay to play system.

Ms. Seibert asked about the effect of cutting many of the freshmen teams. Mr. Mangan said that many students can still play on Junior Varsity.

Ms. O’Gara asked Mr. Mangan if he expects the relationship between parents and coaches to change if fees are instituted. Mr. Mangan said yes. He said that he would expect parent attitudes to change to “why isn’t my child playing more?”

Ms. O’Gara asked if Mr. Mangan expects to see an increase in community support. He said yes that it has been more active lately and that booster support has covered all supplemental costs over the last few years.

Mr. Hafer noted that there does not seem to be any recreation alternatives for track or field hockey.

Mr. Hafer asked if cutting all freshmen sports was considered. Mr. Mangan said yes, that this was an option. Mr. Sills said that he did not want to cut all freshmen sports because sports is the one place where Hanscom, Boston and Bedford students meet and do things together. He also said that freshmen sports really help a lot of kids transition to the high school.

Ms. Bickford asked why the Interact Club was chosen to be eliminated. Mr. Sills said that he tried to spread cuts across all areas – music, drama, community service and school service. He said the Red Cross Club is a good alternative to the Interact Club.

School Committee members thanked Mr. Sills and Mr. Mangan for coming to the meeting and answering their questions.

5. Approval of Davis School Statement of Interest for MSBA

Dr. LaCroix explained that the first step in being considered for state building renovation funding is to submit a Statement of Interest to the MSBA. She explained that it would be prudent to start the MSBA process. She is not at all sure if the request will be considered but she does know it is important to ask for the funding to be considered. Therefore, she asked the School Committee to review and approve a Statement of Interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority for an addition and renovations to the Davis School. Dr. LaCroix explained that Selectmen approval and support is also needed. The deadline to submit statements of interest is the second or third week of January 2011.

Dr. LaCroix explained that the Davis School needs to be renovated if we want to continue to bring in new programs and to update curriculum. The need at the school will be defined as over-crowding because we currently are not able to bring in additional special education programs. Dr. LaCroix said she thinks the State will be receptive to this reason.

Dr. LaCroix further explained that the MSBA only allows Bedford to submit one project at a time. She said it is a very different process that the one we went through for the High School.

The School Committee reviewed the Statement and gave Dr. LaCroix several edits. Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: Having convened in an open meeting on December 14, 2010, the School Committee for the Bedford Public Schools, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts

School Building Authority the Statement of Interest dated December 14, 2010 for the Lt. Eleazer Davis School located at Davis Road, Bedford, MA which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which the Bedford Public Schools may be invited to apply to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future:

Priority #7: Replacement of or addition to obsolete buildings in order to provide for a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirements.

Deficiency:

Educational laws, including IDEA 2004 and Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71A amended St. 2002 c.386, educational needs and the educational delivery model, both internationally, nationally and in Bedford, have required changes in several critical respects since Davis School was conceived and finally constructed in 1999. Instead of teachers working alone in isolated classrooms and Special Education services delivered separately, the new delivery model calls for inclusion of Special Education, grouping and regrouping of students based on proficiencies in varied subjects and Response to Intervention (RTIs) with frequent micro testing to determine learning progress and focused support learning specialists. The spatial consequences of these delivery changes are that a host of small spaces are needed to house tutorials and small group learning auxiliary to regular classrooms. The educational space study completed in May 2010 found the need to substantially renovate 6,300 square feet of existing space and add 6,800 square feet of new space in order to address the needs in these areas. Renovations include repurposing four pod areas to other uses, including science/project room, literacy center, work space for learning specialists and testing and the modification of existing rooms to accommodate a new purpose such as Special Education programming. New space would be constructed to provide learning labs, foundation programs, classroom, transitions (behavioral) classroom with counseling space and quiet room, ELL classroom, RTI classroom and integrated kindergarten classroom.

And hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Bedford Public Schools to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Hafer	Yes
Ms. Seibert	Yes
Mr. Pierce	Yes
Ms. Bickford	Yes
Ms. O’Gara	Yes

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

6. Superintendent’s Report

Dr. LaCroix said that she received notice of several more retirements and therefore, the budget needs to be revised to reflect the change.

Dr. LaCroix wished everyone a happy holiday season and a restful and enjoyable holiday season.

7. Liaison Reports

Ms. Bickford reported that the CEC approved the capital request list and is moving it forward to the Selectmen.

Ms. Seibert said she met with the Turf Design Committee and a lot of questions were answered.

Ms. Seibert also reported that the Anti-bullying Task Force met and the group is off to a great beginning.

Mr. Hafer said that there have not been any changes to the Finance Committee's financial model or guidelines.

Mr. Hafer reported that the Energy Task Force would be holding a community discussion on February 8th and they will discuss the new energy policy under development.

8. Minutes for Approval

Ms. O'Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the November 30, 2010 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

9. Future Agenda

FY'12 Budget

10. Adjournment

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:30 p.m.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O'Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Hafer	Yes
Ms. Seibert	Yes
Mr. Pierce	Yes
Ms. Bickford	Yes
Ms. O'Gara	Yes

School Committee Secretary

Date

School Committee Chairperson

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

December 14, 2010

Exhibits/Documents

- **Reductions to 2011- 2012 Athletic/Extracurricular Programs.**
- **Draft of School Committee minutes dated November 30, 2010.**

Bedford School Committee

**Executive Session Minutes
December 14, 2010**