

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF
March 9, 2010**

1. Call to Order

At 7:30 p.m., Mr. Pierce called to order, the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Bickford, Ms. Seibert, Ms. O’Gara and Mr. Hafer.

2. Comments From Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Dr. LaCroix reported the following information items:

Resignation

Lisa Harrington	.8 English Teacher	High School
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Returning from LOA

Peter Jacob Dolan	English Teacher	High School
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Leave of Absence

Thomas Fay	Social Studies Teacher	High School
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Coaching Appointments

High School

Al Dougherty	Varsity Boys Outdoor Track
Rich Schilder	Assistant Boys Outdoor Track
James Greenwood	Varsity Girls Outdoor Track
TBD	Assistant Girls Outdoor Track
Charles Puopolo	Varsity Baseball
Harry Boghigian	Assistant Varsity Baseball
Gunnar Olson	JV Boys Baseball
Tim French	Freshman Baseball
Dave Wilson	Varsity Softball
Dennis Walsh	Assistant Varsity Softball
Bill Berlino	JV Softball
David Sukoff	Varsity Boys Lacrosse
David Malio	JV Boys Lacrosse
Libbey Beinert	Varsity Girls Lacrosse
Bev Barton	JV Girls Lacrosse
Kim Peterson	Freshmen Girls Lacrosse
John Guilfuss	Varsity Boys Tennis
Marie Westerkamp	.5 JV Boys Tennis
Susan Adamik	Varsity Girls Tennis
Vixen Peare	.5 JV Girls Tennis

Middle School

Matt Hagar	Co-Baseball
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Jeff McGrath	Co-Baseball
Jim Nagle	Softball
Ken Norling	Outdoor Track

4. Minutes for Review

The School Committee was waiting for the Safe Routes to School presenters to arrive, so they decided to review a set of Minutes.

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the December 1, 2009 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

5. Presentation: Safe Routes to School

Sue Baldauf, Director Youth and Family Services, Lea Susan Ojama, Board of Health, Rob Ackerman, Principal of Lane School, Courtney Croteau School Outreach Coordinator, and Carla Baer, Bedford Safe Routes Coordinator were all in attendance and presented an update to the School Committee. Ms. Baer explained that they were here tonight to begin a series of ongoing conversations on how the town can support students who want to walk or ride a bike to school safely.

Ms. Bauer explained that the goal of Bedford’s program is to enable and encourage children to walk and bicycle to school and to provide education, resources and encouragement. The hope is to encourage a more healthy and active lifestyle from an early age. Also, the group will facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that improve safety, reduce traffic, reduce fuel consumption and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.

Ms. Courtney Croteau, the representative from Mass. D.O.T., explained that Safe Routes is a Federal Program and that there are funds available for sidewalks, etc.

Ms. Ojama stated that she would like Safe Routes to be a true community effort. She realizes that not all students can participate but many can. The Task Force will continue to build support and knowledge of the program across community stakeholders. She said that the program will also promote bus ridership in order to reduce the number of private vehicles on the road.

Ms. Baldauf explained that at Lane School, students plot on a map, where they live and how they can get to school safely. She said the DPW has been involved in sidewalk plans.

Other Bedford Safe Routes to School accomplishments to date include:

- May 2009- the first Bedford Walk/Ride to School Day
- June 2009- \$6,000 grant was received from Northwest Suburban Health Alliance from Lahey Clinic
- October 2009 – two Lane School Walk/Bike to School events were held and 103 students participated.
- November 2009 Bedford received an award for “Community Collaboration for Safe Routes Success” from the State.

Upcoming events include:

- April 2010 Bicycle safety training for 4th graders
- May 2010 “Town-wide Walkability Workshop” sponsored by Bedford Selectmen, Health Department, Planning Department and Chamber of Commerce.
- May 3-7, 2010 Walk/Bike to School Week promoted by Lane School

Ms. O’Gara said that this effort is a great idea but she does see lots of obstacles. She asked about Federal funding. Ms. Croteau said there is potential Federal funding available. Ms. O’Gara said that this was very good news because the town has been talking about putting in sidewalks for many years and there has been very little action.

Ms. O’Gara asked about the culture of “not letting kids out of sight”? Ms. Baer agreed that this is the culture. The Task Force has tried to ease concerns. One way has been creating remote drop off locations that would allow students to walk from a certain designated area. They have also discussed the concept of a “walking school bus”. This is where parents and students stop by and pick up other students to walk together. Ms. Baer feels a lot of parent workshops would help change the culture.

Ms. O’Gara said the Bike Safety Workshop for 4th graders is a good idea and will be a big confidence booster.

Ms. Bickford said at first she was skeptical about the program due to Bedford’s geography but now support the efforts. She feels it is good to help build young adult independence. In Bedford, independence never really occurred until a young adult gets a driver’s license. She is also happy to hear about the possibility of Federal funds. She suggested that the Task Force work with the Selectmen on the sidewalk planning.

Ms. Ojama said that the Walkability Study will help the town recognize that a town-wide approach is necessary to get sidewalks installed.

Ms. Bickford said that Bedford is a good, safe town so it makes sense that the town has sidewalks so children can walk safely around town. Traffic is really the only unsafe issue in town.

Ms. Seibert asked if there was a limit to the number of federal grants received. Ms. Croteau said yes, only one per school/community.

Ms. Baldauf pointed out that Lane School was a good place to promote Safe Routes to School. The Principal is enthusiastic about the program and the children are at the right age developmentally – parents are ready to let go, just a little. Also, the bike path is nearby.

Mr. Hafer suggested establishing guidelines and/or structures to help accomplish some of the objectives. For example, establish drop off points in town for Lane and/or the Middle School.

Mr. Pierce recognizes that this is a difficult endeavor to implement because there are not a lot of students and/or families walking to school. However, he believes in the effort. He believes in the effort even though it will take a lot of work.

Ms. Baer said it is important to start healthy habits with students and children. She pointed out the fact that this is the first generation to have a lower life expectancy than their parents.

6. Bedford Public School Lunch Program Presentation

Mr. Ken Whittier, Food Services Director, presented a financial update on the School Lunch Program. He explained that as of January 31, 2010, sales have been down by approximately \$40,000. Food costs are down by \$30,000 and labor costs have stayed the same. Therefore, the year-to-date profit is \$3,500. However, Mr. Whittier is forecasting a \$10-15,000 loss for the rest of the school year.

Mr. Whittier explained that the cost of each meal has only risen \$.05 but unfortunately, there has been a decrease of 6400 meals (\$12,000 loss). He further explained that the schools are serving more reduced and free lunches compared to last year. Paid lunches and A la carte sales are down. Adult sales are also down in all schools.

At the High School, the average meals per day is down 9 per day. At JGMS, the average meals per day is down 27 meals per day. Davis is also down by 29 meals per day. Lane however is stable. Mr. Whittier said that he assumes this is a reflection of the recession.

Mr. Whittier also compared the price of school lunch in Bedford to other nearby towns. Bedford is one of the lowest prices. The average elementary school lunch price is \$2.41 while Bedford charges \$1.75. The average secondary lunch price is \$2.69 while Bedford charges \$2.25.

Mr. Whittier showed the School Committee budget projections for the next three years with no lunch price increase. If this were to happen, the projected loss will be \$17,000 for the next two years.

Mr. Whittier also showed projections with a .25 increase in 2011/2012. This resulted in a break-even year or possibly a small profit of \$1400.

Mr. Whittier explained that the margins are very small so an increase in price will not create a profit.

Mr. Whittier explained that enrollment increases were accounted for in his projections. He also assumed that a .25 increase in price will cause about a 10% drop in the number of meals served. He also accounted for contracted labor increases and inflation in the rate of 2.5%.

Based on his analysis, he believes a price increase will be necessary sometime within the next three school years in order to maintain a positive balance in school funds.

Ms. O'Gara asked about the status of the Davis School's new payment plan. Was it successful in collecting more money upfront and having less accounts receivables? Mr. Whittier said that he is working hard at collecting the receivable and believes the new monthly billing helps. He believes the letters that he sends home and the automated call program have been effective tools in collecting overdue accounts.

Ms. O’Gara asked if he would like to implement this program in other schools. Mr. Whittier said there are indeed a lot of benefits to having a district wide POS system but policies need to be developed and implemented in order to deal with getting the bills paid.

Ms. O’Gara asked about the desired capital items for Food Services. Mr. Whittier said that a freezer for the Lane School continues to be at the top of the list. Lane could also use a new dishwasher. He also needs a new cash register at the High School and new food warmers for Lane and Davis.

Ms. O’Gara said that she hears the a la carte items are very popular with the students. Mr. Whittier said that this is good news but it is not profitable. He explained that selling school lunches is his goal because of the reimbursement rate for selling full lunches.

Ms. O’Gara asked how the use of commodities fits in. Mr. Whittier said that a list comes out every month from the State. He does buy things like canned vegetables and fruit and pasta. He also has had success diverting a lot of commodities. For example, he has diverted chicken on the bone to Tyson. Mr. Whittier said that he has used commodities efficiently as possible but it is a balance between high quality, desired items at a decent price v. commodities.

Ms. Bickford asked Mr. Coelho to provide some additional information on the food services revolving account. He agreed.

Ms. Bickford asked when the last price increase was. Mr. Coelho said it was in 2007-2008. He said that he remembers that the School Committee agreed to review possible price increases every three years or so. Ms. Bickford agreed.

Ms. Bickford asked if this was a formal request to increase lunch prices. Mr. Whittier said not tonight, but it will be presented to the School Committee in the near future.

Ms. Bickford said that we do need to put the Lane School freezer replacement project on the Capital Expenditure list again. She suggested looking at the project from an energy conservation perspective.

Ms. Seibert asked how all of the changes – reducing Lane School ice cream sale days to only Friday and changing vending machine products – affect the bottom line. Mr. Whittier said that selling ice cream only once a week reduced income by \$300 month. Vending sales have been down. However, Mr. Whittier said that he moved some of the machines at the high school and he thinks now that they are more easily accessed that sales will do better.

Mr. Whittier also mentioned that the schools make more money on vending sales now that the management of the vending machines is inhouse.

Mr. Hafer asked what the reimbursement rate is. Mr. Whittier said .30 per paid meal.

Mr. Hafer asked if the same standards were used at each school. Mr. Whittier said no. Davis School has much smaller portions. All the others are the same.

Mr. Hafer said that he should consider having Davis School charge a lower lunch price than the other schools. Mr. Whittier said this would make sense if you looked at the cost per plate ratio only but other factors, such as outstanding receivables, do exist.

Mr. Pierce said that the Food Services Program is charged with the objective of not losing money. He is pleased this is happening. He recognizes that there are razor thin margins and appreciates why Mr. Whittier uses conservative financial models. He said it was important to track participation rates. Mr. Coelho and Mr. Whittier agreed.

Mr. Pierce asked if there were any new mandates for cafeteria reporting. Mr. Whittier said that there are new proposals being discussed at the State level about what types of food can be sold at schools. But this mandate would include vending and bake sales and it would be hard to regulate. He also said it sounds like an unfunded mandate and that reporting will be burdensome. Mr. Whittier agrees with the idea that more fresh fruits and vegetables should be served but knows it will be more costly to do so.

Mr. Whittier wanted to reassure everyone that Bedford does serve healthy foods. The talk about new legislation tends to drive the perception that we do not.

7. Energy Conservation Initiatives

Mr. Richard Jones reviewed the energy conservation measures that have taken place systemwide over the last two years. Some achievements include:

- Upgraded HVAC controls in September 2008 at a cost of \$80,645. Mr. Jones said that this paid for itself in one year – FY'08 savings were \$108,645.
- In FY'07, Mr. Jones conducted an energy usage baseline study. Usage declined in the schools by 23% from FY'07 to FY'09.
- BHS Commissioning
- Dept. of Energy Audits conducted at Davis, Lane and JGMS

Mr. Jones said that the school buildings are the most efficient buildings compared to other town school buildings. However, energy use reduction is leveling off. He said we will not see the same reductions without further investments in infrastructures. Some possibilities of infrastructure investments are Lighting Upgrades and the Lane School gas service/piping upgrade.

Mr. Jones also commented that he was intrigued with some of the recommendations that came from the Department of Energy Audits. One such recommendation was to combine heat and power as an alternate energy source. Mr. Jones would like someone from the Energy Task Force to scope this project in order to study the feasibility.

Mr. Jones explained that the Energy Task Force is appointed by the Selectmen and is charged with trying to facilitate energy conservation. This group has helped secure a DOER grant for Lane School. Mr. Jones thanked the Energy Task Force member Brenda Kelly for getting this grant. The grant will help the schools establish an Energy Policy and some guidelines for schools to follow in order to save on energy costs.

Mr. Jones explained that the DOER grant at Lane is \$150,000 and this money will be used to upgrade its HVAC controls. As a result, estimated savings will be approximately \$11,000 per year in HVAC and \$26,000 in DVC. Also, the old HVAC parts can be used as spare part for other systems within the school system.

Mr. Jones said that there are many other energy conservation opportunities. For example:

- Air leakage reduction program
- Utility company rebate projects
- Vending machine timers
- Demand controlled ventilation
- Combined heat and power project

Ms. O'Gara thanked Mr. Jones for all of the information. She said it was interesting to learn that the schools are hitting a plateau in savings without further investment.

Ms. Bickford thanked Mr. Jones for the phenomenal job he has done for Bedford. She is pleased to hear about the Energy Task Force and its involvement.

Ms. Bickford asked if Mr. Jones thought it was time to embark on the Lighting Project. Mr. Jones said that there are many concerns including payback periods and technology changes. He believes this project needs more investigation before making a recommendation.

Ms. Bickford asked about Mr. Jones's vision for establishing energy policies. Mr. Jones said these policies could address town vehicles, street lighting, school building temperatures, etc.

Ms. Seibert asked if Mr. Jones could measure the actual high school usage compared to the architect's predictions. Mr. Jones said he would do this.

Ms. Seibert said establishing energy reduction policies and guidelines will help but it is also important to change human habits too.

Mr. Jones said he would like to put the school buildings into an Energy Star Program to see where they rank. He said this would not create any savings or money but it would be great recognition for the town.

Mr. Hafer thanked Mr. Jones for the informative presentation and his hard work.

Mr. Pierce also thanked Mr. Jones. He would like to see the life expectancy of investments especially for projects with longer paybacks.

Mr. Pierce also commented that he would like to see lighting improved at the middle school gym. He said the gym looks very dingy at night.

8. Superintendent's Report

Dr. LaCroix reminded the School Committee that the next School Committee meeting will be held on April 13th. The big gap is due to Town Meeting on March 25th.

Dr. LaCroix reminded everyone that the High School play is this weekend and encouraged all to see the "Music Man". She also said that "Fiddler on the Roof" would be performed at the Middle School next week.

Dr. LaCroix congratulated the BHS Boys Basketball team - the Division 3 North champions! She said the game at the TD North Garden in Boston was very exciting. She said even though Bedford lost the game, the town has lots to be proud of.

9. Liaison Reports

Ms. Seibert said the EDCO Policy Forum will be held on March 31st at 9:30 at the State House in Boston. The topic is 21st century classrooms.

10. Minutes for Review

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the December 8, 2009 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the January 12, 2010 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

11. Future Agenda

No comments since Town Meeting is 2 weeks away.

12. Adjournment

Ms O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn to Executive Session at 10:35 p.m. for purposes of negotiations. Not to reopen.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

**EXECUTIVE SEESION
MINUTES OF**

March 9, 2010