

# **BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES OF**

**February 24, 2009**

### **1. Call to Order**

At 6:30 p.m., Ms. O'Gara called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present were Mr. Pierce, Mr. Hafer, Ms. Seibert and Ms. Bickford.

### **2. Adjournment**

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

**MOVED:** Motion to adjourn at 6:30 to Executive Session

**MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert**

**MOTION APPROVED: 5-0**

#### **Roll Call Vote:**

<b>Ms. O'Gara</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Mr. Pierce</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Ms. Seibert</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Mr. Hafer</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Ms. Bickford</b>	<b>Yes</b>

### **3. Return to Open Session**

At 7:30 p.m., Ms. O'Gara called the School Committee to return to Open Session. Members present include Mr. Pierce, Mr. Hafer, Ms. Seibert and Ms. Bickford. Charles Connell, student representative was also present.

### **4. Comments from Public**

Mr. Kenney, member of the Finance Committee, thanked the School Committee and Administration for a thorough review of the FY'10 budget. He was pleased that the School Department was able to meet financial guidelines by containing costs and that the hard work of the School Committee helped the Town balance the budget.

### **5. Personnel Report**

Dr. LaCroix announced the following items:

#### **Leave of Absence:**

Peter Jacob-Dolan	English Teacher	Middle School
Lisa Harrington	.8 English teacher	High School

#### **Resignations:**

Rebecca Wetzel	Reading Teacher	Davis School
Suzanne Reynolds	.5 Elementary Teacher	Davis School
Kim Marino	.5 Elementary Teacher	Davis School

### **6. Open Budget Hearing**

Dr. LaCroix officially opened the Budget Hearing at 7:35 p.m. As part of this process, Dr. LaCroix reviewed the FY'10 budget numbers and opened the meeting to any questions.

Dr. LaCroix's summary included:

Original Budget Request on 12/2/2008	\$31,623,398
Financial Guideline issued 12/15/2008	\$31,348,066
Revised budget Request on 1/13/2009	\$31,237,761
Revised Financial Guideline 1/30/2009	\$31,167,761

On February 10, 2009, the School Committee approved the final budget request of \$31,167,761 for FY'10. (Met the guideline issued by the Finance Committee). Dr. LaCroix explained that this will be the number presented at Town Meeting. It is a 3.74% increase over last year.

Dr. LaCroix noted that this number does not include any transportation increase because the new contract is currently being negotiated. She also noted that Special Education changes will be identified next year if we encounter significant changes within the Special Education budget.

Dr. LaCroix presented some budget breakdown slides.

All in all, Dr. LaCroix was pleased to say that Bedford Public Schools can continue to offer the same programs with out raising "private" fees.

There were no questions from the public.

Ms. Bickford commented that Bedford is fortunate in the fact that the School Committee and the Finance Committee can work closely together. Ms. Seibert echoed this sentiment.

The Budget Hearing closed at 7:43 p.m.

## **7. Facilities Department Overview**

Before the presentation by Mr. Jones, Director of Facilities, Dr. LaCroix thanked Richard Jones for his hard work. She noted that he is one reason why the School Department was able to meet the Town's financial guidelines.

Mr. Jones explained that the joint Facilities Department was formed in 1999. The department supports Town and School buildings. Administrative salary costs are split 70% schools and 30% town. This ratio also applies to general purchases.

Mr. Jones stated the mission of the department:

*"In a cost effective customer oriented manner, protect the capital investment made by the residents of Bedford in their public facilities and maintain a safe, comfortable, and functional environment for all building occupants."*

Administrative responsibilities of the Facilities Department include:

- Preparing and managing the Capital Budget.
- Preparing and managing the Operating Budget.
- Purchasing for goods, services and construction projects.
- Accounts payable are managed by staff for utilities, supplies and services.

- Maintenance Management System administration.
- Energy Management including monitoring use and procurement.
- Environmental and regulatory compliance such as asbestos, elevators, fire alarms, inspections.
- Personnel management.

Mr. Jones is very proud of the accomplishments of his department. Some major ones include:

- All staff have completed procurement training.
- Provided administrative support to the BHS renovation project in addition to regular responsibilities.
- Worked with the Business Office to implement a Facility Scheduling system.
- Management of cellular phone service.

Some of his Capital Budget accomplishments include:

- Prepared a 20 year planned maintenance schedule for each building.
- Completed 27 of 29 approved capital projects since FY'02.

Some Energy Management accomplishments include:

- In FY'08, saved \$67,300 by using third party natural gas and electricity suppliers.
- In FY'09, BHS electricity use is expected to be less than FY'08 when the building was smaller. This is due to building management and control systems. Mr. Jones estimates savings of \$84,000.
- Other school energy conservation measures equaled \$80,645 in savings.
- Override controls for HVAC helped control costs too.
- Provides energy reports to Principals.

Mr. Jones also reviewed maintenance responsibilities.

- Schedule preventative maintenance.
- Routine/emergency repairs.
- Weekend/holiday building checks.
- On call emergency requests is 2157 per year (for the last four years).
- Use computerized building management systems to identify and correct HVAC issues before receiving a call for service.

Mr. Jones highlighted custodial responsibilities and accomplishments.

*Responsibilities include:*

- Daily maintenance, cleaning
- Vacation cleaning
- Non-hazard waste disposal
- Increased recycling efforts
- General safety and security of buildings
- Special event/rentals

*Accomplishments include:*

- Custodial procedure manual has been written.
- Work assignments have been tailored with cleaning schedule.
- In-house periodic gym floor refinishing.
- Covering special events such as graduation, graduation party, Bedford Santa program, Town elections, and Town Meeting.

- Support rental activity in buildings.

Mr. Jones also noted that he has over seen 2 school renovations and four town additions/renovations in the last 7 years and that all projects have come in on time and under budget.

The School Committee thanked Mr. Jones and had several questions/comments for him.

Ms. Bickford thanked Mr. Jones for his success with the Building Projects and for his work on Energy Management Systems. She said that his efforts saved the Town a lot of money.

Ms. Seibert thanked Mr. Jones for all his efforts to save energy. She also complimented him on the open, clean and operational condition of all of the buildings.

Ms. Seibert asked if Mr. Jones noted any emerging trends with Energy Use Reports. Mr. Jones answered that a few have emerged but the one thing he has learned is that it is difficult to get people to change habits. He needs to keep reminding people to change habits and will have the Principals and Mr. Lord help too.

Ms. Seibert asked for some details on recycling efforts. Mr. Jones said that he is trying to get cardboard recycling set up and would like to get the DPW to make some changes too.

Mr. Hafer asked if Mr. Jones was concerned that some maintenance related requests did not get approved through the Capital Budget process. Mr. Jones said that scheduled maintenance projects do need to be addressed. He said that there have been some discussions on changing the budget process to ensure these items get funded. He agrees that scheduled maintenance items cannot be put off.

Mr. Pierce thanked Mr. Jones for a comprehensive report and all that he does to support the Town's \$150 million investment in buildings. He thanked him for all the steps taken over the year that has helped the Schools save money and allow Administration time to focus on educational programs.

Ms. O'Gara complimented Mr. Jones on his strong staff development and focus on keeping occupants comfortable and safe.

Mr. Kenny, a member of the Finance Committee, said, "Mr. Jones is an outstanding asset."

Dr. LaCroix said that other towns have visited us to see how a shared facilities department works. She said the Mr. Jones does a good job reporting and answering to two departments – the Superintendent and the Town Manager. She acknowledged that this is not always easy.

## **8. Mid-year Goal Report**

Dr. LaCroix explained that the School Committee recently received a lengthy mid-year report on goals and that this final document will be posted online. Therefore tonight, she

will present a “short and sweet” version of what the schools have been doing and what needs to be done to meet FY’08-Fy’09 Goals.

Dr. LaCroix noted that the goals reflect the work of all the Principals, administrators and teachers.

Highlights include:

#### I. Governance & Leadership

- Leadership Transitions

Dr. LaCroix noted that this year, two significant leaders need to be replaced. The Davis School Principal and the Director of Special Education. She said that neither person will be easily replaced but she is encouraged by the pool of candidates.

- NEASC progress at BHS.

BHS is officially removed from Warning Status. Self Study process continues.

- Student Transitions

A Lane/JGMS team has been established and the Lane/Davis school councils have met to discuss common issues.

- School Security

A community meeting will be held on Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup> to discuss security issues in a town-wide forum.

- Communication

Aspen has been implemented; Alert Now has been used; district-wide web page is used regularly to disseminate information; all four schools use electronic newsletters, teacher web pages are in use and BHS profile is on the web.

- Successful implementation of the Integrated Preschool program at the High School.

- Bedford Education Foundation has been very innovative in its fundraising.

- METCO liaisons have been established at each school to help communicate with parents.

- Partnering with EDCO to explore cross-district minority student achievement network.

- BHS Excel Program is successful so far – fifteen students have moved up a level and are earning Bs and Cs.

#### II. Curriculum & Instruction

- Math program review has led to requests for new math texts.

- Foreign language and science program reviews will begin in 2009-2010

- A Graduation Requirements Review Committee has been established

- An exploratory committee on adding Mandarin to the Foreign Language offerings has been established.

- Initiated community kindergarten survey to explore desirability of fifth day of kindergarten.

- Monitor new leveling criteria set-up at the Middle School.

- Monitor DIBELS as an assessment tool.

- Monitor integration of academic, social and civic expectations into high school culture.

- Support work by parent committee to bring back the Marching Band.

- Try to restore BHS Live.

- Will be making a recommendation on the elementary math program and JGMS math texts.
- Continue with 21<sup>st</sup> century skill development.

### III. Assessment and Evaluation

- Develop a K-12 writing rubric.
- Data Task Force will draft a template on longitudinal database on a specific student.
- Will try to establish student performance levels for each grade and subject at JGMS – create a common assessment.

### IV. Human Resources and Professional Development

- Targeted training initiatives such as Behavior Management at Davis, Lesson planning in science at Davis, JGMS longer block teaching, and Smart board training at BHS.

### V. Student Academic Support

- BHS Guidance is trying to meet with all students.
- Social climate improvements
- Antibullying efforts underway K-12 but especially at JGMS.
- New HS Guidance Counselor is making a difference with the Hanscom students and families.

### VI. Finance and Asset Management

- FY'10 has a lean operating budget but existing programs will be maintained.
- New special education initiatives such as the Integrated Preschool, Transition Program, etc. help avoid expensive services.
- Training staff on identifying specific learning disabilities also helps avoid expensive special education services.
- Will continue to work with the State on maximizing reimbursement on the High School project.
- Monitor unanticipated increases in student enrollment.
- Will continue with Strategic Communications Task Force to seek additional financial support for Hanscom students.

The School Committee thanked Dr. LaCroix for her report. Members had several questions and/or comments.

Ms. Bickford asked whether someone is looking at disseminating Dibels and Grade test information to parents. She is concerned about this because the schools have been using these tools for several years now and parents have not had any feedback. Ms. Crimmins said that the Data Task Force is indeed looking at this issue.

Ms. Seibert asked if there would be any savings incurred by combining automatic call systems with the one used by the Town for emergencies. Dr. Lacroix said that she does not think there is a lot of savings by combining systems and said that the two systems have two different objectives.

Ms. Seibert asked where the money raised from the Buc Stop store at the High School is used. Mr. Coelho said it is put in a student account.

Mr. Hafer asked if there were any projects/goals not on the report. Dr. LaCroix said the schools could do more on developing 21<sup>st</sup> century skills,

Mr. Pierce asked for more information on changes in the math program. Dr. LaCroix said that the big picture will likely be to incorporate the Bridges curriculum into K-2, keep Every Day Math at Lane School, and move away from CMP at the Middle School. There will be a presentation in April.

Ms. O'Gara asked how we funded RTI. Dr. LaCroix said it was funded with reading funds.

Charles Connell said that he cautions adding the National History Day event to JGMS because even though it is a great opportunity, it is really intense. He did not think this type of intensity is right for the middle school student.

Charles also asked if there had been any cyber bullying incidents at the schools. Dr. LaCroix said yes and that the Administration is trying to articulate how far schools can reach with their policies but there are no longer any clear lines. Dr. LaCroix said that she does not want to extend school authority to student's life at home. But, there is a learning curve to define policies. Overall the goal is to keep students safe.

A parent in the audience asked Dr. LaCroix to comment on recent enrollment trends. Dr. LaCroix said that the Lane School is close to enrollment capacity and that we are at our outer limit of class size. She is not sure the enrollment trend will continue. Dr. LaCroix said that the schools need a sophisticated enrollment study to help plan.

Another member of the audience said that she was pleased to hear how well the School Committee and Finance Committee worked together to pass a budget with out program cuts.

## **9. Liaison Updates**

None

## **10. Minutes**

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

**MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the October 28, 2008 School Committee meeting as amended.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert**

**MOTION APPROVED: 5-0**

## **11. Future Agenda**

No additions.

**12. Adjournment**

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

**MOVED:** Motion to adjourn at 10:05.

**MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford**

**MOTION APPROVED: 5-0**

**Roll Call Vote:**

<b>Ms. O’Gara</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Mr. Pierce</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Ms. Seibert</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Mr. Hafer</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Ms. Bickford</b>	<b>Yes</b>

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School Committee Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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**EXECUTIVE SEESION  
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