

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF
January 21, 2014
Bedford High School - Large Instruction Room**

1. Call to Order

At 7:35 p.m., Mr. Pierce called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Seibert, Mr. Hafer, Mr. McAllister and Ms. Guay.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Mr. Sills presented several field trip requests for approval.

Mr. Griffin and Mr. Steif are asking for permission to take 22 students to travel to Merrimack, NH for the Science Olympiad Invitational on February 8, 2014 at no cost to the students.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip request for 22 students to attend the Science Olympiad Invitational on February 8, 2014 in Merrimack, NH at a cost not to exceed \$70.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Griffin is asking for permission to take students in the Environmental Club to hike and explore the White Mountains in New Hampshire during February and April vacations. There will be no cost to students or the school.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip request for the Environment Club to travel to the White Mountains in New Hampshire for day hikes during February and April vacations at no cost to the schools.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Sills announced the retirements of Fran McGrath, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and Bev Marklis, Administrative Assistant. He also announced the resignation of Brian Ake, Teaching Assistant at the High School. Mr. Sills noted that Ms. McGrath and Ms. Marklis will be sorely missed and he was extremely grateful for their enormous contributions made to the Bedford Public Schools.

Other informational items include:

Appointments:

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|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Christine O'Donnel | Teaching Assistant at the high school |
| Michael Poe | Teaching Assistant at the high school |
| Charissa Edmonds | .5 Custodian at the middle school |

4. Discussion: Planning Board Comprehensive Plan

The School Committee reviewed a draft of the Comprehensive Plan prepared by the town's Planning Board. The Planning Board asked the School Committee to review and to comment accordingly.

Ms. Seibert noted that connecting and upgrading sidewalks could benefit the town and possibly save money from the school budget.

Ms. Guay noted that development of the former Coast Guard housing could directly affect the schools.

Mr. Pierce said he will be meeting with the Planning Committee and will report back to the School Committee.

5. Discussion: FY'15 Budget

Mr. Sills presented three rounds of proposed reductions from his original budget proposal. He did this in attempt to get closer to the Finance Committee guideline. Mr. Sills presented these proposals in priority order.

Mr. Sills began the discussion by noting that he neglected to include a request for the BHS Preschool to bring two preschool teachers on board as Bedford employees (and part of the bargaining unit). Initially, these two teachers were paid from BHS Preschool tuition. Now he is proposing that they become part of the bargaining unit and tuition be used as an offset. The net result to the school budget for FY'15 will be \$24,058 (and one teacher would be eligible for benefits).

Mr. Sills also noted that with the retirements of the two administrative assistants in the central office, he needs to request another \$21,200 for a buy back of unused sick days.

All in all, the FY'15 is \$962,000 above last year.

Mr. Pierce handed out a chart showing Mr. Sills' request for additional personnel to relieve high class size. Mr. Pierce reminded the Committee that if the budget request was approved, sixty-four classes would no longer be over enrolled.

Mr. Sills discussed the ramifications of not adding the requested staff. One example he discussed was the additional TA for the Directed Study. Mr. Sills explained that if we did not move forward with this change, the high school could get cited by the Department of Education. Directed Study is a class that is intended to have a teacher be on hand to help students. If the number of students comes close to forty, this is not possible.

Mr. Sills also discussed how the schools are not meeting the new ELL requirements, especially at the elementary level. Therefore, Mr. Sills has requested adding ELL staff to Davis to be closer to compliance.

Mr. Sills also proposes to move ahead with eight kindergarten classes and has asked the Finance Committee to put a reserve for the salary of one more kindergarten teacher and one more educational assistant in case the enrollment in kindergarten is large (again).

Mr. Sills also announced that he is moving the discussion of eliminating the elementary foreign language program to the very end of budget process. He wants to look at this decision from a program point of view, not a budget point of view.

Mr. McAllister commented that he is surprised that Bedford is moving away from hiring a Data Coordinator. He said most districts are adding a full time person to do this.

Mr. McAllister also pointed out that the 1.9% projected student increase eats up a lot of the 2.88% Finance Committee guideline.

School Committee members then discussed Mr. Sills proposed reductions. They determined that \$448,000 were very doable and did not affect FTE .

Ms. Seibert said she would like to see the Technology inventory and justification of any new purchases. She feels that there may be room to cut some of the replacement technology. Mr. Sills said he believes it is pretty tight and not a lot of room to cut replacements.

The School Committee decided to pause at this point and to vote, next Tuesday, on a budget request to move forward with discussion with the Finance Committee. All in all, the School Committee identified \$584,000 in reductions from the original FY'15 budget request.

6. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Sills reported on last Friday's Professional Development day. He handed out an example of the Ed Camp that was held at the high school. It showed the variety of workshops offered to teachers. Mr. McAllister said he was impressed that teachers put this all together on their own time.

Mr. Sills said that the March Professional Development day would focus on culturally proficient classrooms and that the goal will be to have classrooms that help all kids feel intellectually safe and to take academic risks. The Diversity Equity Committee will be planning the day.

7. Adjournment

Ms. Seibert made the following motion.

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:36 p.m.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

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|-----------------------|------------|
| Mr. Pierce | Yes |
| Mr. Hafer | Yes |
| Ms. Seibert | Yes |
| Mr. McAllister | Yes |
| Ms. Guay | Yes |

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
January 21, 2014
Exhibits/Documents

- **Handout – Best Practice EdCamp**

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Executive Session
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