

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES OF**  
**February 26, 2013**  
**Bedford High School - Large Instruction Room**

**1. Call to Order**

At 7:35 p.m., Ms Bickford called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Mr. Hafer, Mr. Pierce, and Ms. Seibert. Mr. Ben Driscoll, student representative, was also in attendance.

**2. Comments from Public**

None

**3. Personnel Report**

Mr. Sills asked the School Committee to consider approving a field trip request from Mr. Griffin. Mr. Griffin requested permission for a field trip to Merck Forest and Farmland in Rupert, VT with 22 members of the Environmental Club and AP Environmental Science class to learn about sustainable farming and energy conservation on a working farm. The trip will be from April 18-20, 2013. Students will travel by school van. The cost will be \$100 per student and no cost to the school department.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

**MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip request to Merck Forest and Farmland in Rutland, Vermont for 22 student members of the Environmental Club and AP Environmental Science class on April 18-20, 2013 at no cost to the school department.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer**

**MOTION APPROVED: 4-0**

Mr. Sills announced the following informational items:

**Resignation:**

Stania Augustin	Social Studies Teacher	BHS
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**Appointments:**

Beth Benoit	Principal – Davis School	
Linda Barbacano	Accounts Coordinator	Central Office
Denise Oldham	Permanent Special Ed Director	System

**4. FY'14 Finance Committee Recommended Budget**

Mr. Sills gave the committee a review of the FY'14 budget:

\$34,214,568      voted last week by Finance Committee

\$34,331,451      voted Jan. 15, 2013 by School committee

The School Committee then found \$56,883 in savings (\$30,00 to be determined) and agreed to remove \$60,000 from Homeless transportation costs since the state is expected to reimburse the town.

\$34, 214, 568 is new School Committee FY'14 budget number, which matches the Finance Committee's recommendation.

The School Committee discussed the \$60,00 homeless transportation reimbursement from the State. The money will be sent directly to the town but the schools will be responsible for paying the transportation bills. The Finance Committee did not want to increase the FY'14 school department budget by this amount. One member of the Finance Committee felt this way because the School Committee typically gives back money to the town at the end of a budget cycle. The School Committee members verified with Mr. Coelho that this happens because outstanding obligations are often carried over to the next fiscal year.

Mr. Coelho said that as of December, the schools have spent \$66,000 for homeless transportation. He estimates that the total amount spent this year will be \$166,000. He does expect the State to reimburse the town for the expenses.

Mr. Pierce asked if he expects this expense to continue in the future. Mr. Coelho said most likely yes. The State wants to fix the homeless issue but chances are it will still be the same next year.

Mr. Sills said he feels that we should budget for next year's homeless transportation costs. He is very concerned about these expenses.

Ms. Seibert said that a few years ago, there was a budget item for an extraordinary special education expense. At the time, the School Committee explained to the Finance Committee that there was a possibility of incurring these additional costs. However, Ms. Seibert said that with this similar kind of extraordinary cost for homeless transportation, she is inclined to leave the budget as is (remove the \$60,000 homeless transportation item) and explain to the Finance Committee the likelihood of a reserve fund transfer to cover the costs of transporting homeless students.

Mr. Hafer said he agrees with Ms. Seibert.

Ms. Bickford noted that if revenues are maintained on the town side from state reimbursements, then we should agree that expenses flow through to the town to the schools. She does not want to go to Town Meeting with different budget amounts. She thinks the discussion should be continued at Town Meeting.

**Mr. Pierce made the following motion:**

**MOVED: That the School Committee revote the FY'14 School budget to \$34,214,568 (to correct a \$40 mistake).**

**MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert**

**MOTION APPROVED: 4-0**

## **5. Open Budget Hearing**

According to state law, the School Committee held an open budget hearing and opened up the floor to any questions from the public.

Mr. Sills reviewed the FY'14 budget request:

FY'13 original proposed budget:	\$32,787,202
FY'14 Proposed budget as of Nov. 28 <sup>th</sup>	\$34,709,554 (5.86% increase)
Reductions	\$494,986
New Budget voted on Feb. 12 <sup>th</sup>	\$34,214,528
Finance Committee budget on Feb. 14 <sup>th</sup>	\$34,214,568

Revoted budget Feb. 26<sup>th</sup>

\$34,214, 568 (4.35% increase and a \$40 correction)

Mr. Sills explained that the drivers behind the FY' 14 budget include:

- Steady enrollment increases
- Consecutive years of tight school budgets
- Cancelled capital projects of \$4.63 million
- Savings due to in-house Special Education programs (\$3.3 to 4.1 million).
- Federal and state mandates on topics such as homeless, concussions, RTI, ELL, and the new teacher evaluation system
- Changing demographics in Bedford
- Growing in-house special education programs
- Maintenance of current programs
- Challenging needs of students with social-emotional, behavioral, and cognitive challenges.

School-by-School Look:

- BHS has seen the biggest increase in enrollment and therefore has an increase in its budget of 6.25%.
- JGMS needs to meet the needs of special education and increased its budget from last year by 5.24%.
- Davis is adding a fifth day of kindergarten due to Common Core curriculum requirements (7.75%)
- Lane has a modest increase of 3.63%
- System wide budget has increased by .6%

Mr. Sills noted that all budget information will be posted on the school website.

Ms. Bickford pointed out that while our budget is growing, state aid is also increasing. However, state aid in FY' 14 will be higher than FY' 13.

No questions from the audience.

The Open Budget Hearing closed.

**6. Reading Department Presentation**

Sue Rozen, Grade 6 -12 Reading Program Administrator updated the School Committee on the Reading and Literacy department. Linda Volpicelli, the K-5 coordinator was scheduled to present too, but was absent due to illness.

Dr. Rozen explained that Dibels and GRADE assessments are used district wide. Dibels has really helped the district. Each year, the assessment helps identify students who need intervention. Other evaluations are also used.

Dr. Rozen noted that the population in Bedford schools has really changed and the district has been keeping severely reading disabled students (language based disabilities) in district. This ends up helping students at or above grade level because of the district's focused strategy on reading skill development.

Dr. Rozen explained how valuable data is. She gave an example of how data on a specific student, collected over the years, pointed to a specific problem (on open response questions). With out the careful collection and review of student data, this student would not have had intervention and would have encountered problems with open response questions at MCAS time. Dr. Rozen also showed examples of “cohort” data and discussed how she analyzes the data and the trends it indicates.

Some challenges she sees include:

- Changing curriculum and academic foundations.
- Massachusetts’ new way to measure student growth
- The new PARCC assessments due to be introduced in 2014
- New WIDA standards for ELL students
- The changing demographics in Bedford

Some new things for the future include:

- Foundations phonics program in grades K-2 (big change from the whole language tradition)
- Evaluating the 90-minute literacy blocks.
- Emphasize writing in classrooms
- Developing more formative assessments

Ms. Seibert said she was impressed with how much Dr. Rozen knows about reading and analyzing data to make improvements.

Ms. Seibert asked about Dr. Rozen’s thoughts on the future of kindergarten curriculum in Massachusetts. Dr. Rozen said she thinks we have to put our heads together and decide what is best for Bedford students. She said developing the joy of reading is still the key to developing reading skills at the young age.

Mr. Hafer thanked Dr. Rozen. He agrees that getting rid of distractions and increasing time to read is very important.

Mr. Sills agrees as well. He suggested we remind all classrooms in all grades to have time for independent reading.

Mr. Pierce said he loves Dr. Rozen’s use of data. He especially liked to see how it helps students early on in the process. He appreciates hearing that Bedford schools do a good job at this.

Ms. Bickford said Dr. Rozen had great graphs and appreciated seeing the longer view of cohort’s data since the cumulative nature of data is so important.

## **7. School Committee Reorganization**

Due to the fact that tonight is Ms. Bickford’s last meeting, a new Chairperson must be elected.

Mr. Hafer made the following motion:

**MOVED: To nominate Ed Pierce to serve as Chair of the Bedford School Committee.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert.**

**(Mr. Pierce accepted)**

**MOTION APPROVED: 4-0**

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

**MOVED: To nominate Brad Hafer to serve as Vice Chair of the Bedford School Committee.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce**

**(Mr. Hafer accepted)**

**MOTION APPROVED: 4-0**

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

**MOVED: To nominate Abbie Seibert to serve as Secretary of the Bedford School Committee.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford**

**(Ms. Seibert accepted)**

**MOTION APPROVED: 4-0**

Ms. Seibert presented flowers to Ms. Bickford and thanked her for her twelve-year tenure on the Bedford School Committee. "Thank you for every thing you do for the kids and staff of Bedford Public Schools." Ms. Seibert noted how analytical Ms. Bickford is and how she always looked for solutions. She appreciated her grace and use of humor .

Mr. Hafer said he learned so much from Ms. Bickford – on process, policy, analysis, and politics. "The town has benefited from your work on the School Committee for twelve years. Thanks for your tremendous amount of effort."

Mr. Pierce said he was proud to work with Ms. Bickford for eleven years. He likes the way she always looks at things in terms of how it will benefit the students. He noted that Ms. Bickford is remarkable in her ability to analyze and understand all situations and to simply summarize for everyone. He will miss her. "Thank you for your contributions".

Mr. Sills said that he has had a long history with Ms. Bickford and he truly cannot imagine the School Committee with out her. He appreciates her incredible capacity to see the big picture and equally analyze and see the details. "You are an anchor and rock and have brought immeasurable strength to the School Committee. On behalf of the kids, staff, parents, and community, thank you."

Ms. Bickford said upon reflection, the twelve years on the School Committee have been incredible and that she has been lucky to work with such talented people.

Ms. Bickford shared School Committee minutes, hand written in a book, from the years 1899-1913. She noted how similar the issues are then and today! She said that the book points out that Bedford has a long history of a strong foundation in education.

Ms. Bickford concluded, "It has been an honor to serve on the School Committee."

## **8. Superintendent's Report**

- The High School musical, Footloose, will be held on March 6<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup>.
- Mr. Sills will be mailing a letter home to preschool parents explaining the importance of a five-day kindergarten program.

## **9. Liaison Reports**

Ms. Bickford said that the Strategic Task Force is helping with a bill on state aid.

## **10. Future**

Welcome two new School Committee members. On March 12<sup>th</sup> there will be a joint meeting with the School Committee and Selectmen to conduct interviews with School Committee candidates to fill Ms. O’Gara’s position. It will be a one-year position.

**11. Adjournment**

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

**MOVED: Motion to adjourn, not to reopen.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer**

**MOTION APPROVED: 4-0**

**Roll Call Vote:**

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

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School Committee Secretary

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Date

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**February 26 2013**

**Exhibits/Documents**

- **Reading Department K-12 presentation dated February 2013**
- **FY'14 School Department Budget Open Hearing presentation**

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**Executive Session**  
**February 26, 2013**