

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF
February 7, 2012**

Bedford High School - Large Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

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

2. Comments from the Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Dr. LaCroix announced the appointment of Susan Doan, Teaching Assistant at the high school and Shawn Ayala, Educational Assistant/METCO bus monitor at the middle school. Also, Benjamin Girard has been appointed a .6 Science teacher at the high school.

4. Policy Approvals

Dr. LaCroix asked the School Committee to approve the Acceptable Technology Use policy for Students. However, School Committee members suggested that this policy allow downloads without permission since this is possible with the iPads at the high school. Also, they questioned the prohibition about not using technology for political purposes. (Does this include school elections?) As a result, the School Committee asked to see an edited version of the policy one more time before approving.

The School Committee also reviewed the draft of the new policy on Social Networking for Staff. School Committee members gave Dr. LaCroix several edits. Dr. LaCroix explained that one point of the policy is to explain to staff that it does not matter which social network account you use, you communicate as a representative of the Bedford Public Schools.

Mr. Hafer agreed that this was important but did not want the policy to over extend its reach to the personal lives of staff. Dr. LaCroix agreed.

Ms. Bickford commented that the policy needs to be written using a consistent voice. She is also concerned about using private communications on social networks because there is no such thing as privacy on a social network. For example, Facebook owns everything posted on its site. Dr. LaCroix agreed and will review the language and clarify appropriately.

Dr. LaCroix will revise the policy and present it again for consideration.

5. Energy Efficiency Projects

Mr. Richard Jones explained that a consultant helped prepare a bundled list of potential energy efficient projects which were recently presented to the Selectmen. All in all, the Selectmen were very supportive of the presentation and approved setting up a revolving fund for such projects.

Mr. Jones explained that 9 projects were presented at a total cost of \$553,091. These projects have a projected utility savings of \$90,564 and a payback period of 6.5 years. Mr. Jones shared several charts with the School Committee on these numbers. Mr. Jones pointed out that one chart

he used assumed a four percent debt service charge, but feels that the Town can borrow at a lesser rate so there may be even more potential savings.

School Committee members gave Mr. Jones several suggestions on how to make his payback chart more informative for use at Town Meeting.

Ms. Bickford asked why the building recommended projects did not appear in this presentation. Mr. Jones explained that the grant guidelines steered him away from including them. He does feel that these projects will however lead to savings.

Mr. Jones explained that the plans presented tonight will be short of achieving the 20% reduction in overall MBBTU's as required by the Green Community Grant. He noted that Bedford will not be charged a penalty for this failure but the town may not get a chance for grant money in the future.

Ms. Bickford suggested that Mr. Jones add dollar savings to the presentation for the Finance Committee and Town Meeting.

The School Committee agreed to revisit this after Mr. Jones meets with the Finance Committee and the Capital Expense Committee.

6. Jenks Trail – Memorandum of Agreement

Jaci Edwards, chair of the Jenks Nature Trail Working Group (an unofficial group) presented the groups proposed concept to revitalize the area and to make it more of an arboretum.

Ms. Edwards said that the working group would like to educate the town on this "gem". Ideally, they would like to piggyback on April's Pole Capping ceremony to educate the town about this trail since it is near Arbor Day.

Specifically, the group would like to post two signs (in Mahogany similar to town-wide conservation commission signs) and use tree tags to identify the tree species. The group would also like to immediately plant 1 or 2 new trees. Also, the group will draw up plans to remove and replant additional trees going forward in order to make more room for new species and again, make the trail more of a true arboretum.

Ms. Edwards is asking for School Committee agreement in order to move forward.

Mr. Hafer supports all of the issues presented by Ms. Edwards. He did ask the group to look at the rock walls too to make sure everything is safe.

Mr. Pierce suggested that the group should be prepared to repaint the mahogany signs in the future. Ms. Edwards agreed.

Mr. Pierce said he would like to review the tree removal/replanting plan before it is put into action. Ms. Edwards agreed.

Ms. O'Gara thanked Ms. Edwards for her stewardship on the Jenks Trail. She too supports all proposals including reviewing the removal/replanting plan.

Ms. Seibert and Ms. Bickford also agree with the proposals and would like an opportunity to review the plan to remove and replant trees.

Ms. Edwards also mentioned that she will contact Mr. Mike Griffin to see how students at the High School can help with the redevelopment plan too.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the proposal presented by the Jenks Nature Trail Working Group for installation of signs and additional plantings of trees in celebration of Arbor Day in April 2012.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

7. Discussion Fields Use for Bedford Public Schools

Keith Mangan, Athletic Director, gave a presentation on the advantages and disadvantages of having a turf field on the Sabourin Football Field.

Mr. Mangan described several advantages:

- A turf field on the current Sabourin Field will benefit physical education classes at the high school and middle school.
- The field could be used year round.
- Sabourin Field has the infrastructure – lights, seating, parking, location.
- Bedford is currently the only school in the Dual County league without access to a turf field and varsity teams are at a competitive disadvantage. Play is different on turf.
- Teams can move outside earlier in the spring. For example, baseball can use it to play long toss, etc.
- Bedford Public Schools will no longer have to rent space for lacrosse.
- JGMS games can start earlier.
- Bedford has missed several opportunities to host State Tournaments (and miss out on revenue opportunities).
- Last year, 8 varsity field hockey games were played at alternate sites due to our wet fields.
- The existing track (around the Sabourin Field) is in need of resurfacing. If we upgrade, we will be able to upgrade and host State Track Tournaments.
- More fields in town can come off line to rest with extra capacity.
- There is not enough capacity in the fall to meet the schools needs.
- It is difficult to have full field practices.
- The need to reschedule games (or cancel them) due to weather will be greatly diminished.

Mr. Mangan reviewed several disadvantages:

- The cost of \$1.1 million is expensive especially given the town’s financial constraints.
- Scheduling issues (setting priorities) will be tricky.

Mr. Hafer said that the bottom line is that Sabourin Field is not used that often. In his opinion, turf is not a luxury especially given the field capacity in Bedford. “Turf in Sabourin Field will increase utilization of premier fields in town and increase capacity across the system.”

Mr. Pierce asked Mr. Mangan to give him the number of sporting events for Bedford Public Schools in the spring and fall. Mr. Mangan agreed.

Mr. Pierce asked if we could revise the existing football field in order to allow more use? Mr. Mangan said that this was another option but only one football game will tear up the field.

Ms. O’Gara said that Bedford used to, as a matter of practice, close fields to let them rest. She does not think that this is done anymore. She definitely learned a lot from the presentation. She believes the whole town will benefit from a turf field but realizes her focus is on the schools. She thinks it is really unfortunate that the sub varsity teams take the brunt of the problem. In her view, it is valuable to support the investment to turf because more students can participate.

Ms. Bickford said that summer use of an artificial turf field is overly optimistic given the extreme heat it produces.

Ms. Bickford is concerned that if the town invests \$1.1 million into a turf field at this time, it will be harder for the town to invest in the upcoming modifications in school buildings, which will be necessary due to growth in enrollment. She thinks that the land bought from St. Michael’s may be a better alternative for the turf field which has the potential to be funded with CPC funds less any expenditures from the tax levy.

8. Fields Partnership/Turf Committee

Mr. Jim Lespasio addressed the School Committee as a representative of the Fields Partnership Committee and the Turf Committee. He explained that in 2007, the idea of turf field in Bedford was proposed. In 2008, an article was approved by Town Meeting and a grass roots campaign raised \$37,500 for a turf field design. In 2010, the design was completed and later that year the Fields Partnership Committee was formed. Now, in 2012, there has not been a vote by the selectman (to approve turf field). The turf field proposal will appear for a vote at the March 2012 Town Meeting as a result of a petitioner’s article.

Mr. Lespasio noted that Bedford does have a lot of fields in town, but they cannot be used regularly. He also noted that the former St. Michael’s property has been cited as wetlands (a significant amount) and to date, no applications for variances have been filed for use of this land.

Mr. Lespasio noted that the proposal for the turf field is designed specifically for the Sabourin Field and it could not be transposed to another location in town without incurring more costs.

Mr. Lespasio said he was here tonight to ask the School Committee to support converting the Sabourin Field to turf. He will also ask other committees in town for their support as well.

Ms. Seibert said her initial thought was for the School Committee to wait until after the next Fiscal Planning meeting (on Monday) before taking a position.

Mr. Hafer said that the CEC is also looking for the School Committee to voice its opinion on the turf field project.

Mr. Hafer said overall he supports the idea of a turf field. He believes the schools have a need for such a field. He even feels that he could find away to pay for it out of the operating budget.

Mr. Pierce said under the town’s bylaws maintenance of the fields is the responsibility of the Selectmen. He said that the School Committee has taken votes in the past that clearly state that if the football field is converted to turf, the Schools will share it.

Mr. Pierce said he is still looking for a long-term field plan which will help with planning a turf field and any new fields. He said the lack of a big picture plan may cause concern with a lot of residents.

Ms. O’Gara said that Mr. Mangan had compelling reasons why a turf field will benefit our students. She said that it is clear from past votes that the School Committee will share this resource.

Ms. Bickford thanked Mr. Lespasio for his hard work and that it is admirable that he has been dedicated to this project for such a long period of time. However, she disagrees with Mr. Hafer and does not feel it would be appropriate to cover the debt service cost of a turf field from the school’s operating budget given the competing educational needs and a constrained budget environment.

Ms. Bickford said she would support a motion if it is approved by the Town Meeting that says the School Committee will support a move by the town to put in a turf field in Sabourin Field (or whatever improvements the town decides). She is concerned about the financing and competing educational priorities.

Ms. Seibert said that a lack of a long term plan is her concern. She thinks it is hard to move something forward without knowing the long term plan.

Ms. Picciuto, a resident in the audience, said that she is concerned that the town boards have not figured out how to deal with fields. She is concerned that the schools have not attended to this issue especially when the issue has been discussed in front of the School Committee for many years.

Ms. Picciuto said that the School Committee should begin to think about the use of advertising on fields (what is our policy?) as we move forward. Advertising could become a strong revenue stream.

Ms. Picciuto pointed out that it is odd that we have a facilities department which takes care of the brick and mortar buildings but not the outside and the fields. Perhaps fields should be part of facilities.

Ms. Cowles, a resident in the audience, said that she clearly sees both sides of this issue. She is a Bedford Public School teacher and a parent/resident of Bedford. She does not think that Mr. Lespasio is asking for the School Committee to support the town spending \$1 million on this project but he is asking the schools to state that they acknowledge that a turf field will help Bedford students and athletes.

Dr. LaCroix said that the School Committee can support the concept but cannot walk away from how it is funded. It is important to put the project in the larger picture. Dr. LaCroix said she is glad it is a petitioner’s article and that residents will decide. Dr. LaCroix said that the need is obvious for the schools and the recreation department but there is a need to address the big picture.

Mr. Lespasio said he disagrees and feels that town boards and management have not done their job. This project has fallen through the cracks and no one is stepping up to get it through. He does not think the petitioner’s article is the right way to get it done.

Ms. Bickford said that the reality is that the town is in tight financial condition and has been for several years. The town has been making tough choices for years where some very good projects have fallen off the radar screen. She said that this is why no one has stepped up to take charge of the project. She said that we are fortunate to have the Town Meeting style of government so people can come out and vote for what they want.

Dave Sukoff, a member of the audience, stated his opinion that there is no plan to use the former St. Michael's property because there are too many wetland concerns and the area is not buildable. He noted that the need for a turf field has been established and the high school football field is the desired site.

Mr. Hafer said that the School Committee has a representative on the Fields Partnership Committee. The School Committee has approved a field's usage policy developed by the Fields Partnership and the Fields Partnership is now working on a maintenance plan to articulate a long term vision.

Mr. Mulligan, a member of the Recreation Commission in the audience, thanked the School Committee for all they do for the town and the schools. He asked them to think about this project too as it will help the entire town.

9. Superintendent's Report

Dr. LaCroix announced that 13 art students were honored in the Boston Globe Scholastic art competition. She is very proud of them.

Dr. LaCroix sadly announced that William Tolland, the band director for BHS from 1960 to 1980 recently passed away. She said that he made a huge impact on Bedford students.

10. Liaison Reports

Mr. Hafer said that the BEF raised more than \$3,000 at the Barnes and Noble Fundraiser last December. He also noted that the CEC will be revisiting the project/priority list.

Ms. Seibert noted that the Finance Committee agreed with the FY' 13 budget request by the School Committee and voted the same number.

Next School Committee meeting will have the Open Budget Hearing.

11. Minutes

Ms. O'Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the December 13, 2011

School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. O'Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the January 3, 2012 meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the January 17, 2012 Executive Session meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

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

12. Future Agenda

Ms. Bickford would like to hear thoughts/reports on this year’s schedule changes as well as an update on the iPad pilot.

13. Adjournment

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 10:55.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Feb. 7, 2012

Exhibits/Documents

- **Capital Plan Energy Efficiency Bond Projects**
- **Sabourin Field Proposal by Keith Mangan**
- **Acceptable Technology Use Policy for Students - draft**
- **Social Networking Policy of the Bedford Public Schools for Staff – draft**
- **Draft of minutes from December 13, 2011 School Committee meeting**
- **Draft of minutes from January 3, 2012 School Committee meeting.**
- **Draft of minutes from January 17, 2012 Executive Session meeting.**

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
February 7, 2012
Executive Session