

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF
January 3, 2012**

Bedford High School - Large Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 7:32 p.m., Ms. Seibert called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Mr. Hafer, Ms. O’Gara, Mr. Pierce, and Ms. Bickford. Sam Markuse, student representative, was also in attendance.

2. Comments from the Public

Mr. Mike Culhane, a resident of Wilson Road, spoke about his concern over a recent letter he received from the Athletic Director and Principal of the high school. In the letter, the Principal and Athletic Director wrote that a High School coach was spoken to about his actions at a party. Mr. Culhane said he was alarmed that this coach was being punished for having a legal drink on his own time, off school property, outside of Bedford, and at an event that was unrelated to school. Mr. Culhane said that he was concerned that the Bedford community was very punitive in this situation and was concerned that the coach’s reputation was tarnished as a result.

Dr. LaCroix explained that the School Committee was not aware of this issue because it is a personnel matter. She also said she could not really comment on the issue because it was a personnel matter.

Ms. Seibert thanked Mr. Culhane for voicing his concerns and suggested that he speak with Mr. Sills to help clarify the information in the letter.

3. Personnel Report

Dr. LaCroix asked the School Committee to consider approving a field trip from Mr. Shawn Daley for the annual RISE Program field trip to Jefferson, NH in May. Dr. LaCroix explained that the students in the RISE Program would miss three days of school in order to attend the hiking/camping field trip to the Appalachian Mountain Club Nizpan Hut in Jefferson, NH. The cost of the trip is \$1400 and will be covered by the RISE budget. The school van will be used for transportation.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip for RISE students in grades 10-12 at Bedford High School to participate in the annual trip to Jefferson, NH on May 16-18, 2012 at a total cost of \$1400 which will come from the school’s RISE Program budget.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Dr. LaCroix also presented two job descriptions for the School Committee to review. Dr. LaCroix explained that these job descriptions were not for new positions but were being rewritten in order to accurately reflect the job responsibilities.

The first description discussed was for a K-5 Literacy Coach. The School Committee reviewed the job description and gave Dr. LaCroix a few minor edits.

The other description was for the High School Principal. The position was rewritten to reflect current expectations. School Committee members gave Dr. LaCroix several edits.

The School Committee agreed to vote on these two job descriptions at the next meeting.

Dr. LaCroix announced the following informational items:

Appointment:

Katherine Parker	.9 Music Teacher	Davis School
------------------	------------------	--------------

Resignation:

Matthew Driscoll	Teaching Assistant	High School
------------------	--------------------	-------------

4. Presentation: Green Community Check

Mr. Richard Jones, Director of Facilities, explained that last December, the Town of Bedford was awarded the status of Green Community. As a result of this official designation, Bedford applied for grant funds. Mr. Jones was pleased to announce that Bedford was awarded \$148,000 as a result. (He showed the School Committee the official Green Community designation signs and the large check). Mr. Jones explained that the funds would be used for numerous energy saving projects including one at Lane School.

5. Policy Presentation – Social Networking for Staff of the Bedford Public Schools

Dr. LaCroix presented a draft of a new Social Networking policy for staff to the School Committee for review. She explained that the policy has been under development for a couple of years. She has looked at many other existing policies to try to come up with one that helps faculty understand the expectations around the use of social networking.

Dr. LaCroix said that this policy was difficult to develop because social networking is hard to define and it is always changing. She did try to be explicit in some areas – namely if you use social networking as part of your job, then staff has certain responsibilities. Teachers cannot blur the line between student and teachers. Dr. LaCroix said that the policy also tries to be very clear advising staff to use school email when conducting business. This is imperative because the school, as a matter of law, archives all email.

Dr. LaCroix also explained that the new policy reminds faculty and staff that they have a responsibility to be mandated reporters, even in off hours.

All in all, Dr. LaCroix said that the policy is somewhat prescriptive but she feels there is a need to be explicit. Dr. LaCroix said that the School Committee may want to take some time reviewing and commenting on this policy.

Mr. Hafer said that staff expectations are somewhat general on one hand but sometimes very specific. He discussed the intent of saving and archiving communications with the Committee.

Mr. Pierce suggested tying “inappropriate conduct” to words used in the teachers’ contract (under Code of Conduct). He also suggested not being specific about penalties but rather referencing penalties as described under law or under B.E.A. contract.

Ms. Bickford said that the policy needs a consistent voice. She also suggested relying on training to explain how teachers and staff need to use social networking correctly.

Dr. LaCroix agreed that this topic would be part of new teacher training.

Ms. Bickford said to make sure the policy and the training is “nuts and bolts” and should be very clear that nothing on Facebook or any other social networking site is private.

School Committee members agreed to send further edits and comments to Dr. LaCroix who will submit the policy for review again.

6. Budget Discussions

Dr. LaCroix reviewed the current status of the FY’13 budget request. She reminded everyone that the current proposed budget for FY’13 is \$32,966,779. She explained that the Finance Committee recently issued a guideline amount of \$32,286,961 which means that there is a variance of \$679,818.

The School Committee discussed how to tackle this gap. Ms. Seibert wondered whether it makes sense to go through the exercise of cutting programs and staff to meet the Finance Committee’s number. Ms. Seibert also commented that it was too early in the budget process to know what type of revenues will be coming in.

Ms. Bickford said that the compelling piece of the school budget is spending money to bring in-house more special education programs. Therefore, she believes that the School Committee should spend some time articulating this strategy and explaining the costs associated with special education.

Mr. Pierce said he has been trying to analyze the financial model used by the town to determine the guideline number. He said that there seems to be a significant number of financial items still in flux. He said that it does not make sense to go ahead and propose cuts to existing programs at such an early point in the financial process. Mr. Pierce said that he agrees with Ms. Bickford to focus on articulating the school’s special education strategy (and any other mandates).

Ms. O’Gara agrees that it is too early in the financial process to make decisions to cut programs.

Mr. Hafer agrees and said he does not want to go through the same process as last year. He believes that the financial model will change and that there will opportunities to meet with the Finance Committee to discuss further.

Ms. Seibert did ask Mr. Coelho to redefine the textbook plan.

Ms. Seibert also commented that the School Committee is taking the variance seriously, but the School Committee is simply trying to approach the problem realistically and in the best way.

7. Superintendent Report

Dr. LaCroix wished everyone a Happy New Year.

8. Liaison Updates

Ms. Bickford noted that on December 29, 2011 the Federal government issued an RFP on the K-8 school at Hanscom. It is a five-year contract. The bids are due on January 27, 2012. Ms. Bickford commented that given the quick turnaround and the complexities of the RFP, it is unlikely that there will be any new bidders.

9. Future Agenda

The next School Committee meeting will be January 17, 2012.

10. Adjournment

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:00 to Executive Session for purpose of contract negotiation, not to reopen.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

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

January 3, 2012

Exhibits/Documents

- **Draft of Literacy Coach job description**
- **Draft of High School Principal job description**
- **Draft of Social Networking Policy for Staff of the Bedford Public Schools**
- **FY'13 School Budget Proposal v. FinCom Guideline**