

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF
December 13, 2011**

Bedford High School - Large Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 7:40 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

None

3. Artificial Turf Proposal

On behalf of the Fields Partnership Committee, Mr. Mike Rosenberg presented an update on the artificial turf proposal. He explained that the Fields Partnership Committee is an interagency panel made up of volunteers from the schools, recreation, DPW, CEC and the Turf Advocacy Group. Mr. Rosenberg explained that tonight’s presentation was only an update but he does hope that the Committee will support a warrant article for bonding which will appear at Town Meeting.

Mr. Rosenberg explained that artificial turf on the Sabourin Football field will benefit the entire Bedford community. Turf will expand the use potential of the field because it will allow the town to accommodate many more participants. Putting in artificial turf will also allow Bedford’s current grass fields to rest, which is critical to proper care and maintenance. Mr. Rosenberg expects usage to increase greatly with proper marketing. He anticipates usage on summer mornings and evenings and anticipates big revenue potential, especially with adult leagues.

The Fields Partnership Committee feels that users of the artificial turf field should pay for the field and have proposed upwards of 40% to 100% replacement costs when the warranty runs out and the turf needs replacement.

Mr. Rosenberg said that three turf fields in neighboring Lexington cleared \$250,000 in revenues.

Mr. Rosenberg hopes that the Selectmen will put this issue on the warrant in order to have a proper discussion on the matter.

Mr. Hafer spoke and said that as CEC liaison, the CEC is looking to the schools to help with the ranking of this project. He also said that the bonding impact of this project will peak in year 2 at a cost of \$3.10 per \$100,000 of home valuations.

Ms. Bickford asked if fees would be charged to the Recreation Department. Mr. Rosenberg said yes in order to offset general field maintenance. He sees collateral benefits from all sports groups, even those like baseball who would not use the field directly.

Mr. Rosenberg said he would not want to charge a maintenance fee to groups if Bedford does not implement the turf field. He said our fields are not up to par and therefore, he could not rightfully charge a fee for use.

Mr. Rosenberg noted that currently no outside groups are using Bedford fields because the schedule does not allow it. Potential revenue sources are being turned away.

Ms. Seibert asked when the town would see another request for upgrades to the artificial turf field. Mr. Rosenberg said that typically, the warranty for the field is eight years but average life is about 10 years. He said only the top of the field would have to be replaced at this point and he believes that it would be self sufficient in ten years.

Ms. O’Gara said her experience has been that during the 10 years, there will be upgrade requirements because field quality does deteriorate. She also feels that the risk of serious injuries goes up as the field quality diminishes.

Mr. Rosenberg agreed to do more research on this point.

Ms. O’Gara asked if the youth groups would be comfortable with field usage fees. Mr. Rosenberg said yes.

Mr. Pierce said that for the last few years, Bedford has acquired many new fields and/or land for new fields. (South Road, VA Hospital, St. Michael’s property, and the Princeton property.) He asked if there was a comprehensive plan for the town.

Mr. Rosenberg said there is a plan but it is not that extensive. Using the land at St. Michael’s is tied up due to a wetlands issue, but Mr. Rosenberg believes it is close to being resolved. This area will accommodate two lacrosse fields. This may allow one of the existing fields to rest. The property at Princeton needs much more studying especially since there is an access problem. Mr. Roenberg also noted that the VA fields are not ours and should not be part of the long range plan. South Road has one full size field almost completed.

Mr. Pierce asked if there could be lights on the St. Michael’s property. Mr. Rosenberg said he would expect neighbors to oppose this.

Ms. O’Gara asked why the Sabourin field was selected for turf. Mr. Rosenberg said because it is lighted and because football prohibits use from other teams. Therefore, the field sits unused for most of the year. Turf will alleviate this problem.

Ms. Seibert said she is concerned about competing projects for bonding. Also, the Athletic Director has indicated that the school’s programs can be met with existing fields. Therefore, she does not think that the School Committee has a responsibility to support this.

Mr. Rosenberg said that when the new schools were built, they set a precedent for town wide use. Extra large gyms were built so that the community could use them, not just the schools.

Ms. Seibert asked if there was a timeframe for this proposal. Mr. Rosenberg said no because Town Meeting is three months away. He asked the School Committee to take its time thinking about the issue and that he does not expect any action tonight. He did comment that he was surprised that the Athletic Director feels that current fields are adequate since they are very wet and are often closed. He sited the fact that lacrosse often practices in the parking lots and home games are frequently moved to away fields.

Mr. Rosenberg said that the schools would not have to pay user fees.

Ms. Bickford said that there have been discussions about a possible \$1.1 million bond issue. She feels that it is important to consider future needs of the school buildings which will require renovations due to the changes in school population. The town needs to consider competing bonding possibilities such as artificial turf, school renovations, and energy saving projects.

Sam Markuse, student representative, said he believes weather does affect Bedford's fields and the game schedules.

Mr. Kenney a member of the Finance Committee in the audience said that as a resident, he would oppose spending a million dollars on a turf field. It is not a necessity. He also opposes adding money to acquire the two additional fields as well.

4. FY'13 Budget Discussion

Mr. Coelho explained that he met with members of the Finance Committee last Thursday who proposed questions on the FY13 budget. As a result, he made a chart highlighting the impact of the FY'13 salary changes compared to FY'12. The change is:

Existing Staff increase for FY'12	\$497,421	2.19%
Net grant offset changes	\$143,989	63%
New positions	\$244,206	1.08%
Total	\$885,616	3.90%

Ms. Bickford commented that there is a conceptual misunderstanding with grants and government funds for specific purposes (such as HAFB). Ms. Bickford said that because a grant is terminated or funding cut, it does not mean the need goes away. We are not adding superfluous positions when we transfer certain positions to the operating budget.

Dr. LaCroix said that Education Grant money was used to build in-house special education programs and now that they are built, we must maintain them. This was the intention of the grant.

Ms. Taymore said that we still have to apply for entitlement grants and explain how we use the funds.

Ms. O'Gara agreed and said that education grant funding was established to entice schools to start something (that the DOE wants and will mandate) and then stick to it. Maintenance of these programs and services has always been the responsibilities of the schools.

Ms. Bickford asked about the circuit breaker assumption used in the FY'13 budget request. Dr. LaCroix said that the budget assumes that the state will reimburse us for 65% of special education costs. She is confident that this is a realistic assumption.

Mr. Kenney said that the Schools really need to figure out ways to reduce the budget. Ms. Bickford said that the School Committee will reduce the budget by reducing programs when the community tells us to do so.

Mr. Kenney said he is not convinced that the town people want all of these programs. Ms. Seibert reminded him about a very highly attended meeting last year at the high school auditorium after the School Committee proposed cutting programs.

Dr. LaCroix also reminded Mr. Kenney about the changing population in the schools. She said there are demands for ELL and SPED services and that Bedford Public Schools has a responsibility to serve all children regardless of their needs.

Dr. LaCroix commented that the schools do indeed appreciate the fact that the budget request is a big number but it is necessary to educate all the children including those with special needs and regular education needs.

The School Committee then reviewed the PC Replacement Schedule presented by Mr. Ken Lord. The schedule indicated that there are 1047 PCs in the system and 139 are slated to be replaced in FY'13. (This would be a 7-8 year rotation.)

Mr. Coelho stated that he does not expect a financial guideline to be issued by the Finance Committee until after December 22nd.

5. Town's Field Policy Review

Mr. Hafer presented the revised Field Use Policy and asked the School Committee to approve the policy and then he will send it to the Selectmen for their review.

The School Committee discussed some of the wording and gave minor edits regarding formatting to Mr. Hafer. All in all they were comfortable with the policy's intent.

Ms. O'Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Town of Bedford's Use Policies for Athletic Fields and Other Recreational Facilities as presented today, December 13, 2011.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Bickford thanked Mr. Hafer for his hard work on developing this policy.

6. Gift Donation

Mr. Coelho asked the School Committee to accept a donation of \$1,000 from the Haran family of Raleigh, North Carolina for Bedford High School. The Haran family simply requested that the money be used for the high school "where it is most needed". The money will be deposited into a gift account to be used at the discretion of the Principal.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee accept the donation of \$1,000 from the Haran family of Raleigh, North Carolina for use at the High School.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O'Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

The School Committee thanked the Haran family for their generosity.

7. Superintendent's Report

Dr. LaCroix announced that the Marching Band has been asked to perform at Disney World in Orlando, Florida. She said the band has been reconstituted over the last three years. It is a great honor to be selected to perform at Disney and that it is a nice recognition for the hard work of the band and the enormous support from the community.

8. Liaison Reports

Mr. Hafer reminded everyone about the Bedford Education Foundation fundraiser at Barnes and Nobles tomorrow night. He also reported that the CEC met and voted on priorities but will meet again to finalize. All departments are invited to discuss the list at the December 21 meeting. He believes that the school requests for roof replacement at Lane, wireless updates, AC compressor, and space modifications are on the approval list. He is not sure about the SMART Boards and Copier replacements.

Ms. Bickford said that the School Committee will present its budget proposal to the Finance Committee on the last Thursday in January.

9. Minutes

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes from the November 8, 2011 meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

10. Future Agenda

No one had any future agenda items. Ms. Bickford however, noted that Mr. Ed Gillespie, the first Principal of Bedford High School recently passed away at the age of 99.

11. Adjournment

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn to Executive Session for purposed of discussing the new Superintendent’s contract, at 9:45 p.m., not to re-open .

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

December 13, 2011

Exhibits/Documents

- **FY 2013 BPS Budget Request Salary Impacts**
- **Town of Bedford Use Policies for Athletic Fields and Other Recreational Facilities**
- **Memo from Mr. Coelho regarding donations for School Committee Acceptance dated December 9, 2011**
- **Draft of the minutes from the November 8, 2011 School Committee meeting.**