

OPEN SESSION MINUTES
MINUTEMAN REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
JUNE 27, 2016 6:30 PM
PAUL REVERE ROOM, MINUTEMAN HIGH SCHOOL

Present:

Jeff Stulin, Chair (Needham)	Jennifer Leone (Lancaster)
Carrie Flood, Vice-Chair (Concord)	Jack Weis (Belmont)
David Horton, Secretary (Lexington)	Mary Ellen Castagno (Wayland)
Alice DeLuca (Stow)	Pam Nourse (Acton)
Ford Spalding (Dover)	Sue Sheffler (Arlington)
Vince Amoroso (Boxborough)	
Judy Taylor (Carlisle)	
Dave Manjarrez (Sudbury)	
David O'Connor (Bolton)	

Absent: Sharon Antia (Lincoln); Doug Gillespie (Weston)

14 members present, 2 members absent for the full meeting.

Also present: Ed Bouquillon, Kevin Mahoney, Elizabeth Rozan, Diane Dempsey, Nick Greenhalgh, Mary Ann Williams, Steve Sharek, Linda Hathaway

1. CALL TO ORDER: OPEN SESSION

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no Public Comment.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT, *Jeff Stulin*

The Chair asked for flexibility in the meeting schedule over the next few months, noting that special meetings or changes to meeting dates may come up.

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT, *Ed Bouquillon*

a. Update on Stakeholder Meeting 6.20.16

The Superintendent noted that he did not attend the Stakeholder Meeting and suggested that someone who had attended may wish to report. Mr. Weis reported that from his perspective he thought the meeting was going to be a forum to push Belmont into reconsideration, but instead it consisted of respectful dialogue. He reported that the Belmont Selectmen expressed that if 16 (d) were presented again, the same results would happen, and they would push to prevent any change in the Town Meeting vote.

The member from Arlington expressed that she was disappointed with this turn of events, given the costs involved in a 16 (n) option, especially after Belmont could have withdrawn when the other towns declared.

The member from Dover explained that he heard Belmont's intention to consider withdrawal now, despite that they hadn't planned for this a year ago. The member from Sudbury pointed out his recollection that Belmont Selectman Mark Paolillo had been asked why they were considering withdrawal now, and he said that they went through the process thinking they could reason with other members to right-size the school.

Mr. Weis explained that Belmont appreciates Minuteman as a resource to their students, and that it was never their first choice to consider leaving. He expressed that Belmont town officials expected more resistance to the building project from the other communities. Now that it is clear that nine towns want the school project, they see themselves as the impediment, and are asking how they can get out of the way to let the school be built that the other nine communities clearly want. The decision to want to withdraw now is as a result of how the building vote turned out, he explained.

Ms. Castagno asked about the costs of 16 (n), specifically, who will pay for the Police detail, or the extra hours worked by the Town Clerk. Mr. Mahoney explained that expenses incurred by the towns will be paid for by the District and the estimate is \$100K.

The member from Boxborough explained that there are specific procedures that will be followed, despite the associated costs. From his perspective of the 6.20 meeting, it was clear that Belmont would not change their opinion. He understood that they intended originally to reject 16 (n), if they could withdraw, but given that withdrawal would not be simple, and that a second round of 16 (d) did not make sense, particularly because their position would not change, they agreed to the 16 (n) route. Mr. Weis added that they got the message that an amendment to the Regional Agreement allowing them to withdraw was not a viable path.

The Vice Chair noted that it was helpful to get these perspectives; particularly valuable was knowing that the leadership at the meeting was aware of the ramifications.

The Chair pointed out that the last line on the presented vote language had been left blank. He announced the Administration's suggestion to add **Tuesday September 20, 2016 from Noon-8:00 PM** as the date and time of the election. Additionally, they suggested holding the election at a single polling place in each community. This date and time would minimize costs by not holding a Saturday election, would avoid religious holidays, would allow sufficient time for voters to consider the issue, and would meet both the State requirements and the MSBA deadline. With this information, a motion was made (Flood) and seconded (Leone).

To the question of whether the debt exclusion taken by some towns was still valid, Mr. Mahoney expressed his understanding that it is, and that no additional debt exclusion vote was necessary. Regarding the warrant itself, the Superintendent noted that what was sent out was a draft, and it is not yet ready to be signed by the School Committee. He noted that conversations with Town Clerks have begun, and Mr. Mahoney will hold a meeting with them, hopefully before July 12, to discuss the details and process.

With regard to location, the Superintendent noted that having one location in each town would make it easier to operate and count. The concerns that Belmont's Town Clerk had expressed regarding the proximity to the September primary and the November national election were raised.

Process details were raised as well, and Mr. Mahoney affirmed that he would be meeting with the Town Clerks to review. The member from Stow urged that all Town Clerks be included in this meeting.

The member from Sudbury pointed out that at the 6.20.16 meeting, Jeff Wulfson, DESE Deputy Commissioner had been asked about the capital fee/student, and that he did not have the numbers. The Superintendent noted that this number is set by the Department of Education, and it has not yet been set.

The Vice-Chair pointed out that she had been prepared in the Fall to approve a 16 (n) option, but believes that Town Meeting is an educational process, and that 16 (d) was a necessary step. She added that she is ready now for 16 (n) and any further delays impact credibility as well as funding. She stressed that having approval on the project is essential.

The political question of what resources the District is allowed to allocate for a District Wide Ballot was raised. The Superintendent noted that Mr. Sharek has been in communication with the Office of Campaign Finance, and has material that can be shared with the School Committee on what the rules are. He emphasized that the main point is that public funds or resources cannot be spent to influence the vote. Mr. Sharek explained the distinctions between what one can do as a private citizen vs. what one can't do as a public employee. Ms. Flood noted that one is not giving up free speech, and that letters to the paper as private citizens are possible.

The representative from Sudbury raised a concern about listing out pro and con arguments on the warrant. Mr. Sharek pointed out that Sudbury is the only town in the District that requires this, and expressed his opinion that it would probably be done at the town's expense. The following vote was then taken by roll call:

ACTION 2016 # 51

Moved (Flood) and seconded (Leone)

To authorize debt under MGL Ch. 71, Sec. 16 (n) as follows:

**Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School District
Suggested Form of MSBA Funded Project Vote -- For District-Wide Election**

VOTED: That the Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School District (the "District") hereby appropriates the amount of \$144,922,478 for the purpose of paying costs of designing, constructing and originally equipping a new district school, to be located at 758 Marrett Road, Lexington, Massachusetts, and for the payment of all other costs incidental and related thereto (the "Project"), which school facility shall have an anticipated useful life as an educational facility for the instruction of school children of at least 50 years, and for which the District may be eligible for a school construction grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA"), said amount to be expended at the direction of the School Building Committee. To meet this appropriation the District is authorized to borrow said amount, under and pursuant to Chapter 71, Section 16(n) of the General Laws and the District Agreement, as amended, or pursuant to any other enabling authority. The District acknowledges that the MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need as determined by the MSBA, and any Project costs the District incurs in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the District and its member municipalities; provided further that any grant that the District may receive from the MSBA shall not exceed the lesser of (i) forty-four and three quarters percent (44.75%) of eligible, approved Project costs, as determined by the MSBA, and (ii) the total maximum grant amount determined by the MSBA, and that the amount of borrowing authorized pursuant to this vote shall be reduced by any grant amount set forth in the Project Funding Agreement that may be executed between the District and the MSBA.

The debt authorized by this vote shall be submitted to the registered voters of the District's member towns for approval at a District-wide election in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 71, Section 14D and Chapter 71, Section 16(n) of the General Laws and the District Agreement. The date of such District-wide election shall be **Tuesday September 20, 2016 from Noon-8 PM.**

Arlington	yes	Needham	yes
Acton	yes	Stow	yes
Wayland	abstain	Dover	yes
Belmont	yes	Boxborough	yes
Lancaster	yes	Carlisle	yes
Lexington	yes	Sudbury	no
Concord	yes	Bolton	yes

VOTE: 12 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention (with 14 members present)

5. ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT REPORT, *Kevin Mahoney*

a. Potential Vote: To approve Budget Transfers to Fund the Costs Associated with Conducting a District Wide Election

Mr. Mahoney explained that in preparation of a possible districtwide ballot election, the statute requires that the school district reimburse each member town for all costs associated with conducting the election. It is estimated that the total costs will be at least \$100,000. He further explained that funding for this purpose was not included in the FY17 budget, requiring a vote of the School Committee to transfer funds.

He explained the source from which funds could be transferred, and noted that there will likely be an additional budget transfer request forthcoming. He also noted that a financial report will be presented to the School Committee at the completion of the election process. A motion was made (Flood) and seconded (Leone).

Questions were raised regarding why funds could not be encumbered, the relationship to the E&D fund, and the mechanics of how funds would be reimbursed directly for town expenses. A question also was raised about whether withdrawing towns would be credited back a portion of the remaining \$400K in the Construction Capital account from which the funds are potentially being transferred, and whether the Department of Revenue should be consulted for a ruling. Mr. Mahoney indicated that it was not clear what question he would pose to the Department of, Revenue and noted that all funds get closed out to E&D. The following vote was then taken to authorize the FY17 budget line item transfer listed below:

ACTION 2016 #52

Moved (Flood) and seconded (Leone)

To transfer the sum of \$100,000

from account #01.08.8600 – Interest-Building Project

to account #01.08.1230 – Districtwide Election Expenses

VOTE: 12 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention (with 14 members present)

6. ADJOURNMENT

The Chair reminded members of the July 12, 2016 meeting, noting that this is the meeting where Weighted Voting begins, and the Reorganization of Officers occurs.

In response to a question about what kind of Public Education campaign is being planned relative to the 16 (n) vote, the Superintendent underscored that no public funds can be used in any form to influence the

vote. No staff can be involved. He did note that there are many “friends” of Minuteman who have expressed willingness to be involved. MaryAnn Williams pointed out that there is much good information on the Minuteman website which is available to the public as well.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Rozan
District Assistant

David C. Horton
School Committee Secretary