

OPEN SESSION MINUTES
MINUTEMAN REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
DECEMBER 16, 2014 7:00 PM
PAUL REVERE ROOM, MINUTEMAN HIGH SCHOOL

Present:

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| Jeff Stulin, Chair (Needham) | Kemon Taschioglou (Lincoln) |
| Carrie Flood, Vice Chair (Concord) | Dave Horton (Lexington) |
| Nancy Banks, Secretary (Acton) | Jack Weis (Belmont) (arrived 7:04 PM) |
| Alice DeLuca (Stow) | Mary Ellen Castagno (Wayland) (left 9:50 PM) |
| Ford Spalding (Dover) (left 9:40 PM) | Daniel Mazzola (Lancaster) (arrived 7:15 PM) |
| Cheryl Mahoney (Boxborough) | Doug Gillespie (Weston) |
| Judy Taylor (Carlisle) (left 9:40 PM) | |

Absent: David O'Connor (Bolton), Sue Sheffler (Arlington), Dave Manjarrez (Sudbury)

Others Present: Ed Bouquillon, Kevin Mahoney, Elizabeth Rozan, Christina Laskey (student rep.), Tracey Sierra, Brendan Dutch, Michelle Roche, Connie Maynard

1. CALL TO ORDER: OPEN SESSION

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no Public Comment.

3. STUDENT REPORT, *Christina Laskey*

Ms. Laskey reported on a number of recent activities at the school, including: the Horticulture and Environmental programs, Girls in STEM, Skills USA Leadership Conference, National Honor Society, Horticulture's Holiday Sale, the Senior's Powder Puff Game (which raised funds for American Cancer Society), and Winter Sports.

4. CHAIR'S REPORT, *Jeff Stulin*

a. Follow-up on Letter to Sudbury

The Chair explained that the documents at the table related to this item were provided as informational, and that there would be no discussion or vote.

b. Governance Issues: Remote Participation

The Chair reported that the Chair revised the draft policy on Remote Participation, and received comments from the Wayland Moderator. He also noted that he is not aware of any large regional school district that uses Remote Participation. He explained that his suggestion is to try a restrictive measure, then lift restrictions if it works. He explained that his suggestions were based on conversations from counsel and School Committee members, as well as his own desire not to incur additional costs for the District. With regard to his concern for costs, he read from correspondence received from the Director of Instructional Technology, Annamaria Schrimpf (shown in Attachment A). He also noted concerns about not having the software to deal with Executive Session restrictions, which would cost approximately \$7,000. Ms. Castagno requested a copy of this information, and made a point that she had not been consulted, which was a component of the vote last time. She noted that the remote process works at her place of employment. It was suggested that perhaps her work had the appropriate software, which Minuteman does not have. The Chair explained that he did the best he could to inform/include her in the process, and stressed that there are two issues: one related to providing reasonable accommodation for ADA compliance, and the other related to whether this body wants to have a Remote Participation policy. The Chair noted also that because such a policy would make managing the meeting much more difficult, he would be abstaining from any vote related to this item.

[Mr. Mazzola arrived at 7:15 PM.]

The Chair suggested a motion, which was made (Banks) and seconded (Mahoney) to accept the draft policy developed by the Chair for a one meeting trial at the February meeting. The Committee discussed the general vs. the specifics of the draft, whether this policy would be necessary, whether it has any benefits, and other alternatives for addressing the compliance issues such as car pooling in the spirit of congenial relationships. It was suggested that allowing remote participation improves the Committee's function and that members who are traveling or otherwise indisposed are able to be involved. Whether such a policy would be invoked, whether it works for government bodies with OML compliance issues, and how it works with speaker phones were points raised. It was suggested that the restrictions proposed are an insult to participants; the one-person restriction and the geographic distance were cited as examples of this restrictive nature of the draft. A member offered her opinion that there was no compelling reason for a group this size to use remote participation, that every vote would have to be by roll call, that this would apply to subcommittees as well, and that it takes energy and time away for issues of concern to children. She noted quorum issues, planning in advance, and the general impracticalities of working this into a group this size. Ms. Shrimpf confirmed that the Chair covered all the issues in his review of the questions and answers he read. The following vote was then taken:

ACTION 2014 #134

Moved (Banks) and seconded (Flood)

To move the question and end discussion

Vote: 5 in favor, 7 opposed, 1 abstention (with 13 members present)

This did not pass, and the discussion continued. Ms. Castagno expressed that she is disheartened by the School Committee's discussion. She emphasized that she has a disability, and without this policy, Wayland would not have a voice. She stressed that it is difficult not to take it personally. She also expressed that she, too, does not want to waste time on matters that do not concern the students at the school, but felt this School Committee could not be compared to a government agency. An amendment to the main motion was offered as follows:

Weis Amendment #1

Amendment offered (Weis) and seconded (Gillespie) to accept the original draft developed by Ms.

Castagno for a one meeting trial at the February meeting

Whether the draft document was ready to be rolled out, whether a policy is the preference of the School Committee, separating out the ADA issues from the policy issues, whether it would make sense to have a subcommittee work through the issues and discuss it with other public bodies, and whether it would work with the current dynamics and training level of the School Committee were items discussed. To prevent wordsmithing related to some of the concerns at the table, the Chair pointed out that the draft he proposed is far from perfect, but the question is whether the School Committee wants such a policy or not. The following vote was taken:

ACTION 2014 #135

Moved (Flood) and seconded (Banks)

To move the question on the amendment and end discussion

Vote: 12 in favor, with one member out of the room

This motion passed. The Committee then took a vote on Weis Amendment #1 as follows:

ACTION 2014 #136

Moved (Weis) and seconded (Gillespie)

Amendment to main motion: To accept the original draft developed by Ms. Castagno for a one meeting trial at the February meeting

Vote: 4 in favor, 7 opposed, 1 abstention, and one member out of the room

The amendment did not pass. Ms. Castagno expressed her interest in discussing the matter with the School's attorney. This was discouraged, and she expressed concern that she had no representation for her disability.

It was clarified by general consensus that no one was against accommodating the ADA issue. Expressing concern that perhaps neither version was ready to be rolled out, another amendment was offered as follows:

Weis Amendment #2

Moved (Weis) and seconded (Banks) not to roll out a Remote Participation policy on a trial basis, and instead create a subcommittee with Ms. Castagno to think it through

This was clarified further as follows:

Flood Amendment:

Moved (Flood) and seconded (Banks) to add: “and the Chair will consider other accommodations in the interim”

Concern was raised about who the subcommittee/task force/study group would be, how it would operate, and when they would have the time to do such research. It was clarified that the Policy Subcommittee had spent considerable time researching this issue. It was suggested that the Chair could brainstorm with Ms. Castagno to see how her needs could be accommodated at this point, and a “straw” vote was taken as follows, with the Chair not voting:

- 1.) to see how many were interested in having the School Committee pursue a Remote Participation policy (4 in favor)
- 2.) to see how many were against it (4 against)
- 3.) to see how many were neutral (4 neutral)

Given this result, it was agreed that nothing will happen quickly on this matter. It was also agreed that at the next meeting, the Chair will propose a subcommittee/task force/study group be established to review the issues, do research, and make recommendations. It was also agreed that over the next month, the Chair will discuss accommodations with Ms. Castagno for the January meeting. It was suggested that the research just be done, without establishing a subcommittee or task force. The following vote was taken to close the matter for the time being:

ACTION 2014 #137

Moved (Flood) and seconded (Weis)

To table all motions related to Remote Participation indefinitely

Vote: 12 in favor, 1 abstention

There was a suggestion to reorder the items in the Superintendent’s Report, and with no objections, this was done.

5. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT, *Ed Bouquillon*

a. Superintendent’s Goals: December Progress Report

The Superintendent called attention to materials at the table, and noted that due to the time spent on previous item, this is informational and will be discussed with the Superintendent Negotiations and Evaluation Subcommittee at their next meeting. He called attention to evidence he compiled. He circulated a copy, noting it is available electronically upon request.

b. Professional Development Update

The Superintendent called attention to materials at the table related to a strategic plan underway to improve student enrollment and retention with consultant Mark Perna, of *Tools for Schools*. He reviewed the associated details on cost and collaboration with other schools, and outlined the general plan to establish a professional development team, noting dates that have been scheduled for a series of meetings for this work.

c. DESE’s Proposed Amendments to Regulations for Vocational Technical Education 603 CMR 4.00

The Superintendent gave an update on the status of DESE’s proposed amendments, noting that they were presented to the State Board of Education in November, and that the Public Comment period is now underway. He explained that the Board of Directors of MAVA met and developed comments, which he shared with the Town Managers at their recent meeting. He also noted that he is anticipating holding a Municipal/Legislative Breakfast on February 6, 2015 to discuss these issues further.

A request was made by the Stow representative for a copy of these comments, so that they could be used to raise awareness on the issues, and he agreed to get this to the School Committee.

In response to his request for input, the School Committee discussed a number of specific points in the documents. How these proposed changes alter the way things work specifically with regard to exploratory programs, provisional approval, dates, access for out of district students, admissions, and transition period were some of the issues discussed.

d. Intermunicipal Agreements (Type A and Type C drafts dated 11.17.14)

The Superintendent called attention to the two draft Intermunicipal Agreements included in the packet, and noted that these resulted from the work of the Regional Agreement Amendment Subcommittee, and the group of town managers who met after that group disbanded. A motion was made (Flood) and seconded (Gillespie) to adopt draft Intermunicipal Agreements (Type A and Type C, dated 11.17.14) as templates to be used for “intermunicipal agreements” with non-member communities in the future, with the understanding that such agreements will need to be approved by a majority vote of the full School Committee. That Type C gives preference to members who have left, how it might change the vote for those towns that had voted to “pass over”, and the non-negotiability and non-amendability factors were discussed. A friendly amendment was offered (Spalding) and seconded (Weis) to vote A and C separately. This was accepted, and the following vote was taken:

ACTION 2014 #138

Moved (Spalding) and seconded (Weis)

To vote the Type A and Type C drafts dated 11.17.14 separately

Vote: 12 in favor, 1 abstention

The need for all towns to come to agreement on the Regional Agreement Amendments was emphasized, and the following vote was then taken, relative to Type A:

ACTION 2014 #139

Moved (Flood) and seconded (Gillespie)

To adopt draft Intermunicipal Agreement (Type A dated 11.17.14) as a template to be used for “intermunicipal agreements” with non-member communities in the future, with the understanding that such agreements will need to be approved by a majority vote of the full School Committee

Vote: 12 in favor, 1 abstention

The discussion continued around Type C, specifically related to whether a Type C version was necessary, the recent votes taken in Sudbury, the history and impact of the discussions around the IMAs in Boxborough, the benefits of non-membership, whether these agreements offer an incentive to leave, the risk factors, and the compromise components. The advantages/disadvantages of Type C, caps, the timing with the building project, the need for tools to negotiate these agreements, that the agreements between School Committee would work differently in each town, and that these are templates for agreements, not the actual agreements were points raised. The following vote was then taken:

ACTION 2014 #140

Moved (Flood) and seconded (Gillespie)

To adopt draft Intermunicipal Agreement (Type C dated 11.17.14) as a template to be used for “intermunicipal agreements” with non-member communities in the future, with the understanding that such agreements will need to be approved by a majority vote of the full School Committee

Vote: 9 in favor, 4 opposed

[At 9:25 PM, Mr. Mazzola left the meeting. There were then 12 members present.]

e. Admissions Policy Revision

The Superintendent called attention to the draft language for a revision to the Admission Policy, as a result of the above voted Intermunicipal Agreement templates. He pointed out that reflecting the agreements, this language could be considered “housekeeping” at this point, and that a review of the Admissions policy may come before the School Committee in February or March. The narrow cost advantage of not being a member, that the District is at a major transition point that needs flexibility, and the messiness of the process were points raised. A motion was made (Banks) and seconded (Gillespie) to approve the related Admissions Policy revision, and the following vote was taken:

ACTION 2014 #141

Moved (Banks) and seconded (Gillespie)

To approve the Admissions Policy Revision, related to Intermunicipal Agreements, as presented

Vote: 11 in favor, 1 opposed

f. Principal Search Process

The Superintendent noted that Principal Houle's last day will be close to February 1, and he explained that he has been engaged in appointing an Interim, with the help of an Advisory Committee. He noted that there were 6 internal candidates who applied, and that interviews for 4 finalists are underway. He explained that he anticipates appointing the Interim by this Friday, and that this person will serve through July 1, when the permanent position is filled. He noted other changes in his office, offering congratulations to Brendan Dutch who will be moving on to work at the State House as a Legislative Aide to Plymouth Representative Vinny de Macedo, and that both Rose Cappucci, and Donna Heisler and her husband Bill will be retiring by the end of the year.

g. Review of Proposed School Calendar 2015-16

The Superintendent addressed concerns raised in the draft calendar. He noted that the Union will be looking at the draft, that there are discussions about the school year beginning earlier, and that a second draft will be presented in January for a vote.

h. Update on NEASC Report

The Superintendent called attention to the NEASC report cover letter included in the packet, and noted that the full report is available upon request. He pointed out that in the letter, there is acknowledgement for efforts made to date, as well as highlighted recommendations. He also noted that Minuteman still is in danger of losing accreditation, given the facility issues.

6. SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT, *Ford Spalding*

The Chair of the School Building Committee gave a brief report, noting that he is anticipating numbers prior to the February 6 Legislative meeting. These numbers, which will not be final, will outline options for a new building, a renovation, a new/renovation, and for a non-MSBA project. He pointed out that Minuteman has not yet gone out to the communities to present and discuss these options, and that this is of concern to him, given the tight timeline. He explained that the Joint Communications Subcommittee will develop a communication strategy to facilitate these discussions, as the communities need to hear the information and give feedback. He expressed his opinion that the issues are all about cost.

[At 9:40 PM, Mr. Spalding and Ms. Taylor left the meeting; there were then 10 members present.]

7. ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR FINANCE'S REPORT, *Kevin Mahoney*

a. Review of FY 15 Q1 Expenditure Report and Revolving Fund Report 9.30.14

The Assistant Superintendent called attention to the Q1 Expenditure Report and Revolving Fund Report included in the packet, and noted that in his opinion, there were no surprise concerns. He highlighted and clarified detail about a few specific line items, and explained corrective actions anticipated for the Revolving Accounts. He explained that the Q2 updates will be forthcoming, and at this time, all is tracking well.

[At 9:50 PM, Ms. Castagno left the meeting; there were then 9 members present.]

b. Governor's 9c Cuts

The Assistant Superintendent called attention again to the reduction in Regional Transportation anticipated by the Governor's 9c Cuts. He noted that the 93-75% reimbursement will be reduced to 62%, and that Minuteman has budgeted this at 55%. The Superintendent added that MAVA and MARS are pulling together a fund, with between \$500-1000 from member districts to hire a legal firm to challenge the cuts, and that Minuteman may make a contribution to that fund out of the legal expense line item. There was some discussion about the history of these cuts, and a pause while two members looked up the actual law for wording a motion. The following vote was then taken:

ACTION 2014 #142

Moved (DeLuca) and seconded (Banks)

To direct the Superintendent to write a letter to the Governor urging that the 9c cuts to Regional Transportation be reversed, pursuant to Section 15 of Ch. 15 of the Acts of 2010, to reflect both the language and spirit of the legislation

Vote: Unanimous

Members requested a copy of this letter when it is sent out.

c. Bid Results: Construction Materials

The Assistant Superintendent provided details on the bid for construction materials for the renovation project the students are working on at 22 Mill St. He explained that the contract was awarded to Friend Building Center of Burlington as the low bid, meeting all required specifications. He noted this as informational, and commented that the project involves students from Horticulture, Carpentry, and Plumbing. He also noted that when the project is complete, the property may be considered for rental.

d. Preliminary Status: FY 16 Budget

The Assistant Superintendent gave an update on the FY 16 Budget, referencing and explaining details of the documents included in the packet, specifically the FY 16 estimated Revenue Plan, the FY 16 Preliminary Assessments, and the Budget Summary by Function Code. He explained that the total operating budget is a 1.64% change over last year, and that this is the first budget compiled with the 628 student number in mind. He also explained that there is still more work to do on this, and he anticipates bringing the final recommendations to the Finance Subcommittee at their January 6 meeting.

Given the hour, the following vote was taken:

ACTION 2014 #143

Moved (Flood) and seconded (Gillespie)

To continue the meeting past 10:00 PM

Vote: Unanimous

The Assistant Superintendent continued, noting that the School Bus contract is up for renewal. He noted that he anticipates an increase, as this will be for a 5 year contract. He also explained the changes in the assessment formula for SPED, and that the Town Managers were supportive of the first pass on this budget. The Chair of the Finance Subcommittee added that at the December 2 Finance Subcommittee, the Administration's Executive Team gave an excellent presentation, and the details of this will be presented as part of the Budget Hearing in January.

8. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT, *Dave Horton*

School Committee Evaluation Subcommittee: Survey Results and Next Steps

On behalf of the School Committee evaluation subcommittee, Mr. Horton referenced supplemental material related to the School Committee evaluation, which was distributed at the table. The frustration of OML restrictions was noted as one item that people raised, and previous training on OML was explained. Workshops vs. trainings were briefly discussed, and Mr. Horton noted that it was the Subcommittee's suggestion that they now share the results with a field representative of MASC and ask for comments/recommendations that can be brought back to the full School Committee. He pointed out that this is a cost-free service to members of MASC. It was agreed that this evaluation data was a good start, and that the School Committee was supportive of this plan of action.

9. SECRETARY'S REPORT, *Nancy Banks*

Ms. Banks noted the comments on the minutes, received by Mr. Horton. These were discussed and the following vote was taken:

ACTION 2014 #144

Moved (Banks) and seconded (Horton)

To approve the past Open Session Minutes of 11.18.14, as amended

Vote: 8 in favor, 1 abstention

10. ADJOURNMENT

All business being completed, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Rozan
District Assistant

Nancy Banks
Secretary

ATTACHMENTS TO THE MINUTES OF 12.16.14

- A. Details on Remote Participation read by Chair