

OPEN SESSION MINUTES
MINUTEMAN REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
SEPTEMBER 10, 2014 6:30 PM
PAUL REVERE ROOM, MINUTEMAN HIGH SCHOOL

Present:

Jeff Stulin, Chair (Needham)	Kemon Taschioglou (Lincoln)
Carrie Flood, Vice Chair (Concord)	Dave Horton (Lexington)
Nancy Banks, Secretary (Acton)	Jack Weis (Belmont)
Alice DeLuca, (Stow)	Mary Ellen Castagno (Wayland)
Ford Spalding (Dover)	Daniel Mazzola (Lancaster)
Cheryl Mahoney (Boxborough)	Doug Gillespie (Weston)
Judy Taylor (Carlisle) (arrived 6:43 pm)	Susan Sheffler (Arlington) (arrived 6:32 PM)
Dave Manjarrez (Sudbury)	
David O'Connor (Bolton)	

Others Present: Ed Bouquillon, Kevin Mahoney, Ernie Houle, Bill Blake, Michelle Roche, Elizabeth Rozan, Brendan Dutch. There was an overflow crowd. Those who signed in included: Nancy Pierce, Carol Yelle, Sara Bazydola, DeAnne Dupont, Eugene DiPaolo, Diane Dempsey, Sheila Nagle, Ken Bazydola, Bonnie Polakoff, Geoffrey Grossman, Mary Ann Ham. Dana Ham, Barbara Deveau, Kathleen Smith, Sara Ard, Rich Kelliher, A. Gottschalk, John Goudey, Rick Gottschalk, Bernadette Goudey, Cecil Holifield, Ryan Marsh, Andreas Aluia, Tim Bell, Brant Boudrot, Angelo Butera, Daniel Sweet, Rhonda Monahan, Lisa French.

1. CALL TO ORDER: OPEN SESSION

The Chair opened the meeting at 6:30 PM, noted that the meeting was being recorded by Mr. Manjarrez, and expressed appreciation for the turnout. He suggested that Public Comment be moved to after Item 3b. so that questions might be answered by the Superintendent's presentation. Some concern was expressed that out of respect for those who had shown up, it would be better to follow the agenda as presented; a vote was taken as follows:

ACTION 2014 #85

Moved (Spalding) and seconded (Banks)

To move the Public Comment section of the agenda to after Item 3b

Vote: 11 in favor, 3 opposed, 1 abstention (with 15 members present)

2. EDUCATION PROGRAM PLAN

a. Presentation of Proposed Education Program Plan

The Superintendent gave a presentation, as shown in Attachment A, that outlined the Educational Program Plan (EPP) Overview, the MSBA Feasibility Study EPP Requirements, CVTE Ch. 74 Regulations, Perkins Performance Indicators, Critical Indicators, CVTE Curriculum Frameworks, Massachusetts Career Clusters and Minuteman Programs, and proposed Program Closures (2014-17). He explained that Telecommunications and Marketing would close, that HVAC would become a component of Plumbing, and Welding would become a component of Advanced Manufacturing. He explained the new programs: Advanced Manufacturing and Multimedia Engineering, and explained what these programs are, the state's commitment to these programs, and opportunities in these areas. He then reviewed the Horticulture Framework Overview, and outlined critical indicators, average wages, Minuteman performance, Horticulture Enrollment 2005-14, the program at Minuteman, the current community partnerships, and Massachusetts partnerships in this area.

b. Summary of the Work of the Education Plan Task Force

Jack Weis, Chair of the Education Plan Task Force, summarized the work of the reconvened Task Force. He explained that the charge was to recommend to the full School Committee a menu of vocational and technical education programs that would fit within a 628 student school. He also explained that to be productive, they did not debate the size, but looked at updated enrollment data. He then referred to documents at the table (Attachment B), which outlined the recommended plan, capacity, comparisons, and rationale. He explained the details of the sheet comparing 2013 approved programs with the ones being recommended for 628 students. He then explained that the Task Force considered substituting metal fabrication for horticulture, but this was not approved; they voted to accept the Superintendent's recommendations.

c. Public Comment

In order to accommodate the overflow crowd, many of whom wished to make a Public Comment, the decision was made to move to the Mezzanine area of the building. On short order, the custodial staff rallied to set up the space, under the guidance of the Principal. The Chair explained the parameters of Public Comment, and the following Public Comment was given:

1. Carole Yelle (parent of Carlisle Welding student) expressed her concerns about lack of notification and lack of voice, asked that the School Committee to vote no, and to get input as required by the Open Meeting Law. (Comments included in Attachment C.)
2. Barbara DeVeaux and spouse (parents of Lexington Welding graduate, 2013) spoke of the positive experience her son had at Minuteman and his status as a college student pursuing his field. She extended thanks to all who made this happen for her son. She also spoke of the benefit of this program on a female student who had fewer advantages than her son. She urged the School Committee to consider the next generation of young adults and not to deny them this opportunity.
3. DeAnne Dupont (**Arlington**) expressed her concerns with the way in which the June, 2014 updates to the School Improvement Plan were approved by the School Committee in July, and pointed out that the School Council had not provided input as claimed by the Superintendent. She articulated facts about the 2013-14 School Council Meetings, and emphasized the School Council's role and her opinion of diminished transparency. (Comments included in Attachment C.)
4. Sarah Bazydola (parent of Welding student) explained the excitement and reasons for her son's enrollment at Minuteman. She expressed concerns that her son will not be able to gain certifications, or to finish a program in which he is having success, that parents were not informed about the dismissal of Mr. Ryan in June, and not informed about this meeting and the upcoming vote. She urged that comments expressed be considered before a vote is taken. (Comments included in Attachment C.)
5. Thomas Ferri (member of American Welding Society) spoke of the need for welders, the many opportunities for their employment, and urged maintaining the program.
6. Randall Blakelocke (2011 graduate, Lexington) explained that he is now an apprentice pipefitter, and is proud to be a part of the local union. Alluding to the building boom in Boston and Cambridge, he pointed out that there is a great demand for welders and metal fabricators.
7. Anita Gottschalk (out-of-district parent, Wilmington), spoke of the importance of the Horticulture program from the perspective of being a business owner in this field. She referred to a September 4, 2014 *Patch* article written by School Committee member Dave Manjarrez, and noted that contrary to what was portrayed in the article, the green industry has a great demand for trained people, and is much larger than simply growing plants. (Referenced article included in Attachment C.)
8. Heidi Corton (parent of a senior) pointed out that both Horticulture and Welding programs are necessary to build bridges and to farm locally. She affirmed her understanding that the programs are changing, but urged the School Committee to keep going and include both.
9. Jeff Grossman (ranger, Minuteman National Historic Park) pointed out that while he is a government agent, he is not allowed to give his opinion on the matter before the School Committee, but he shared his experience with some of the Minuteman Horticulture students in their community service projects at the Park. He highlighted their

enthusiasm and eagerness to learn, as well as the importance of kids being out in nature. He expressed appreciation for their work, and noted the importance of invasive plant management to maintain outdoor resources.

10. Bonnie Polokoff (Concord) encouraged parents to make use of the “Stay Put” state law option available to students on IEPs. She also noted that the reality of getting TV/Film/Multimedia type jobs is tougher than portrayed, and her opinion was that people need to get an MFA to get a job in this area.

11. Bernadette Goudey (parent of an out-of-district Horticultural student, Billerica) expressed appreciation to the Superintendent for allowing her son to attend Minuteman. She referenced the *Patch* article, and noted that while she acknowledges that Welding is an important core occupation, there are 31 other cities and towns that offer this program, and suggested that this is why the out-of-district student number in this program is low. She compared this with the few Horticulture program offerings across the state, and pointed out the many skills her son is learning in the Horticulture program. She also referred to costs and suggested that the writer of the article check his numbers. She emphasized that both careers are very important and that to discontinue either would be a loss to students. She encouraged continuing both as a good choice. (Comments included in Attachment C.)

12. Bob Lucite (representing Mass. Flowergrowers) spoke to the need for Horticulture in Massachusetts, and encouraged the leadership to allow this program to grow and prosper.

13. Jacob Littlefield (2011 graduate from Stow) spoke of his experience in the field of Welding, working with people who are masters of the craft. He pointed out that 4 people in the yard he works in are from the Minuteman program.

14. Jim Maxwell (President and Owner, Hub Foundation Construction) pointed out that he employs 49 people in his business, and 46 of them are earning union wages that, including benefits and retirement, amount to \$143,000/year. He emphasized that Minuteman’s program is a good program. Graduates are highly productive and play an important role in the communities. He extended an offer of \$100,000 to fund the equipment for a new Welding shop.

15. Dan DeRocco (Billerica) noted that he has 25 years in the Welding business, and works with 10 Minuteman welders who have earned the D125 certificate through Rich Gallant, and this is an easy pass into the union, which then provides good wages, insurance, and financial freedom. He noted that the program is perfect just as it is.

16. John Goudey (Horticulture student, Billerica) read an email submitted by Jason Crowdle, JC Landscaping Company in Newton/Needham. Mr. Crowdle explained that he was an out of district Watertown student and was able to benefit from the Horticulture program and now operates a landscape company with an annual sales of approximately \$2M, and employs a staff of over 25. He affirmed his support of this program. (Email included in Attachment C.)

17. Andreas Aluia (Horticulture student, Somerville) read an email submitted by Michael R. Kelley, President of the Massachusetts Association of Landscape Professionals. Mr. Kelley, on behalf of the 500 members of this association, expressed support for the essential instruction provided by the Horticulture program and Minuteman. He alluded to national and local numbers associated with this industry, and referenced the ongoing concern for having a qualified workforce. He noted that Minuteman students have joined this industry and have gone on to have successful careers. He urged that the program continue as a pipeline for career-oriented professionals. (Letter included in Attachment C.)

18. A Boxborough 2012 graduate in the Welding Program, working with Jim Maxwell at Hub Foundation, noted that he loves his career. He quoted what he learned from Mr. Ryan: Come to work on time, with your boots tied, and sober, and you’ll have a job for life. He expressed his opinion that it would be a sin to shut down the Welding program.

19. Nick Godfrey (2010 graduate from Watertown) pointed out that Advanced Manufacturing is not a skilled trade, whereas in pipefitting, you need more experience.

20. Robert Ard (employee of Wilson Farm in Lexington) referred to the *Patch* article. He expressed his opinion that School Committee members should be serious about their role, and that the information in the article is false. He urged that there is no place for making fraudulent statements, and that passing them off as fact is shameful.

21. Warrant Ballett (former teacher in the Welding shop) pointed out that you can't build a bridge, a ship, or a tunnel in an Advanced Manufacturing factory. Pure welders are needed to fix and dig.
22. Mike Watese (Arlington parent of a Welding student) explained that he has 30 years of experience in the construction trade, has worked with Mr. Ryan, and is a parent of a student who has loved welding since Middle School. He urged the School Committee to continue the program, and give other students the same opportunity.
23. Dave Manjarrez (Minuteman School Committee member from Sudbury, and author of the *Patch* article) explained that his immigrant father was a welder, and his great grandfather was an **agronomist**, so he has an understanding of both sides. He expressed that he was pleased to know there were over 30 Welding programs in Massachusetts, and that Mr. Maxwell offered \$100,000 to buy welding equipment, as it is very expensive. He urged looking at ways to enhance both programs.
24. Kathy Allen (parent of an out-of-district Horticultural student from Somerville) explained that her son has had an incredible experience at Minuteman, and was fortunate in landing a summer job at the National Park Service. She can't imagine what he'd do if he was denied the opportunity to attend this program. She pointed out that if a program is not available in their home district, they can apply to a program as an out-of-district. She emphasized that out-of-district students have a right to be here.
25. Dana Ham (former welder, Minuteman graduate of 1999) expressed that he was appalled at the article in the *Patch*. He pointed out that it's clear that some School Committee members don't consider **what's** right for kids, and have a personal agenda. He urged that the selection of School Committee **members** should be made more carefully, and that issues on the School Committee itself need to be addressed.
26. Matt Kelley (2007 graduate, Lexington) explained that after graduating from Minuteman, he went on to Mass. Maritime. He explained that he is a welder, uses this skill in his current work, and owes his success to Minuteman.
27. Anthony Adams (2013 graduate, Arlington) noted that he works at a construction company in Allston. He pointed out that both machinists and welders require years of training. These are true skills that require thinking outside the box, and offered his opinion that the programs can't just be merged.
28. George Marsh (2014 graduate, Concord) expressed his opinion that welding is a true skill, and that it would be a crime to close the shop. He urged the School Committee to please keep it open.
29. Angelo Butera (sophomore Horticulture Program, Needham) expressed his opinion that the *Patch* article was appalling. He noted that there are hundreds of jobs in the Horticulture field that also require skills in many areas, including plant identification. He pointed out that the industry is growing, and it **cannot** be characterized as "two schmucks in a truck".

The Public Comment period ended, and the group flowed enmasse back to the Paul Revere Room for the next item. Appreciation was extended to the Custodial Staff and to the Minuteman students who helped with setting up chairs.

d. Motion, Deliberation, and Vote

A motion was made (Spalding) and seconded (DeLuca), as listed on the agenda:

To accept the Education Program Plan as presented by the Superintendent and as recommended by the Education Program Plan Task Force

One member clarified that the vote refers to 16 programs as shown on the top sheet of Attachment B, referred to earlier. Another member expressed that it was great hearing about the school and its value to work life. It was pointed out that there had been a request at the Public Comment period to explain exactly the vote that the Education Plan Task Force took. The Chair of the Education Plan Task Force explained that there were two votes taken on 9.2.14:

- 1.) The first vote was on a motion made to substitute Metal Fabrication for Horticulture, and with 4 members of the Task Force present, 2 voted in favor of it, and 2 were opposed. As a tie vote, it did not pass.

2.) The second vote was to accept the Superintendent's recommendation as presented (16 programs as listed on the top sheet of Attachment B). 2 voted in favor, 1 was opposed, and 1 abstained.

The Chair of the Education Plan Task Force also stated that he thought saying that the HVAC program would become a part of the Plumbing program and that the Welding program would become part of Advanced Manufacturing overstated the degree to which the eliminated programs were being incorporated into the other programs. He stated that he felt it was more accurate to say that element of the eliminated programs would be covered in the other programs.

The School Committee Chair explained that the Task Force does not have the authority to determine the ultimate outcome. Their goal was to explore the issues and make a recommendation to the full School Committee.

A request to clarify exactly what the vote means for current students was also made. The Superintendent explained that no student currently in the Welding program would be negatively impacted, and will complete the program entered. Regarding the details of the State Frameworks, he pointed out that he can't articulate the details at this time, but that Minuteman folks have been visiting programs. Those who visited the Blackstone program earlier in the day, including Michelle Roche, Ernie Houle, and Ford Spalding, spoke of what they observed and how the program works in that school. Michelle explained the majors; Ernie spoke from his experience as a welder, and pointed out that many of the students from Upton are getting co-op placements in Waltham or Woburn, and that as Minuteman moves into the 21st century, students can take advantage of the proximity of those placements as well. He pointed out that Blackstone and other schools are trying to retrofit their programs, while Minuteman's program will be ahead of the curve in its design. In response to a question, he confirmed that there are 4-5 schools going in the same direction with Advanced Manufacturing. The certification process and equipment investment were also discussed.

Ford spoke about the equipment, the number of females he observed, and about welding being connected to metal fabrication and machining. He also urged that as the details are developed, the Welding Department needs to participate in the process.

Appreciation was extended to all the speakers for what they shared that enhanced learning about application to real work settings. In response to a question about whether teachers had been invited to the Task Force meetings, it was pointed out that while they were not formally invited by the Task Force, there was a broad representation of faculty present. In response to a question, the Superintendent pointed out that DESE no longer recognizes Welding as a "stand alone" program, but that the Frameworks call it Metal Fabrication and Joining. It was pointed out that the School Committee hasn't seen these Frameworks. The Superintendent explained that the Frameworks are listed on the DESE website, and they were just completed at the end of July; the School Committee hasn't met since then until this evening. He also pointed out that the vote is on the Education Program Plan, not on the curriculum. Another question arose about hour requirements for certification, and it was pointed out that there is not enough information at this time.

Another question related to why Minuteman got rid of the machine shop they once had. The Superintendent pointed out that this was before his time, and he did not know. A question was raised about how the process for implementing the Blackstone Model would work. The Superintendent explained that he has meetings scheduled with both faculty and students. He also noted that relevant materials will be posted on the School Building website. Another comment was made that the School Committee might like to be more involved in the design.

It was pointed out that programs need to be promoted, and that schools don't have to accept all out-of-district students who apply. It was pointed out that Blackstone Valley turned away 300 students, as there was not enough room. It was also noted that the Education Program Plan relates to a new school, anticipated to be built in 2019-20. Future orientation was urged. It was noted that MSBA was anticipating Town Meeting approval in 2016, or Minuteman will be taken off the list after being on it for 7 years.

Additional points made included that the new configuration presents broader possibilities and exposure to 21st century concepts, as well as integrating new space and resources to evolve the programs; the fact that the building needs to be fixed, and that there are the pressures of size. Hearing the good things about Minuteman was appreciated, as was hearing about the need for people to be agile workers in a changing environment that offers a variety of experiences.

To a large audience, it was pointed out that it was a pleasure to hear about the success of students. A member urged people to talk to their friends and neighbors and tell them about Minuteman. An opinion was offered that instead of the funds offered earlier, it would be more valuable if people walked into Board of Selectmen meetings and expressed support for Minuteman.

In response to a specific question about whether teachers in the Welding program were involved in the decision-making process, the Superintendent explained that they were not involved, as the decision involved him and his team over the summer.

In response to questions about MSBA's role in the Education Plan and funding for equipment, the Superintendent explained that they did not determine the Education Program Plan, and that the line item for furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E) is a component of all MSBA projects, and is never adequate.

The Task Force Chair pointed out that programming decisions are not easy ones, and he appreciates the heartfelt sentiments expressed. He pointed out that a choice has to be made, and there are many who could fill the room, specifically a group of supporters of programs that are up for consideration, or taxpayers in member towns. He noted that there is a huge cadre of people who wonder why they should shoulder the cost of educating a high school student outside of the district. He also pointed out that after the Task Force looked at enrollment data that reflects trends, he had voted for the substitute motion, and abstained from the vote on the program plan.

The member from Lincoln was thrilled to see the outpouring of commitment to Minuteman education. He urged looking at things more optimistically, and highlighted recent action in Advanced Manufacturing, interest in vocational technical schools, the development of frameworks, and real money coming from industry to support this perspective.

The member from Dover reiterated that forward thinking is needed, and he referred to the Tesla factory for a view of the process in engineering robotics and the development of education reform as additional positive developments.

A motion was made (Castagno) to move the question. The Chair explained that a 2/3 (11 members) majority vote is needed for this to happen, and the following vote was taken:

ACTION 2014 #86

Moved (Castagno)

To move the question and end debate

Vote: 12 in favor, 1 opposed, 3 abstentions (with 16 members present)

The vote on the main motion was then taken as follows:

ACTION 2014 #87

Moved (Spalding) and seconded (DeLuca)

To accept the Education Program Plan as presented by the Superintendent and as recommended by the Education Program Plan Task Force

Vote: 10 in favor, 5 opposed, 1 abstention (with 16 members present)

The list of 16 programs recommended and approved is found as Attachment D.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Rozan
District School Committee Assistant

Nancy Banks
Secretary

ATTACHMENTS TO THE MINUTES OF 9.10.14

- A. Ed Bouquillon's Power Point Presentation: Recommended Program Plan
- B. Task Force Report Sheets Outlining the Recommended Program Plan
- C. Public Comments Submitted for Inclusion
- D. Program Plan Recommended to and Approved by the School Committee