

Date Approved/Released: 5/4/17

Date Approved/Hold: \_\_\_\_\_  
School Committee Chair: Laurie Murphy

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 2017  
MURDOCK HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

1. **Call to order:** 6:01 P M.

Present: Janet Corbosiero, Dawn Fronte, Larry Murphy, Felicia Nurmsen  
Steven Haddad, Superintendent, Richard Ikonen-Business Manager

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

3. **Citizen Questions and/or Comments:** None

4. **Correspondence and Announcements:** The District Attorney's office is sponsoring a Safety Forum on the opioid use and abuse crisis on May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:00 PM in the MMHS Auditorium.

5. **Student Representative:**

Chloe Lawrence reported the High School Student Council was recognized with the Gold Council of Excellence Award for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time at the statewide MASC Conference; only 13 schools statewide received this distinction. They also received the National Gold Council of Excellence. A delegation is at the Spring CDMASC Regional Conference; Aidan Provost is completing his year as Regional Secretary. Michaela Benedict is running for Vice President for the '17-18 school year. Michaela and Ms. Rondeau will attend the National Association of Student Councils in Derry, NH in June. Ms. Rondeau has been chosen to present a workshop this year. The Middle School Dance is on Friday, April 14<sup>th</sup>. She reviewed the sports schedule.

6. **Student Recognition: Recognitions** are scheduled for April 27<sup>th</sup>. Blue Devil Cool Award (*1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the month*)

D. Fronte moved to move all of the new business listed under Item 10 to right now.  
Second by F. Nurmsen. Approved 4-0-0.

10. **New Business:**

- a. Alumni Banquet: Fran Murphy, Murdock Alumni Association, gave the history and significance of the Alumni Banquet. He noted the event has seen low participation in recent years and explained how the 'no shows' affect the funding for the dinner. He reviewed the activities at each event. He wanted to impress the importance of the 3 days of graduation activities to today's kids and asked everyone who signs up to attend. The information will be in the Courier this week. He asked the graduating classes to make donations to scholarship fund so it can keep it going. L. Murphy agreed, noting the district must sell it to alumni as the way to fund the scholarships and that the weekend is the community's way of celebrating the students' accomplishments. The Alumni Banquet is unique to Winchendon. Teachers and Josh Romano are promoting the

graduation weekend activities. S. Haddad is kicking off the Wall of Fame at the Banquet to highlight graduate's accomplishments and successes.

- b. Autism Awareness-April is Autism Awareness Month. Suzanne Michel, Assistant Director of Pupil Services, explained what it is and how it impacts our district. The disorder affects 12% of students on IEP's in district. She explained the steps and measures taken to determine the services that best serve those needs. At the committees' April 27<sup>th</sup> meeting, Ms. Jamie Hobbs, the ALL Room Teacher at Memorial School, will present teaching highlights used to support students with autism. F. Nurmsen stressed the importance of inclusion, noting there are companies who target those students with the expectation that they will succeed in the workplace and lead productive independent lives. L. Murphy commended the teachers who work within that population, striving for students to reach their potential. Suzanne Michele noted she has been working to create a Life Skills curriculum.
- c. Community Eligibility Provision - S. Haddad reported this food program this year is too costly, so the committee will not need to discuss this year.

**7. Superintendent Report:**

Out of State Field Trip- D. Fronte moved to approve the Pre-kindergarten trip to The Inn at East Hill, Troy, NH. Second by F. Nurmsen. Approved 4-0-0.

**Business Office Report:** None

**8. Teaching and Learning Highlights:**

Therese Packard, Family and Consumer Science, teaches students life skills and how to become independent adults. She is known as "The Mother of Murdock" and has taught for 21 years. The curriculum includes Foods and Culinary Arts, Early Childhood Education lifelong skills that can be taught in that environment. She explained the benefits of the program, stressing they transcend to other academic areas and life out of the school setting. Students can also earn college credits at MWCC. Committee members noted financial literacy, co-teaching, small business management, interdisciplinary work, social skills, positive school climate through service, environmental awareness and career preparation as course benefits. They agreed that it is a strong, helpful and supportive program for the students, stressing 'these skills translate into the workplace and into college'.

J. Romano presented a project supervised by the Art teacher in which students created a city, to scale, with recycled materials; he showed the trailer of the movie being made.

**9. Old Business:**

- a. Montachusett Regional Vocational School Charter Review - The Montachusett Regional Vocational School Committee met last week and voted the request down. Winchendon's Representative, Burt Gould spoke against the opening the charter for review. The Winchendon Public School Committee will follow up with Mayor Hawke to see if Gardner, Narragansett and Fitchburg want to move forward. F. Nurmsen and L. Murphy, Montachusett Regional Vocational School sub-committee, will attend the Montachusett Regional Vocational School meeting and report to the School Committee.

Representatives will also meet with Montachusett Regional Vocational School Superintendent, Dr. Shelia Harrity to open a dialogue. R. Ikonen noted the contract is in effect indefinitely. The committee discussed the pros and cons of the charter and proposed changes. They agreed the admission process needs to be less competitive and more collaborative, and that Montachusett Regional Vocational School should stick to its' mission when it incorporated, and not go into things it was not chartered for originally.

- b. Budget Review - The FY'18 Budget Public Hearing is scheduled for April 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM in the Town Hall Auditorium. S. Haddad stressed the need to offer competitive services to keep students in district and to fulfill the 5-year plan to be a Level 1 school in 5 years. He explained how the decrease of Chapter 70 funding combined with increased operating costs created the budget deficit, adding the building and maintenance projects cannot be put off any longer.

S. Haddad reviewed the three proposed budgets, the DESE recommendation from the District Accountability Report and the upcoming NEASC review. Consolidating schools in district was also discussed; the state recommended the district create an ad-hoc committee to talk about the future if declining enrollment continues. The committee agreed the district needs long term solutions and needs to show voters what they will get for the money and to be transparent.

- c. DESE District Review Report 2017- S. Haddad reviewed the DESE recommendations and explained the Strategic Plan, the Improvement Plan for the District and the School Improvement Plans. The Strategic Plan will be in place for the 2017-18 school-year.

**10. Citizens Questions and Comments:** None

**11. Consideration of Minutes of Previous Meetings Not Yet Approved or Released:**

- a. School Committee Regular Meeting-Thursday, March 23, 2017-D. Fronte moved to accept and release. Second by L. Murphy. Approved 3-0-1. J. Corbosiero abstained.
- b. Tri-Board Meeting, February 27, 2017 - D. Fronte moved to accept. Second by L. Murphy. Approved 3-0-1. J. Corbosiero abstained.

**12. Questions and Comments by Members:** The committee has a Joint Meeting with the Board of Selectmen on April 19<sup>th</sup>. S. Haddad will present the budget; the budget sub-committee will meet to discuss the presentation and meet with the other committee members in groups of two.

**13. Other:** None

**14. Future Agenda Items:**

- a. Monty Tech Representative Update
- b. FY18 budget
- c. Autism Awareness-Jamie Hobbs - April 27, 2017
- d. Rearrange the Agenda - D. Fronte

15. **Executive Session:** None

16. **Adjournment:** 7:51 P.M. L. Murphy moved to adjourn. Second by F. Nurmsen. Approved 4-0-0.

Respectfully submitted: Barrie E. Martins, School Committee Recording Secretary