



Date Approved/Released: 10-4-18

Date Approved/Hold: _____

School Committee Chair: Gregory A. Davis

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Thursday, July 19, 2018
2nd Floor - Town Hall Auditorium

1. Call to order: 6:00 pm/ Pledge of Allegiance

Present: Greg Vine, Dawn Fronte, Larry Murphy, Roann Demanche, Felicia Nurmsen (Abs)
Richard Ikonen, Acting Superintendent/Business Manager

2. Audio/Video Disclosure- Barrie Martins
3. Citizen Questions and/or Comments: None
4. Student Representative Report - None
5. Student/Staff Recognition: None
6. Teaching and Learning Highlights: None

G. Vine introduced the new school committee member Roann Demanche. He thanked her for volunteering her time and experience to the school district and community.

7. New Business:

a. Introduction of new Administrators:

- i. Murdock High School, Assistant Principal, Charlie Keene reviewed his academic and professional background. He stated that he is really excited to be working in Winchendon and is looking forward to impacting the students in the high school. L. Murphy welcomed him, noting one of their brainstorming sessions. G. Vine commented that all of his questions were answered by the information on the whiteboard from one session.
- ii. Dean of Students at Toy Town Elementary, Joanne Forsythe reviewed her background, including her 4 years at Memorial School. From Leicester, she currently lives in town with (2) children in the school system. She explained what her position entails, noting it is focused on the behavioral system, including PBIS, Tier 2 and 3 behavioral interventions.

b. Parent/Student Handbooks:

The documents were emailed earlier this week. Thad King reviewed the revisions, including the tobacco and vaping policy. Discussion included the procedure followed for infractions and possible involvement with the police and courts. L. Murphy suggested an addendum be considered if current policy is not effective. D. Fronte noted two policies regarding this matter need to be voted on tonight to add to the handbook. T. King stated that going forward he intends to have the School Psychologist be involved. He also stressed the importance of consistent enforcement. Because the committee needs to add the approved bullying and tobacco policies to the handbooks, L. Murphy moved to table Agenda Item 7b, Parent/Student Handbooks, until the August 16th meeting. The motion was seconded by R. Demanche. Approved 4-0-0.

c. Athletic Fee's:

G. Vine reviewed the user fees, including the exceptions. Students/families on free/reduced lunch can apply for a waiver or be put on a payment plan. L. Murphy stressed he wants to make sure that no student is denied the chance to play due to a financial situation. T. King noted students are included in any school activity as long as they are making some effort to pay. L. Murphy asked the administration to reach out to them. D. Fronte noted that Athletic Director Jenna Whitaker tracks payment and makes sure kids can participate. R. Demanche suggested the school committee receive a report stating the total user fees that are not paid by the end of the school year and use this data when considering user fees in future years. The fee schedule has not changed in 4 years. D. Fronte moved to accept the fees as issued by the Director. The motion was seconded by L. Murphy. Approved 4-0-0.

d. Sub-Committee Assignments:

L. Murphy moved to table #7d, Sub-Committee Assignments, until the retreat on August 16th. Second by R. Demanche. Approved 4-0-0.

8. Consent Agenda:

a. Field Trips: None

b. Minutes: None.

L. Murphy moved that the minutes (6/21/18 & 6/28/18) they (the committee) received from B. Martins in an email on June 29th be tabled until the August 16th meeting. Second by D. Fronte. Approved 4-0-0.

9. Superintendent/Business Office Report:

a. R. Ikonen reported that Steve Haddad confirmed by telephone and letter that he will return to work on July 30th.

b. Summer Programs:

Memorial has completed its 2nd week; there were some issues with the children being on the bus longer than desired due to having only 1 bus for the entire route. Some parents have

opted to drive their children to and from the school. Adjustments have been made to ensure timely drop-offs. One student was dropped off early with no adult/guardian at home; the matter has been rectified.

- c. Murdock Middle School has 56 students who did not complete the Summit Learning Program during the school year; 31 have completed the program to date, and all will complete it by the end of the summer school session. J. Vezina noted that the MMS Summer School was not a priority or funded in recent years. She presented data, from 2015 to 2018, that showed a pattern of students who have gone onto 9th grade not as prepared as they should be. Expectations have been raised and students must attend summer school if necessary to complete the school year's program. G. Vine emphasized that summer school is not a punishment and that the district is making sure the students have the education they need to function at the next grade level. J. Vezina noted the students understand they will now be held accountable and will not be moved forward with failing grades. The administration team started looking at students in February to determine who was not on track for completing the program. There were several meetings with parents, learning plans set up and time set aside after school to help students. All students required to attend summer school have attended, attendance is closely tracked, and arrangements made for those away on vacation or camp. L. Murphy noted the philosophy of ensuring that every student who moves on to high school demonstrates they have the skills and knowledge base to be successful is a complement to the work the middle school is trying to do. He also noted it isn't unusual to have kids in summer school. Renee Eldridge, resident and parent, asked for the Public Citizens Questions and/or Comments be at the end of each meeting on the agenda so questions raised during the presentations may be addressed. She requested the information J. Vezina distributed; L. Murphy offered his copy. Ms. Eldridge stated that parents want to be supportive, but they are not getting answers to their questions. The ad-hoc committee has been formed but has not met. Ms. Eldridge asked how the summer school was funded, noting there were no funds available in past 2 year. L. Murphy stated that information will be requested, verbatim from parents' questions, from legal counsel and an update provided. Ms. Eldridge stated that F. Nurmsen had asked the matter to be added to the July agenda.

10. Update of Budget Closing:

- a. Assistant Business Manager Search-6 applicants were interviewed; they have the background in municipal or school finance. R. Ikonen will reach out to the top candidate tomorrow.
- b. R. Ikonen reported the FY19 budget has been entered into MUNIS and posted by the Town Accountant. The reclassifications the committee signed tonight will close FY'18. Encumbrances will be posted by the Town Accountant: the district is in the black by approximately \$20,000 which will go back to Free Cash when the municipal books are closed.
- c. Grants: R. Ikonen noted that grants close on each individual schedule; they are reconciled and submitted according to regulations. The FY17 End-of Year report is taking longer than expected; he is still working with the Abraham Group and plans to file the report by the end of July.

11. Sub Committee Report: D. Front reviewed the changes to the following five policies:

- a. Instructional Materials – File IJ – Added Gender Identity and Orientation and a legal reference.
- b. Bullying Prevention – File JICFB - Needs an entire update to MASC guidelines and added to the handbooks; it is very outdated.
- c. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Use by Students Prohibited-File JICH- Needs entire policy update to include vapor e-cigarettes, marijuana, steroids, and any controlled substances. It includes the screening tool the Guidance Counselors will use: it will be posted in the handbooks and website.
- d. Public Complaints – File KE – Complaints about school personnel will be fully vetted; they must be submitted in writing, and all anonymous complaints will be disregarded.
- e. Relations with Parent/Booster Organizations – File KBE – ‘Booster’ added to the policy and a legal reference.

L. Murphy moved to accept the five policies as amended. Second by R. Demanche.
Approved 4-0-0.

12. Old Business:

- a. Summit Learning Update- R. Ikonen, G. Vine, L. Murphy and Murdock Middle School Principal Jessica Vezina participated in a tele-conference with the district attorneys. The discussion revolved around issues regarding the Summit Learning Program (SLP). He read the synopsis of the discussion; a transcript of the discussion was included. The SLP and Winchendon School District (WSD) are in compliance with online privacy practices. The SLP privacy statute provides greater privacy protection than those provided by Massachusetts. The SPL should be included as a ‘school official’ in student handbooks and through the district’s annual FERPA notice. The School Committee cannot implement or suspend curriculum decisions. The attorneys felt it was unnecessary for the district to get parental signature for students under the age of 13 in the SPL or any online curriculum program. L. Murphy reported the district is acting within the legal laws pertaining to online programs and curriculum; it is within the prevue of the Superintendent and the Principal Designee. This response should answer all the questions presented.

Renee Eldridge thanked them for their efforts. She questioned naming the SPL as a school official. Discussion included whether the platform is an employee or vendor, and any access to students’ information this could allow. She has concerns about her daughter’s information being stored at Summit and any information connected to a student. The use of the student ID number was explained. L. Murphy stated the district parties involved are satisfied the information will not be compromised. He noted the district can’t give a 100% guarantee the files won’t be hacked but everything within reason has been done. R. Demanche reported the state only receives one identifier; the process has to be certified annually. This does not give any vendor or contracted service access to the information.

R. Eldridge reiterated her concerns regarding the SPL being designated as a school employee, stressing some parents still have concerns about student information being shared. J. Vezina stated the SPL agreement only receives students' data that 'may be provided by the school district'. The WSD only provides data to track each student. No other data is provided. That was a conscious decision that we (the district) made. G. Vine urged parents to forward by email to himself or J. Vezina any other concerns or questions. Upon request, the time line for the ad-hoc committee going forward will be determined. F. Nurmsen is the school committee member.

b. Superintendent Evaluation –The Superintendent is not present; no presentation.

c. School Committee Retreat:

The retreat is scheduled for August 16 from 4:00-8:00 pm at The Winchendon School. Committee members should email G. Vine with specific items for the agenda. The request to consider moving the Public Comments/or Questions will be included.

c. Interim Superintendent Search Update:

D. Fronte reported the committee had their first meeting; they will pick 6 candidates for interviews and then bring 3 candidates to the school committee. The search committee's next meeting is Tuesday, August 24th. The committee hope to present the finalist for the August 16th retreat.

13. Future Agenda Items:

- a. Interim Superintendent Interviews
- b. Superintendent Evaluation

14. Committee Member Comments:

The School Committee Retreat is on August 16th from 4:00-8:00 pm at The Winchendon School. A special meeting will be scheduled for the Superintendent Interviews, possibly on Thursday, August 9th. R. Demanche noted she looks forward to catching up.

15. Executive Session. 7:17 pm L. Murphy moved to go into Executive Session for Reason #2, to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel, or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel. Second by D. Fronte. D. Fronte – Aye; L. Murphy – Aye. R. Demanche – Aye; G. Vine. Approved 4-0-0.
L. Murphy moved to amend the motion to return to Open Session for the sole purpose of adjourning. Second by D. Fronte. D. Fronte – Aye; L. Murphy – Aye. R. Demanche – Aye; G. Vine. Approved 4-0-0.

15. Adjournment: Called after Executive Session Completion

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

List of Documents and Exhibits used:

- Athletics' User Fee Schedule
- Policies:
 - Instructional Materials – File IJ
 - Bullying Prevention – File JICFB
 - Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Use by Students Prohibited-File JICH
 - Public Complaints – File KE –
 - Relations with Parent/Booster Organizations – File KBE