



Date ~~Approved~~ / Released: 10-17-19

Date Approved/Hold: \_\_\_\_\_

School Committee Chair: *[Signature]*

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, July 11, 2019

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor - Town Hall Auditorium

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Call to Order:

School Committee Members Present: Greg Vine (Chair), Larry Murphy (Vice-Chair), Felicia Nurmsen, Roann Demanche, Joan Landers (Superintendent), Seth Signa (absent)

Chair Greg Vine announced the audio-video disclosure process to the public.

3. Citizen Questions/Comments: None

4. Student Representative Report: None

5. Student Recognition: Beginning in September

6. Teaching and Learning Highlights: None

7. Superintendent's Report:

- a. Superintendent Landers gave the school committee an update on the Community Eligibility Report (CEP). Section 104(a) of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Act) amended section 11(a)(1) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to provide an alternative that eliminates the need for household applications for free and reduced-price meals in high-poverty LEAs and schools. This alternative, which is now part of the NSLP, is referred to as the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).

She spoke to other superintendents in the area about the program as well as the district's food services director about Winchendon's eligibility for the program. There is no clear prediction that the program would be advantageous to the district. At this time, due to the transitions in the business office, it was suggested that the school department wait a year to see if this program would be beneficial to our district and if our percentage rating increases. DESE will also work with us in the new school year so we can fully understand the impact on Winchendon Public Schools.

- b. Superintendent Landers informed that committee that she spoke to Commissioner Riley at the MASC conference. She spoke of the sense of urgency in Winchendon due to DESE's involvement for a decade in the district. Commissioner Riley offered to visit the Winchendon Public Schools in the coming year.

Superintendent Landers updated the committee on the Growing Places project and the freight farm proposal.

- c. Superintendent Landers and Dr. Landman met with representatives from DESE and discussed the district and school turnaround plans. The representatives felt that the developed plans would make a difference in the education of our students.
- d. Superintendent Landers discussed a meeting that she had with representatives from North County Pop Warner. At the meeting, participants were informed about the issues with the football field, and the work needed to be completed before district students can use the field in the coming season. Superintendent Landers discussed that the district would contract with a vendor to use cameras to go under the field to determine the cause of irrigation problems. North County has a temporary home at the Clark YMCA and will use their football field if not able to use Murdock's field.

The Superintendent informed the school committee that pop warner would be responsible for providing bathroom facilities and trash pick-up. North County would have to carry liability insurance in case a participant is injured during practices and games. No additional security measures would be needed because of the age of the students. Mr. Murphy said that if the response to the request is no say no. The superintendent said she held the meeting to get all the specifics from the pop warner organization and relayed that she wanted to allow the representatives the opportunity to present their request.

Mr. Vine asked if the superintendent if she needed a vote, she said the vote was not necessary. The superintendent would be the contact person for the district.

Superintendent Landers informed the school committee that Commissioner Riley has discontinued the approval process for the use of Blizzard Bags (Extended Learning Days), so the district does not need to pursue forming a subcommittee to explore this option.

### 8. Business Office Report:

a. Financial Report: Superintendent Landers spoke of the transfers and re-classes that need to be processed through the town. The district closed the FY-19 in the black, funds will be returned to the town. Grant funding that was to be used during the school year to close out previous grants. The district continues to aggressively search for a business manager and explore different finance models and whether there is a way to consolidate financial operations with the town. Well the search continues for a business manager, the district will pursue sharing a business manager with another district.

### 9. Policy Sub-Committee: 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: None

## 11. Old Business:

### a. School Committee Retreat

The school committee discussed and decided to hold the retreat on August 1<sup>st</sup> at the Winchendon School, if the facility is available from 4:00-7:00 pm.

### b. Charting the Course – No discussion

## 12. New Business:

### a. School Committee Reorganization

The school committee decided to move forward with the school committee reorganization process because 4 out of 5 members were present at the meeting. Mr. Vine informed the school committee that he would be willing to continue as chair, but he wants to allow others to assume this role if someone is interested. The committee entertained nominations for Chair of the Winchendon School Committee. Discussion of the motion took place. Mr. Murphy asked Mr. Vine why he would be interested in stepping down as chairperson. Mr. Vine stated that he would be more than willing to continue in this position.

Larry Murphy nominated Greg Vine for chair for the 2019-2020 school year; Felicia Nurmsen seconded the motion. Vote: 3-3 unanimous.

Greg asked for nominations for vice-chair of the committee. Mrs. Demanche nominated Mr. Murphy for the position. Vote: 4-4 unanimous.

### b. School Committee Meeting Schedule for FY2020

Mr. Murphy suggested the committee keep August 1 and 15<sup>th</sup> on the schedule, but suggested that the committee discuss the meeting calendar at the retreat. After the discussion, the committee decided to eliminate August 15<sup>th</sup> as a meeting date.

The school committee asked if the student handbooks would be ready for the August 1<sup>st</sup> retreat. Mr. Murphy requested a summary page of any changes to the handbooks.

### c. School Committee Member Contact Information

Mrs. Hendricks asked members to email her with any changes to their contact information.

## 13. Future Agenda Items:

### a. Capital Planning Committee

### b. Health Center Overview September 5, 2019 tentative

## 14. Committee Member Comments

School Committee member Mr. Murphy stated that he would like to hear from the students. Students were at the school committee meeting to support their school. There is a lot of concerns in the community through Facebook discussion. Mrs. Demanche stated that she would like to hear from Mr. King. Mr. Murphy said that he would like to hear from the students to get their perspective.

Mr. King informed the school committee that he and Ms. Rondeau met with the student council officers from the senior class because there was concern about who would be their class advisors. While meeting earlier, the students asked if they could come and speak at the school committee meeting to support their school. Mr. King addressed teacher turnover and informed the committee that the administration is working very diligently to hire staff since the close of the school year. He is happy to report that the administration and search committees were impressed by the high quality of candidates for each of our positions. He stated that change can be scary but brings with it opportunities, he is very excited about the coming year.

Mr. Vine stated that there has been a fair amount of discussion about the Mass Core requirements. He asked Mr. King if he had been contacted by any parents about what this means or vice versa. Mr. King reported that no parents had reached out to him to inquire about Mass Core. As part of the high school turnaround plan, the school staff would talk to parents, students, and the community to receive their input. He stated that it was important to be inclusive of all our stakeholders and to be thoughtful of what we are doing for our students. He spoke about the need to assemble a school site committee to address the need for a schedule change. Mr. Vine spoke of the stringent requirements of Mass Core. Mr. King spoke of the need for higher expectations for our students and the need to hold high expectations for ourselves. We are in this together, students, staff, and the community. We have to step up the expectations and what we know about students is that they will always rise to the occasion and step up.

Mr. King stated that it is incumbent on us as a district to communicate with parents to increase involvement. We need qualitative results to determine how we are progressing in this area. Mrs. Nurmsen spoke of the need for over-communication. Mr. King we need to all pull in the same direction.

Mr. Vine invited the students from the high school to engage in a conversation with the school committee. The students were asked if they had any concerns and whether they felt comfortable addressing the committee. High school senior, Hannah Demanche spoke about the article in the Winchendon Courier and how the students present at the meeting are not feeling good about senior year. She said that whoever wrote the article and information did not have the students' back. Hannah reported that they were feeling more relaxed hearing from Mr. King about the coming year. We have these new opportunities. People need to have a good attitude going into the new school year, not just the students.

Mr. Vine stated that he was not happy with the Courier article. The article not once mentioned the concerns of the students. It was not supportive of the town if people do not have the courage to own their comments especially when they do not have good things to say. We could not be more proud of you for standing up, we have amazing staff and students.

The students want everyone to go into the new school year with a positive attitude.

Mrs. Nurmsen stated that having the four of you here speaking to the committee was an accomplishment in itself.

Superintendent Landers stated that we need the community, we need everyone to make the changes that need to be made, and we can all make a difference.

The students want everyone to go into the new school year with a positive attitude.

Mr. Vine thanked Mr. Murphy for his assistance over the past year while he was serving in the role as chair.

Mr. Vine spoke of the proposed budgets for public schools. He wanted to send a letter to include Winchendon's "voice", we need to let them know we prefer the Governor's version.

15. Executive Session (Open meeting Law Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)):

Purpose #2 to conduct strategy session (s) in preparation for negotiations with union and/or non-union personnel or to conduct contract negotiations with union and/or non-union personnel.

Mrs. Demanche read the motion to enter into executive sessions, "to conduct a strategy session in preparation for negotiations with union and or non-union personnel or to conduct contract negotiations with union and non-union personnel. We will adjourn for the sole purpose of adjourning for the evening. Roll call vote was taken: Murphy Aye, Vine Aye, Nurmsen Aye, Demanche Aye, vote was unanimous.

16. Adjournment