

Date Approved/Released: 2/14/18

Date Approved/Hold: _____

School Committee Chair: Thurmon

Winchendon School Committee Meeting

Wednesday, January 17, 2018

Town Hall Auditorium

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

Present: Danielle LaPointe, Dawn Fronte, Larry Murphy, Greg Vine,
Felicia Nurmsen (arrived 6:05 pm)
Steven Haddad, Superintendent

2. Audio/Video Disclosure: Barrie Martins, Doneen Durling

3. Citizen Questions and/or Comments: L. Murphy thanked everyone for coming out in the snow.

4. Student Representative Report: Nicole Lemire announced that the 10th grade class will hold a bottle and can drive on Saturday, January 20th. Musical rehearsals for Footloose are underway; the production will be held on February 9th. Tomorrow at Murdock, the Lieutenant Governor will be visiting the school and working with some of the technology and computer classes. Murdock Student Council will be attending MASC Conference March 7-9; 20 students will attend. The Boys Varsity Basketball team are 5-5.

5. Student/Staff Recognition: Student of the Month for December 2017 and January 2018. Pre-K: Drake Whitaker & Kaitlyn Gosselin; Memorial: Talia Verda, Kindergarten & Scarlett Babineau, 2nd grade; Toy Town Elementary: Alina Zheng, 3rd grade & Eva Martin, 3rd grade; Murdock Middle School: Jillian LaBarge, 8th grade & Emily Wightman, 6th grade; Murdock High School: John & Abigail Adams Scholar recipients: Michaela Benedict (present), Ariana Berman, Jason Bourgoin, Ethan Brodeur, Jacob Carter, Mary Desire (present), Samuel Drake, Katelyn Hutton, Emily Kiberd-Pervier, Joseph LaFord, Steven Lemieux, Marisa Losurdo, Alexander Marshall, Hannah Morse, Molly Murphy, Shyla Palmer, Brandon Peterson, Thomas Sutherland. R. Olson explained the requirements for and the benefit of the scholarship award. Murdock Academy: January-Morgan Coderre, 12th grade.

Blue Devil Cool Award: Stephanie Rondeau was nominated by Kris Provost, Murdock Academy for Success Director. S. Haddad reviewed her involvement in many school events and clubs, especially the Student Council. Through her constant support of student's efforts, she is a voice for improvement, sees potential and challenges the system, imbuing her students with the belief that success is achievable. She prepares the Academy students for the MCAS. L. Murphy noted her many awards in other areas. F. Nurmsen noted her statewide and nationwide activities where she represents the school district and the community. Ms. Rondeau acknowledged her efforts over the past 15 years trying to instill high standards across the board to the students.

6:49 pm G. Vine moved for a 5-minute recess. Second by D. LaPointe. Approved 5-0-0.
6:56 pm Reconvened in Open Session.

6. **Teaching and Learning Highlights:** Introduction of Family Outreach and Resources Liaison – Suzanne Michel introduced Nicole Cormier, noting the position is funded by a competitive CFEC grant of \$45,700/year distributed through EEC. Ms. Michel reviewed the history of the grant over the past 15 years in Winchendon, noting it focuses on children from birth to age 3. The district ascertained the grant is renewable for a 3-year period provided the necessary documentation is provided demonstrating that the grant objectives have been met; a 2-year extension can also be applied for. Ms. Cormier is also a para-educator at TTE and works very hard marketing the Early Education Program. She assists Kathleen Brooks in the Pre-School program, extending information and other resources to families, especially using social media platforms. She will provide additional resources, using the Ages and Stages questionnaire, she customized a family access launching page for parents to use sign up for resources. She collects data from the submissions, noting the importance of streamlining the process. She noted the program works to find the best fit for the children even before they enter kindergarten. S. Michel stressed the improved best practices regarding outreach efforts prior to and up to grade 3. The position provides guidance and a go-to-person and extended the boundaries to fulfill the needs of Winchendon. S. Haddad reported that the ‘Footsteps to Brilliance kick off is on February 8th; he invited N. Cormier and S. Michel to attend, noting it is very valuable to our district. Ms. Cormier will update the committee as warranted.

D. LaPointe moved to take 11b then 11a then continue with Agenda Item 7. Second by G. Vine. Approved 5-0-0.

11. New Business:

b. United Sports Program Registration – S. Michel reviewed the program, noting an outstanding first season and that Winchendon had the largest number of participants. The Winchendon School donated space, materials and peer mentors. Murdock High School students can also apply to be a mentor. The Basketball program runs from January 21-March 4th. She commended the mentors, the connections families made and the inclusion of these students as a part of the community. The program could be expanded beyond the 3 districts once the process is underway; the fall soccer program had 40 participants. She noted great fellowship and that it brings the community together. F. Nurmsen commended the fantastic, innovative program that offers the same level of opportunity for all students of all abilities. She hopes to get peer mentors from the district to participate.

a. Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School (MT) Representative, Austin Cyganiewicz noted that he likes the Student of the Month awards and extended kudos to the committee, adding he would like MT to follow suit. He reported that 156 Winchendon students enrolled as follows: 9th grade-40; 10th grade-39; 11th grade-36 and 12th grade-41. 12 students

were inducted into the National Honor Society in November. The MT district is working hard to create a new and updated web page that the general public can also use. MT was chosen to escort Wreaths Across America; he explained their participation. The JROTC will send 54 students and chaperones to Texas to rebuild homes lost in the hurricanes last Fall; they had raised over \$42,000 toward the effort. The superintendent and school committee are negotiating articulation agreements with Mount Wachusett Community College and Fitchburg State University regarding dual enrollment possibilities. The Veterinary program will start next year. He noted that 26 students from Winchendon will represent the school and town at the Skills USA District Competition, working to progress to the State and then Nationals. He reported the school tracks post-graduation plans through an email survey; when the student leaves MT and a year later for an update. The school hopes to build an alumni network. Approximately 90% of students receive their first shop preference; the transfer process was explained. The percentage of students who are on an IEP and also on the Autism Spectrum was not available yet. He reported the matter of the letters from the 2 mayors and from Winchendon were discussed at a sub-policy meeting last night; he believes that and the possible litigation with Gardner will be on the next MT school committee agenda. He wants to make it public record that Winchendon does support this and wants to see it addressed. The District Agreement is not on the MT website; G. Vine asked him to bring it to that committees' attention along with the operating budget. A. Cyganiewicz stated he believes it should also be on the Winchendon town website. D. LaPointe commended his pro-active actions and level of transparency, noting it makes it a collaborative effort. He agreed that a peer mentor program would be beneficial at MT, adding he was involved in younger grades during his academic career there. He is on the Financial Planning and Capital Improvement sub-committees; he wants to also be on Student Advisory sub-committee. He agrees the District Agreement needs to be looked at to review documents and to update to current/modern language, adding other districts believe likewise. He noted the most important thing is to be able to explain why the number is what it is at Town Meeting. G. Vine stressed the importance that MT understand that communities have concerns that should be heard and addressed, possibly legislatively. F. Nurmsen stated the sending communities need to be more clear and specific regarding what they want to achieve by re-opening the agreement. She stressed that she is against what Gardner has done, noting that is not working in good faith. D. Fronte reiterated the invitation for any Winchendon MT students to be recognized by the Winchendon school committee. F. Nurmsen suggested the students who are going to Texas also be recognized. L. Murphy stated MCAS and NCLB changed the focus and spirit of the agreement has been circumvented. He acknowledged the greatness of MT, stating 'we should be collaborating not competing with MT, especially when the playing field is not level'. The sending schools have lost control and fairness and equity regarding the way students are selected. The funding issues are bankrupting small districts like us; we can't plan or budget for it. He added 'MT is flourishing at our expense and the expense of the other Winchendon students'. He added that students who need MT cannot get in while MT is taking top level kids. He stressed 'We don't have a voice' and 'we need to do overhaul not just tweak the language'. L. Murphy will send his draft foundation to A. Cyganiewicz to work from. G. Vine suggested the MT meetings be held in the sending districts several times a year; A. Cyganiewicz will bring it forward. Austin Cyganiewicz noted the MT school committee meetings are not video recorded; he believes they should be sent to each community to broadcast. He is in favor of a hybrid program and looking at the admissions policy. S. Haddad agreed, and related an incident that highlighted the need for improved communications with the sending districts.

7. Consent Agenda:

- a. Minutes: Regular Meeting December 7, 2017 Vote: D. LaPointe moved to approve. Second by G. Vine. Approved 5-0-0.

8. Superintendent/Business Office Report - S. Haddad noted the newsletter went out in December. Lieutenant Governor Karen Polito will be at the Murdock tomorrow to view/inspect the upgrades the \$86,000 Capital Skills grant made possible in the technology program. The Tri-Board meeting is on Monday, January 22. R. Ikonen will send a financial update out tomorrow. The Footsteps to Brilliance kick-off is on February 8th, plans will be determined to roll it out into the community.

- a. Strategic Plan – The document was put together by the administrative team; it rolls out to the DIP. He believes it will guide the district to Level 1. S. Michel and Jessica Vezina worked with him to condense the 23-page document to 7 pages; it is a living document and will be reassessed once a month to see if it is achieving the objectives. G. Vine requested additional time for review prior to a vote. D. Fronte moved to approve the plans as brought forward and accept the Strategic Plan as written. Second by F. Nurmsen. D. LaPointe stated she feels the committee repeatedly approves plans without work being initiated. S. Haddad explained several objectives/goals have been achieved during the process. D. LaPointe stressed the need to articulate what has been achieved; L. Murphy agreed but wants the cost included for each goal/objective – a sustainability plan- to present to the Finance Committee. G. Vine requested the cost prior to approval; adding he is not implying disapproval of the whole plan. S. Haddad said the cost analysis will be ready by the March meeting. D. Fronte agreed the district needs to move on the plan now. F. Nurmsen stressed the need to operate within the boundaries to get the goals accomplished within the budget. Then show what can potentially be done if allocated more funds. VOTE: Approved 4-0-1. G. Vine abstained.
- b. Budget Update – R. Ikonen and the Town accountant are finalizing the first half of the FY18 Report and will send it out tomorrow. The goal is to have the FY19 budget ready by February 17th.

9. Sub Committee Report:

- a. Policy BHC School Committee & Staff Communications – D. LaPointe moved to table until the next meeting. Second by G. Vine. Approved 5-0-0.

10. Old Business:

- a. FLLAC and CAPS Audit Documents – The documents are in Central Office for the committee's viewing.
- b. School Committee Day Meeting Schedule Room Availability - S. Haddad suggested the 2nd Wednesday of the month due to conflicts with school vacation weeks. G. Vine moved to approve meeting on the 2nd Wednesday of the month. Second by D. Fronte. The committee discussed dates to accommodate member's schedules. After discussion GV withdrew the motion. G. Vine voiced concern about the irregular meeting schedule; stating it is a disservice to the public. The committee will discuss it at the summer summit. D. LaPointe moved to accept the following dates for

School Committee meetings: February 7, March 14, April 11, May 23, June 20.
Second by G. Vine. Approved 5-0-0. D. Fronte requested the dates be posted on the district calendar (and everywhere). S. Haddad will ensure they are on the district calendar.

- c. Principal Search Update - L. Murphy reviewed the process to date. He reported the committee looked at approximately 20 submissions, selected 7 candidates to interview and 3 were sent to the Superintendent who will interview then select 2 for site visits. The goal is to present a candidate at the March meeting. The transition could start soon after. L. Murphy was impressed by the search committees' work and focus. He, R. Ikonen and J. Vezina will be at the interview tomorrow.
- d. Superintendent Evaluation –8:49 S. Haddad will send committee members the Mid-Cycle Evaluation Report for the Superintendent. He will send the status of each goal this weekend. Committee members will send their evaluations to L. Murphy by February 1; he will present them in Executive Session on February 7. This report will be part of the Summative Evaluation in June, which is released in Open Session.

12. Future Agenda Items:

- a. Meeting Schedule - July, 2018
- b. Executive Session – February 7, 2018
- c. Director of Pupil Services Search
- d. Policy BHC School Committee & Staff Communications
- e. FLLAC Report – S. Haddad
- f. CAPS Report – L. Murphy

- 13. Committee Member Comments:** L. Murphy noted the teacher's union has the proposal from the committee; negotiations continue tomorrow. G. Vine noted that the Middle School had a flood last Thursday due to the fire sprinkler damage; he applauded the custodial crew for their quick intervention that prevented further damage. D. Fronte-Director of Pupil Services will commence after the Principal search concludes. L. Murphy noted this is a usual meeting length for once-a-month meeting. F. Nurmsen stated she wants the MT sub-committee (F. Nurmsen & L. Murphy) to focus more energy on the concerning issues and to build a consensus to move forward. She wants to make it a priority work with A. Cyganiewicz, especially regarding students with disabilities. She believes kids do not have equal access at any vocational school.

14. Executive Session: none

- 15. Adjournment:** 9:03 pm. D. LaPointe moved to adjourn. Second by G. Vine.
Approved 5 -0-0.

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