

BROOKLINE-NEWFANE SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

Thursday, November 18, 2010
6:30 PM at *NewBrook Elementary School*

Draft Minutes

Present: Lee Anne Parker, Dan Seiden, April Wellman, Brookline; Kim Colligan, Kim Friedman, Ken McFadden, Pam Meihak, Brandy Pickering, Newfane (Board members); Bruce Garrow, NewBrook Principal; Steven John, WCSU Superintendent; Amy Jo Cable, recorder.

I. Call to order, introductions & agenda review (including consent agenda): Kim Friedman called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM. No objections were made to having Bruce Garrow's *Principal's Report* remain on the **Consent Agenda** for this meeting along with approving the class size policy which was warned at the October meeting of this board. Kim Friedman noted that she had asked Steven John for feedback on her job as Chair and meeting facilitator. Kim advised that Steven had suggested that it might be helpful to have a timekeeper other than herself. Pam Meihak volunteered to be the timekeeper for this meeting.

II. Staff & Community Input: Samantha Bovat, WCSU Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent/Receptionist; Scott Bovat, Emily Bullock, WCSU Guidance; Mary Parlman, NewBrook Physical Education instructor; Julie Plummer, Molly Wilson, NewBrook Special Education instructor. Kim Friedman asked if there were any thoughts or questions from the members of the staff and public which were present at the meeting. Some staff advised they were present to give input in the upcoming budget discussion to follow at this meeting. No other questions or concerns were noted.

III. Discuss 1st draft of *FY11 NewBrook Budget* (developed by Bruce Garrow, Steven John and Frank Rucker based on the guidelines, assumptions and parameters that were discussed at the October joint board meeting): Kim Friedman pointed out that this will be the first of probably three joint board meetings this year that will be devoted primarily to discussion of the *FY11 Newbrook Budget* and therefore nothing discussed at this meeting is "etched in stone."

- a. Principal's Budget Overview: Bruce Garrow distributed handouts for discussion and provided an overview of those handouts. (*Brookline – Newfane Joint School FY 2012 BUDGET PROPOSAL and Budget planning for School Board Meeting*).
 1. Steven John commended Bruce Garrow and Frank Rucker, WCSU Chief Financial Officer, for the work they did in obtaining a \$50,000 energy grant for the *NewBrook Elementary School*. Bruce pointed out that due to that grant money, insulation in the school would be done this year and there would be a predicted savings of \$8,000 in fuel oil per year. Also, according to the school's five-year maintenance plan, Bruce requested window replacement and a boiler update for a cost of \$25,000 to the

school budget. Bruce advised that Patrick Mace recommended replacing the one large boiler with two smaller energy efficient boilers where both would only be used in colder weather, thus saving fuel oil.

2. Bruce advised that there will be a predicted student population drop from 142 students this year to 129 students next year which will affect state reimbursement and ultimately education costs. Bruce pointed out that the budget proposal he distributed was based on no changes to current FY11 certified employment and that the NES Student/Teacher Ratio recommended by the legislature is 11.7. *NewBrook* is 0.1 above the required teacher/student ratio this year and a predicted 0.9 below the requirement for the 2011-2012 school year.
3. Bruce noted that he had been advised by the WCSU Special Education Director that the school's predicted need for para-educators will be reduced from 8 to 6 for the 2011-2012 year.
4. As requested by the board, Bruce advised that he had met with *NewBrook* staff to discuss budget needs, and he had several requests from his staff.
 - Mary Parlman, *NewBrook's* physical education teacher, has requested an additional hour be added to her schedule for next year so that she can see the kindergarten class twice a week. Bruce advised this will have a minimal budget impact. Mary pointed out that presently the kindergarten class has 30 minutes of P.E. time a week, 1st and 2nd graders have 30 minutes twice a week and 3rd-6th graders have 35 minutes twice a week. Mary also pointed out that the most amount of time she would recommend adding to her program would be a half of day so that all students could have either 35 or 40 minutes of P.E. classes twice a week at an approximate additional cost of \$6,420.
 - Emily Bullock, WCSU guidance counselor, requested another day per week to meet guidance needs at the school (cost undetermined). Emily distributed her proposal and a handout entitled *The ASCA (American School Counselor Association) National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs*. Emily advised that 61 out of 142 of *NewBrook's* students have been referred to her; she is currently seeing perhaps 20-30 of those students. Emily advised that depending on the student's needs, some could meet in small groups. Emily pointed out that she has been unable to meet with some students at all or not on a regular

basis as needed. She also pointed out that even though she has worked an average of 6 to 8 extra hours per week since this school year began, she has not had enough time to make outside referrals for the students that need them, and she has received requests for more counseling services from staff, parents and students.

- Bruce Garrow submitted a request for a full-time kitchen person for next year who will be able to plan, serve and do the paperwork that is needed to satisfy state requirements.
- A letter was read by Bruce from Joyce Van Pamelan (5th/6th grade *NewBrook* teacher) since she was unable to attend this meeting. Joyce indicated in her letter to the Board that she supported more guidance and physical education time. She also hoped that extra staffing for the lunch program can be added next year to make things smoother and easier for all involved. Joyce also pointed out that she felt very strongly about the need for enough computers, especially to meet the needs of the 5th/6th graders.
- Bruce passed on budget requests from the *Newfane Technology Committee* which met on November 15, 2010. Bruce explained that in order to do *MAPS* testing in a timely manner and do minimal work that needs to be done within the school, that a total of \$22,000 of equipment was needed. The minutes from that meeting indicated the following was needed in equipment: a computer for every teacher and ability to print, a computer designated for para-educators in the special ed. room, one *ELMO* for each classroom, several new *Flip* digital cameras, 40 working laptops, 6 computers for online games (3 for kindergarten room and 3 for 1st/2nd grade room).
- As per Dan Seiden's request, Bruce advised he roughly calculated the cost of adding a music space to the school. In talking with Frank Rucker, Bruce pointed out that new construction can be roughly calculated at \$200.00 per square foot and to build and heat a 20' X 40' room the total cost would be around \$164,000. Bruce also is looking into the cost of moving a portable classroom from the *Dover* school to *NewBrook* as another possible space for a music room.

5. Bruce explained that the present budget draft does not include additional time for guidance, 19 students in pre-school, or a new music room. The present draft is creating about a 1.6% increase over last year's budget.
6. Bruce pointed out that we need to discuss early education, guidance and the music room addition.

Kim Friedman asked if there were any questions for Bruce or any further clarification needed. *Kim Friedman noted that the total for the proposed 2011-2012 budget was almost \$2 million (\$1,948,771 on page 5 under Total Joint School Expense), which represents a 1.6% increase over last year's budget.* Kim Colligan asked if an estimate the cost for the additional day for guidance could be provided.

TASK: Steven John will forward Kim Colligan's request to calculate the approximate cost involved in adding an extra day for guidance needs in the budget and advise before the December meeting.

- b. Superintendent's Budget Overview: Steven John pointed out that *NewBrook's* budget, as it stands, has the highest increase that he knows of of any budgets in the WCSU, but Steven also reminded the Board that they (Brookline and Newfane school districts combined) cut \$250,000 from their budget last year, which is a perspective that the public has to understand. Steven pointed out that each school district within our WCSU has different circumstances to deal with when creating their budgets. Steven talked briefly about the developing budgets of the different school districts in the SU and attempts to meet the *Challenge for Change* legislation from the state (Act 146). Steven explained that the reason more time was not allotted to physical education and guidance in *NewBrook's* budget was not that the administration was opposed to those things, but the administration was trying to show some restraint in developing the budget. Steven pointed out that *NewBrook's* present ratio of students to counselors is more than adequate to the national recommendations, but he acknowledged that it doesn't mean it's adequate to *NewBrook's* particular student's needs. Steven advised, still, he is hesitant to increase *NewBrook's* guidance allotment in the proposed budget, and the predicted upcoming decrease in *NewBrook's* student population was also a consideration.

Kim Friedman thanked Steven for the effort that went into preparing the first draft of the 2011-2012 budget and asked Steven to pass along the board's appreciation to Frank Rucker as well.

- c. Discussion:
 - A brief discussion followed regarding the possibility of our SU meeting the *Challenge for Change* targets from the state.
 - The predicted number of students that will be enrolled in early education next year from Brookline and Newfane was not a firm number. It was unclear if there would possibly be more or fewer

than the current 12 children enrolled in pre-school from Newfane and Brookline next year.

TASK: Kim Friedman will ask Lisa Harris from Rock River to contact BettyAnn Runge and advise on the number of pre-school children she predicts will attend school in the 2011-2012 year in from Newfane or Brookline.

- Kim Friedman also pointed out to the board that our joint board does not have its own tax rate; each town (Brookline and Newfane) has its own tax rate as we have not combined school districts (only school boards). Kim Friedman also recognized that Brookline had a substantial tax rate increase last year and specifically asked April Wellman, Dan Seiden and Lee Anne Parker for their input on the proposed budget. Dan Seiden advocated reasonable additions to our budget. April and Lee Anne agreed to look at another proposed budget which would include additional P.E. and guidance time. Dan Seiden moved to instruct the Superintendent to prepare a budget that includes increased P.E. by half day, increased guidance by one day and retention in the budget of the other discretionary items included in the draft budget that was presented tonight. Brandy Pickering gave her second. No further discussion. Ken McFadden abstained with all others in favor. Motion passed.
- Ken McFadden reminded board members that at October's meeting someone was going to look into asking about a reduction of *NewBrook's* SU assessment bill due to the consolidation of the Brookline and Newfane schools. (It was presumed by the Board that the *NewBrook Elementary School* took less time to service from the SU than both the Brookline and Newfane schools did separately). April Wellman advised she did not bring it up at the last SU meeting. Steven John pointed out that he would be able to help address that question in his upcoming presentation of the *WCSU FY11 Budget* to follow.

TASK: April Wellman will contact Emily Long regarding adding a discussion to the WCSU agenda on December 8, 2010 regarding Ken McFadden's request for a reduction in *NewBrook Elementary School's* SU assessment.

IV. Presentation of WCSU FY11 Budget: Steven John distributed a handout entitled *Windham Central Supervisory Union Proposed Fiscal Year 2012 Budget*. Kim Friedman reminded board members that purpose of this portion of the agenda was for Steven to go over this budget and for Board members to ask questions or clarification so that those Board members who were going to the December 8, 2010 WCSU meeting to represent our individual school boards or the Joint Board unofficially, are prepared to act on this budget.

- Steven discussed the proposed WCSU budget, where he noted he has hired two new employees, Samantha Bovat, WCSU Administrative Assistant/Receptionist and also Jen Chapin, Administrative Assistant to

Abigail Dillon. Steven advised that he was managing to keep within the budget this year even with the two new employees and that the positions were also included in the proposed WCSU budget he presented at this meeting.

- Steven pointed out that the proposed WCSU budget is based on no professional salary increases and a 2 % salary increase for para-professionals.
- Steven explained that due to the upcoming legislative requirements of ACT 153, the proposed WCSU budget includes \$307,971 or 3.5 FTE teachers previously employed by *Leland & Gray UHS*.
- Steven advised that the proposed budget for the Superintendent's office/instruction is 1.1 % less than last year but was not enough of a decrease to meet the *Challenge for Change* target.

Kim Friedman asked Board members if there was any other piece of information or point of clarification that anyone needs to feel that they are making a responsible decision at the WCSU December 8th budget meeting. Kim Friedman and Steven John also explained that pages 2 and 3 of the proposed WCSU budget would be what would be voted on at the December 8th WCSU meeting.

V. How Are We Doing? (tracking progress towards outcomes):

- a. Discussion w/Superintendent based on report (including Regional Education District study): Kim Friedman briefly explained to staff members present that *Leland & Gray UHS, Jamaica Village School* and the *NewBrook Elementary School* were interested in forming an RED and therefore were looking into doing a study regarding that formation.
 - Steven John reported on a recent conference (item #3 in his report) he attended where he learned that in order for *Leland & Gray UHS, Jamaica Village School* and Brookline and Newfane to form/explore a RED, the *Leland & Gray Union School District* would have to dissolve simultaneously. Steven did advise that if Townshend and Windham school districts agreed to be part of this study to form a RED, we could proceed with the study without having to dissolve the other. Steven advised that Emily Long was approaching representatives from Townshend and Windham to request they join in the study to form a RED. The VT School Boards Association have discussing with legislators the possibility of a technical correction that would exempt L&G and other union school districts from having to dissolve in order to participate in the RED.
 - Steven explained that state representatives did not approve of the recent truancy policy the Joint Board had warned since it was not the same as the *Brattleboro School Districts* truancy policy. Steven was not aware that the state wanted all the truancy policies to be the same throughout the county.

TASK: Steven John will obtain a copy of the *Brattleboro School District's* truancy policy.

TASK: Ken McFadden will alert Kim Friedman when the new truancy policy needs to go on the board's agenda to be re-warned.

Kim Friedman thanked Steven John for his report and also for keeping on top of things.

VI. Short items:

- a. Town Meeting 2011: Discuss compensation for school officers (Newfane An specifies hourly rate while Brookline specifies a set amount for the year): Following up on a tickler from months ago to discuss compensation for school officers, Kim Friedman explained that the town of Newfane pays its school officers \$7.53 an hour, and Brookline pays the school directors \$200.00 a year. Kim also explained that she and Bruce Garrow feel it is difficult to attract qualified school board members to serve on the school board and moving to an hourly rate for school officers from both towns would be a small incentive for people to serve. A discussion followed. No action taken.
- b. Reserve location (NewBrook Firehouse) for Feb. info. mtng. and Newfane/Brookline joint school districts budget mtng./vote:
 - Monday, January 24, 2010 at 7 PM info. mtng.
 - Saturday, February 12, 2010 at 10 AM Newfane/Brookline joint school districts budget mtng./vote.

TASK: Brandy Pickering will contact Bob Litchfield sometime in the next two days and request the *NewBrook Firehouse* be reserved for the meetings noted above.

TASK: Brandy Pickering will e-mail Board members, Bruce Garrow, Steven John and Samantha Bovat and advise if there are any problems reserving those two dates.

It was agreed that the NewBrook Elementary School would be the board's second choice as a location for both meetings.

- c. Re-warn truancy policy: per above, Steven John and Ken McFadden will advise.

VII. Information-Sharing:

- a. Brookline Building Committee Update: Dan Seiden and Lee Anne Parker pointed out that there has been a lot of interest in holding classes, such as music or yoga classes, at the former Brookline Elementary School building. Dan Seiden moved that the building act as a community meeting center for the towns of Newfane and Brookline. Lee Anne Parker gave her second. A discussion followed which included questions

from Ken McFadden and Kim Friedman regarding the budget implications of that recommendation. Dan pointed out that it is unclear what the costs associated with that would be. Kim Friedman, Ken McFadden and Kim Colligan expressed a need to understand how the financing of the recommendation would work out but fully support the intent.

- Lee Anne Parker advised there is a play scheduled for the 12th of December and rehearsals on December 10th and 11th for which the community would like to use the building. Dan Seiden tabled his motion, and it was decided that Dan would work out the details with Bruce Garrow regarding the upcoming use of the building for the December rehearsals and play.

TASK: Dan Seiden will work out with Bruce Garrow et all details regarding management, scheduling, cleaning, keys and costs during this interim period.

Tickler: Dan Seiden will bring a proposal to 12/20 joint board meeting for discussion and hopefully approval. The committee's proposal will include possible uses for the building and ways to finance its use.

TASK: Dan Seiden will talk with Bruce Garrow re: use of building during December:

- Dan Seiden mentioned that a craft fair was also part of the activities on December 10th, 11th and 12th.
- Dan also mentioned that staff from the *Brattleboro Music Center* have shown an interest in giving music lessons in the building.

Kim Friedman thanked Dan Seiden for his leadership and work on the committee.

- b. Monthly school newsletter piece: Kim Colligan pointed out that Board members need to follow a different protocol for future school newsletter pieces. Kim Colligan explained that whomever writes the letter needs to send it to Bruce Garrow and Steven John, who will direct it to Melanie Larson at the NewBrook School. Kim Friedman asked for suggestions for the December newsletter piece. Lee Anne Parker suggested writing about the play.

TASK: Dan Seiden will write an update about the *Brookline Building Use Committee* for the December issue of the newsletter.

- c. Correspondence: No correspondence that had not already been shared at the meeting.

- d. Alternate to WCSU meetings (as needed):
- Brookline board members advised that April Wellman would attend the WCSU meeting on December 8, 2010.
 - Lee Anne Parker will attend in April Wellman's place if she is unable to attend.
 - Kim Friedman advised that a Newfane board member representative would also attend that meeting.
 - Steven John pointed out that since the WCSU meeting on December 8th is a full board meeting, Brookline and Newfane board members are entitled to three votes each at that meeting.

VIII. Consent agenda:

- a. Approve Oct. minutes
- b. Approve class size policy (warned at Oct. mtng.)
- c. Principal's Report

Kim Friedman moved to approve the consent agenda. Kim Colligan gave her second. No discussion. All were in favor. Motion passed.

IX. Next Meeting : Since board members advised that there is a band concert several board members need to attend on our regularly-scheduled meeting date, it was decided to move the date of the board's next meeting. The Board's next meeting will be Monday, December 20, 2010 at 7 PM at NewBrook Elementary School.

Brandy Pickering asked that board members get the word out regarding the change in the date and time of the December board meeting.

TASKS

- **Bruce Garrow will put a notice up in the school and also mention the change in the school's newsletter.**
- **Lee Anne Parker will work with Steven John to draft an article to be warned by either the Joint Board or the separate boards regarding Australian Ballot for future budget vote.**
- **Steven John will inquire if the copier machine or any of the remaining computers at the former *Brookline School Building* could be used at *NewBrook*.**

DECEMBER TICKLERS

- **Discuss the article regarding Australian Ballot**
- **Discuss where interest paid on loans shows up in the budget**

Executive Session entered at 9:32 PM to discuss negotiation of Master Agreement
Executive Session ended at 9:42 PM. The board took no action as a result of Executive Session.

Executive Session was entered at 9:43 PM to discuss a personnel matter.
Executive Session ended at 9:52 PM. The board took no action as a result of Executive Session.

Dan Seiden moved at 9:53 to adjourn. Ken McFadden seconded the motion. All in favor.
Meeting adjourned at 9:53 PM.