

WEST BOYLSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
WEDNESDAY, April 10, 2013

LOCATION: West Boylston Middle/High School Media Center

PRESENT: SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

John Owanisian, Chairman  
Jennifer Breen  
Richard Shaw  
Erin Palumbo  
James Pedone

ADMINISTRATORS

Elizabeth Schaper, Superintendent  
Lawrence Murphy, Principal Middle/High School  
Christopher LaBreck, Associate MS Principal  
Marjorie McCarthy, Elementary Principal  
Roger E. Pontbriand, Jr., Business Administrator  
Sherri Traina, Special Education Administrator

COMMUNITY

Faculty & Staff:	3	Guests:	50
Student Advisors:	2	Press:	1

Mr. Owanisian opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the April 10, 2013 School Committee Meeting.

**Approval of the Minutes**

Mr. Pedone made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular School Committee Meeting of March 13, 2013; Mr. Shaw seconded. Motion approved. **Voted 4-0-1.**

Mr. Shaw made a motion to approve the minutes of the School Committee Special meeting held on February 21, 2013; Ms. Palumbo seconded. Motion approved. **Voted 4-0-1.**

Mr. Pedone made a motion to approve the minutes of the FY14 Budget Public Hearing which took place on March 13, 2013; Mr. Shaw seconded. Motion approved. **Voted 4-0-1.**

**Student Recognition Awards**

Mr. Owanisian introduced Ms. McCarthy, who presented the Student of the Month Award to Major Edwards Elementary student, Meghan Holland.

Mr. LaBreck presented the Student of the Month Award from the Middle/High School Hannah Silva and Jessie Doherty.

Mr. Murphy presented the Student of the Month Award for the High School to Jenna Coviello.

**Student Advisory Council**

Mr. Owanisian introduced the members of the Student Advisory Council – Abby Colangelo and Kelly Sorge, who updated those in attendance regarding current events happening in the Middle/High School.

Abby indicated that a parent information meeting was held regarding the Europe trip on March 26, 2013. She also stated that a student informational night would be held in the near future concerning available scholarships and possible fundraising ideas.

Kelly stated that the Performing Arts Workshop is performing “Quixote”, which is this year’s spring musical and will run on May 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. Kelly indicated Dickinson’s Ribbons is

working on their spring issue, which will be published on the web.

Mr. Owanisian asked the council if there were any updates with regard to sports.

Kelly stated the tennis and softball teams won their first games.

## **Acknowledgment Of Camera Crew**

Mr. Owanisian thanked the camera crew for their work in filming the School Committee meeting.

## **Highlight on Schools**

Mr. Owanisian introduced Sara Kyriazis and Bridget Welch who gave a presentation to those in attendance on 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Book Trailers.

Ms. Kyriazis and Ms. Welch explained the 5<sup>th</sup> graders had been learning how to present information on books they've read to other students by using technology and creating a book trailer, similar to what you would see in a movie trailer. The students preferred this method by far, over showing other students what they had read on an index card.

Ms. Kyriazis and Ms. Welch stated the program was a collaborative effort between the technology class and language arts teachers. Both teachers gave credit to Dr. Schaper for asking them to include technology in their curriculum, thereby increasing the students' interest and participation.

The teachers explained that the students' work is available for viewing on YouTube.

## **Community Input**

Mr. Owanisian asked if there was any community input, and seeing that there was none, moved on to a discussion regarding the school calendar for the 2013-2014 school year.

## **School Calendar**

Dr. Schaper requested approval of a revised 2013-2014 school year calendar. Ms. Breen made a motion to accept the 2013-2014 school calendar with the one revision, Ms. Palumbo seconded; Motion approved. **Voted 5-0-0.**

## **Nature's Classroom**

Mr. LaBreck asked the School Committee to approve the Nature's Classroom Trip, which would take place this year on Tuesday, October 15<sup>th</sup> and return home on Friday, October 18, 2013  
Mr. Shaw made a motion to approve the return to Nature's Classroom this year, Mr. Pedone seconded; Motion approved. **Voted 5-0-0.**

## **Subcommittee Reports**

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Budget Subcommittee. Mr. Shaw indicated they are still in the process of trying to cut the deficit, and we are hopeful that an agreement will be reached at the town meeting.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Chapter 74 Subcommittee. Ms. Breen indicated there was no meeting and therefore no report.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Marketing Subcommittee. Ms. Palumbo indicated that there was no meeting and therefore no report.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Negotiations subcommittee. Mr. Owanisian asked Dr. Schaper if there were any more steps to approving the memorandum of understanding.

Dr. Schaper indicated that the contract was ready to be signed by all committee members.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Policy Subcommittee. Ms. Palumbo indicated that she and Ms. Breen, along with Dr. Schaper, developed a revision to the homework policy. She asked

that they vote on a first reading for the guidelines as presented.

Dr. Schaper stated she would like to send the homework policy to the staff for their review and feedback.

Mr. Shaw made a motion to accept the first reading of the homework policy as presented, Ms. Breen seconded; Motion approved. **Voted 5-0-0.**

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Building Subcommittee. Mr. Pedone stated they had not met since the last School Committee meeting, but he explained that work continues on the Media Center project. Mr. Shaw indicated that they are also investigating the possibility of converting to natural gas, which would save the district hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Technology Subcommittee. Mr. Pedone stated that the new website is under development and he stated that a Chrome Book cart has been purchased – a tablet similar to an iPad, but much less expensive. He indicated that they had discussed several different financing options to for students and their parents to obtain one of the tablets from the school.

Dr. Schaper stated that there is a plan to poll the parents of incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grade students about their thoughts on 1:1.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Transportation Subcommittee. Mr. Shaw indicated that there was no meeting and no report.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the elementary school. Ms. McCarthy indicated there were many things happening at Major Edwards this month such as:

- Spring Open House – Thursday, April 11, 2013;
- Pre-K and K students learning studying life cycles;
- Invention Convention; and
- Book Trailers

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Middle High School. Mr. LaBreck indicated the math MCAS test is scheduled for May 13 and 14 and Science for June 4 and 5. He indicated that there was a homework incentive program at the middle school.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the High School. Mr. Murphy stated that the senior class has worked on the project “In it to End It” to support the American Cancer Society and to provide a scholarship for those students who have lost a parent. Last year’s seniors raised about \$9,000.00 for the project and this year’s class is hoping to match or beat that amount.

Mr. Murphy provided information about the Lions Scholar Academy. Thirty seven students were invited to participate and 30 families attended the event to learn more. He stated that they received positive feedback regarding the program.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Director of Special Education and Ms. Traina indicated that she had nothing to report.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Business Administrator. Mr. Pontbriand stated that the town treasurer requested a vote to transfer funds from the school choice fund to the cafeteria revolving account. Mr. Pontbriand stated that participation in our school lunch program is down, and the federal government is making changes with regard to the dietary concerns in their program.

## **Communication and Reports**

Mr. Pontbriand indicated that the revolving lunch program is heavily funded by federal funds.

Mr. Owanisian asked Mr. Pontbriand if this was a one-time occurrence and if it would be remedied by the following budget cycle.

Mr. Pontbriand stated that if we do not make any changes, this would reoccur.

Mr. Shaw made a motion to transfer the \$12,000.00 from the school choice account to the revolving cafeteria account, Mr. Pedone seconded; Motion approved. **Voted 5-0-0.**

Mr. Pontbriand provided the financial report.

Mr. Pontbriand indicated that he has applied for extraordinary relief in Circuit Breaker funds. He explained that the money we receive from the extra ordinary relief is a one-time amount.

Mr. Pontbriand stated that they are working on three capital improvement projects.

- Safe Schools Package;
- Architectural study of the MHS roof
- Conversion to natural gas fueled boilers.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the superintendent of schools. Dr. Schaper provided a model of the data dashboard that was requested by the committee to be included in each month's report. Dr. Schaper stated that the dashboard provides student attendance data.

Ms. Breen was concerned with the percentage of students who have IEP's in Pre-K – 58.8%.

Ms. Traina indicated that the Pre-K program serves students from 3-5 years old. The program provides educational services for all students in this age range who have special educational needs. Additional students who do not have Individualized Education Plans are enrolled based on availability.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the School Committee. Mr. Pedone indicated he had nothing to report at this time.

Mr. Shaw commended Ms. Breen on her work with the Parks and Recreation Committee. He also mentioned there is an "Interact Program" through the West Boylston Rotary that has been brought to the schools. He stated that it is for children ages 12-18. It teaches them about Rotary and community service projects. He stated further information was available on the international Rotary website.

Ms. Palumbo stated she had written a letter on behalf of the School Committee, with the intent of submitting said letter to "The Banner". The letter is addressed to the Town of West Boylston residents and provides updates with regard to the proposed STEAM Academy and the Lions Scholar Academy.

Mr. Owanisian asked to have the letter signed by himself – on behalf of the West Boylston School Committee.

Mr. Shaw made a motion to submit the letter to "The Banner", with the requested signature change, Mr. Pedone seconded; Motion approved. **Voted 5-0-0.**

Ms. Breen indicated that work was still going on involving the dedication of the Major Edwards Library for Ann Marie Richardson. She stated that the committee met last week and that

approximately \$1,400.00 has been collected. She indicated that the library would be totally repainted so that it would look its best when the library was dedicated. A tentative date for the dedication would be June 6, 2013 at 6:00 p.m.

Ms. Breen indicated that WestBEST is sponsoring the Book Fair at Major Edwards this week and the first week's sales are at about \$2,300.00. She thanked parents, children and teachers for supporting the fair.

Mr. Owanisian stated that the monthly sport light on schools continue to run on Cable Channel 12 in West Boylston. He recently interviewed Dianne Holmes and Sue Cassidy from Major Edwards, which focused on Reader's Workshop.

## **Adjournment**

At 8:52 Mr. Shaw made a motion to adjourn, Ms. Pedone seconded; **Voted: 5-0-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Marie Johnson  
Recording Secretary