

PETERSHAM CENTER SCHOOL AGENDA

JUNE 25, 2014

LIBRARY

6:30 p.m.

AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chuck Berube called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

Members Present: Chuck Berube, Russell Fontaine, and Lynn Peredina

Members Absent: None

Others: Superintendent Tari Thomas, Principal Chris Dodge, and Alyssa Roberts

II. HEARING FOR VISITORS-

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: *Russell Fontaine moved to approve May 28, 2014 minutes. Lynn Peredina seconded. VOTED: Unanimous.*

IV. OLD BUSINESS:

- a. **FY 15 Budget-**Tari Thomas stated that we are delighted to see the budget pass unanimously on town floor and they are now gearing up budgetsense for FY15. Tari also mentioned that it was really nice to see the 2.75% increase for the support staff. Chuck Berube stated that it is wonderful to see the community trusting the administration and all of the hard work that was put in.

V. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Financial Update/School Lunch Deficit-** Tari stated that if you look at the financial update you will see that the FY15 budget was passed, the FY14 budget is coming to a close with minimum expenditures. Tari stated that PSC will be receiving \$371,904 for school choice in FY14. Tari stated that it was estimated that we would receive \$360,650 so this means we have an increase of \$11,254. Tari stated that as we proceed and take a look at the food service revolving the committee might need to make some changes to where money is coming from. Chuck stated that for the sake of transparency to everyone in this community he think it might be prudent to cover the money of the school choice deficit from the reserve account.
- b. **Lunch prices for FY15-** Chris Dodge stated that they recently had an audit of the lunch program where minor suggestions were made and almost all corrective actions have already been fully implement. Chris stated that one of the suggestions was safety protocols and they will be looking into having a handbook in the near future. The second suggestion was the lunch prices. Chris stated that they currently are \$2 for students and \$3 for staff. Chris stated that it is his recommendation to increase both of these amounts by .25 cents in FY15 and then revisit this topic and hopefully increase by .25 cents in FY16. Chris would like to do the increase up .50 cents in 2 years to monitor if they are losing students to the change in price and how things start to change.
Chuck stated that if we had been at a higher price for this past year what would the deficit have been. Chris stated that he doesn't have that number but the thing that caused this deficit was a couple of salaries that were being taken out of this account. Tari stated that the goal for any

food service program is to cover all salaries and payroll and to stay in the black but this is very hard to maintain. Russell asked what percentage of students buy lunch at Petersham. Tari stated that because the district is so small we don't have the capability here to figure that out by a push of a button. Lynn Peredina raised the question of is .25 cents enough. Chris stated that he doesn't want to do too much at once. Chris stated that he thinks it would be good to see what going up to \$2.25 does and then look at it after that. Russell asked what the cost of breakfast is. Chris stated that is \$1. Russell stated maybe we could up that to \$1.25. Tari asked if the audit had any recommendations about breakfast. Chris stated that they didn't say anything about breakfast prices it was just the lunch prices.

Chuck asked if we are doing something fiscally irresponsible by pulling funds from the school choice account. Tari stated that she doesn't think that is the case because many other districts try other things such as carrying over deficits, using excess and deficiency, and using school choice funds. The committee agreed to up breakfast by .25 cents as well and Principal Dodge can figure out the logistics on how to make that work for families.

Lynn Peredina moved to implement new breakfast price for school year 2014-2015 to make this cost \$1.25 and to implement new lunch prices to make them \$2.25 for students and \$3.25 for staff. Russell Fontaine seconded. VOTED: Unanimous.

- c. **State Assessment for 2015 (PARCC vs. MCAS)(vote required)-** Tari Thomas stated that next year districts have a choice whether they want to stay the course of MCAS or go with PARCC which is the next generation of assessments that are computer based and aligned with the common core. Tari stated that the benefits is that districts will not be held accountable for the 2014-2015 school year but if they test will their accountability can go up, the state is calling this being held harmless for 1 year. Tari stated that Petersham needs to decide whether grades 3, 4, 5 and 6 want to move to the PARCC for ELA and Math and then grades 5, and 6 would need to stay with technology and engineering in MCAS because PARCC has not yet developed a science assessment. Tari stated that in Orange they decided to participate in the PARCC because they think it will be most beneficial to take a risk free year and iron out the wrinkles and get a vision of what we want the kids to know based on the new assessment tool. Tari explained that it is part of the committee's responsibilities to determine whether we apply to be part of PARCC next school year or stay with MCAS.

Mr. Dodge stated that this could be something that gives us a leg up if we know that PARCC is going to be replacing MCAS. Chris stated that it will be able to give the students and the teachers a heads up on what this test looks like. Chris thinks that soon it will no longer be an option and they have the technology to support it in the building and we would benefit from getting the results much quicker.

Russell Fontaine moved to approve the Superintendent to apply for PARCC for the 2014-2015 school year. Lynn Peredina seconded. VOTED: Unanimous.

- d. **Math and Science Curriculums-** Chris stated that at the beginning of the year he updated the committee with the Envision software and this year was really an implementation phase. Chris stated that some of the books have their weaknesses and we are finding that out as we go. Chris stated that math was a weakness and with the new standards there really was a shift. Chris explained that the teachers are using envisions and feel that it is correlated to the standards and they have been developing formatted documents on what lessons they did and what order. Chris stated that implementing any new curriculum takes many years. Chris stated that teachers, parents, and students are struggling a little bit but he has some ways to work on improvements for next year. Chris wants to hold a couple PDS to help the adults as well as the students next year. Chris thinks that the teachers are getting into more of a rhythm and he has seen a difference in the way math is taught in the classrooms and involves a lot more conversations.

Tari stated that this is a real shift and one thing the committee should be aware of is that the Principal is a highly skilled math teacher and has been extraordinary in his efforts to providing

trainings in Orange and Petersham. Tari stated that Mr. Dodge is actually the lead trainer with the DESAC specialist in this work. Chris stated that there is a lot of negative press around the new math standards and he understands that and thinks that schools just need to do a better job of communicating the change to parents.

- e. **Elementary Curriculum Coordinator-** Tari stated that Roxanne Dorrie is coming on as of August 19 and is currently the Regional Literacy Specialist for the Massachusetts Department of Education and holds a BA from Syracuse University and post-secondary work at Lesley College and University of MA as well as administrative certification through CES in Northampton. Tari stated that she will be joining in on the retreat in July and be involved in all sorts of next steps. Tari stated that she is really excited to have someone of this caliber working with us.
- f. **Gym Use Policy-** Chris stated that he provided a copy of this to the committee and highlighted in yellow the changes that have been made. Chris stated that we needed to make sure we are sticking to this policy so this was reviewed by himself, Jay Burke, and Ann Degnan. Chris stated that he added clarification that the cafeteria and gymnasium are what we are allowing to be used because the kitchen is not allowed to be used unless there is a staff member present. Chris stated that on number 7 he added school community instead of resident because they have been allowing school choice students to use the building as well as the residents of the town and where more than 50% of students in the building are school choice that made sense. Chris stated that they changed the regulation of asking 21 days ahead of the time you need the space to 5 school days or business days ahead of time. Chris explained that they are asking that all school equipment remain in the building and stay where it is because they have had a couple issues with that. Chris added wording for this to be a peanut free facility which they have been telling anyone that comes in with parties all along that this is the case. Chris stated that they added something in for technology or equipment and that could only be used if there was a staff member present. Chris changed the wording that instead of damages being reported to the school committee immediately to the principle. Chris stated that money is to be collected prior to use instead of with the key returned so that we don't have to hassle anyone for money. Chris also mentioned that there is a new spot for people that are using the building to sign stating that they have read the policy. Chris stated that we are also asking if you use the building that you will need to get the key the day before and bring this back the day after use because there are not that many keys out there and we want to make sure they get returned in a timely manner. Jay Burke wanted to mention to the committee the they have changed the locks so that the key that is given out only has access to the front door no other doors in the building can be used with that key. Chris changed the fee to \$25 to align with the town hall fees.
Russell Fontaine moved to approve the Policy of Community Use of Facilities. Lynn Peredina seconded. VOTED: Unanimous.
- g. **Facilities Update/ Summer Plans-** Jay Burke stated that they had an insulation company come through today and it turned out very well and everyone seemed to be very impressed. Chuck stated that one of the main things that we were impressed with is that he was looking to stop air penetrations for heat loss for example in the chimney that we have. Chuck stated that he has great knowledge of how to deal with the installation of dense packed cellulose and was very thorough. Jay explained that the fire inspection company that the school was previously using had a bit of scheduling problems and missed scheduled appointments. Jay stated that one of the days of the missed appointments a vendor came to the front door and introduced himself and he was very impressed with his presentation. Jay stated that his price is actually \$50 less so we signed a contract with them and they will start after July 1st and will be coming twice this July. Chris stated that they work with a lot of big school districts in the area. Jay stated that the company is New England Fire and Security and they are out of West Springfield. Jay wanted to give the committee a heads up the 16,199 gallons were used to heat the building

and in the past it has been around 14,000.

Jay stated that he does have a few summer projects coming up one of them being the annual septic system cleaning as well as the operation of maintenance comes twice a year to go through the waste water system. Chuck asked if we have UV in that system. Jays stated no it has a sand filter and it goes through the whole series of that before it send it to the leaching system. Jay also stated that they are going to do the carpet and vinyl floors and resurface the gymnasium floor. Jay explained that he will be able to do the gymnasium and stage by himself in 1 day. Jay also mentioned general cleanup, and pressure spray of the windows. Jay stated that the big thing that Mr. Dodge and himself are talking about the gutters that were put up a couple of years ago have not held the paint and they are starting to look a little shabby. Jay would like to get to that project this summer. Jay stated that he wants to do some lattice work on the front porch. Chuck mentioned the idea of freeing up some of Mr. Burke's time by having someone come in and mow the laws. The committee discussed this idea and recommended a resident of Petersham that Jay Burke would feel comfortable using. Mr. Dodge will be giving that gentleman a call to see if he is interested because that could free up 8-10 hours a week of Jay's time.

Russell Fontaine wanted to bring up a parking issue. The issue is that at the end of the parking lot when parents are picking up and dropping off people were pulling into lines that aren't really spots and then people were leaving and trying to get through and it makes it really tight. Mr. Dodge noticed that it was happening and has now asked the last group of recess to put cones in that spot and that has worked great. Chris stated that they need to think of something to do in the morning. Chris stated that he needs to make it clear to parents that they can come into the building afterschool to talk to teachers but please park in the designated spots.

VI. REPORTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

- a. Superintendent Evaluation Update-** Tari stated that there is going to be an open session meeting on her evaluation this Friday at 3pm in the Mahar Library. Tari stated that the subcommittee has been reviewing articles via her website and looking and progress to date and they will be providing the Chairs Peter Cross and Patricia Smith information that will be reported publicly on Friday.
- b. Superintendent Contract update-** Tari stated that this is a done deal. Tari stated hopefully she will be signing that document on Monday.

- VII. REPORT OF THE PRINCIPAL-** Chris stated that he does not have a lot to say but he just wanted to mention that all of the end of year events were phenomenal and we had a fantastic end to the school year. Chris stated that graduation went very well and report cards were mailed out today. Chris has started sending out school choice letters for next year kindergarten's classroom and some other classrooms that have openings as well. Chris stated that it has been nice for him to experience all for him to experience all of the incoming phone calls of interested parents and being able to give tours. Chris stated that it looks like we are in good shape for next year and there were a couple of openings in 5th and 6th grade and he posted these in the paper on Friday and they were filled by Monday so he was excited about that. Chris stated that the summer programs started on Tuesday and these 2 programs have been running on Tuesdays and Thursdays for 12 total sessions. Chris stated that students have received their summer work and they took a lot of feedback from parents and lessened this a little. Chris is doing a principals award for the students that complete all of the teacher's goals. Chris stated that him and his staff are reading "Mind in the Making" and having a discussion on google docs as they go. Chris wanted to tell the committee that he is moving his office from where it is now to across the hall and a lot of the reason is for confidentiality. Where he is now has 3 copiers and a lot of staff in there. Chris will be moving into the guidance office and he can have meetings in there as well. David will move into Pat Martins old office. Chris stated that some of the copy machines will be moved into the conference room across the hall to get people into different areas. Chris thinks that this will be a good fit.

VIII. Vote for Superintendent to Conduct Business- *Russell Fontaine moved approve to vote that the Petersham School Committee authorize the Superintendent to conduct the business of the District over the summer months for ratification, if necessary, by the Petersham School Committee at its first regular meeting in the fall of 2014. Lynn Peredina seconded. VOTED: Unanimous.*

IX. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING-

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION-*Rusell Fontaine to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares. Chuck Berube seconded. Roll call done by Alyssa Roberts. All in favor.*

XI. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS- Wednesday, September 24, 2014

XII. ADJOURNMENT- *Russell Fontaine moved to adjourn at 8pm. Chuck Berube seconded. VOTED: Unanimous.*

The listing of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair, which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

Minutes Recorded by: Alyssa Roberts

APPROVED: