

Petersham School Committee

Minutes

April 11, 2013

In Attendance: Chuck Berube, Russell Fontaine, Lynn Peredina, Tari Thomas, Patricia Martin, Rebecca Phillips, and Ann Degnan

Meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. with a motion to approve the minutes from March 12<sup>th</sup> and March 26<sup>th</sup>.

Motion made by Russell Fontaine to approve the March 12, 2013 minutes, seconded by Lynn Peredina and passed with an all in favor.

Motion made by Russell Fontaine to approve the March 26, 2013 minutes, seconded by Lynn Peredina and passed with an all in favor.

Old Business: Motion made by Russell Fontaine to approve the second vote on the Restraint Policy with a second by Lynn Peredina and passed with an all in favor.

New Business: Chuck Berube asked the Committee if they were still interested in accepting school of choice students at the Petersham Center School. Lynn Peredina made a motion to be a School of Choice school for the 2013-2014 school year. Seconded by Russell Fontaine and passed with an all in favor.

Chuck Berube addressed the Committee with an update of the meeting with the Finance Committee. He stated that it did not go well. He told the committee that there needed to be some time spent between the Superintendent and himself as to how to proceed with the school budget in the future. One of the items of contention at the meeting was the figure of \$300,000.00 being used for incoming School Choice money as opposed to the \$350,000.00 that would actually be received. There needs to be more transparency when it comes to the budget. Chuck asked that there be an adjustment made to the School Choice amount to bring the budget to a number closer to what the Finance Committee would like to see.

Chuck also stated that he thought it would be beneficial for the Finance Committee to see what School Choice money is actually spent on each year. A handout was passed out to everyone itemizing the unanticipated costs and overages that occur each year and that the School Choice money funds. He explained the overages in detail to the Committee. On the last page of the handout Chuck asked that the School Choice amount of \$300,000.00 be changed to \$325,000.00 and then reduce the town appropriation by \$25,000.00. Also noted would be that there be another line added to explain that \$10,000.00 for the prior year and \$10,000.00 for the

current year were being held in reserve. Acting Superintendent Thomas stated that the Department of Revenue is showing \$350,000 as the anticipated incoming School Choice amount and that the money is given to the school in three payments with the last one of the year reflecting any special needs costs.

Chuck was happy that the original 8% increase in the budget would be dropped to a 5% increase with the use of the additional \$25,000.00 in school choice money, but stated that the Finance Committee may still ask us to cut even more. Chuck asked the Committee if they would support the following: 1) increase in school choice income, 2) keeping a running account which is always revealed, and 3) being held accountable to the Finance Committee for any unanticipated costs.

Russell Fontaine made a motion to increase the School Choice incoming projection from \$300,000.00 to \$325,000.00 to help offset the 2013-2014 budget. Lynn Peredina seconded the motion with the motion passing with an all in favor.

Tari Thomas informed the Committee that Mr. Christopher Dodge was hired as the new Principal for the Petersham Center School and would be starting his position on July 1, 2013. She went on to inform the Committee of what a great job the Interview Committee did and that Mr. Baldassarre drew up the contract and everything was good to go. The starting salary for the new Principal would be \$74,900.00, which was a reduction from the existing salary in the budget. Lynn Peredina made a motion to reduce Item 2210 (Principal's salary line) to \$74,900.00 to reflect the new Principal's salary. Russell Fontaine seconded the motion with the motion passing with an all in favor. Chuck stated that this would bring the bottom line to \$1,242,471.00.

Chuck then made a motion to recess the meeting at 6:50 p.m. to go into the Public Hearing meeting. The motion was seconded by Russell Fontaine and passed with an all in favor.

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Budgets and handouts were given to all in attendance. Acting Superintendent Tari Thomas gave a brief overview of all the adjustments that were made to the budget at the regular meeting within the last 22 minutes. She explained the handout of zero based budgeting to all in attendance.

She went on to explain that an additional \$25,000.00 would be added to the incoming school choice dollar amount of \$300,000.00 to bring that total up to \$325,000.00. Chuck Berube then spoke to those in attendance of the unanticipated costs that were incurred by the school and that were paid for by School Choice money. Chuck went on to explain the last page of the budget and gave the actual figure that was going to be used to reduce the budget to \$1,242,470.00. Finance Committee member Dave Davis stated that maybe there should be a contingency line placed on the budget to show the unanticipated items.

Concerns regarding the \$325,000.00 of incoming school choice money that the School Committee was showing and that the figure should actually be \$350,000.00 were addressed by acting Superintendent Thomas, who explained that the figure of \$350,000.00 was based on special needs figures and students that were on IEP's as of now and that from now until the end of the school year anything could happen that would change that amount.

Much discussion regarding school choice and whether it is beneficial to our school was held. It was noted that the School Committee had voted to continue to be a school of choice school at its regularly scheduled meeting earlier in the evening.

Russell Fontaine made a motion to close the public hearing at 8:15 p.m. with an all in favor. Russell Fontaine made a motion to adjourn the regular School Committee meeting at 8:16 p.m. with a second from Lynn Peredina and passing with an all in favor.