

Petersham School Committee
August 21, 2013

In Attendance: Tari Thomas, Patricia Martin, Chuck Berube, Russell Fontaine, Lynn Peredina, Chris Dodge, Ann Degnan.

Meeting called to order by Russell Fontaine at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: Corrected May 14th minutes had already been approved. July 22, 2013 minutes were approved as read. Motion to approve the July 22, 2013 minutes made by Lynn and Seconded by Russell with an All In Favor.

There was a Point of Information by Pat Martin that in the future minutes should not include visitors under In Attendance. This is for School Committee only. Visitors should be placed under Visitors in the future.

Hearing for Visitors: Ann Townsend told the Committee that she would like to be better informed before Town Meeting regarding School matters and that she would be attending future School Committee meetings.

Old Business: 2013-2014 Budget – Superintendent Thomas informed the Committee that both the FY2013 and FY2014 budgets are now in the new Budget Sense program and that **Stacey Mousseau, Financial Administrative Assistant, from R.C. Mahar will now provide oversight**. She will be there to help Ann with any budget questions or concerns. Superintendent Thomas explained to the Committee that there are two levels of approval for the budget; the Principal and the other the Superintendent. Beginning in September the Committee will be receiving an Expenditure Report for the General Budget, as well as the School Choice Budget.

Superintendent Thomas told the Committee that there is an update from the DOR regarding anticipated receiving money for School Choice. The new figure is \$399,000.00. She reminded the Committee that they voted for \$350,000.00 for incoming School Choice money. Superintendent Thomas than passed out a sheet which listed overages for the 2012-2013 school year and were taken from the School Choice account.

A motion was then made by Russell that all School Choice Expenditures in excess of what was voted at the annual town meeting be recommended by the Superintendent of Schools and approved by the majority vote of the Petersham Center School Committee. Seconded by Lynn and passed with All In Favor. Chuck mentioned that he felt that this will still be a problem and that the Committee need to make very clear to the public what we are spending this extra School Choice money on.

New Business: Questions raised on details surrounding school choice and special needs students; a request was originally made to provide an analysis of the cost vs. revenue of a child with special needs who is also a school choice student; Superintendent Thomas recommended that the Committee begin with an informational meeting on the school choice program and specifically how it affects school finance. She told the Committee that she has contacted Christine Lynch as well as Ken Rocke and that Ken Rocke would be willing to come out one evening to provide information regarding School Choice.

Report of the Superintendent: Superintendent Thomas informed the Committee that there are 30 staff at PCS and 112 students to start the school year. Staff begins on Friday with students starting on Tuesday, the 27th of August. Principal Dodge has participated in induction trainings and has been assigned as a mentor. He is also participating in leadership team on the district level. Superintendent Thomas will also be taking data on bus routes over the next month for the new contract. She told the Committee that her Entry Plan will go up on the websites later in the week with a plan to interview School Committee members, chairs of the Selectboard and Finance Committees, Chief Cooley, and others.

Chuck then asked if visitors had any comments and the Committee was asked if they would please have their meetings at times other than when the Selectboard have their meetings.

Russell asked Principal Dodge if the Reading Buddies and Friday Clubs will be coming back to the school. Principal Dodge replied that as of right now there was not enough time to fit those into the schedule, but assemblies were still taking place on Fridays. There was a question from one of the visitors regarding the count of school children. Specifically Petersham children vs. School Choice children. Principal Dodge informed the Committee and visitors of the count of each.

Superintendent Thomas brought up the questions that were asked at the last town meeting and mentioned the informational meeting that she was planning on scheduling with Ken Rocke for the next School Committee meeting. Chuck then mentioned that he would not be here from September 17th through the 24th and asked if the informational meeting could be held at a time other than then.

Principal's Report: Principal Dodge informed the Committee that the teachers have been in all week getting ready for the first day of school. He explained that there would be workshops throughout the school year for the teachers and what would be expected from each of them. Brandi Cooley resigned and has taken a teaching position with another school as a First Grade teacher. Kristine Wallace was hired to take her place. Kristine had spent the previous year as a substitute Para to help with the younger grades. Principal Dodge informed the Committee of his goals, with the main goal being safety. He has already met with Chief Cooley and they would be updating the Emergency Management Plan and offering a series of updates with the staff as well. There is a new Math curriculum and Chris will be overseeing this program. Fifth and Sixth grade students will be heading to

Ocean Park, ME for the week of Nature's Classroom on September 9th. Sunday the Nurse comes to the school and does bag checks and checks for any sickness.

September 19th is Parent's Night at the school and Instrumental sign ups, as well as the Annual Book Fair.

Superintendent Thomas explained to the Committee that the bus contract would be up in 2014 and she will be doing an analysis of the bus routes and number of students. Looking at regional cost-effective transportation, to that there is not a separate bus contract.

Discussion regarding asking a company for a projected 10 year enrollment for Petersham took place. Superintendent Thomas asked the Committee if they would like her to look into this. Russell asked what the cost might be for this. Pat Martin mentioned possibly \$100.00 for just Petersham data. Superintendent Thomas was asked if she could look into this possibility.

Items for Agenda: 2013-2014 Budget; School Choice Program Forum

Next meeting date: September 26, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. with invitation to Ken Rocke

Chuck asked the Committee if there should be a set date and time for upcoming meetings. It was decided to have School Committee meetings set as the 4th Wednesday of each month with the exception of December. Either there will be no meeting in December or the meeting will be scheduled for December 18, 2013.

Ann asked if the bills payable should be placed on the upcoming Agendas and was instructed to do so.

Lynn made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:52 with a second from Russell and motion passed with an All In Favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.