

**BERKSHIRE HILLS REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Great Barrington Stockbridge West Stockbridge**

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MONUMENT VALLEY REGIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL

June 5, 2014

Present:

School Committee: D. Adler, S. Bannon, R. Bradway, F. Clark, R. Dohoney, D. Kain, J. Krahm, C. Kuller,
C. Shelton, D. Weston

Administration: P. Dillon, S. Harrison

List of Distributed Documents:

June 5, 2014 School Committee Meeting Agenda

March 6, 2014 Meeting Minutes

March 6, 2014 Meeting Minutes - Revised

Opinion – PARCC vs. MCAS 2014as Policy Question

BHEA Unit C Revised 5-30-2014

Revision to BHRSD Policy JICFB (Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

June 5, 2014 Personnel Report

Rate Memo May 2014

Any additions, deletions and/or corrections to these minutes can be found at the beginning of the next School Committee Meeting minutes.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Steve Bannon called the meeting to order at 7:22PM.

The listing of agenda items 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 be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law. This meeting is being recorded by CTSB and will be broadcast at a later date. Minutes will be transcribed and made public, as well as added to our website, www.bhrsd.org once approved.

Eileen Mooney may also be recording.

MINUTES – March 6, 2014

Mr. Bannon – In your packet you have the minutes of March 6, 2014.

Mr. Bradway – I don't believe I opened that meeting.

Debbie Brazie – That item has already been corrected.

Mr. Bradway – But it hasn't been distributed yet.

Mr. Clark – It is on the printed copy that is up on the

Mr. Bannon – OK. There is one change. I opened the meeting.

Mr. Kain made a motion, seconded by Mr. Krahm to approve the meeting minutes, as amended, of March 6, 2014.

Unanimous approval.

TREASURERS REPORT – None

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

a) Good News Item(s)

Mr. Dillon – Let's start with the Principals.

Muddy Brook Regional Elementary School

Mr. Dingman – I have two things.

For the last three years we have actually used the end of the year as a time to keep teachers pumped up and looking forward. And we have organized quite a bit of PD, and this year has been no different. This year we have continued to be focused on writing. We are working with a great consultant, we are now in our second year, who is our link to Teacher's College, which is where our writing curriculum comes from. Our teachers just did their last day of PD. We spent a lot of time this year, both district time and time at Muddy Brook, to look at writing to text, which is one of the big shifts with the common core. So our teams today for the first time, Mary had a great idea and we mixed up. We had 1st grade teachers and 4th grade teachers and 2nd grade teachers and 3rd grade teachers, which doesn't always

happen. So that was a real nice opportunity for people in different places in the building who may not see each other for a week because they are on different floors to spend some time together and talk about instruction.

And then this will jump into some summer work, which Mary is organizing and we will talk about it later. But our teachers are busy and it has been effective and they are excited about what we are doing with English Language Arts.

And then additionally, through some different connections, and again, this is something really Mary has put together, we have teachers who are going to be connecting other educators in Northampton and looking at reading, looking at some of the new tools we are using for curriculum and developing our professional network, which is really important for our teachers in this district. And that is coming up the next two weeks.

Mary Berle – We have ten teachers from Muddy Brook and Monument Valley going to work with teachers in Northampton for two days. It is a way to save some money on these expenses. It is a nice collaboration.

And tonight we just had a really nice extension of our Community Forum project. The Community Forums that we have held over the last two years have brought in a particular clientele and we wanted to expand that. So we combined a health and wellness forum tonight with our community showcase end of year Project Connection bash. The theme was “Trying Something New”. Kids did a really wonderful job in Project Connection courses all year trying new things. We have a jam band tonight play homemade instruments. We saw a film on zombies taking over Monument Valley. There are some really great engineering projects from Scott Farrell’s course. Beautiful things. And then we had a light dinner, including tamales, fruit, hummus and vegetables, which everybody loved. It was a little bit of a risk and it went really well. And then also about 70 parents participating in a health and wellness conversation, facilitated primarily by our parent mentors, Susan Higa and Kristen Flynn who both have extensive experience in both. I brought you a souvenir. This is a bookmark that everyone received who came to the forum that has some tips on health and wellness locally, and maybe some of you will enjoy them as well.

Monument Valley Regional Middle School

Chris Congdon – Hi everybody.

At Monument Valley we have been very busy lately. We have curriculum meetings happening and wrapping up the curriculum work this year. So that has been going on.

Our big dance is tomorrow night in case you wanted to come out for the evening from 7:00 – 9:00PM. Dress up too.

Our orchestra students played for Muddy Brook today, so that was one of the high lights of our day.

We have an 8th grade project taking place that is student lead, to try to stop put downs and name calling and offer an alternative. That is sort of the legacy being left by our current 8th graders. So they are in the middle of the final edits on that.

Monument Mountain Regional High School

Mrs. Young – Thank you for those of you who were able to join us at graduation. It was a really gorgeous day at Tanglewood. We had a really wonderful graduation. You can see the valedictorian and salutatorian speeches both on

video and read them on Monument's web page, so go there. On Monument's Facebook page you will see hundreds of pictures from the Berkshire Eagle and iBershires of graduation. Really a wonderful Senior class. A wonderful group of students to work with. Again, great prom, great class day, the whole thing really went off without a hitch. That is always wonderful.

At the awards assembly we gave away over \$170,000 in scholarships, all donated by members of our community. Families, business, organizations like the Rotary Club and the Thursday Morning Club. Really wonderful support for our students.

You have sent hat our girls' tennis team, boys' tennis team and baseball team are doing really well. The baseball team is playing tonight in Turners Falls under the lights, so sending some good vibes out to them. And tomorrow the two tennis teams play. Boys will be playing in Lee and girls will be playing in Lenox at 3:30PM.

We are holding respect forums on the 12th. We sent ten students to be trained in peer leadership training with the Anti-defamation League. They will be coming back and working with teacher, working with Multi-Cultural Bridge and working with administration in hosting conversations about the tone and climate we set. How accepting, respectful, accepting and supportive we are of everyone in the building, regardless of their race, sexual orientation, financial status, size or age, etc. And this group, our Advanced Drama and Acting and Directing students have put together about a 90-minute production telling individual stories about challenges students face in high school. Both personal stories that are being performed by someone else in the group, but really getting at where Monument's strengths are and where we need to improve. So that will be the morning of the 12th.

Finally, a really wonderful opportunity that I want to share with you. I have mentioned this a few times this year, but Holly Troiano's Civics class has been working in partnership with an organization called The Civic Life Project. That project is about students choosing an issue facing our communities or our society, putting a documentary together on that that indicates work that could be done in a small community to help address the situation.

One of the groups in Holly's class chose gun laws and they have produced a film called "It Could Happen Here". They had an opportunity two weeks ago to meet with parents from Sandy Hook Elementary School and the people who have organized a group called "Sandy Hook Promise". And their interviews and conversations with these two parents of Sandy Hook victims is in the film. And they will be showing their film. Their film is being screened Sunday at the movie theater in Millerton, NY.

The other group did a film called "Ohana", which means "family" in Hawaiian. The topic of that film is single mothers, single parents. They have been invited to screen their film for the first time tomorrow night at the Woman and Fashion Film Festival in Manhattan. So Holly is traveling with this small group of students into New York City tomorrow afternoon where they will walk the red carpet of this film festival in Manhattan. Their film will be shown among other films produced by students at the girls' film festival of this event, and then they will be answering questions from the audience.

So another remarkable opportunity for young people all from people reaching out and into our school and saying we have a great idea, or us reaching out to them and providing this. You can see both films on Wednesday night, the 114th, at 7:00PM at Monument is you would like to join us for that.

Thank you.

District

Mr. Dillon – So, a couple of things on the district level.

I think I told you we had applied for a Behavioral Health grant with the Attorney General's Office, and sadly, we didn't get that one. We were one of 300 applicants and we don't win them all.

But on the other side of the coin, the President of the Massachusetts Teacher's Association, Pal Toner, nominated us to apply for an NEA Foundation Institute Grant for innovation in teaching and learning. We submitted that application and we expect to hear from them within a week about that, and that would put us in a cohort with like 13 other districts around the country. And this is a real outgrowth of our work and the district capacity project around labor and management. So we are hopeful about that one.

b) PARCC or MCAS Determination

Mr. Dillon – I wanted to bring up tonight and talk additionally about it on the 19th, and this is an assessment question.

Currently we use the MCAS assessments in grades 3 through high school. There is a consortium that has resulted in some tests that we have piloted a little bit called PARCC, and we are charged with making a recommendation to the School Committee, and there was something in your packet about sort of your role and authority around this, about which way we would like to recommend the district go from an assessment perspective.

Whatever happens, MCAS is going to change over time, and there is the possibility that the state fully adapts PARCC going forward, or there is the possibility they will continue to pilot for a year and then make another decision. This is controversial across the nation, and in a funny way the very far right and the very far left are becoming strange bedfellows over this.

When we looked at it and started talking about it as an administrative team our initial recommendation is that we do the PARCC assessments in grades 3 through 8, but we do the MCAS assessments in the high school, in part because the high school assessments are graduation requirements and we don't want to fool around with that.

There are things that are interesting in the PARCC stuff. There are things that are challenging. I know I talked to Dan about it and a bunch of other people. Some people feel the content in the new assessments is too challenging, and what used to be taught in one grade is now being taught many years earlier. It is dependent on technology. There is a whole host of things. But I wanted to start the conversation now and then bring it back to you again on the 19th. From a state perspective they would like us to make a choice and enter that choice electronically by June 30th. So our last opportunity to discuss it as a whole group, I think, will be on June 19th.

So if people have questions or things they are wondering about I can respond to some of it now, and we can talk more about them later.

Mr. Adler – I am just curious how our Principals feel about this? How do you feel about it? PARCC? MCAS?

Mrs. Young – The faculty and I agree that at this point the high school should stay with the MCAS. We have only piloted one component of the PARCC assessment to only two sections of Algebra I. So about 30 to 40 students have actually even experienced it right now. We have no idea what the high school English piece looks like. We know that if we went to PARCC in the next year those scores would not be held against us or for us in any AYP or evaluation. But the faculty has not seen at all what the PARCC is going to be really looking for for students. And at the high school it is a pretty high stakes issue. It is still their diploma, and we would still end up having to have some state assessment.

So our feeling is that from 9 – 12 we should just stay the course with the MCAS right now until it is much more clear what the PARCC is going to be, what it is going to look like in English, Math and Science and that we can prepare both our teachers and our students well.

Mr. Dingman – So we piloted this year. We field-tested the Math performance based assessment, end of year assessment in 4th grade. They are rigorous assessments. We are not going to see the feedback from them, but from anecdotal, over-the-shoulder they look good. They look fair and challenging. We haven't seen the ELA. Field tests will continue next year and then the decisions will be a little more concrete.

I think it also makes sense for us to get on this bandwagon and give our kids time to take these technology driven assessments. I assume, regardless of PARCC or MCAS, standardized assessments are going to move this way. They are going to be delivered in the way the PARCC is being delivered. So this will also give our kids a couple of years to become familiar with the platform for the PARCC.

One other thing that has been appealing about it is the tools and the opportunities that they offer diverse learners. So there are quite a lot of accommodations and things built in, calculators, protractors, rulers, tools for testing, strategies, eliminating answers, masking answers and things like that, all of which we offer to some students through the MCAS, and now all students have those opportunities.

So we are comfortable with making that recommendation moving forward for our kids.

Mr. Clark – Is either system, or are they both a contiguous continuity flowing from grade to grade in terms of curriculum? In terms of if we were, to say, do a hybrid of PARCC in the lower grades and MCAS in the upper grades do we face challenges of having some curriculum issues dealt with in a grade earlier? Or in our high school, since the high school kids come not just from our middle school, but also from BCD, Steiner, Farmington River and Richmond, is there an issue there?

Mr. Dillon – I will let Mary speak to it first, and then maybe I will.

Mary Berle – Both tests are now aligned to common core and I think the advantage of pushing to PARCC for K – 8 is that by the time those 8th graders are in 10th grade they are going to be doing PARCC too, likely, or Massachusetts won't adopt PARCC and there will be another computer-based assessment. So it makes sense to keep the kids who have been doing paper-based assessments doing MCAS until we have made the switch over.

Mr. Clark – So I gather from what you and Thad said, and Marianne, we are looking at a transition period of 4 to 6 years where things are going to be dynamic.

Mary Berle- It is interesting. The state is asking districts to choose MCAS or PARCC for next year and they are hoping that it will be a 50/50 split so they can study. And then... there are all these politics around PARCC, so if for some reason we decide not to do PARCC then we are going to be coming up with our own thing that is technology-based. I have been serving for the last six years as one of twelve teachers on an MCAS development committee for Math, and I don't think that the MCAS test is getting better, as a lot of the folks move to PARCC who were working on MCAS.

Mr. Clark – Just one follow up question. To that point, do you see MCAS migrating to be more like PARCC over the next 3 to 5 years?

Mary Berle – Definitely. Whether it is PARCC or something else, we are moving towards a digital platform.

Mr. Dillon – And I would add there is a strong possibility that the timeframe will be much quicker than 3 to 5 years.

Mr. Clark – And I guess the question that needs to be asked is, will the state accept us doing a hybrid of K – 8 selection for PARCC? And you and Peter both mentioned they want us to choose. That implies to me choose one.....

Mary Berle – I believe so. That is our reading, and we need to tell them soon so that we are in the list of actually getting to make the choice.

Mr. Dillon – So we think it is an acceptable choice. I haven't talked the state yet about it, but I have talked to some other districts who are thinking the same. Some people are very adamant and they are digging their heels in and just doing MCAS. Some are going entirely to PARCC.

Marianne's argument is a compelling one. That as a high stakes graduation requirement for high school students it would be really problematic to shift the rules of the game in the middle for them.

Mr. Clark – One last question. Is there any money on the line? Is there any money on the table here that we can pick if we go one way or the other? Any incentives?

Mr. Dillon – Some, but not a lot. In the long term the PARCC assessment end up being less expensive than the MCAS. The downside of moving to whatever technology-based assessment is.... And we have budgeted for it, but the impact on our own technology. So there are other schools who are, "We are going to do paper until they stop sending the tests on paper, and we won't spend any money on technology". On the one hand they are saving money, but what are they losing? And we are not just using the technology for assessments. We are using it for all sorts of other things.

Mr. Adler – My only concern would be, if we go with PARCC are we putting our students at a disadvantage if we are requiring them to pass the MCAS to graduate? That would be my only concern.

Mary Berle – I think we are putting our kids at a disadvantage if we don't put them into PARCC earlier, because once more than half the state is comfortable with PARCC, and then we are trying to catch up two years from now, that is not a great position for our kids to be in. Since all of the kids in the high school have been working with paper and pencil that is fine. The kids who are coming up will have been doing paper and pencil and digital, so I think it is neither.

Mr. Weston – So when we go to PARCC, is that like starting the baseline for our scores all over?

Mr. Dillon – They haven't worked that out, but our understanding is we will be held harmless going forward. The pilot of the test is to try to figure out scores and **cannot hear on tape**. So the first couple of years we will be starting over.

Mr. Weston – So here is my question. How do you go to our MCAS ranking.....?

Mr. Dillon – The hold harmless thing is we can't be hurt. But they are going to try to correlate the two and we will see how.... it is really complicated stuff.

Mary Berle – The reason why they were trying to do 50/50, and most states aren't doing it this way, is that they want to equate MCAS scores to PARCC scores so that they can look the same. The Psychometricians are going to go crazy on that.

Mr. Weston – I guess my question is, if there an opportunity here to reset our baseline for scores to help our AYP?

Mary Berle – It depend son how you look at it.

Mr. Bannon – Any other questions?

Mr. Dohoney – I guess my question is, all the comments from the staff, the presumption is that PARCC is the future. Am I correct?

Mary Berle – The assumption is that the whole world is moving to digital based testing and that anything is going to.... unless we get rid of the common core, all these tests are now about the same set of standards. The presumption is they are moving to a digital platform and we might as well be moving our kids while everyone is testing, because once everyone has figured it out and we are joining that doesn't feel quite as good.

Mr. Dohoney – So the preference isn't that one test is better then the other. It is that the format is better because it is the future.

Mary Berle – Right. The format is better. Massachusetts has actually done a really solid job, I think, of creating a responsible standardized test. But the people whoa re working on PARCC are also.... There is this huge effort going into it. It is going to be a learning curve for everyone involved. I think it is better to be in the learning curve with everyone then trying to catch up later.

Mr. Dillon – And this is a highly political debate. So initially a bunch of states signed on for PARCC and then some states dropped out. There is another different testing consortium that Vermont is using and some other states. It is going to go back and forth some. Massachusetts talks about that it is piloting PARCC, but the Commissioner sits on the PARCC Board. Many people think a decision has already been made, but they remind us that we are just piloting this. So there is a lot to unpack in this.

Mary Berle – There is another important thing that we are doing in parallel, which is district wide we are having really significant conversations about local assessments and performance assessments. The summer work this year is teachers working very specifically on performance assessments that reflect our local mission and values. So I think keeping that strong and having alternative and multiple measures is really maybe the most important thing for us to talk about and do.

Mr. Dohoney – If we go to the split format with the high school staying MCAS and the other school staying on PARCC, what will the trigger be to switch the high school over?

Mary Berle – After a couple of year the state will decide. There will be a decision, and at that point the 8th graders taking PARCC now will be 10th graders who have had both experiences, so they will had MCAS as younger students and

Mr. Dohoney – You make that sound like that is good.

Mary Berle – It means that we have actually prepared them as well as we can for an uncertain future. 8th graders who take PARCC next year will have a lot of MCAS experience and some experience in the digital platform. So when they are in 10th grade, regardless of what the state does, they will have had some baseline experience. That is positive, I think, for them.

Mr. Bannon – Any other questions? We will continue this at the end of June.

c) Ratification – Unit C Contract

Mr. Dillon – So the next thing on the agenda is potential ratification of the Unit C contract. And to put this in a broader context, this was a negotiation year, and the Negotiation Committee negotiated with the three bargaining groups. Two of the groups, we formally used the interspace bargaining process. And that was an out growth initially of the district capacity project. We all in this room got trained on that, and the facilitator came through the district capacity project, and then we plugged into the federal mediation and reconciliation service and the Commissioner from Albany, Cynthia Jeffries, finished the work with us. So that was positive.

But what you have in front of you is a copy of the Unit C contract. That is the group that represents the paraprofessionals. The negotiating team worked very hard with that group and the paraprofessionals worked very hard on it too, and came up through the concienous process with a contract that everybody has things in it that they like, and everybody has things in it that they agreed to.

Mrs. Kain made a motion, seconded by Mr. Krahm to approve of the Unit C contract.

Mr. Bannon – Any discussion?

Unanimous approval.

Mr. Dillon – Thank you. That is wonderful news. We will pass it on. That group will be happy.

And I should have mentioned, as our tradition, the group votes before and they also voted unanimously on that. So we have come a long way since our last round of negotiations.

d) Update:

- Bullying Prevention Policy

Mr. Dillon – The next thing is an update on a Bullying prevention Policy that is also in your packet. I thought I would have Marianne speak to it just for a second.

Mr. Clark – Is this in the packet to be referred to the Policy Committee?

Mr. Dillon – Occasionally we have direct interactions with the state, and occasionally the state informs us of particular changes. So let me let Marianne speak to it first and then we can talk about that part of it.

Mrs. Young – We have heard from the Department of Education around some of the language in our CVTE Programming. You received a request earlier this year that we needed to update our language around inclusivity, that we recognize all spectrums of people’s choices and orientations. This is similar to this in a report that I have received from the Department of Education based on a situation that we were working with at Monument.

We were cited by the Program of Quality Assurance to look at our district bullying plan, which is current. It does have all of the components that we are supposed to have. What it doesn’t have right now is this definition of perpetrator. Our district bullying plan, the one that we are using at the schools, identifies only students.

So I emailed Peter and let him know about this and asked that we put it on your agenda, because really the only change that we need to make to that plan, which is considered policy, is that we expand the definition of perpetrator to include the language that is here on the cover page. And this is the language that is cited from the statute and the Department of Education.

We either need to include a definition of perpetrator in our.....

Changing tape side

Mrs. Young – Where we to use the word “student” we need to write “student”, comma, and a member of the school staff, and include this entire phrase. So it is really just a simple, one informative piece for you, but also a request to go ahead and put this language in the Bullying Prevention Plan.

Mr. Dillon – So Fred, going back to your other question, we can take this information back to the Policy group, and the Policy group can make a recommendation to this group, or because it came directly to us from the state and the guidelines were updated at the state level we could simply change it.

Mr. Bannon – And I guess my question would be, does MASC not have a policy that includes this since we spent money with MASC, and can’t we just look at their policy?

Mrs. Young – I haven't checked MASC, but what I have been told is what I wrote in here. Our Bullying Prevention policy is the most updated policy from the Department of Education, and I think it is what you would find on the MSAC's website.

Mr. Bannon – But, wouldn't they have the definition in there?

Mrs. Young – This law was changed, effective just this past July. So they may have it, but it may not have prompted us to go back. I think we adopted the recommended policy on Bullying Prevention around 2011, somewhere around there.

Mr. Clark – This past July is almost a year ago. They pride themselves on responding to the law as it becomes effective, and our prescription is supposed to do that.

The issue, Peter, is that this isn't really.... This needs to be "wordsmithed" into the policy. Right now there isn't a section here that specifically has a definition of perpetrator. If there was we could simply take that out and insert this bold paragraph here. I think what we need, right now, the definition says, "Bullying is the repeated use by one or more students", and we need to either "word smith" that together to align with the state law or redo the policy so we have a definition of what a perpetrator is.

Mr. Dillon – So let's just do that at the Policy Committee with all the other work we are doing and when we are ready we will bring it back to the whole group.

Mr. Clark – Yes.

Mrs. Young – The MASC may have updated it and you may find the "wordsmithing" already done. I can check that and I can report back to the Department of Program Quality Assurance that you have been informed and that our Policy Subcommittee will be making the appropriate adjustments.

Mr. Bannon – And we will do so.

Ms. Shelton – This just brings me to my question of what is going on with Policy and where is the Policy Book?

Mr. Dillon – This has been a busy spring, and we have been doing a ton of work on negotiations, and those have all just come to conclusions and we need to re-double our efforts on policy, and we will. I have spoken to Pat and we have a little work to do on our end and we need to start scheduling meetings again and then bring back whole sections to this group, and I think that would be a very nice project for us to bring to closure in the month of August.

Mr. Dohoney – Do we want to move that over to the Policy Committee? Is that what the

Mr. Dillon – Yes.

Mr. Dohoney made a motion, seconded by Mr. Weston to move the needed amendment to wording in Policy JICFB - Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan to the Policy Committee for review and completion, per new state law.

Unanimous approval.

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Policy Committee

Mr. Clark – No further report.

b) Buildings & Grounds Subcommittee

Mr. Krahm – We met this evening. The projects we have been working on are the chiller and the geo-thermal, which will be done over the summer. And we discussed further the solar array. We should be having some more input on that soon.

Mr. Bannon – Any questions?

c) Superintendent's Evaluation Subcommittee

Mr. Weston – We met. We met again just this past Monday, and I just received some information this afternoon from Peter Dillon that I will be disseminating to the subcommittee, and they will.....

Mr. Dillon – I disseminated it to them already.

Mr. Weston – OK. So you have all the information. I will be sending out an email reminding them to fill it out and return that to me as soon as possible with the lofty goal of having this ready for the next meeting.

Mr. Bannon – Great.

d) Technology Subcommittee

Mr. Bradway – We will meet in two weeks and we will be declining on a site map, hopefully, and a general design for the new district and school websites.

Mr. Bannon – Any questions?

e) High School Building/Renovations Committee

Mr. Bannon – With everyone's indulgence, we are going to move around the High School Building/Renovations Committee report. Under that tonight we were going to have a brief discussion about forming a Steering Committee to start the project off. Karen Smith is here.

The idea here is to have an over-arching steering committee to work on this project for now through November. And Peter will talk after we do this about the vote.

So there are four groups that need to be represented. One is the School Committee, the administration, the Building Committee and the outreach group. And there needs to be some cohesiveness.

Mr. Clark – When you are finished I would like to be recognized.

Mr. Bannon – OK.

There needs to be some cohesiveness between the groups. So my recommendation would be, and Peter and I have discussed this, I have discussed this with Rich, is that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the School Committee, the Co-Chair of the outreach groups, Karen Smith and Rebecca Gold, Marianne and Peter representing administration, and the Building Committee, which would be Dick Coons and Steve Soule. So all would be able to sit down at one table and discuss this, and the School Committee then would be brought up to date at every meeting, we would have a report.

So that is what we would like to do to be much more cohesive than we were last time. There were too many people talking to too many other people and it wasn't cohesive enough, and it got very disorganized.

Mr. Clark – I was just going to ask... what you say makes sense. I was going to ask, isn't this the responsibility of the School Building Committee? Isn't that the group that is charged with this responsibility instead of forming another group? Can't it be done under that umbrella?

Mr. Dillon – In the discussion we had we believe the School Building Committee still has a role, but its role is primarily connected to design and cost. So I think Dick has the intention of re-convening that group on an ongoing basis to get feedback.

Mr. Clark – This is a point that I raised early in the first round too, with a similar answer.

Mr. Bannon – I think the Building Committee has its own specific charge and I don't think its charge is as broad, at least in my opinion. As bringing the project to the voters. I don't believe that is their charge.

Mr. Clark – I don't believe the Building Committee has been used very well, to tell you the truth.

Mr. Bannon – We did talk about that, and I agree with you.

Mr. Clark – Because things.... I am supposed to be on that Committee, and things happen, things get decided, which I don't know anything about. Whether they happen on at Committee or separately. I have no idea.

Mr. Bannon – That is one of the reasons we want to be more cohesive so everyone knows what is going on. And the Building Committee will meet again. We have talked to Dick. And I think we are probably going to have a sub-section of that Committee meet very soon, which I know you will be a part of. Because the Building Committee had some flaws in it, so we will move ahead with that.

Mr. Dohoney – Could you re-state the purpose of this new committee?

Mr. Bannon – The purpose of this committee is to bring some cohesiveness to this project. There was, in my mind, and Rich, I didn't mention your name, you definitely will be an adhoc. You have done some things....

Mr. Dohoney – That's OK.

Mr. Bannon – It is written down here. I just didn't mention it.

We found people didn't know who to contact, and when I say "people" I am talking about voters, I am talking about community members, I am talking about officials, when they had questions. Therefore, Peter may be answering 70% of the questions, I might be answering some, Dick Coons might be answering some, and it just got to be too repetitive. Some of the questions were well answered by some people, but other people who really should have answered them did not even know that the questions were being asked. So we need to bring this thing together so there is some cohesiveness.

And Rich, do you want to talk about that at all?

Mr. Bradway – I was just going to say that the purpose of this is to... in the previous vote we had the School Committee, we had the Building Committee and we had this outreach committee. They were not working as well together with each other. They were working kind of independently and it just offered up an opportunity from people in the community, a perception, that we didn't have our act together. I think that part of this Steering Committee is to try to create more cohesiveness so that we can actually have a more unified, how should I say it? It is not necessarily a more unified effort. It is a unified message. So if someone asks a question we will answer it appropriately and all parties involved in this Steering Committee and all groups in this Steering Committee will have agreed upon that. There is not going to be any kind of different voices in this. There will be one voice, but each portion of the Steering Committee will have their distinct responsibilities. So for example, the Building Committee will be specifically talking about the building and the project. The School Committee members will be representing the School Committee so that we are informed of what is going on and making it clear where our line and our responsibilities are. There will be the administration to advocate and speak about the project, especially from like an educational perspective, and then you have this Outreach Committee that is being used to build awareness about the project in the community.

Mr. Clark – The real purpose of the committee is advocacy. That is the bottom line, isn't it?

Mr. Bannon – There is no doubt that we want to advocate. I hadn't thought of it that way. Obviously we are not here.... But I think we want to send out a clear message, an accurate message, and I felt last time that each group was slightly left out and I don't want that to happen again, including the School Committee.

Mr. Clark – The mission of the committee is to advocate for positive results of the ballot.

Mr. Bannon – Yes.

Mr. Bradway – I think one of the things is there was this perception that there was a lack of transparency last time, and I think this time around we want to make it clear that we are not hiding anything. We are not trying to do anything. There are no ulterior motives. There is a project that we need to vote on and we are advocating for it.

Mr. Bannon – We are all on the same page. And I think we were last time, but it wasn't clear that we were.

Karen Smith – I think that all of you have spent a lot of time on this. I think what we need to do is we need to present information that is clear and concise and accurate. Number two, we need to have a trickle down theory with people in the community in the sense that they are not coming to meetings. Basically, what I am hoping to do and what Rebecca is hoping to do is we will have 150 people that will be part of our team, not 15. And that we will go into small neighborhood groups, by neighborhood, by neighborhood to sit down quietly and casually and go over this, what we are trying to do, why we are trying to do it, what the rationales are and not have these large whatever meetings to do whatever. The Building Committee is going to be used as a resource. If we have a question about a particular part of that that is what they are for. They are going to be able to help research and speak to it. Marianne and Steve Soule, we need people to talk to it from a perspective. We want to talk to the elementary and middle school parents. We want to outreach to some of the senior groups. We want to get more people involved at a grass roots because it needs to be a ground swell from below and not from above. This needs to be a bottom up project and not a top down project. Trying to get all sorts of different people and highlighting it. I am imploring the School Committee at some level that we want to be set up in the four areas. West Stockbridge, Stockbridge, Housatonic and Great Barrington. We want to sort of grid out the neighborhoods and figure out who the people are that support the project who would be willing to have people come into their homes, or whatever, and sit down and talk it out. Let's find out what the problems are. We know what the problems are. Present it in an organized way that we have an option to vote this project up in November. If you choose not to there may be some scenarios that we can't answer all the questions because there are things down the line we don't have any control over. But to at least give people an open view as to what we have done. The website will reflect more of a calculator thing. If you put your assessment in you can get the actual number, instead of this average home value thing, in all the communities. We will have documents. The Committee is going to have what we call a Google Group, am I right so far?

Mr. Bradway – Yes.

Karen Smith – So all the information that gets disseminated between people, if something asks a question, we know where the question came from, that it gets directed through the right person and then it gets back through that person. So we know what people are saying. So we have things that are all centralized, because the same questions gets asked 150 times and sometimes, I am not sure whether the question is getting asked to get an answer or the question is getting asked to see if they get a different answer. So let's get everything centralized and clear. And we need the people in the community, and I need the School Committee to help us out. Identify people in your neighborhoods that are supportive and would like to help.

Mr. Dohoney – Of your composition of this committee, what is perceived to be all of the focus points, is the financial aspect of it under the administration head? It seems to me that 99.9% of the questions that came up last time around all centered around the finances, and there is not necessarily a designated delegate on your committee for that.

Mr. Bannon – I think it would be Peter, and through Peter he would go to Sharon for that information and we would make sure that.... I think the key answer to that, though, is if a question is asked about finances, and I think probably you are right, 99% were asked, that we all understand the question, we all answer the question in the same way, there

is this average and there are all kinds of ways of answering it, and we all have to be on the same page because what can be perceived as two different answers could be the same answer, but given two different ways. We don't want to do that because it just confuses too many people. So yes, it would be Peter.

Mr. Dohoney – The municipalities?

Mr. Bannon – Actually, that is what the School Committee representatives are going to represent. Rich and I will represent the municipalities and contacts with them.

Mr. Dohoney – OK.

Mr. Bannon – Because we are elected officials as they are.

Any other questions or comments?

So I would like a motion to form this committee as outlined.

Mr. Dohoney – I have more questions. This is a committee that we are creating, will the committee have access to school department staff? Staff time, staff resources?

Mr. Bannon – No. Other than Peter, Steve and Marianne.

Mr. Bradway – Can you elaborate on that?

Mr. Bannon – Let me just say what my answer meant, and you tell me if I am right. If you meant will be using school Secretaries or school copiers, no, we will not.

Mr. Dohoney – Why not?

Mr. Bannon – Because it is going to be a ballot initiative committee.

Mr. Dohoney – No it is not.

Mr. Bannon – There is going to be a ballot initiative committee that is going to do that.

Mr. Dohoney – There is. Karen is a representative to that group to our group.

Mr. Bannon – Right. But as far as doing handouts etc. to the public to advocate for this that is their job.

Mr. Bradway – They are the outreach group.

Mr. Bannon – That is the outreach groups' job. We are not going to use taxpayers' money for that. Does that mean that at a Steering Committee meeting if we need eight agendas.... The agenda will come from the district, obviously, and it is eight pieces of paper, or ten. That is different. But in bulk, no.

Mr. Dohoney – This is an information processing and generating body.

Mr. Bannon – Yes.

Mr. Dohoney – And all the information is contained within the district. I am not viewing it as a propaganda machine.

Mr. Bannon – No. Neither am I.

Mr. Dohoney – I am fine with that.

Mr. Bannon – We are trying to keep this as clean as possible. So my answer still will be no, within reason. In other words, if Sharon needs to come up, because obviously Sharon is going to have some knowledge, and she comes up with a spreadsheet and the Steering Committee needs ten copies of the spreadsheet, yes, it is going to come from the school. If we decide to use that spreadsheet and pass out 1,000 copies of it, it is not coming from the school.

Mr. Dohoney – I am not worried about the copies. I am worried about the information. What is this committee says we need a spreadsheet that analyzes “X” versus “Y”?

Mr. Bannon – That would be well within the administrations purview.

Mr. Bradway – I think that we should be clear. This is one thing that was absent the last time we did this, and that is you are going to have an outreach committee whose sole purpose is to be focused on getting the word out and getting people to support the vote. There will be school resources to put up public documents and information, which should be posted on our website, that are pretty much analogous to what this group should be doing on their website as well. So that information, anything that is a public document, anything that has been generated as part of this project should go up on our website. I would totally advocate for that because it is public information.

Mr. Bannon – Yes, absolutely. Rich I am glad you are asking these questions because these are the questions that were never asked or answered last time because we never sat down and talked about it, and this is exactly the reason I want to do this. So I am glad. Had we thought everything out? I thought we had, and I still think we have. What I want the Steering Committee to be able to do is be information gathering and to represent the four groups. And then clearly, the Ballot Action Committee has a very separate mission that will not use school resources.

Mr. Dohoney – Absolutely. Maybe I am not phrasing this correctly, but this is a 50 something million dollar project that was designed by highly trained professionals and accounted for by highly trained professionals and is being asked to be voted on by 4,000 to 6,000 lay people, which is a tough thing to ask. The processing of information of this complexity in no other place in the world would be left to a team of volunteers.

Mr. Bannon – And it is not going to be. Let me give an example. If someone asks a question that we have not heard before, which will be unusual because we have heard a lot of questions, it is not up to the Ballot Action Committee to come up with the answers. It is up to this district to come up with the correct answer. If it is a financial or a building question we may go to the Building Committee, if it is educational we will go to Marianne and Peter. If it is monetary we will go to the Business Office and we will get that answer. You are absolutely right. We are not saying that we won't use our resources because it is our project, and the School Committee is not giving up any of their, and the

word isn't correct, any of their powers or any of their legal obligations and turning it over to anyone. We still have the obligation. We brought this forward and we are bringing it to the voters. This is still our project.

Mr. Bradway – Peter brought it up in the last vote. The reason why we have Peter doing this is because if you were a Fire Chief advocating for a new fire house you would be entirely within your rights to be doing stuff and doing work to provide that information and we would expect it of him. I guess my point is that we are using the resources that we have at our disposal.

Mr. Dohoney – My question actually, the hidden agenda to my question was to go one level forward. Peter has been doing everything for this.

Mr. Bannon – Here is the answer to that. This is a delegation of responsibility now, which I am not sure we had last time. I will say Peter did everything, he did a lot last time, and it was at the expense of being Superintendent of this district and having to take twice as much time in his life, and it just wasn't the right thing to do. Now we are delegating. The Building Committee is responsible for this. The administration is responsible for that, etc., etc. So we are changing the way things were done the last time. If someone called Peter and said they would really like to sit down and talk about "X", "Y" and "Z" Peter has every right to say they really should be sitting with this person because they are the ones who have that distinct knowledge. You don't really need to sit down with me. That is not his area of expertise. If someone wants to sit down and talk about the effects of the high school this project will have, he may say Marianne really has a good handle on this and to sit down with her first. That is exactly a good point.

Mr. Dohoney – I am not going to talk about this anymore, because what I would really like to propose is an impossibility. I think we should have an Assistant Superintendent for special projects. Someone who is properly trained, properly paid to administer all of this stuff, and we have no choice but to delegate this to a team of volunteers.

Mr. Clark – To follow that up. At one point we talked about having a consultant. We had a budget for a correspondence and public relations issues, some of them related to the high school project. Is that appropriate use of dollars? And if we don't know the answer tonight, can we get the answer to that legally?

Mr. Bannon – Yes, we can Fred. My answer to this is, to spend money on this project, further money other than MSBA allowed money, we are shooting ourselves in the foot and we will be perceived very poorly by the public spending taxpayers' dollars on it. That is why I think... I won't say every other because I don't know, many other areas end up doing it with volunteers. We are volunteers for God's sake.

Mr. Dohoney – Absolutely.

Mr. Clark – Given that answer, if we still need that level of expertise and we can't use public dollars, is there another mechanism that we can use to fund it or the committee can use to find it, in kind services or.....

Mr. Dohoney – Steve didn't say we can't. He thinks it is not policy.

Mr. Bannon – The other person we do have, and not necessarily a consultant, but John Winniker has said he will give all his time that he can to this, and he has. He is completely not getting paid right now.

Mr. Clark – I don't think we used him.... I recall his interview before we hired him and there was a lot of talk about his resources that he could bring to bear that I don't believe we used fully last time.

Mr. Dillon – I have been speaking to John regularly, really regularly, and I am quite hopeful that we will take advantage of his skills going forward.

Mr. Bannon – What we are really trying to do is to look at, and I won't even call it mistakes because that is not the right word, but where we had some pitfalls the last time and try to improve them. If you have a second chance at something, whether you wanted the second chance or not, you might as well look at where things were done well and where things didn't happen as well as we would have liked and improve on it, and I think this is what this is doing. I think forming this steering group, using John Winniker in a better manner. I think there are some things we did really well last time and will continue with. Some things we didn't. And if we don't learn by where we maybe fell down a little bit, then shame on us.

Mr. Dohoney – I actually view this concern that I have as not unique to this project. The amount of energy and time that was sucked up in this and the SRO debate last year would have been cut by 10% if we had a professional public relations person in our administration. There is no organization that serves this many citizens that spends this many dollars that doesn't have somebody who is professionally there. I will bring it up at budget next year.

Mr. Bannon – I think that is the appropriate place to bring it up. You are absolutely right.

Any other discussion on this?

Mr. Weston made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Kain to form a Steering Committee to work with the high school building project, per the description of such committee provided.

Mr. Bannon – Any discussion?

Unanimous approval.

Mr. Bannon – I really feel good that we are on the right step. It doesn't mean we are going to get this passed, but I think we are in an organizational period where we as a School Committee have now taken some responsibility, and that is good.

Mr. Clark – Is there any update on the progress of the high school relative to the election date and any feedback from MSBA?

Mr. Bannon – You read my mind because I asked Peter to talk about this forward. Could you talk about the vote date and then your quick discussion with the MSBA?

Mr. Dillon – So I had a quick discussion with the MSBA yesterday. Yesterday morning they shared this body's news with the full Board, and in the conversation they were asking details about when we might have a vote, and I told them we are looking to do a vote in the fall. That potentially it might be on Election Day. That the advantage of doing it on Election Day would be that it would save the district, and in turn, the taxpayers' money to not have a separate special election.

There is a funny wrinkle in Massachusetts General Laws that elections around school debt issues are supposed to be a minimum of 4 hours and no more than 8 hours. That appears to me to be inconsistent with the notion that the polls are open on Election Day for 13 hours. So we are exploring how to keep the polls open for potentially this part of our vote for the full 13 hours, and we are working on that now. I will be talking to the three Select Boards in the next week to ask for their support of that.

Mr. Clark – So does that mean that the MSBA Board is supportive of the November 4th date?

Mr. Dillon – They are always very delicate in their language. They are supportive of a fall vote, which very well could be November 4th.

Mr. Bannon – What would have to happen, correct me if I am wrong, in order to use November 4th and use the full 13 hours is we would have to get special legislation.

Mr. Clark – **Cannot hear on tape.**

Mr. Dillon – Yes. That is something we are exploring.

Mr. Bannon – If we do, Peter would like the three Select Boards to be on board with this, and then we would go ahead and try to advocate for that. It makes perfectly good sense to do it then. And the MSBA, as Peter said, is being very diplomatic about it.

Mr. Clark – But supportive of a fall vote.

Mr. Bannon – Yes.

Mr. Clark – Which means no earlier than September 1st.

Mr. Bannon – Well, we wouldn't be ready for then either.

Mr. Dillon – Plus, the whole other thing about it that is complicated is set in the **cannot hear on tape** with the MSBA, so that is a whole other process that we have to go through.

Mr. Bannon – Any other questions on this whole process? And we are going to use a lot of School Committee time between now and November 4th to make sure everyone is on board and understands where we are and what we are doing.

Mr. Clark – Will the School Committee be notified of the meetings for this adhoc advocacy committee? Will the School Committee be welcome to come and sit as **cannot hear on tape** or in the audience as members?

Mr. Bannon –Yes.

Mr. Clark – Yes to both? We will be notified and we will be welcome.

Mr. Bannon – Yes. As far as I know they are open meetings, and if they are open meetings you are always welcome. You are welcome to everything. If the law says they don't have to be open meetings then we will post them as such. But as far as I know, right now, we will say they are open.

Anyone else? Karen, thank you for your time.

PERSONNEL REPORT

Mr. Bannon – Any questions on the personnel report?

Mr. Clark – I have a few questions. I was a little disturbed by this personnel report.

The personnel report is tagged 2013 –2014 school year, and I am just wondering why these notices are coming at this time of the year. Are these positions that are being filled now, or are these positions that were previously filled? If that is the case we are not getting timely notification of these issues.

Mr. Dillon – Can I go through them one by one?

Mr. Clark – Well, I can give you all of my questions if you would like.

Mr. Dillon – Yes, give me all the questions.

Mr. Clark – The first one here is the “Dress Up Dance Coordinator. There is nothing like that that I recall in our contract. We have got to stop making up definitions.

Mr. Bannon – According to our contract they are allowed so many stipend position at \$900.00 and some odd dollars, a limited number, at both the elementary and middle school.

Mr. Clark – They can make up the title?

Mr. Bannon – Yes. They can make up the title. I didn't make up this one, and it is not at 212.50, but Peter maybe can explain that.

Mr. Clark – My other concern has to do with some of these people show up on multiple stipend reports. I don't want to pick on any particular individual, but can somebody assure me that if somebody is getting multiple stipends, that is presumably for doing work beyond their contract hours. Can somebody assure me that their contracted hours are not being suffered because of all of the stipends? In other words, we are giving people lots of stipends here. Some of them. There is one individual that is on this list that I recall her name four times at least this year.

Mr. Dohoney – I have a suggestion on that. Maybe at the end of the year we could get some kind of summary on one or two pages of all the stipends paid in the preceding fiscal year.

Mr. Clark – We have asked.

Mr. Bannon – You wouldn't be able to read the font in one or two pages.

Mr. Dohoney – Whatever it has to be. Something where somebody could look through it.

Mr. Clark – We asked for that and I have never seen it.

Mr. Dillon – A number of people have seen it. Let me try to talk to a couple of things.

I don't want to speak about the details of negotiations because even though we are included, it is not yet appropriate to do that, but it is something that has come up in the context of negotiations and we will be looking at it additionally.

Separately, it is something we have talked about at length as an administrative team and while I am very confident that the thing you are concerned about, either "double-dipping" or people being pulled in too many directions, I am confident that is not an issue. That is something that we are aware of and we are going to be even more deliberate going forward about that.

On this particular one, if you look carefully, and it is in very, very small print, there are a couple of people that are getting two stipends, but if you look in the very small print you will see one is for the academic year and one is for a discreet summer program. And in both cases they are funded by special education grants. So on the surface it doesn't look great, but if you actually read the small print it is OK and appropriate.

Occasionally we get things up from the schools and because of the timing of our meetings, to see somebody as an assistant coach, and while the season is still going on and they are playing right now, it would be better if the assistant coaches appeared towards the beginning of the season as opposed to towards the end of the season. So that is something we will continue to work on.

And then the last one, while the title of the Dress Up Dance Coordinator is less than ideal, Steve was right about the little bit of latitude about positions. What I need to continue to work with my team on are that the..... it has been a common practice that if two people split something, whatever the stipend amount is, that each of them would get half. And that is fairly easy because you know that a particular stipend amount might be \$2,030.00, and if they split it then they would each get \$1,015.00.

There have been some instances where folks got creative about their math and it is not a 50/50 split, but it is 20% of a stipend or 30% of a stipend, and there is intentionality behind it, but I don't think that was the intention of the School Committee when you give us a little bit of flexibility of that, so we will fine tune that.

Mr. Clark – So, to follow up. I was aware that the summer and the other were different seasons. My comment actually had to do with a different person that is on that list, that only shows up once today, but has shown up many times throughout the year.

Secondly, I don't believe you addressed the question of, I understand we are now getting the notification of the summer grant, but why are we getting the notification for the Student Services Project Leader for activities that have already concluded?

My basic thrust is, this is the end of the school year. Why are we not getting timely comments on these things?

Mr. Dillon – You are correct and that is something that I have to work with my team to fix. I am sorry that I am presenting these late.

Mr. Bannon – Can I just ask Marianne a question, because my memory is terrible and I don't remember. Marianne, I know you have stuck to this really well. The booster club one, did we approve that? Do you remember? The Assistant Baseball Coach funded by the booster club?

Mrs. Young – Yes.

Mr. Bannon – I just don't remember. I know you have stuck to it really well. I just have to ask.

Mr. Dillon – And sometimes, because of the schedule of our meetings and things, Marianne has to come and get you to approve it, and then it can't end up on the personnel report until after the meeting that you approved it. So, if a particular season, and our baseball season is very short because it is cold here, but if a season is 10 weeks and we don't know until after tryouts and things get going, so it takes two weeks to generate the letter to get on the agenda, and then after that meeting it is another two weeks to get on the next agenda, that is how we end up with things like that.

Mr. Bannon – Any other questions on the personnel report? Thank you Fred.

PERSONNEL REPORT

Resignation:

John Miller	Technology & Information Technician District Buildings	effective 6/10/2014
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Extra-Curricular Appointments:

(2013-2014 School Year – unless stated otherwise)

Karen Ross	Dress Up Dance Coordinator Monument Valley Regional Middle School	Stipend - \$212.50
Peter Wilson	Assistant Baseball Coach Monument Mountain Regional High School	Stipend - \$2,315 <i>(funded by Booster Club)</i>
Jennifer Miller	Student Services Project Leader Monument Mountain Regional High School	Stipend - \$1,015 <i>(funded by SPED grant)</i>
Susan Teigen	Student Services Project Leader Muddy Brook Regional Elementary School	Stipend - \$1,015 <i>(funded by SPED grant)</i>
Kathryn Burdsall	Student Services Project Leader Monument Valley Regional Middle School	Stipend - \$1,015 <i>(funded by SPED grant)</i>

Susan Teigen	Student Services Project Leader Muddy Brook Regional Elementary School <i>Summer 2014 (7/1/2014 – 8/21/2014)</i>	Stipend - \$1,015 <i>(funded by SPED grant)</i>
Jennifer Miller	Student Services Project Leader Monument Mountain Regional High School <i>Summer 2014 (7/1/2014 – 8/21/2014)</i>	Stipend - \$1,015 <i>(funded by SPED grant)</i>

BUSINESS OPERATIONS

a) Additional Compensation Rates

Mr. Dillon – In the Business Operation thing, and I will talk about this a little bit from an instructional perspective, one of the issues we have been trying to work through is unifying or consolidating a range of rates and making them coherent and consistent. And over time there were a whole bunch of things that were paid at different rates, and it didn't make sense, and one thing got layered on top of something else and got layered on top of something else.

So in your packet you have a memo that details our recommendations for tutors, instructors, paraprofessionals working in other programs and then substitutes for non-school day or year programming. All of this stuff exists outside of the contracts so I am beginning it to you all for your feedback, and then ultimately for your approval.

Sharon Harrison – It makes it consistent. It is easier for the appointing supervisors. It makes it consistent. Like with the tutors we had a low rate, we had four different kinds for non-specialists, so we are trying to make it consistent and understandable for people who might apply for these positions because it hasn't been, and then like I said, for supervisors so there is no guess work.

Mr. Dillon – And this is partly we are a victim of our own success. So we have done all this great competitive grant writing and we are getting all of these grants, and in the context of all of those grants we need to figure out a coherent structure to compensate people.

Mr. Adler – I am just curious about the top one, because it really doesn't matter, but how does this compare to what the current rates are? So for example, tutors, \$40.00 and hour. You said there are multiple different levels or different groups or different people who are doing the same kind of job. Is this the average of them, basically, or how did you come up with the number?

Sharon Harrison – That is the instructor rate. So what we did, you will see, when we looked across all of these rates, if you are a certified teacher that is the rate you would get if you are tutoring because there is a different level of expertise that you are bringing then say, me, if I were to tutor someone.

Mr. Bannon – Any other quesiotns?

Mr. Dohoney made a motion, seconded by Mr. Krahm to approve the compensation rates, as presented.

Mr. Bannon – Any other discussion?

Unanimous approval.

EDUCATION NEWS – None

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Clark – I wonder if you could give us an update on the Chapter 71 and the state budget. I understand that Senator Brewer has put forth a recommendation that Chapter 71 regional school transportation be funded at 90% this year, which if you do the math, I think would result, we were funded at roughly 60% before and it is \$1,000,000, it is roughly \$300,000, plus or minus, windfall for us.

Mr. Dillon – Potentially. So we have reached out to MASC and MASS, so the School Committee's group and the Superintendent's group on this, and Senator Brewer is in his last term and is retiring and apparently he is trying to do this as his legacy project. I have talked repeatedly, and you all have too, about regional transportation is the unfulfilled promise. It has never been fully funded, or maybe once it was. So the Senator proposed 90% and the House proposed around 60%. So now they come together... I don't know what they do. Arm wrestle, fight, argue, agree, cooperate and we will see where it lands. What is going to happen is highly speculative. We could land at the 90%. We could land at the 60%, or it could be anywhere in between. We will likely know in the next three weeks. Say it was the full 90% and we got the extra \$300,000, it would just come to us and then ultimately would drop down to E & D.

Mr. Bannon – The irony there, and Sharon, correct me if I am wrong, we can't spend it because at the town meeting we vote a spendable amount.

Sharon Harrison – Right.

Mr. Clark – Well, we shouldn't spend it.

Mr. Bannon – It would drop to E & D. My recommendation, which is purely premature, is that we find some way to return it to the towns.

Mr. Clark – We could have that discussion. I think it would be a one-time windfall given that Senator Brewer is retiring.

Mr. Bannon – Well, it is going to E & D, so it is a windfall for E & D.

Sharon Harrison – The other caution is that when they projected... This year they are using last year's end of year report amounts projecting to what this year will be, projecting to what is actually available when they give it out next year. So that is why I am always conservative because even if they were to say 70% this year it is not until this year's end of year reports are reconciled by the state in next December does that rate actually get set because they don't know what everyone's cost is. They have a pot of money, but only once they know what everyone's cost is can they decide what the reimbursement rate is, based on the pot of money they have.

Mr. Dohoney – Should we be doing anything to advocate for Senator Brewer’s proposal?

Mr. Clark – Monday night there is another legislative session with our MASC District group in the library at Pittsfield high school with sandwiches at 6:00 where Smitty and Ben and the rest of the Berkshire delegation get together with the Berkshire School Committee’s. You probably have all been notified. I know I was.

Mr. Dillon – Is anyone planning on going?

Mr. Clark – Yes, I am planning on being up in Pittsfield.

Mr. Dillon – I think it is a very appropriate thing, and they are very supportive. Smitty and Ben have always lobbied for additional regional transportation aid, but just to remind them how important it is. And if we are talking to gain \$300,000 and it has never been 100%, then one could say that every year we have lost \$400,000 for many, many years. It is millions of dollars that we have been deprived of. So if somebody wants to make that argument it is a compelling one.

Sharon Harrison – I prefer that we push that SPED transportation start being reimbursed because we get nothing back on that.

Mr. Clark – That is an important sedgeway because, given that we do have this meeting going forward on Monday, are there nay other issues that members of the Committee are particularly interested in having aired?

Mr. Bannon – You know that we need to continue to hammer home school choice until we are blue in the face, whether it matter to the Senator and the Representative or not, whether they can do anything about I t or not, we can’t forget about it.

Mr. Dillon – And connected to that, and we have announced it and it is starting to be in the papers, there is forum at the high school on June 18th at 7:00 on school choice. We have a field representative coming from MASC to help us in that conversation.

Mr. Clark – I believe the other issue is minimum local contribution that is going to be raised by the rest of the group on Monday night.

Sharon Harrison – Yes. Having that set, not just a joint resolution like they did this year, but having it set before House One goes out.

Mr. Clark – I have a couple of things that I notified Steve about that I wanted to talk about having to do with tuition, if you will indulge me. It is kind of interesting because the minutes that we approved tonight were from the March 6th meeting when we did talk about tuition. AT that time we were involved in negotiations and decided we would defer future discussions until those negotiations were done. I think this is future so I am going to make a motion.

Mr. Clark made the following motion, seconded by Mrs. Kain:

Resolved, that the tuition for the following school year shall be presented and approved by the Berkshire Hills Regional School Committee annually by December 1st of the previous year.

Mr. Dillon- In the actual tuition agreements we wrote in that new agreements needed to be negotiated by September 30th.

Mr. Clark – OK.

Mr. Dillon – At least for this year.

Mr. Clark – That doesn't preclude this motion. What I am suggesting is that that negotiation can take place outside of this resolution. This resolution says that by December 1st I would like this committee to vote annually to accept or to post the rate for the following year. Now if you say you negotiate something on September, whatever, that is fine.

Mr. Bannon – Are you precluding a two or three year agreement?

Mr. Clark – No. I am not precluding a two or three year agreement. What am I am requiring is that we vote annually to set the tuition rates.

Mr. Dohoney – Flat rates.

Mr. Clark – The resolution does not say that. I could foresee differentiated rates for the middle school versus the high school.

Mr. Dohoney – But not from sending communities.

Mr. Clark – It doesn't say that. I don't want to restrict it to that level at this point. I want us to bring it back with a date certain. I don't want us to get caught into what we caught into this year where because of issues outside of our control by others we got to the point where we didn't have choice to do so.

Mr. Bradway – Just one procedural thing you said. You said to vote annually by December 1st to set the rates.

Mr. Clark – To accept the rates.

Mr. Bradway – To accept the rates, OK. Because if we are doing multi-year agreements...

Mr. Bannon – That is why I asked.

Mr. Dohoney – The rate is kind of not.... Any tuition contracts must be voted on and approved by December 1st of the preceding year?

Mr. Clark – I would prefer not to do tuition contracts whatsoever, if you ask my opinion. I would prefer to simply unilaterally set rates and accept people who come to our door.

Mr. Bannon – But your motion does not also preclude us doing a contract.

Mr. Clark – Correct. Which I would believe would not have the force of a contract, but rather be a memorandum of understanding. And Rich, if you want to weigh in for that.

Ms Shelton – Did we just approve two or three years that we were running a certain rate to these districts that we just.....

Mr. Bannon – No. One year.

Mr. Weston – I guess I am confused as to what this would obligate us to. Is this something that would be a policy that we are setting? How bound are we to it if we were to approve this? If it was a policy I could see we would be bound to it.

Mr. Clark – It would bind us to have a vote by December 1st.

Mr. Weston – Is this something that.... I just don't understand the mechanism.

Mr. Bannon – The question I would we put this into school district policy because we don't have a School Committee Policy Manual, so this..... so other than writing it on my hand we would make sure we enforce it because it is binding if the School Committee approves it.

Mr. Clark – For many years we have not brought this in front of the School Committee and simply continued with an undated, I will call it a memorandum of understanding, with our partner towns. I believe this issue should be voted in public session, and I believe it should be done annually.

Mr. Dillon – Just as a point of clarification. I get why the notion of a tuition agreement or contract could be perceived as problematic, but absent that, if we decided to take kids then the only other mechanism would be choice, which is currently \$2,500 less than the tuition rate. So if we throw the tuition thing out, then the only other way to accept kids would be through the choice process.

Mr. Bannon – What Peter is saying is you cannot set tuition rates and not have a contract with those towns and allow those students to come in.

Mr. Clark – I don't understand.

Mr. Bannon – Farmington River, for instance, if we didn't have a contract with them, the only way to take those students would be under school choice.

Sharon Harrison – You can't charge them anything different.

Mrs. Kuller – Could I make an alternative suggestion that might accomplish what we want without being restrictive, and that is that we review the status of tuition agreements by December 1st of every year.

Mr. Bannon – That is up to Fred if he wants to.... you are putting this as an amendment, but.....

Mr. Bradway – If we do decide to come up with an agreement that is three years, what are we voting on for that year. And if it is voting to just acknowledge that rate and we don't vote to acknowledge that rate, what do we do? I guess that is what I am just a little bit confused.

Mr. Dohoney – I think we are going a couple of steps behind. I think what Fred is proposing is that decisions about tuition for a school year should be decided well in advance of when we historically have, and I don't necessarily disagree with December. I think your use of the term "rate" begs another issue. The only way we can accept tuition money, from what I understand, is through a tuition agreement. It is not an open market where people can pay us that. So I would say I would use the term "contract" if I were you. I would say, "All contracts for tuition must be approved by December 1st of the preceding year".

Mr. Clark – I defer to legal counsel. Perhaps we should refer it to that. I stand by my motion, sparing any legal thing. The purpose of the motion is to try to keep it as simple as possible, to set a date, and to say that annually this will be brought forward in public session and voted upon.

Mr. Bannon – We will bring this to legal counsel after we vote, if we approve it, and if it is not....

Mr. Dohoney – Do you want to table it and have a report back? Have I already missed my opportunity to move to table?

Mr. Clark – Whatever you want. I would just asoon vote on it.

Mr. Weston – So if we don't have a contract in place by December 1st, would that motion preclude.... District "X" doesn't sign something with us by December 1st, we don't have an agreement with them for tuition, then the next year we don't have those students here?

Mr. Bannon – And we could lose \$750,000.

Mr. Weston – I think there need sot be some careful steps taken.

Mr. Clark – It doesn't say that is the only time we can vote on the issue. It says that we would vote on it.....

Mr. Bradway – **Cannot hear on tape.**

Mr. Dillon – We had a previous experience where one of our partner districts just didn't want to talk to us for a year.

Mr. Dohoney – Then they cannot send their kids here.

Mr. Dillon – If we follow Dan's line of reasoning, if they didn't talk to us for a year, then do we default to the previous year's agreement or do we throw their kids out?

Mr. Weston – I want to have a choice. I don't want to have a circuit breaker in place that says if we don't have an agreement by December 1st we are throwing them out, because I see we are going to have one by January 1st.

Mr. Bannon – Fred has asked to call the vote, and so I will.

1 member voted approval.

Mr. Adler, Mr. Bannon, Mr. Bradway, Mr. Dohoney, Mrs. Kain, Mr. Krahm, Mrs. Kuller, Mrs. Shelton and Mr. Weston opposed.

Motion defeated

Mr. Clark – I have another additional resolution.

Mr. Clark made the following motion:

Resolved, the Superintendent shall develop guidelines for the admission of tuition students. Admission students shall be based on a space available basis.

The motion was not seconded.

Mr. Clark – My third is a reintroduction of a previous resolution that I made on March 6th.

Mr. Clark made the following motion, seconded by Mr. Weston:

The Superintendent shall draft a letter requesting the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education establish tuition rates for Massachusetts school districts. Copies of this letter are to be distributed to our legislative delegation.

Mr. Bannon – The problem with this, as I see it, is in two words, school choice. We already have the state setting rates for us that we don't like and can't change. I understand that you are asking the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to establish these rates, Fred, and I have as little faith in them establishing rates as I do.....

Mr. Clark – Since it is my motion, I can speak to it, since we have a second. That is a quarter of the states in this country set tuition rates for local tuition between districts. Our neighbors in New York State set tuition between districts for every school. It is posted. Taconic Hills is \$13,000. It is posted on their website. New Lebanon is \$12,000 something or other for this year. It is posted every year by October 1st. Our state already sets tuition for all vocational programs, all Chapter 74 programs, including the two certified programs that we have here. They are posted on the website right now. They are about \$8,900 or something in that range for our vocational. The rates at McCann are \$16,500 that the state sets.

The state also calculates under the foundation rate something similar, I know Sharon is going to correct me if I am wrong, something similar to the costs that we incur, minus, I believe, capital for Berkshire Hills. They are already collecting this data. They are already establishing that. I believe our foundation rates is \$9,900 for this year.

My point is many states are already doing this. The state is already doing it for vocational programs. They are already collecting the data that they could use for this and they have a mechanism to do it.

Mr. Bannon – Any discussion?

Mr. Bradway – Could you repeat the motion please?

Mr. Clark repeated his previous motion.

Mr. Bradway – So we are just drafting a letter asking them to do something, and that is pretty much the extent of the motion.

Mr. Dillon – If the School Committee asks me to do something that in my judgment is inconsistent with state laws and processes, am I obligated to do it?

Mr. Dohoney – No you are not. But that is not what this is.... Asking you to send a letter to advocate....

Mr. Clark – It doesn't say that you personally advocate

Mr. Bannon – And you could say right at the begging that the School Committee asked you to write this letter.

Ms. Shelton – I am concerned that it could be drastically lower.

Mrs. Kain – That is my feeling.

Mrs. Shelton – The Chapter 71, that doesn't live up to what we need. School choice doesn't live up to what we need. I would be afraid that we would be getting even less.

Mr. Dohoney – **Cannot hear on tape.**

Mr. Clark – Speaking towards my motion, my notion is that if we can enter into our negotiations with our partner feeder schools and have a third party setting the rate we can say it is not us charging, it is these guys that set the rate here. This is what the cost is.

Mr. Bradway – The letter we are writing, they are not going to do a one

Mr. Bannon – We are asking them to do it for the whole state.

Ms. Shelton – We are a very small portion of the state....

Mr. Bannon – It is an advocacy letter that if you agree with the concept you would agree to send the letter. If you don't agree with the concept you wouldn't.....

Mr. Bradway – Why don't we just send it out, each of us?

Mr. Dillon – That is one thing. There are so many slices of the pie and there are only so many "asks" we can ask. DO we want to use one of our wishes for something

Mrs. Kain – As opposed to transportation...

Mr. Dillon – Or special education transportation.

1 member voted approval.

Mr. Adler, Mr. Bannon, Mr. Bradway, Mr. Dohoney, Mrs. Kain, Mr. Krahm, Mrs. Kuller, Mrs. Shelton and Mr. Weston opposed.

Motion defeated.

Mr. Clark – Thank you for your consideration.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Adler – I would just to say it was a pleasure to see some of us at the graduation, and I am looking forward to next year where we have more of us there. I hope we will have more then five of us. I think it is a fantastic occasion, and I think it should be something we should be proud of as School Committee members.

Mr. Bannon – It was very nice. It was a wonderful graduation.

Mrs. Kain – And I was sorry to miss it.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION – None

PUBLIC COMMENT –None

Mr. Krahm made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Kuller adjourn the public meeting at 9:05PM.

Unanimous approval.

Debra E. Brazie, Recorder

Secretary

