



**Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District School Committee
Regular Meeting**

~~**DATE: Tuesday, January 24, 2017~~

~~**DATE: TUESDAY, January 31, 2017**~~

Note rescheduled second time for inclement weather.

****DATE: THURSDAY February 2, 2017****

TIME: 6:00 PM

LOCATION: Auditorium, Southwick Regional School, 93 Feeding Hills Road, Southwick, MA 01077

MINUTES

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

I. ROUTINE

A. Attendance

The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson of the School Committee, Mr. Houle at 6:02 pm

The Following were present:

School Committee: Jeffrey Houle, Chairperson
George LeBlanc, Vice Chair
Theodore Locke, Secretary (Tolland Rep.)
Jean McGivney-Burelle
Kelly Clendenin
Pamela Petschke (Granville Rep.)
Maria Seddon

Administration: Jennifer Willard, Superintendent
Stephen Presnal, Business Manager
Amy McLaughlin, Recording Secretary

Student Representatives: none

News Media: Southwick News, Westfield Evening News

Observers: approx. 60

B. Opening Ceremony – Pledge of Allegiance

C. Secretary's Report

1/10/2017 Meeting Minutes: Accepted as written

Motion by LeBlanc, seconded by Locke 7/0/0

D. Warrants - Circulated

E. Correspondence

- Town of Southwick School Sewer Project Update

On January 17, 2017 Superintendent Willard received an email from Randy Brown from the Town of Southwick DPW regarding an update to the School Sewer Project. Mr. Brown's email communicated that they were wrapping up the design process by the end of January and included a schedule for the bid process as well as some attachments that included the latest design drafts of the sewer pump sub-station.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Emily Lachtara, Southwick, MA, stated that she represented a group of students and community members who supported the reinstatement of a District Girls Soccer and Softball coach. She read excerpts from a petition that had been signed and asked for more information and transparency regarding this situation.

Stephen Cook, Granville, MA, stated that he believed the agenda item to modify the timeline related to the feasibility study should not be acted upon because he questioned the extraordinary circumstances that existed and he believed that no fiscal analysis had been completed.

Laura DeGray, Southwick, MA stated that she is a bus driver at SRS, Woodland and Granville and that the drivers working for the District develop valuable personal relationships with students and a sense of community.

Danielle Sullivan, Granville, MA stated that she forwarded Superintendent Willard a picture that a Granville student took of a note posted in the faculty lounge at the Southwick Regional School. The note encouraged readers to support the closure of Granville Village School. Ms. Sullivan feels the note is inappropriate. Ms. Sullivan stated that she is sad because the kids are upset and asked the School Committee to not vote to close the school before the next school year. Ms. Sullivan requested an extra year before closing the school.

Ted Sussmann, Granville, MA stated that he was on the building committee and regionalization committee. Mr. Sussmann distributed paperwork that he stated were copies of documents from the District and their contractors during the Building Project. Mr. Sussmann stated that Granville had a history of bad decisions they'd made relating to the Village School including the 1990's when they turned Tolland away. He stated that the regionalization was approved by an overwhelming majority by all three towns and the Building Committee worked to be sure the buildings were sized right for the enrollment. He stated that he was surprised by the excess capacity that the District has currently. He stated that at the time of regionalization, Granville Village School was to become another school in the District. He stated that he believed the students at Granville Village School were not incorporated in to the District. He stated that requests to bring Granville Village School students to the Rec Center were denied. Mr. Sussmann stated that he believes that the region is growing with companies like Pratt & Whitney and Amazon investing in the area and expanding jobs.

David Ripley, Granville, MA stated that the handouts distributed by Mr. Sussmann prove that repairs on the Granville Village School were promised. Mr. Ripley stated that previous administration stated that if the MSBA took care of Southwick, the District would take care of GVS. Mr. Ripley stated that the Granville Village School has not received any repairs. Mr. Ripley stated that he thinks the closure of the school is a backdoor plan about money and not education.

Richard Woodger, Granville, MA stated that he is a Granville Selectman and grandfather. Mr. Woodger stated that the study was not complete and that Superintendent Willard told the Select board they'd be involved in the study but no one had questioned them. Mr. Woodger stated that he believed they'd been short changed on the study. Mr. Woodger stated that Pratt & Whitney and Amazon are adding jobs to the area and the salaries for these jobs would be low paying and workers will want to move to Massachusetts towns like Agawam, Southwick and Granville to avoid high Connecticut taxes. Mr. Woodger stated that Granville School Building would become unusable if it was closed and unoccupied. Mr. Woodger stated that the larger class sizes would not be good for young kids.

III. STUDENT ADVISORY REPORT - none

IV. EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATION

- A. School Facilities Use Discussion with select board members from Southwick and Granville, Tolland select board members also invited.

Attendance: Granville Select board Members: Ted Sussmann, Richard Woodger, David Ripley
Southwick Select Board Members: Doug Moglin, Joe Deedy, Russell Fox

Mr. Houle invited the Granville Select board Members to join the Southwick Select Board Members in the front row of the auditorium to participate in the discussion. The Granville Select board members declined.

Mr. Houle stated that the discussion was placed on the agenda in response to a request by the Granville Select board meet. Mr. Houle then invited the Select board members from both Towns to direct any questions at the Committee.

Mr. Sussmann stated that MCAS scores are worse now than five years ago and that he was not present at Superintendent Willard's presentation of the options relating to the study results but he was disturbed to hear that the primary allocation of funds, from savings of closing the Granville Village School, would be for security cameras for the Central Office staff. Mr. Sussmann stated that there should be less focus on security and more focus on learning opportunities.

Superintendent Willard responded that she regretted that Mr. Sussmann was unable to attend her presentation because security cameras were a single bullet point on one slide. Ms. Willard stated that had Mr. Sussmann been in attendance, he would have seen that the vast majority of the presentation was focused on student achievement and the opportunities to improve student achievement through Professional Development, Project Based learning classes, and job embedded coaches. Superintendent Willard stated that she completely agreed with Mr. Sussmann that the District can and should do better to improve learning and that MCAS scores are not where she'd like them to be. She stated that when she was hired by the Committee they tasked her to improve student achievement and she is committed to doing that. She stated that to increase the rigor and achievement, for all students in the District, it takes resources and that is was the focus of her presentation as.

Mr. Sussmann stated that Professional Development and Coaching is a commitment that should be included in a five year budget.

Mr. Houle invited further comment from the Select board members from both towns. There was none.

- B. Richard Labrie, Transportation Study – Mr. Presnal reported that Mr. Labrie was unable to attend the meeting due to the rescheduling. The transportation study presentation by Mr. Labrie will take place the first meeting in March.

V. ACTION ITEMS

1. Move to approve the changes to the 2017/2018 SRS Program of Studies.

Mr. Turmel, Principal, Southwick Regional School, reviewed the changes to the program of studies that will be implemented in the 2017/2018 school year. The full description of changes was provided in a handout that the Committee had reviewed. Mr. Turmel stated that the goal of many of the changes is to clarify course names and improve overall offerings for students.

Mr. LeBlanc asked about the addition of the AP Computer Science course and if a ½ year AP class is appropriate. Mr. Turmel stated that this new course offering is an online course and was only offered as a 1 semester course. Ms. McGivney-Burrelle expressed concern over the time lapse between the course offering in the fall and the AP testing in the spring.

Ms. McGivney-Burelle asked for some clarity on the Math offering. Mr. Turmel said that he would provide that information. Mr. Turmel informed the Committee that in the Math offerings the 1st semester and 2nd semester courses were identified by "volume 1" and "volume 2".

Mr. Turmel stated that the concept classes were being modified to college prep. These modified classes would have more supports in place for students and also be more inclusive. Ms. Petschke asked if the standards of the concept classes were being met in 7th and 8th grade and Mr. Turmel confirmed that they are.

Mr. Turmel stated that the changes to the music offerings would still have separate teachers for 7&8 and 9-12 but would promote many more opportunities for 7-12 integration.

For the Science curriculum, Mr. Turmel stated that Physics would become the freshman offering because of closer alignment with math curriculum. Biology has more standards and aligns nicely with the sophomore year while allowing flexibility to take other courses in years 11 and 12. With new science standards coming, the SRS team feels this change will put the school in a good position to implement those when they are released.

Mr. Turmel also highlighted changes in the Nutrition&Wellness, English 12 and Freshman Academy. The Freshman Academy course is being removed from the course offerings and re-evaluated to identify a course that better aligns with the 7-12 population at the Regional School.

A motion was made to approve:

Motion by LeBlanc, seconded by Locke 7/0/0

2.

Whereas, questions have arisen regarding how to define the meaning of "one year in advance" in the following language contained in the Regional Agreement: "A feasibility study conducted by the District's Central office one year in advance of the proposed closing.";

Whereas, the Committee believes the language means that the study must be completed in the school year prior to the school year in which the building will be closed;

Whereas, said study has been completed in the school year prior to the school year in which the building may be closed;

Nonetheless, the Committee wishes to avoid any confusion regarding said timeline, and

Therefore, the Committee hereby moves, based upon extraordinary circumstances, to modify the timeline to make clear that the study will be completed in the 2016-2017 school year, and the Granville Elementary School building closure would occur prior to the commencement of the 2017-2018 school year.

Ms. Petschke asked what are the extraordinary circumstances that require this vote?

Superintendent Willard responded by stating that she believed that the District was well within the timeline, as outlined in the Regional Agreement, of one year of conducting the study in advance of the proposed closing. Ms. Willard stated that this was confirmed for her when she spoke to Mr. Steve Hemman, who participated in the execution of the District's Regional Agreement. Ms. Willard stated that even though the Committee met the language of the agreement, external parties were suggesting it wasn't met. Ms. Willard said that the extraordinary circumstances are that it is not in the best

interest of students to close mid-year. Because of that, in the best interest of the students, and to avoid building closure mid-year it was advisable for the Committee to take the motion so that they would be covered by both pieces of language in the Regional Agreement.

Ms. Petschke asked if the vote was not made to waive the timeline, does that mean the school closure would take place in December? Ms. Willard responded that yes it could. Ms. Petschke asked if that would be a School Committee decision? Ms. Willard responded yes.

Ms. Petschke stated that she believed that if the language was unclear, the Committee should fix the language and not take the vote.

A motion was made to approve:

Motion by LeBlanc, seconded by Locke 6/1/0

VI. REPORTS

A. Superintendent

Calendar

Superintendent Willard notified the Committee that enclosed in their packet is the proposed District Calendar for the 2017/2018 School Year. She ask them to review prior to voting to approve at the next school committee meeting.

Lockdown Drills

Superintendent Willard notified the Committee that on Tuesday January 31, 2017 the District partnered with State and Local Police to conduct lockdown drills at all four schools. The drills went very well. Staff, students and law enforcement are learning and improving with each drill. She recognized Officer Michael Taggart for his outstanding organization of the drills and thanked all of the State and Local Police for their participating.

B. School Business Manager - none

C. Sub Committees and Liaisons

- *Negotiations*: none
- *Finance*: Subcommittee meeting took place on January 19th to review year to date budget expenditures and revisions to procurement regulations.
- *L.P.V.E.C Bd. Gov and Bd. Dir*: none
- *Policy*: There are some clerical edits to policies that will be reviewed at the next regular meeting of the School Committee
- *School Building Committee*:
- *Technology*: no report
- *Curriculum and Instruction*: The next ILT meeting is scheduled for 2/6/2017.
- *Legislative Liaison*: no report
- *SPED Liaison*: no report
- *Southwick Capital Committee*: Next meeting 2/9/2017

D. Policies

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ted Sussmann, Granville, MA stated that he believed that there were no extraordinary circumstances that existed to justify the Committee vote to modify the timeline.

Steve Cook, Granville, MA stated that he believed that the vote waived the requirements of the Regional Agreement and that no fiscal analysis had been completed. Mr. Cook stated that Malcom Gladwell was not an educator and should not be used as a reference for studies regarding class size. Mr. Cook stated that he sent the Committee information regarding the Tennessee Star Study on class size and that K-3 were the grades in which class size is most critical. Mr. Cook stated that smaller class sizes are the most cost effective option.

Julie Clifford, Granville, MA stated that she has a problem with the Committee waiving the timeline and the proposed Granville Village School closure. Ms. Clifford stated that she would find another school to send her daughter to because she would not send her to Southwick for school. Ms. Clifford stated that she was frustrated with the Committee because she felt the questions and comments made by the public were never answered.

Celeste St. Jacques, Southwick, MA stated that her children attend the schools in Southwick and the system has been wonderful and her children love it and she is happy there. She stated that if the Granville students are required to attend Southwick next year, she believes they will also have a good experience. She stated that she is concerned that she is hearing about class sizes at the Granville Village School that are considerably smaller than on the Southwick campus and states that this seems like an inequity.

Ted Sussmann, Granville, MA stated that his children would also do well in the larger classes at Southwick but not all children will.

Emily Lachtara, Southwick, MA stated that, as a senior at the Southwick Regional School, she has been happy with the course work she's been offered but would like to see increase rigor as she has taken all of the Math classes and there are no additional Math courses for her to take. She also stated that she believes that 1 semester AP course offered in the Fall, with the AP test in the spring, results in a course that teaches only to the test and lacks the depth and rigor of a full year AP course.

Debbie Van Etten, Southwick, MA stated that Southwick residents are not aware of what is happening with the Granville Village School. Ms. Van Etten stated that she was unable to send her children to Granville because she was told the services they receive are not offered in Granville.

Laura DeGray, Southwick, MA stated that her son was one of the 7th graders who moved to the Regional School mid-year. She stated that when the move happened there was lots of disorganization and disruption. She stated he now attends Westfield Vocational School because that is a better fit for him.

Dian Houle, Southwick, MA stated that she is a long time resident of Southwick and has been very involved in the schools and Superintendent Willard has the most passion and enthusiasm for students that she has seen in any of the District Superintendents.

Tracy Florida, Southwick, MA stated that her child isn't receiving all of the accommodations that they need on their IEP and that smaller class sizes would provide the ability to offer accelerated and decelerated instruction. She stated that the researcher Superintendent Willard used as a resource doesn't have a background in education.

Bill Stevenson, Granville, MA stated that students that reside in Southwick should attend the Granville Village School.

Danielle Sullivan, Granville, MA asked why the waiver was voted on before the school vote.

VIII. COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

A. Old Business

Best Use of Facilities Study

Mr. Houle stated that the District has put together a summary document of information related to the study. The Committee had copies of the document and it would be placed on the District website. Mr. Houle encouraged all Committee members to take some time to review the document.

Mr. LeBlanc asked if arrangements had been made for the upcoming meeting in the event of inclement weather. Mr. Houle announced to the Committee and the observers that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 7, 2017 in the Auditorium of the Southwick Regional School at 6:00 pm. Should inclement weather require, the meeting would automatically be rescheduled to Wednesday, February 8, 2017 at the same time and location. The meeting had already been posted as such.

Ms. Petschke stated that she doesn't see the necessity for equity among the schools. Ms. Petschke stated that the cost per pupil is an issue but GVS is different in qualitative ways. Ms. Petschke asked the Committee to re-read letters they'd received from community members. Ms. Petschke asked the Committee to consider capitalize on the space at GVS to give everyone in the District the opportunity to have very small class sizes. Ms. Petschke stated that for her, personally as a teacher, 16 is the optimum class size. She stated that in every classroom active student engagement is necessary and time is the biggest limiting factor in this and the District should work to plan appropriately for optimal class sizes.

Ms. McGivney-Burelle asked if Superintendent Willard could provide class size information for the District if GVS closes and there are 6 teachers at each of the grade levels K-3 next year, instead of the currently planned 5 teachers at each grade level. Superintendent Willard agreed to provide this information.

Ms. Petschke asked the Committee to think about where the District will be if enrollment goes up in the future.

B. New Business

February 21st School Committee Meeting

The February 21st School Committee Meeting is scheduled during February vacation and is listed as tentative on the current schedule. The Committee will review at the next meeting.

At 7:56 p.m., a motion was made to adjourn the meeting. With the members Jeffrey Houle, George Leblanc, Theodore Locke, Jean McGivney-Burelle, Pamela Petschke, Kelly Clendenin and Maria Seddon being present and voting individually and unanimously, the motion passes.

Motion by LeBlanc, seconded by Locke 7/0/0

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION - none

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Theodore F. Locke III".

Theodore Locke, Secretary

STAFFING

Appointments

Resignations

1. Jennifer Rogers SRS LPN effective last day of school June 2017

Retirements