



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

**DATE: Tuesday, September 5, 2017**

**TIME: 6:00 PM**

**LOCATION: Superintendent's Conference Room  
Powder Mill School, 86 Powder Mill 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 Mr. Houle at 6:04 pm

The Following were present:

School Committee:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jeffrey Houle, Chairman, Southwick
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> George LeBlanc, Vice Chairman, Southwick
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Theodore Locke, Secretary, Tolland
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pamela Petschke, Granville
	Maria Seddon, Southwick
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jessica Boldyga, Southwick
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amy Stack, Southwick
Administration:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jennifer Willard, Superintendent
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stephen Presnal, Business Manager
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amy McLaughlin, Recording Secretary

Student Representatives:

News Media: Westfield Evening News, Southwick News

Observers: Approx. 13

A. Opening Ceremony – Pledge of Allegiance

B. Secretary's Report

8/29/2017 Meeting Minutes: Accepted as written

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

C. Warrants – Circulated

D. Correspondence – None

**II. PUBLIC COMMENT – excluding personnel issues**

None

**III. STUDENT ADVISORY REPORT**

None

**IV. EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATION**

A. Opening Day – Joseph Turmel, Principal, Southwick Regional School; Amy Fouracre, Ph. D., Principal Woodland School; Kimberley Saso, Principal, Powder Mill School

Joseph Turmel reported that the Student Representative to the School Committee would begin to attend on September 19. He also reported that opening day at the Regional School was a success with all grades, 7-12, having schedules in place with very few adjustments needed. Students have until next Thursday to change their level of study. Athletics begin today and there are approximately 250 student athletes, grades 7-12, participating in fall sports. The boy's soccer had enough players to field varsity, junior varsity and a third junior varsity "B" team. In addition to athletics there are over thirty clubs and extracurricular activities available to Regional School students. The club descriptions will be presented at Open House on September 13 and students promote

the clubs within school. Mr. Turmel encourages all students to take advantage of the many extracurricular activities offered, including fall play has been selected and will be *The Crucible*. Mr. Turmel credited the staff and students for the successful start to the school year.

Ms. Petschke asked if the addition of the JVB Boys Soccer team is re-evaluated each year. Mr. Turmel responded that yes, the decision to field additional teams is based on student participation.

Amy Fouracre, Ph. D., reported that summer curriculum work was successful and generated some new excitement among staff and they've seen development of new PD. She stated that she is noticing the increased number of staff at the school with the addition of teachers at K-2 and specials teachers who are now full time, no longer splitting time between schools. She reported on some changes to the preschool program which now includes a substantially separate program. Dr. Fouracre reported that Woodland School has renamed "specials" to "perspectives. The selection of this name is because learning in these subject areas is not separate from traditional areas, but rather from the perspective of art, music, PE, health, etc... She reported that Health is newly offered at Woodland School this year, sharing a teacher with Powder Mill. Dr. Fouracre stated that the rolling start to the school year has been a success. This sees Grades 1 and 2 arriving on the first day, preK on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day and K on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day. She stated that Woodland School offers some morning clubs for Grade 2 that are new this year. These before school clubs take place from 8:40-9:15 and include, PE, Art, Music and Newsletter. Dr. Fouracre reported on the challenges faced regarding last minute student registrations and transportation changes made by families. She stated that in the future, the District may need to consider cut off dates for any changes that will be effective for the first day of school.

Ms. Boldyga asked why preschool parents are no longer able to park in the fire lane for pick up and drop off. Dr. Fouracre responded that it is for safety purposes.

Ms. Petschke asked if the Health program has a state framework. Dr. Fouracre responded that yes, there are standards and many focus on social emotional health.

Ms. Petschke asked how the morning programs are staffed. Dr. Fouracre responded that the programs take place during regular teacher hours and that the additional staff at the school has provided the flexibility to do this.

Ms. Stack asked about the new preschool programs. Ms. Willard responded that she would invite Noell Somers, Director of Special Education, to come and present the program to the Committee.

Kimberley Saso reported that the Powder Mill School welcomed approximately 445 students on opening day and it was a success. She stated that a change this year was to bring all third graders into the cafeteria where they were met by their teachers. The teachers then escorted them to their classrooms. After three days, the third graders are doing well and going directly to their classrooms from the bus. Also during opening day, in consideration of all of the new students, including those from Granville Village School, staff was positioned throughout the school to help students find their way. Ms. Saso thanked Superintendent Willard and Jenny Sullivan, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, for coming to opening day and greeting students as they arrived. Ms. Saso stated that during the first couple of days, staff focused on setting rules and building classroom communities. Powder Mill School has a school-wide goal for the 2017/2018 school year of "Setting the Stage for Success". Teachers are working with students to set personal goals which will be re-evaluated at the end of the year. Ms. Saso reported that curriculum work over the summer is continuing for staff and that there is still lots of work in progress. Staff team meetings will begin this week. She also reported that the activity coordinator has been appointed and they are excited to set up some activities for students that are non-fee based.

- B. Transportation Update – Karen Wzorek, Director of Transportation; Stephen Presnal, Director of Finance and Operations.

Superintendent Willard introduced Ms. Wzorek and explained that District transportation has gotten off successfully for most families but there are a few families, in Granville, that have been impacted by the limits placed on the District do to the inability for Capital Borrowing. Ms. Willard explained that she requested Ms. Wzorek to present to the Committee the work that was done to establish the routes.

Ms. Wzorek made her presentation and took the Committee through the slides of “Transportation Readiness”. She explained the challenges of changing from the two-tier system to the three-tier system for Granville students. She also explained the importance of the “right-sized bus” in the terrain and topography of our rural communities. Because of the defeat of the Capital Borrowing, the District has been unable to procure three mid-sized buses for Granville routes. Ms. Wzorek also provided detailed explanations and photos of bus transfers that are taking place.

Mr. Presnal reported that the District began receiving feedback regarding routes in the afternoon of the first day of school. One key piece of feedback was that the District did not notify Granville families of transfers. A letter was drafted and sent home with all students of Granville and Tolland on the second day of school.

Mr. Presnal recognized the hard work of Ms. Wzorek and Linda Bathel, Transportation Assistant both over the summer and since the start of school. He and Ms. Wzorek reported that the first week of school always has “hiccups” and that the transportation department expects delays as everyone, including students and families, get back into the routine of school. Ms. Willard highlighted that road construction and last minute road closures has presented some challenges for the transportation department but that they have responded quickly to make adjustments and notify families.

Everyone agreed that a big challenge has been last minute changes requested by families. In the future there will need to be a cutoff date by which changes can be requested for the first day of school. After that cutoff date, changes will be evaluated and implemented but with an allowance of time for the Transportation Department to make the changes.

Ms. Petschke asked and Ms. Wzorek, Mr. Presnal and Ms. Willard responded:

How do you determine what size bus?

Safety is the number one criteria for determining the right size bus for a route. While it is best practice to avoid any turn arounds, the rural landscape of our District often requires us to turn buses around. That is when the right size bus is most important. Onsite visits are the way we determine where turn arounds can happen and what size bus is most appropriate. When conducting an onsite visit the following factors are considered: weather conditions including snow, fog and rain; topography such as culverts, gullies and trees; presence of manmade objects such as mailboxes, flowerpots, landscaping, fences and gates.

Can a driveway be a turn around?

Sometimes driveways can be turnarounds but that is not always an option. It is important that the driveway is right sized, with no obstructions. The driveway must be maintained in all weather conditions, all the time, including snow and ice. Buses are heavy vehicles and turning around in a driveway may cause ruts in unpaved driveways and cracks in asphalt.

Can bell times be adjusted?

Bell times could be evaluated, but changing the current system would not necessarily resolve the situation and may result in increased ride times.

Were new drivers hired to meet the changes?

Not specifically. Drivers were “re-appropriated”.

Why is the Granville Town Hall being used as the transfer location?

The Granville Town Hall’s central location to students in Granville and Tolland, large parking lot, and dedicated winter maintenance make it the ideal spot for a bus transfer location. Bus transfers take place in a part of the lot that is well away from vehicle traffic in the event of a police or fire emergency. The District worked closely with the Granville Town Administration prior to the start of school to ensure communication among everyone utilizing the parking lot.

Are the transfers and shuttle buses causing students to arrive at school late?

No. The transfers are designed to ensure students arrive on time.

What is the length of time students are on the bus?

While some District students do experience bus rides that are close to an hour, we make every effort to get them to their destination as quickly and safely as possible. The rural landscape of our District provides unique challenges that may slow transportation. Important facts to keep in mind:

- School buses rarely leave the school at the dismissal bell time because time is needed to safely load all the children onto the buses.
- Delays at one school often result in delays at subsequent schools.
- Possible reasons for delays include: student loading/unloading time at home and school – the first days are an exciting time for families and pictures and communication with drivers is very common, especially for the younger grades. Other reasons for delays include road construction, tree work, traffic or slow moving vehicles, and road and weather conditions.

Where do CTEC and WTA students transfer?

Those students now transfer at SRS and the Powder Mill parking lot.

What is the load criteria to be eligible for Transportation Reimbursement?

75% capacity for approximately 70% reimbursement

All stops are not currently at the homes of students. If we get the mid-sized buses will the stops be at the homes?

For the most part, yes. There are a few students who will still have a stop location not at their driveway, this is consistent with past practice as well as Southwick and Tolland.

What is the make-up of the whole fleet?

Ms. Wzorek can provide full accurate information after the meeting.

How does the District determine when new buses are purchased?

New buses are purchased based on the age and condition of the fleet as well as District needs. This year the plan was to purchase three new mid-sized buses specifically to be used for Granville and Tolland students and that

decision was made based on all of those factors. The District works to replace approximately three vehicles per year as part of normal fleet maintenance.

Is there a law that states what the longest ride time can be?

There are guidelines that the state targets as best practice but they understand the challenges and limitations of rural districts like ours.

Mr. Houle stated that the Transportation Readiness presentation along with a Frequently Asked Questions sheet would be posted to the District website.

## V. POLICIES

None

## VI. ACTION ITEMS

### VII. Accept donation from Maryanne Forish

Move to accept the generous donation of a sculpture from Maryanne Forish. The sculpture, created by retired teacher, Donald Desmond, designated for display in the Southwick Regional School.

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

### VIII. Approve 2017/2018 Homeschool Applications

Move to approve 2017/2018 Home School Applications HS-1718-01 through HS-1718-30.

Ms. Stack asked about the percentage of Home School students by town. Ms. Willard stated that the District would have more detailed student data after the October 1 student data report.

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

### IX. Approve the authorization to incur debt by the issuance and sale of bonds or notes for the purchase of items specified in the STGRSD FY2018 Capital Improvement Plan

Move to approve the authorization to incur debt by the issuance and sale of bonds or notes for the amount of \$525,000 for the purchase of all items specified in the STGRSD FY2018 Capital Improvement Plan, as follows:

Transportation Vehicles	\$200,000.00
Technology	\$150,000.00
Equipment	\$ 50,000.00
Buildings	\$ 25,000.00
Playground	\$100,000.00

Ms. Petschke asked where the capital monies for technology would be spent. Ms. Willard and Mr. Presnal reported that the primary focus of capital money for technology would be on network infrastructure and equipment needed to prepare the District and students for the expanding state mandated testing.

Ms. Petschke asked where capital monies for equipment would be spent. Ms. Willard and Mr. Presnal stated that the money is earmarked to be used for equipment such as mowers and scrubbers.

The Committee discussed the process by which the capital spending would be reviewed by the towns. Mr. Houle stated that per Mass General Law, the towns have 60 days to take no action, in which case it is approved, or hold a town meeting or other vote.

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

## **X. REPORTS**

### **A. Superintendent**

Superintendent Willard stated that her report to the Committee was included with the Opening Day and Transportation presentations.

### **B. School Business Manager**

Mr. Presnal stated that his report to the Committee was also included with the Opening Day and Transportation presentation.

## **XI. SUB COMMITTEES AND LIAISONS**

### **Sub Committee Assignments**

1. Negotiations: J. Houle, T. Locke, G. LeBlanc Next Meeting Scheduled for 9/12/17
2. Finance: J. Boldyga, T. Locke, G. LeBlanc Next Meeting Scheduled for 9/7/2017
3. L.P.V.E.C. Bd. Gov G. LeBlanc
4. L.P.V.E.C. Bd. Dir. J. Houle
5. Policy G. LeBlanc, M. Seddon, A. Stack Next Meeting Scheduled for 9/20/2017,
6. School Building Committee T. Locke, J. Houle
7. Technology P. Petschke, T. Locke, M. Seddon  
The Technology Subcommittee will attend District Technology Team meetings which are led by SRS Vice Principal Ben Taglieri. The Subcommittee will additionally work with the IT department.
8. Transportation T. Locke, A. Stack

### **Liaison Assignments:**

1. Curriculum & Instruction: P. Petschke, J. Boldyga The instructional leadership team meetings will begin in October.
2. SPED Liaison: J. Houle
3. Legislative Liaison: open
4. Southwick Capital Committee: J. Houle

## **XII. PUBLIC COMMENT – excluding personnel issues**

None

## **XIII. COMMITTEE DISCUSSION**

### **A. Old Business**

Cell Towers on Town of Southwick Parcels

Mr. Presnal reported that Verizon is interested in placing a cell tower on the roof of the Southwick Regional School. This could provide possible revenue for the District. A site visit is scheduled for Friday, 9/8/2017. Mr. Houle and the Committee members expressed concerns over placing a foreign structure on the roof of the recently renovated Regional School. The Committee agreed to the site visit and asked Mr. Presnal to report back.

### **B. New Business**

Transportation Policy Question

Ms. Willard reported that they have had some questions from families regarding the District policy on students crossing main roads to get on/off school buses. She is asking the policy subcommittee to review this at their upcoming meeting.

## **XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 8:35 p.m., a motion was made to adjourn to Executive Session and return to open session.

With the members Jeffrey Houle, George Leblanc, Theodore Locke, Pamela Petschke, Jessica Boldyga and Amy Stack being present and voting individually and unanimously, the motion passes.

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

- ☐ 1. Move to go into Executive Session to discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health rather than the professional competence of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual. The individual to be discussed in such executive session shall be notified in writing by the public body at least 48 hours prior to the proposed executive session; provided, however, that notification may be waived upon written agreement of the parties; and to reconvene in Open Session.
- ☒ 2. Move to go into Executive Session to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; and to reconvene in Open Session.
- ☒ 3. Move to go into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigation position of the public and the chair so declares; and to reconvene in Open Session.
- ☐ 4. Move to go into Executive Session to discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices or strategies with respect thereto; and to reconvene in Open Session.
- ☐ 5. Move to go into Executive Session to investigate charges of criminal misconduct or to consider the filing of criminal complaints; and to reconvene in Open Session.
- ☐ 6. Move to go into Executive Session to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body; and to reconvene in Open Session.
- ☐ 7. Move to go into Executive Session to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements; and to reconvene in Open Session.
- ☐ 8. Move to go into Executive Session to consider or interview applicants for employment or appointment by a preliminary screening committee if the chair declares that an open meeting will have a detrimental effect in obtaining qualified applicants; provided, however, that this clause shall not apply to any meeting, including meetings of a preliminary screening committee, to consider and interview applicants who have passed a prior preliminary screening; and to reconvene in Open Session.
- ☐ 9. Move to go into Executive Session to meet or confer with a mediator, as defined in section 23C of chapter 233, with respect to any litigation or decision on any public business within its jurisdiction involving another party, group or entity; and to reconvene in Open Session.
- ☐ 10. Move to go into Executive Session to discuss trade secrets or confidential, competitively-sensitive or other proprietary information; and to reconvene in Open Session.

At 9:13 p.m., a motion was made to adjourn executive session and return to open session. With the members Jeffrey Houle, George LeBlanc, Theodore Locke, Pamela Petschke, Jessica Boldyga and Amy Stack being present and voting individually and unanimously, the motion passes.

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

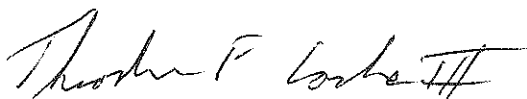
#### **XV. ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:13 p.m., a motion was made to adjourn the meeting. With the members Jeffrey Houle, George LeBlanc, Theodore Locke, Pamela Petschke, Jessica Boldyga and Amy Stack being present and voting individually and unanimously, the motion passes.

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Theodore Locke, Secretary

**XVI. STAFFING**

**XVII. LIST OF DOCUMENTS VIEWED OR DISCUSSED DURING THIS MEETING:**

- Agenda for the September 5, 2017 meeting
- Minutes for August 29, 2017 meeting
- Transportation Readiness presentation
- Granville/Tolland Transfer information for Bus Drivers
- Photo of Donald Desmond Sculpture
- Homeschool Applications listing
- Capital Budget Presentation from June 2017
- Subcommittee Charters