

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF
March 4, 2014
Bedford High School - Large Group Instruction Room**

1. Call to Order

At 7:35 p.m., Mr. Pierce called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Seibert, Mr. Hafer, Mr. McAllister and Ms. Guay. Ms. Emily Moss, student representative was also in attendance.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Personnel Report

None

4. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Sills reported that this week, Davis School held its annual Davis Town event. He said it is a great example of project based learning for the kindergarteners and a wonderful tradition.

Also, on March 19th, there will be a Technology Showcase held at the high school for all community members. Mr. Sills hopes all will come to see and listen to the students discuss and demonstrate how they are learning with technology. Students from grades K-12 will be participating.

Mr. Sills noted that in light of recent anti-Semitic graffiti, the schools, the Town Manager, Clergy, and Police have come together to respond to these hateful acts. The Anti Defamation League has been contacted. Mr. Sills hopes to bring in some new curriculum to use in the future with the students. Mr. Sills also reported that at Davis School, there was an offensively named game being played by some of the children. He is reporting this publicly because he wants everyone to be aware of this. He reminded everyone that Bedford is a "no place for hate" designated town.

5. FY'15 Budget

Mr. Sills noted that increasing enrollment at the Davis School and at the high school have caused a need to ask for more FTE in the budget request. Mr. Sills showed a chart that showed that the 2013-2014 enrollment is 10.9% higher than what it was in 2004-2005. His chart showed how student population growth is outpacing FTE growth, when you take out SPED, ELL, administration, the adjustment counselor, the skills center and reading. The results are

Student Growth	10.9%
FTE Growth	8.8%

Mr. Sills also noted that special education FTE grew 63.2% as a result of the school department's efforts to increase in-house special education programs.

Mr. Sills reminded the School Committee of the budget process so far this year:

- Feb 4, 2014 revoted budget increase of 4.8%
- Feb. 13, 2014 Finance Committee recommended a 3.8% increase and published this in the warrant.

- Feb. 27, 2014 Finance Committee agreed to a budget of \$35,586,487 due to clarification of homeless transportation costs.

Mr. Sills is recommending that the CASE assessment be reduced by \$50,000 (due to fewer CASE students this year). Therefore, the new FY'15 budget will be \$35,745,029 with a gap of \$148,556.

Mr. McAllister asked what type of risk is involved with reducing the CASE assessment. Mr. Sills said it is risky because the CASE number can change quickly. We never know who can come into the program.

The School Committee and Mr. Sills discussed and summarized the proposed cuts to the original budget proposal for FY'15. Mr. Sills noted that adding the desired FTE will shrink not eliminate the number of oversized classes.

Ms. Emily Clark, student representative, noted that large classes can be intimidating for lots of students and it makes it challenging to have interactive classes. She said her small classes are much more comfortable and are a more enriching experience.

Mr. Pierce summarized the revenue funds that the School Committee controls. He said essentially that the unrestricted funds in these accounts will be used as an offset.

Mr. Pierce asked the School Committee and Mr. Sills their thoughts on implementing transportation fees. Mr. Sills said it does not make sense in our district given the rules of who can ride for free versus those who cannot.

Mr. McAllister said that the amount of time and energy devoted to collecting fees is incredible and a huge drain on resources.

Mr. Sills stated that imposing athletic fees is also challenging. He said think of the family who pays fees and has a child who sits on the bench. Then there is the argument that students who do the drama club should also pay fees.

Ms. Guay does not want the school's activities to be exclusionary.

Mr. Hafer said that parking fees may be the most palatable. Ms. Seibert disagreed. We would be the only ones charging for parking in town. It would have a negative effect on the town.

Mr. Sills said he will be looking into leasing iPads for families (or purchase) and will forward his findings to the School Committee at a later date.

The School Committee agreed that they could responsibly reduce the FY'15 budget request by \$50,000 due to the change in CASE assessment.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee further reduce the FY'15 budget request by \$50,000 (due to the newly allocated CASE surplus) to \$35,735,029.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

6. Liaison Reports

Mr. Hafer reported that the Finance Committee did not want to take capital budget money and move it to the operating budget.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Hafer made the following motion.

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:25 p.m.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Pierce	Yes
Mr. Hafer	Yes
Ms. Seibert	Yes
Mr. McAllister	Yes
Ms. Guay	Yes

School Committee Secretary

Date

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Exhibits/Documents

None

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