

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
October 20, 2015
Bedford High School - Large Group Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 7:30 p.m., Mr. McAllister called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Guay, Mr. Pierce, Mr. Hafer and Mr. Brosgol.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Mr. Sills asked the School Committee to consider approving two out-of-the-country trips for high school students. Upon review of the information on both trips, the School Committee decided to postpone consideration because the trips are planned for summer 2017 and winter break 2018. The School Committee believes that these dates are too far in the future to be considered now.

Mr. Pierce noted that he would like to review trips like these in context with all of the other sponsored school trips for the year.

Mr. McAllister said he would like to know more about the travel scholarships that are available for students. How much money is available and how many students have been able to attend past trips on scholarship? He said that the costs of these trips are very expensive and he wants to be sure all interested students have an opportunity to go regardless of the ability to pay. Mr. Sills agreed to get this information.

Ms. Guay suggested planning a field trip that did not involve traveling overseas as an alternative.

Mr. Sills agreed with these concerns but does feel that these trips tie into our school's expanding global focus.

4. Solar Panels Proposal

Taissir Alani, Facilities Director, presented a proposal for a solar energy system for the town. In an effort to be more efficient with energy, Mr. Alani presented a solar energy proposal by Sun Edison.

The proposal includes setting up solar panels on the high school and middle school roofs as well as in the parking lots of both schools. The proposal is for a 20 year Power Purchase Agreement, with no installation or maintenance costs for the Town.

Mr. Alani and Mr. Sills said that they visited a similar set up at Lincoln Sudbury High School. It was especially interesting to see what the panels look like in the parking areas. (Carport like structures were built to hold the solar panels).

As part of the presentation, Mr. Alani reviewed building usage at the high school and middle schools. The proposal will generate \$505,000 worth of net metering credits, which is enough to offset approximately 76% of the town's 2014 total utility bill.

Other highlights of the proposal include:

- No upfront costs will be incurred by the town

- A 20 year contract term.
- Year 1 projected savings of \$232,808
- A potential to earn tax revenue or credits on extra power we may export
- There are extra tax incentives to enter into this type of agreement up until December 2016

Mr. Alani feels that there are enough benefits to consider moving forward with a project like this.

Mr. Hafer said that Bedford has been thinking about solar energy for quite awhile. He asked if the roofs on the schools were sufficient to hold solar panels. Mr. Alani said that the initial review indicated that they are OK but we would definitely do our own structural assessment to verify.

Mr. Hafer said that we would really need to dig into the proposal to understand the assumptions and any hidden costs and to discover ways to save money by possibly doing some part of the project ourselves.

Mr. Hafer also noted that construction of the solar panels at Lincoln Sudbury was disruptive.

Mr. Pierce thanked Mr. Alani for bringing this proposal forward. His initial thought is that the panels in the parking lots will be very unattractive given the central locations of the high school and middle school. He noted that Lincoln Sudbury is set back from the street and not centrally located.

Mr. Pierce also feels that we would have to really dig into the numbers for such a long term proposal/contract.

Mr. Brosgol agrees that the parking lots might not be the best place and that they may interfere with bus drop offs etc. He asked Mr. Alani to find out where the panels are sourced from. He also wondered how long installation is. (Mr. Alani said 6-9 months)

Ms. Guay asked about snow removal from the panels. Mr. Alani said that snow usually melts off of the panels and the panels are typically positioned for drainage.

Ms. Guay said to be sure to check out the pros and cons with Lincoln Sudbury.

Mr. McAllister asked if any other solar energy companies approached Bedford. Mr. Alani said yes, two smaller ones.

Mr. McAllister asked for the next steps. Mr. Alani said that such a plan would require Town Meeting approval and Sun Edison would be prepared to give a full presentation. We can also enter into an agreement that is subject to Town Meeting approval.

Mr. Sills suggested Mr. Alani work up an alternative proposal that calls for solar panels to be set up on roofs only. He also noted that we need to budget for costs such as structural engineers.

Mr. Pierce said that we need a lot of community involvement to move forward with a project like this.

5. Space Needs Task Force

Mr. Sills said that in response to the surge in Bedford's population, the schools need to think of possible creative alternatives to accommodate this growth other than adding on to the buildings.

Therefore, he has asked for community volunteers to serve on a Space Needs Task Force. So far he has received about fourteen inquiries and they all seem to have strong backgrounds for this task force. He will soon be ready to call a meeting. Mr. Sills noted that Mr. Pierce would be the School Committee representative on this Committee.

6. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Sills and Ms. Sallee reported on how the Title 1 grant increase is being used. Ms. Sallee explained that Title 1 money is now being used in all four schools. Specifically:

- Davis School has reading intervention using reading running records, which is a valuable tool to identify struggling readers.
- At Lane, there are math tutoring programs and an extended day program for reading intervention.
- At the middle school, math intervention work is being done in the Skills Center and ELA support will soon be added.
- BHS will pilot an ACT/SAT prep class targeting students who cannot afford a prep class and for other small groups of students. Staff is identifying students right now.

Ms. Sallee said that close monitoring of student progress is required when Title 1 funds are used. She will report back to the School Committee on this.

Ms. Guay said that it is important to keep parents in the loop that their student is receiving extra support. She said it is a positive thing but if parents do not know, it could be perceived as something negative.

Mr. Sills mentioned the success of the TEDx event that was recently held at the high school. He said more than 400 people attended. He was also impressed that the event was planned and executed by a group of seniors. He said it was “tremendously well done”.

Mr. Sills said that the Board of Education will be voting on the future of state testing in Massachusetts – PARCC or MCAS. He said he has heard that there is now the possibility of a hybrid option being proposed.

7. Liaison Reports

Mr. Hafer said that the Fields Partnership may be modifying the Field Agreement. He will keep the School Committee updated.

Mr. Coelho said that Fiscal Planning has changed the financial model for 2017 due to improving new growth revenue, reduced debt service payments, receipt of a higher amount of state aid, increasing the unused levy to \$1.9 million, and moving the monies to support the nurses to the schools.

8. Minutes for Review

Mr. Hafer made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the September 8, 2015 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-1 (Mr. Brosgol abstained)

9. Future Agenda

Mr. McAllister reminded the School Committee that we need a revolving account policy update. The Finance Committee is hoping for this update in November.

Mr. Sills will report on class size.

Mr. Sills will also provide more information on the field trip scholarship process.

10. Adjournment

Ms. Guay made the following motion.

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 8:45 p.m.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

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Exhibits/Document

- Solar System Proposal by Sun Edison in Partnership with Power Options dated October 19, 2015
- Solar System proposal showing Building usage and values
- Draft of minutes from the September 8, 2015 School Committee meeting