

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
March 21, 2017
Bedford High School - Large Group Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 7:40 p.m., Mr. McAllister called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Guay, Mr. Brosgol, Ms. Santiago and Ms. Scoville, newly elected School Committee member.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Mr. Sills presented several field trip requests for approval.

Mr. Smith and Ms. Post have requested permission to take the fifth grade class to Take Flight Ariel Adventures in Kittery, Maine on May 11 and May 12, 2017. This trip is an extension of the Project Adventure. It costs \$20 per student and no cost to the schools.

Mr. Brosgol made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip request to take the fifth grade class to Take Flight Ariel Adventures in Kittery, Maine on May 11 and May 12, 2017 at a cost of \$20 per student and no cost to the schools.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Griffin is requesting approval of the field trip for students of the AP Environmental class and /or members of the Environmental Club to travel to Merck Forrest and Farmland for a week end of community service and hiking. This annual trip will be held on May 26 – 28, 2017 and will cost \$100 per student and no cost to the schools. There will also be workshops on sustainability and energy conservation on the farm.

Mr. Brosgol made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip to Merck Forrest and Farmland in Rupert, VT for approximately 22 students on May 26-28, 2017 at a cost of \$100 per student and no cost to the schools.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Taub and Mr. Mejia are seeking permission to take 19 grade 11 AP Spanish students to New York City for the “WE Day” conference on April 5-7, 2016. The educational aim for this field trip is for AP Spanish students to partake in a variety of cultural experiences. The cost is \$340 per student and no cost to the schools.

Ms. Santiago asked if there were any Spanish cultural events in Boston for the students to attend rather than traveling to New York City. Mr. Sills explained that this is a special conference in New York City and that the students have been preparing and participating in the WE Service Program all year. This is a culminating experience for all the students.

Mr. McAllister was concerned that the cost is expensive and he does not like students missing school days for field trips.

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip for 19 AP Spanish students to travel to New York City on April 5-7, 2017 to participate in WE Day at a cost of \$340 per student and no cost to the schools.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Brosgol

MOTION APPROVED: 3-1-1 (Ms. Santiago abstained and Mr. McAllister voted no)

AFJROTC instructors Gary Maki and Charles Humphrey are requesting approval for 20-30 high school students to travel to the Rhode Island Airshow in North Kingstown, RI on May 20, 2017 or May 21, 2017. The educational aim is to allow students to observe Aerospace science in real life. There is no cost to the students or the schools. School vans will be used.

Mr. Brosgol made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip for 20-30 students to go to the Rhode Island Airshow in North Kingstown, RI on May 20, 2017 (or May 21, 2017) at no cost to the students and no cost to the schools.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Sills asked the School Committee to approve the start and end dates for the 2017-2018 school year. He explained that he was unable to present the entire school calendar at this time since he is still working with the Cultural-Religious Task Force and their recommendations for handling days off for religious reasons.

Mr. Sills proposed that the first day of school of the 2017-18 school year be Tuesday, September 5, 2017 and the last day (without snow days) will be June 15, 2018.

Mr. Brosgol made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve a draft of the 2017-18 school calendar with the start date of September 5, 2017 and an end date (without snow days) of June 15, 2018.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Sills asked the School Committee to accept a gift of \$4,200 from resident Bill Waters. Mr. Waters is donating this money to be used for the Tenacity Challenge, which is an area-wide scholarship contest for African-American and Latino students. Mr. Waters has generously donated this money and will also conduct a study of the impact of the Tenacity Challenge on the participating students.

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee accept the \$4,200 gift from Mr. Bill Waters for the Tenacity Challenge.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Brosgol

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

The School Committee thanked Mr. Waters for his very generous donation and time.

Mr. Sills told the School Committee that long-time custodian (now retired) Ed Dinitto passed away earlier this week. He and members of the School Committee expressed condolences to Mr. Dinitto's family. (Diane, his wife, is an Administrative Assistant for Special Education.)

4. Davis School Space Needs Task Force Report

Mr. Sills and Mr. Alani (Director of Facilities) presented the Space Needs Task Force report on Davis School. He reminded the Committee that the Space Needs Task Force for the Lane project reconvened after the MSBA rejected our interest statement for expanding the Davis School.

Mr. Sills said that he is presenting the report tonight so that the School Committee will support a \$95,000 Feasibility Study request in the Capital Article which will be presented at Town Meeting.

Highlights of this report follow (the entire report will be posted on the website).

Space Needs Driving Feasibility Request:

- Inability to meet class size guidelines
- The three classrooms that are located in temporary modular buildings need permanent space
- The music room is located in a modular classroom and is ineffective
- Kindergarten classrooms require a bathroom in the room

Needs defined include:

- Minimum of 4 regular classrooms to meet demand plus two for a margin of error in enrollment/programmatic needs
- One space-intensive space for SAIL Program
- Adequately sized music room
- Small group/interventions space
- Kindergarten bathroom
- Teacher Prep space
- More parent meeting space
- Improved circulation (to help lessen the time needed for dismissals)

Mr. Sills also explained the reasoning of the Task Force in terms of postponing this feasibility study or finding an alternative to construction.

- MSBA funding will be unlikely. He used the example of the Town of Belmont waiting 10 years to get approval for renovating their high school.
- Adding more modular buildings is not feasible given the limited space at the Davis School and the high cost to rent or buy the buildings. He also noted that operating costs of the modular (electric heat) is very expensive.

Mr. Sills also reviewed the belief that increased enrollment will be sustained and potentially grow even more in the future.

- Davis School has added more than 100 students in the last three years.
- Housing developments in town continue to grow. The task force predicts that out of the 162 new units, there will be 19 new Davis students.
- The number of new homes from tear downs continues to grow.

All in all, Mr. Sills thinks that the need is clear and thinks that it is important to do a Feasibility Study in order to develop several options to meet the space needs at Davis School. If approved,

he will also ask the Feasibility study to explore whether it makes sense to move the Pre-School out of the high school to the Davis School. This may avoid future space needs issues at the high school. Mr. Sills also thinks that it makes sense to have the Davis School Principal more involved with the Preschool program and to get to know the children firsthand.

Ms. Santiago commented that it is important to know that the current leases on the modular buildings are ending soon. She thinks the timing is right to renew or replace them in a thoughtful manner.

Mr. Alani noted that the Warrant Article for the Feasibility Study is for \$98,000 not \$95,000.

Ms. Scoville asked if constructing of a second story would be disruptive to the school day at Davis. Mr. Sills and Mr. Alani explained that heavy, loud work would be done in the summertime or could possibly be done offsite.

Ms. Santiago said that when she visited Davis recently, she noticed that the environment there was quite different than the way it was 10 years ago when her children were there, when there were fewer students and adults at the school.

Mr. Brosgol asked how much money has been set aside for the modular classrooms. Mr. Alani said approximately \$500,000.

Mr. Brosgol asked how the cost of this feasibility study compared with the one done recently for the Lane School. Mr. Alani said it was more because we are asking for more options.

Mr. Brosgol said that the enrollment projections need to be available at Town Meeting.

He also asked Mr. Sills to be sure that the Feasibility Study considers the outside traffic flow at Davis.

Mr. Brosgol reminded the Committee that expected enrollment from new housing is always too low.

Ms. Guay suggested at Town Meeting to compare the enrollment numbers when Davis School opened to today's enrollment numbers and projected numbers.

Mr. McAllister asked if there was a state law requiring kindergarten classrooms have their own bathroom. Mr. Sills said no, that it was ours based on experience.

Mr. McAllister asked how we determined that the Feasibility Study would cost \$98,000. Mr. Sills said it was determined based on our own experience and research.

Mr. McAllister said that the option of moving the preschool to Davis School is a good example of reallocating space.

Mr. Brosgol asked for the timeline. Mr. Sills said that if a Feasibility Study is approved at this Town Meeting, then Construction Documents could be approved at a fall Special Town Meeting and the project could be approved at Town Meeting in spring 2018. Construction would be from July 2018 to September 2019.

Ms. Scoville made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee recommend approval of a Feasibility Study for Davis School.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Santiago

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

5. Strategic Planning Process

Mr. Sills described his plans for developing an updated Strategic Plan for the school district. The present plan is ending. Mr. Sills sees this as an opportune time to gather school community members to pause and think about where we want to go as a district and how we will get there.

A new Strategic Planning Committee will be formed and in the spring, work will begin on developing a new 5 year plan. Tonight, Mr. Sills reviewed his thoughts on what the plan should encompass and what the process will include.

Culture of Continuous Learning

- Develop and articulate the common understanding of what our graduates should know – well beyond content.
- The District needs to identify processes needed for all students to achieve desired outcomes.
- BPS will be devoted to ongoing research and collaboration as well as a mutual understanding of “minds of learning”
- Reflection will be part of the process of learning

Mr. Sills noted the changing demographics of Bedford Public Schools as a reflection of our wider community:

- White households will no longer be the majority.
- Children need to learn how to appreciate diversity.
- Globalization (despite politics) will continue.
- Students need to be more “linguistically” abled.
- Technological change will continue at its accelerating pace.
- The way business is conducted has changed. (For example, Uber is the largest transportation company but yet it owns no cars)

Mr. Sills said that schools need more flexibility and to be more adept. They need to help kids make choices and develop passions. He also explained that with social media (and false news), our teachers need to help students become “discerners of truth”. Bedford Public Schools needs to give students tools to help them navigate ethical issues and new information that social media sends their way.

Mr. McAllister said that critical thinking has been part of Bedford Public Schools for many years now. We are lucky that we have been preparing our students for the future.

Ms. Scoville asked Mr. Sills to think about how we can challenge our students without stress. Mr. Sills agreed that the District will continue to do this.

Ms. Santiago likes the emphasis on flexibility. She also would like to see more of an emphasis on college-alternatives because there are other avenues of success after high school.

Mr. Brosgol said the presentation was a good summary of what the world is like today and he finds it a little frightening. He said the Mr. Sills provides the leadership needed to help prepare our kids for the future.

Ms. Guay said that the Strategic Plan is a great opportunity to teach people about Bedford's education process.

Mr. McAllister said that Mr. Sills' challenge is to streamline the strategic planning process and the plan itself.

Mr. Sills would like to come back to this presentation and show examples of what our teachers are already doing to prepare our students for the future. School Committee members welcome this information.

7. Minutes for Review

Mr. Brosgol made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes from the January 24, 2017 School Committee meeting.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-1 (Ms. Scoville abstained)

Mr. Brosgol made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes from the February 7, 2017 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Santiago

MOTION APPROVED: 3-0-2 (Mr. McAllister and Ms. Scoville abstained)

8. Adjournment

Ms. Scoville made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:20 P.M. not to reopen.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Santiago

MOTION APPROVED 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. McAllister	Yes
Ms. Guay	Yes
Mr. Brosgol	Yes
Ms. Santiago	Yes
Ms. Scoville	Yes

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

March 21, 2017

Exhibits/Documents

- Presentation: Davis School Space Needs Task Force Report – Enrollment and Housing Updated dated March 21,2017
- Draft of minutes from the January 24, 2017 School Committee meeting
- Draft of minutes from the February 7, 2017 School Committee meeting