

Central Berkshire Regional School Committee

Regular Meeting

Thursday, October 11, 2007

A regular meeting of the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee, held at Kittredge School, Hinsdale, MA on Thursday, October 11, 2007, was called to order by Chair Susan Carroll-Lombardi at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Members Bantjes, J. Chivers, L. Chivers, Farley (7:08 p.m.), Goddard, Gordon (7:03 p.m.), Grallert, Harvey, Henderson, Hopper, Les, Shugrue, Welts, and Carroll-Lombardi.

Also Present: Superintendent Donna Harlan, Assistant Superintendent James Stankiewicz, Business Manager Tensel, CBEA Executive Secretary Joanne Dowling, Recording Secretary Mary Jo Keiper, and Members of the Audience.

For the record, Chair Carroll-Lombardi does not vote unless noted.

ARTICLE 9316 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

- Nominations for Vice Chair

MOVED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER GODDARD

To nominate Laurie Chivers Vice Chair of the School Committee

Ms. Chivers stated she was willing to serve. No other nominations were made.

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Bantjes, J. Chivers, L. Chivers, Goddard, Grallert, Harvey, Henderson, Hopper, Les, Shugrue, Welts, and Carroll-Lombardi.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

Member Chivers assumed the office of Vice Chair.

Member Gordon arrived.

ARTICLE 9317 RESPONSES FROM THE AUDIENCE

Dalton selectman William Chabot reported the board had voted to hold a special town meeting on November 19, 2007. He encouraged the Committee to have a warrant article for any Craneville capital project ready to meet the deadline for posting (November 5th).

CBEA Executive Secretary Joanne Dowling addressed the Committee. She reviewed the history of the teacher negotiations, noting the Association had asked for no change in health insurance for the first year of the new contract. She stated the Association had no desire to be at odds with the Committee and appealed to the Committee to return to the bargaining table to look at salaries and the many other issues

that require discussion. Chair Carroll-Lombardi responded the Association's request would be taken under advisement; however, the mediation dates will be kept as scheduled.

Member Farley arrived during Responses from the Audience.

ARTICLE 9318 STUDENT AFFAIRS

A. Wahconah Report

No student representative attended.

ARTICLE 9319 SECRETARY'S REPORT

A. Minutes of Regular Meeting of September 27, 2007

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

To approve the minutes of the regular meeting of September 27, 2007, as corrected (page 32, the first quarterly report date is October 25).

Ayes: Thirteen members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9320 FINANCIAL REPORT

A. Warrants

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

To approve Warrant No. 2008-13, in the total amount of \$693,078.62, as printed.

Warrant No. 2008-13, dated October 4, 2007

PAYROLL

Operating Expenses	\$481,946.12
School Lunch	\$16,603.18
Federal Funds	<u>\$56,426.42</u>
Sub-total	\$554,975.72
FICA (Operating)	<u>\$6,172.55</u>
Total Payroll	\$561,148.27
Transfers (Deductions)	<u>\$131,930.35</u>
TOTAL PAYROLL & DEDUCTIONS	\$693,078.62

Ayes: Eleven members.

Nays: None.

Abstentions: Members Hopper and Welts.

Motion carried.

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

To approve Warrant No. 2008-14, in the total amount of \$342,107.91, as printed.

Warrant No. 2008-14, dated October 11, 2007

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Operating Expenses

Accounts Payable	\$302,889.50	
Insurance Payment	<u>\$1,051.99</u>	
		\$303,941.49
Transfers		\$165.89
Federal Funds		\$9,397.41
School Lunch		\$15,976.48
Reimbursable Property Damage		\$20.69
Athletic Independent Games		\$2,771.38
Literacy Learning Class Revolving		\$609.95
Medicaid		\$3,181.37
Becket Childcare		\$290.00
WRHS Boys' Soccer Revolving		\$1,243.00
WRHS Girls' Soccer Revolving		\$1,348.25
WRHS Football Revolving		\$460.00
WRHS Cross Country Revolving		\$1,150.00
WRHS Golf Revolving		\$1,068.00
WRHS Volleyball Revolving		<u>\$484.00</u>
TOTAL ACCOUNTS PAYABLE		\$342,107.91

Ayes: Thirteen members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9321 COMMUNICATIONS

A. Report of the Chair

The Chair distributed to members informational booklets on Proposition 2½.

She also distributed a two-page document, entitled Central Berkshire Regional School Committee Points of Information, meant to respond to the many comments made at the previous school committee meeting by teachers who formally addressed the Committee. She went over the first several points: Since 2002 district health insurance costs have increased 61%, while Chapter 70 revenues have decreased .8%. Employee expenses are 76.6% of the 2008 budget. Other points in the document clarified step and gate movement on the teachers' salary schedule, paid days off, weekly preparation time, and a comparison among Central Berkshire teachers and other teachers as well as comparisons between teachers and the three highest salaried administrators at Central Berkshire. Also included were the 2007 town excess levy capacities and the actual costs to district and employee for the various health insurance plans. Additional handouts showed an overview of salary movement over the last three years for 154 district teachers and a comparison of administrator and teacher salaries per diem and per hour.

The Committee discussed the information provided and the economic differences between the communities used in the comparisons. Member Harvey agreed to continue looking at demographics.

B. Vacancy – Hinsdale Representative

1. Letter from District Secretary

The deadline has been extended. It was noted there was an article about the Committee and the vacancy in a recent edition of the Berkshire Eagle.

C. Official Delegate – MASC/MASS Joint Conference

Election of the official delegate will be brought to the next meeting. Member L. Chivers was selected on August 23rd to serve as alternate delegate.

ARTICLE 9322 SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Reports

1. Education

The Committee will meet on October 29th at 7:00 p.m. in the Central Office.

2. Finance

Ms. Chivers reported the subcommittee had met and was bringing forward several motions. Finance subcommittee has received a funding request for maintenance of the Wahconah track. The cost is \$58,000 to resurface and \$10,400 to patch and repaint. Rich Labrie attended and reported the Berkshire Area collaborative is supported by fifteen school districts and has applied for and hopes to receive \$150,000 in grant funding.

a. Building Project Consultant

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee authorizes the Superintendent to enter into a contract with a building project consultant for up to 100 hours of contact time and mileage at the current IRS rate, at a total cost not to exceed \$5,000, as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee

It was asked where the money would come from. The response was the school choice account, which currently totals \$500,000.

Ayes: Thirteen members present.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

b. Authorization for Paraprofessionals

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee authorizes the addition of up to five paraprofessionals, as shown below and based on need and availability, as recommended by the finance subcommittee:

- 1. Four hours/week (.75 hour/day) to provide supervision, CPC grant funded*
- 2. Four hours/week (.75 hour/day) to provide supervision, CPC grant funded*
- 3. Three hours/day, kindergarten student 1:1, operating budget/Additional Special Needs grant funded*
- 4. Two hours/day, IEP requirement – bus monitor, operating budget funded*
- 5. One hour/day, mandated bus monitor, Universal Pre-K grant funded*

Ayes: Thirteen members present.
Nays: None.
Motion carried unanimously.

Member L. Chivers reported that the regional agreement will require an amendment to include pre-K students. The amendment would affect capital costs to the towns. Currently only pre-K students on IEP's are included in capital costs.

c. Appropriations from School Choice Fund

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee appropriates \$90,000 from the School Choice Fund to cover FY-2007 extraordinary expenditures, as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee.

ACCOUNT	SCHOOL CHOICE
105 Building Administration: Cops in Schools*	\$64,222
210 Administration: Legal Services	\$1,955
230 Building Specialists: Additional Paraprofessionals	\$20,292
230 Tuition: Tuition to MA Schools	\$3,531
TOTAL SCHOOL CHOICE	\$90,000

*It was noted in October of 2006 we paid the Town of Dalton for the Cops in Schools for FY-2006. This is for FY-2007.

Ayes: Thirteen members present.
Nays: None.
Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Chivers stated a 403b study committee will be formed to address mandated changes in district plans. Administrators and employees will work together on this study committee. The Superintendent will arrange a meeting with the representatives of all units through CBEA Executive Secretary Joanne Dowling. The finance subcommittee will also need to discuss the topic of retirees' insurance. The next meeting is set for October 18th. The Chair thanked Ms. Chivers and her subcommittee.

3. Policy Review

Member Bantjes reported the subcommittee had not met, but recommended the second readings of four policies. He reviewed the changes and additions as each motion was made.

a. Second Reading Revisions to Policy 1205, Powers and Duties

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER HOPPER

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves second reading revisions to Policy 1205, Powers and Duties, as shown (in the agenda packet) and recommended by the policy review subcommittee.

Ayes: Thirteen members present.
Nays: None.
Motion carried unanimously.

b. Second Reading Revisions to Policy 1570, Quorum and Voting

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER HOPPER

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves second reading revisions to Policy 1570, Quorum and Voting, as shown (in the agenda packet) and recommended by the policy review subcommittee.

Ayes: Thirteen members present.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

c. Second Reading Adoption of Policy 7180, News Media Relations/News Releases

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER HOPPER

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves second reading adoption of Policy 7180, News Media Relations/News Releases, as shown (in the agenda packet) and recommended by the policy review subcommittee.

Ayes: Thirteen members present.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

d. Second Reading Revisions to Policy 7250, Uniform Requirements for Designer Selection

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER HOPPER

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves second reading revisions to Policy 7250, Uniform Requirements for Designer Selection, as shown (in the agenda packet) and recommended by the policy review subcommittee.

Ayes: Thirteen members present.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. Personnel

The Chair thanked newly appointed personnel subcommittee chair John Les for his willingness to serve. There was no report.

B. Others

1. Craneville Short-Term Capital Bonding Committee

Chair Carroll-Lombardi reported the short-term bonding committee had met the previous evening. They reviewed the decision to recommend carpet tiles. (Both the Craneville committee and the Wahconah Building Needs Study Committee will report to the School Committee on October 25th.) They also talked about being ready for the November 19th Dalton town meeting. Any other town in the district may also choose to vote on the project.

The following points were brought out: Dalton may want a longer bond; the term of the bond may be tied to the life of the carpet; the timeframe for the bonding may be extended to Dalton's annual town meeting,

allowing for selection of a consultant and designer, if the work could still be completed by summer's end; the bonding committee has been told there is about a 5-week turnaround. Dalton selectman Chabot stated the need for a debt exclusion vote and the possibility that it could be moved ahead from June to the annual town meeting in May. He also suggested the bonding could be combined with other capital projects to improve the interest rate.

2. Wahconah Building Needs Study Committee

Member Henderson reported the study committee would meet on October 16th and will make a presentation to the school committee on October 25th.

ARTICLE 9323 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Reports

Superintendent Harlan distributed copies of a letter from the Mass. School Building Authority, highlighting various points and noting several changes in the process for funding. Data from the past five years must be collected on all six schools in the district and submitted to MSBA as a part of our SOI for Wahconah. That documentation is available and will be organized by central office staff.

Dr. Harlan reported the problems with the Craneville computer lab were related to a Verizon T1 line, which is now up and running.

Following up on a question regarding central office administrators' salaries, several handouts were provided:

- Minutes from the finance/personnel subcommittee of July 17, 2006, minutes from the executive session that same evening, minutes from the finance subcommittee of August 7, 2006 showing the approval of the previously stated minutes.
- MASS salary survey of Superintendents 2006-07.
- County-wide and area regionals survey completed in October of 2007, including salaries of superintendents, business managers (or clerks for business), and recent data on enrollment, grant expenditures, and number of schools.
- The Mass. School Business Officers survey from July 2007, indicating business manager titles, licensure/certification, years in position, salaries, district budget, enrollment, number of schools and responsibilities.
- CBRSD administrators' FY-06 and FY-07 salaries showing a percentage decrease of 1.28%. In July of 2006 the Superintendent was directed to adjust the business manager's salary in relationship to teachers' top salaries, a year in which the overall increase for teachers was 3.75%.
- A comparison of administrator and teacher salaries by per diem and per hour.

The Superintendent referenced the prior handout of 154 teachers' salary data showing increases from 7.12% to 30.64% over a two-year period.

Committee members discussed the information provided. Member Bantjes reviewed the process used to set the relationship for administrators' salaries to the highest teachers' salaries and to link the Assistant Superintendent and Business Manager salaries to that of the Superintendent. Concern was raised about the increases for those two employees not being tied to performance. It was pointed out that competing for top administrators requires offering top compensation and that administrators in the private sector were paid at a much higher rate for a much lower workload.

1. Preliminary October 1, 2007 Enrollments

The Committee reviewed the preliminary October 1, 2007 enrollments, noting a declining enrollment trend in general but an influx of students in grade 6. The finance subcommittee will take a look at the numbers.

B. Recommendations – None.

C. Other – None.

ARTICLE 9324 PERSONNEL

A. Superintendent’s Review of Personnel Changes

The following personnel changes were noted. All salaries are set in accordance with current contracts.

- Sylvie Carrier-Hastings has been appointed cafeteria cook supervisor, approximately 5.5 hours/day, at Berkshire Trail Elementary School, effective October 1, 2007.
- Susan Shelsy has been appointed paraprofessional at Kittredge School, 3.5 hours/day, effective September 11, 2007.
- Bonnie Fahey has been appointed assistant cafeteria cook, approximately 3 hours/day, at Nessacus Regional Middle School, effective September 17, 2007.
- Angela Golembeski, Title I paraprofessional at Berkshire Trail Elementary School, initially appointed August 31, 2007, has resigned effective October 1, 2007.

ARTICLE 9325 OLD BUSINESS

Member Hopper referred to the scheduling of parent teacher conferences and the fact that district teachers who have children in district schools may be unable to attend their own children’s teachers’ meetings.

ARTICLE 9326 NEW BUSINESS

None.

ARTICLE 9327 REMARKS FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMITTEE

Member Gordon is headed to his 40th high school class reunion.

Member Welts asked if a mediation schedule has been set; it is not yet confirmed.

Member Henderson reminded those present of the St. Joseph’s/Wahconah football game on Friday, October 12th.

Member Bantjes and his family are hosting a student from Germany; he stated our students can go to Germany as well.

Member Harvey reported Bob Powell had pointed out the decrease in certain budgetary line items, specifically athletics, noting the tremendous generosity of booster clubs.

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

To adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Ayes: Thirteen members present.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.