

Blackstone-Millville Regional District School Committee
Frederick Hartnett Middle School
Minutes of Meeting
June 9, 2022
6:00 p.m.

Introduction of Members:

Erin P. Vinacco, Chairperson
Tammy A. Lemieux, Vice Chairperson
Charles Dunton, Member
Daniel Keefe, Member
Erin Zimmerman, Member
Ted Novio, Member

Absent from meeting:

Keri L. Gaudette, District Treasurer
Tara L. Larkin, District Secretary

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States was recited. A moment of silence followed for the victims of the Uvalde School shooting.

Also in attendance were Jason DeFalco, EdD, Superintendent of Schools and Matthew J. Ehrenworth, Assistant Superintendent.

As this is the end of the school year there will not be a report of the student reps this evening.

Marching Band Trip

Mr. Shafer stated the marching band performed in Disney in 2004, 2008 and 2012. There is a renewed interest in going back to Disney.

Mr. Shafer would like to take the group during the April 2023 vacation. He presented a tentative itinerary with prices and estimates.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Keefe, seconded by Mr. Dunton and unanimously voted to approve the tentative plans to take the Marching Band to Disney during the April 2023 school vacation.

Retiree Recognition

Esther Cote - chose the book After the Fall, How Humpty Dumpty Got Back Up.
This book will be donated to the Complex library and is a book about determination and perseverance.

Mrs. Cote has been in the District for 34 years as an educator and also attended this school district for a total of 47 years at BMR and ten years as Unit A Union president. Mrs. Cote has touched the lives of many 1st graders that have gone through her classroom.

There are 3 other retirees - Stephanie Abisla retired in December, Fish in A Tree book chosen. Renee Rousselle 5th grade teacher at the Complex, Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus book chosen, Diane Dery, HS Para-Professional.

Matthew Ehrenworth will be leaving us and has been appointed as Superintendent of the Athol-Royalston school district.

Mr. Ehrenworth said it has been a pleasure to serve this community. He is very confident that they will only see wonderful things happen at BMR in the future.

Special Education Parent Advisory Council
Presented by Jill Pilla-Gallerani

Sara is the chairperson of the SEPAC.

The group meets monthly. It is a small but dedicated group of people.

Staff have gone to meetings and given presentations.

Sara gave news about fundraising.

They are having a shoe drive.

She is here because donations need to be accepted and allowed by the School Committee.

The Blackstone Police offered any donations to the SEPAC with their sales of patches for autism awareness.

The SEPAC wants to expand their role in the district.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Keefe, seconded by Mr. Novio and unanimously voted to accept the donation of \$650 from the Blackstone Police Department for the SEPAC.

Unit A Contract Approval from 2022 - 2025

Updated Rubrics to evaluate staff.

The school calendar has been approved and the start of the year was negotiated.

Lead teachers at the High School are back in as department heads.

Starting 2023-2024 paying one rate for insurance which is the HMO rate. District will only pay 75% of HMO rate and if you opt for PPO the district will only pay the 75% of the HMO rate.

OPEB - Unit A will be contributing \$5.00 per pay period.

The raise will be 2.75 in year 1, 2 and 3.

The stipend raises will be 1% in year one, 1.25% in years two and three.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Lemieux, seconded by Mr. Novio and unanimously voted to approve the Unit A Contract from July 2022 - June 2025 as presented this evening.

Mr Keefe thinks it's important that it be said that Unit A is giving a generous contribution to OPEB.

It is the total responsibility of the Towns to contribute to OPEB but they have very kindly made the decision to contribute.

Consent Agenda A

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Keefe, seconded by Mr. Dunton and unanimously voted to approve the Warrants and Minutes of the May 12th meeting.

There were no items for Public Forum.

Report of the Superintendent

Introduction of Mr. Yoder. Mrs Foulis has the pleasure of introducing our new Athletic Director who will also be joining our staff as a history teacher. He was in Southbridge and will be moving to BMR.

Dr. DeFalco wants to breathe new life into their Athletic Program and feels Mr. Yoder can do this.

There will be time built into the day for him to work on Athletics.

Mr. Dunton feels our numbers in Cross Country have dropped. They are looking into starting a running club. He has a 7th grade son and would like to see recruiting or finding interested kids for Cross Country.

Lead Nurse, Karen Young.

Covid Changes:

Close Contact - a week ago DESE stated unvaccinated, asymptomatic students with non school exposure can remain in school They need to mask for 10 days from contact with a positive individual. This does not apply to staff.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Lemieux, seconded by Mr. Novio and voted 5 in favor, 1 abstain (Mr. Keefe) to approve the close contact DESE update that unvaccinated, asymptomatic students with non school exposure can remain in school and mask for 10 days from contact with a positive individual.

Discussion on School Safety

Recent tragedy in Texas makes the leadership team confident that what they have done up to this point is the right work.

Dr. DeFalco stated we have a community drill tomorrow. The District sent multiple communications out to families as well as to the community and both chiefs of police. Remind the public about this drill. It will be at the High School at 12:30 p.m. He has also invited Superintendents in our region. There are no sound effects or active shooters. They will calmly respond to how they would respond to an intruder in the building. Give all staff and students the opportunity to exit the building.

There is a recent piece of information on how not to prepare kids. He feels what we are doing is in direct alignment of what to do.

The Committee has put a lot into making the school space safer with laminate safety on the windows, safe entry vestibules, cameras, key fobs, etc.

Mrs. Vinacco - since 2012 when the Sandy Hook shooting happened our district didn't take a lot of action so she is glad to see it in place 10 years later. Our Committee can make policy changes and she would like to see more done. She is interested in increasing the SRO's in our District. A gun law change may take time but we can make changes in our schools.

We currently have one full time school resource officer for all of our school buildings. Officer Laudon has done a tremendous job. He will get pulled from the different schools to work on things.

The current SRO is paid for by the Town of Blackstone. They took one of their patrolmen off the street to have them in the building. We have an MOA that the town pays the salary of the SRO.

Mr. Dunton feels that they should give us another resource officer and possibly take another officer off the street.

If we put one officer in every building it would be \$180,000 - \$200,000 for another three SRO officers.

Mr. Keefe feels the officers in Blackstone are necessary and are very busy. It would need to be a big conversation with both Towns on how these officers would be paid.

Mrs. Vinacco feels that we should probably pay the bill for the additional 3 officers and find a way to put it in our budget.

Would the Committee like Dr. DeFalco to convene with the 2 town chiefs of police to have discussions on this?

The Committee agreed this next step is necessary.

Mrs. Vinacco wants a change to be made by the time our doors open next fall.

In SRO training they are the first one on the scene, no questions asked you run into the gun fire to stop the gunman.

Mr. Keefe would like to hear the feedback of the SRO officers and the chiefs of police to see what their thoughts are on this subject.

The majority of the school committee would like to dive deeper into discussions with the Towns on this subject and where they will be on the first day of school.

Mr. Keefe asked if it would be a good idea to put the drill out on social media? They discussed this question. Dr. DeFalco will take care of this by putting it up on their twitter social media page.

Family Welcome Registration Center

One stop registration shopping and wrap around family service that our families may need.

They want to stop the parent from having to go to multiple schools and do it one time in one place.

They decided to move offices in the central office area and put in a family registration center there. Martha Vazquez will do this. She is very good and bi-lingual. She knows how to work with kids and is also a licensed teacher. The process will begin on August 1st. All registrations moving forward will be done there.

The re-registration every year paperwork will be done electronically. As of Sept. 1st all new registrations will be electronic.

There will be a nice family welcome sign. There is a side entrance that will be the central location to the family welcome center.

Lead Planning and Teaching Learning Coach

Job Description which gives all responsibilities of this individual.

This was built with Jill Pilla-Gallerani, school principals and Kerri Purcell.

The stipend amount proposal is for \$12,000.

It is a re-purposing of existing dollars.

He would like to be able to start a discussion with Unit A and see where it goes.

Dr. DeFalco was doing this job previously.

Coordinating support for coaches and aligning curriculum practices across the school system.

At our next meeting you will hear about progress in our district blueprint. This person would coordinate this.

They would spend ½ time coaching in their building and ½ time coordinating this coaching work.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Keefe, seconded by Mrs. Zimmerman and unanimously voted to begin negotiations for an MOA with Unit a to move forward with the stipend for a Lead Planning and Learning Teaching Coach for a stipend of approximately \$12,000 per year.

This is to be funded through the assistant superintendent salary line.

The intent is for this person to start this summer. If there is a delay in the start date the stipend would be pro-rated.

Business Office Report

FY 20 Audit - behind due to the circumstances of Covid and hoping to be caught up. No significant findings. Letter of engagement was received today to start the FY21 audit.

Bi-County Collaborative tuition. We are a member of the collaborative and oversee the running of it. There have been financial problems and they need to increase tuition rates. We had already budgeted for this. We need to see where we could offset to pay for this. There is a stipulation that we can pre-pay this. We have 2 tuitions we could pre-pay this year. It would come from the circuit breaker account. Asking to be allowed to pre-pay \$105,436.80.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Keefe, seconded by Mrs. Lemieux and unanimously voted to approve allocating \$105,436.80 to pre-pay 2 Bi-County Collaborative tuitions for the 22-23 school year.

Mr Keefe stated it originally was for \$80,000 and now it has increased to \$105,436.80.

Dr. DeFalco stated they rebuilt the budget on 190 students. With that they had a deficit of \$450,000. It was discussed it would take them enrolling 10 more students and the deficit is closed and we would break even. As of April 1st enrollment they have 208 students. Next year we should be all set. The budget should land this time next year and break even. Dr. DeFalco will ask to be on the budget sub-committee and executive director evaluation committee.

Revenue Report

Still collecting revenues and in a positive place. Drawing down on our grants and final draw down in June. Still have Chapter 70 funds that need to come in. Just sent town assessment letters today.

Expenditure Report

Expenses going as planned. Still in a place to be \$750,000 in the black. Financially healthy place.

Non renewals went out this afternoon and will continue to be distributed until the end of the week.

Facilities updates

Industrial burner came in and provided a quote.

Irrigation systems filter installed all running properly.

Dugout work continues.

Tennis courts- work started and then ran into rain and a hold was put on it. They were waiting for them to finish the project. They will be given a deadline.

FWH - commitment to securing the buildings cameras- we received a quote and will be getting additional cameras there. 14 new cameras, tied into the police station.

Move between MES and Complex - everything is booked for the 28th and 29th of June for the move and it should take a day or so.

User Request

Track and Field request.

Mr. Dunton feels the shed needs to be emptied out and organized. Mr. Dunton could speak with the new A.D. and talk about new track equipment and storage.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Keefe, seconded by Mrs. Lemieux and unanimously voted to approve the Track and Field Use of Facilities Request.

School Committee Forum

The committee members wish Mr. Ehrenworth the best in his new position.

Mrs. Lemieux - District One event was well attended and well organized. Wanted to acknowledge the efforts that went into planning that. Congrats to graduates. Thank you to the Town of Blackstone for approving our budget and the OPEB monies. Softball lost in the second round at states.

Mr. Dunton - Please talk to us to resolve issues before trying to move to another district.

Mr. Keefe- congratulations to retirees, new hires and Mrs. Cote. She started her career here when he was in 11th grade and wishes Mr. Ehrenworth the best of luck.

Motion: Mrs Vinacco moved to adjourn the regular meeting and move into Executive Session for the purpose of Collective Bargaining not to return to the regular meeting. A roll call vote was taken at 8:21 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Monique F. Simard
Recording Secretary

ATTEST: _____
Tara L. Larkin, District Secretary

