

HADLEY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

HADLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

HADLEY, MASSACHUSETTS

March 1, 2011

5:30 PM Regular Meeting

Hopkins Academy Music Room

PRESENT: Chair: Mr. Thomas Waskiewicz, Vice Chair: Mr. James Michalak. Members: Ms. Linda Dunlavy, Mrs. Tracey Kelley, and Ms. Robie Grant.

Dr. Nicholas Young, Superintendent of Schools and Carol Trane, Administrative Assistant and Recording Secretary. For TV5, Ms. Kristen Garand, and Nick Grabbe, Daily Hampshire Reporter.

Also in attendance: Frank Aquadro, Finance Committee Member. Representatives from the Hadley PTO, Hadley Mothers' Club and Hadley Booster Club joined the Committee to receive a plaque in recognition for their many contributions to the Hadley Public Schools. Others: Mrs. Mary Lou Laurenza, Mr. John Earle and Ms. Renee Hembrough and Mrs. Donna Berg.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Waskiewicz welcomed everyone in the audience and called the meeting to order at 5:35 P.M.

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APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The approval of the minutes of the January 24, 2011 meeting was postponed until the April meeting.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Policy Review-BEDG-Public Participation at School Committee Meetings

Chairman Waskiewicz said he had the opportunity to check with eight schools in the surrounding area regarding their policy on this subject and got six responses. (South Hadley, Northampton, Hatfield, Hampshire Regional, Granby and Greenfield). Mr. Waskiewicz said all six schools had policies that pretty much mirrored Hadley's current policy. All had public participation at the beginning of the meeting, usually three (3) minutes or set by the chairperson, two of the schools require that comments be put in writing, and in every case, remarks are addressed to the school committee only. In Northampton the public session is 15 minutes before the meeting gets into the business portion, along with South Hadley. At Hampshire Regional participants are asked to put their name and address and topic they intent to discuss in writing. Greenfield is also at the beginning of the meeting and the Chair determines the length, usually three minutes or less per remark.

Chairman Waskiewicz also contacted the Mass. Association of School Committee's Executive Director, Glenn Koocher, to find out what is taking place across the state and he mimicked what is being reported by those schools previously reported; adding, by and large, there is a public comment period at the beginning of each meeting, speakers are recognized by the Chair before they speak, speakers have a fixed time limit-average of three minutes-each speaker speaks once to their topic, and written comments are accepted by those who don't have an opportunity to speak. Mr. Koocher highly recommended the common practice that the school committee does not respond to the public comment.

Members discussed several options covering public participation. Mr. Waskiewicz again reminded the Committee that Hadley is not out of line with the region or the state for that matter. Mr. Waskiewicz said he felt Hadley was less strict, not requiring remarks be put in writing or be required to sign in.

Ms. Dunlavy said she submitted a proposal that people be allowed to address the school committee chair after each agenda item, after the discussion of the school committee. Ms. Dunlavy would also propose that at the end of the meeting, audience members can suggest areas that they'd like addressed at future meetings, adding she believes this makes for a more participatory meeting and will reduce the length of the meeting; reasoning, that having participants address issues in advance, they have to guess what will be talked about and guess what the discussion will be by the school committee. Mrs. Kelley suggested that perhaps if someone were unclear about what the school committee discussed, they could put it in writing and it could be addressed at the next meeting.

Ms. Grant remarked that she attended a MASC training session and it was noted that it is a school committee business meeting and not a public forum and not structured for exchange. Yet, Ms. Grant said she does not see anything wrong with letting people make a comment or ask a clarifying question after each agenda item.

Members discussed timing issues, improper remarks and not being fully prepared for unexpected questions. While Ms. Grant and Ms Dunlavy agreed that questions should be on

topic, Ms. Grant did acknowledge that it put more responsibility on the Chair. Mr. Waskiewicz again said most committees do not respond to the public. The committee should avoid a non-board member from hijack the meeting by cross-examining the school committee.

Mr. Waskiewicz said he would forward Ms. Dunlavy's proposal for committee review. Ms. Dunlavy said she did not forward it to all members because she did not want to break the open meeting law. This item will again be discussed at the next meeting.

FY12 School Department Budget Update

Dr. Young said this was an on-going item and offered to repeat what he offered last month adding this is a budget that calls for the following assumptions: that there are no loss of positions, there are no new positions with the exception of a modification of one 2/3rds position to a fulltime position at Hopkins Academy to accommodate the increase in enrollment. This budget calls for no COLAs for anyone in the organization, adding the School Committee could adjust that later if they have the resources. He said it is difficult at this time of year to be certain about grant funding and other things. There is a budget gap at this time. Referring to page 14 of the budget, Dr. Young noted an increase in funding for Smith Voke due to the fact that we were estimating a 4% increase and were just notified that it is actually an increase of 5.7%. Dr. Young took a moment to explain that Smith Voke is allowed to increase their tuition within a fee structure set by the state for vocational schools, or private special ed programs and a variety of others. For a regional voke school like Pathfinder, where school committee members from the different membership towns sit on the board, they govern the amount of money that is allocated while Smith Voke is a closed system for only Northampton so they are structured by the state for all those communities that send students there.

In response to Ms. Grant's inquiry as to why there is a large increase on page 13 for elementary instructional support teachers, Dr. Young reminded everyone that most teacher salary lines were higher but were offset with grant monies. Dr. Young also noted that in FY11 we were given 5.3M, but spent closer to 6M using grant money. For FY12 we will once again have to offset our projected 6M budget with grant offsets. He said at this moment we have a gap of \$789,512, which is the difference between \$5,309,272 (currently funded for this year) and what we need to maintain programs and services at \$6,080,784, leaving a gap of \$789,512.

Dr. Young said in conversation with the Town Administrator, David Nixon he asked Dr. Young what he'd recommend at a minimum increase for the schools, Dr. Young responded that he felt strongly that the schools needed at least \$100,000 with the following explanation. If the schools got \$100,000, then the FY12 funding would be \$5,409,272, leaving a gap of \$689,512. Estimating grants at \$400,000 would leave a \$289,512 gap that the Committee could cover through School Choice. Dr. Young cautioned that with the receipt of approx. \$100,000 in additional Choice money, the Committee has not yet accounted for the \$100,000 needed in supply money that will be needed next fall. Dr. Young reminded the Committee that grants are not allocated by the state until late August, so there is no way to know exactly what Hadley will receive. Mr. Waskiewicz noted that the Committee has reserved \$148,000 of Choice money to

cover the cost of any potential retirements and resignations, plus the Committee is also facing a \$300,000 roof replacement expenditure this year. Dr. Young said there are always uncertainties, like increased sped cost, additional students wanting to attend voke school, increased fuel costs or any number of unexpected increases that will continue to be discussed in the months ahead.

In discussion around the potential for setting up a stabilization fund (as previously discussed during a Board of Selectmen's meeting) from unexpended school budget funds to unexpected sped costs, Dr. Young reminded the Committee that the school is starting with big gaps and ending with gaps and doesn't see any possibility of having any money at the end of this year when he has repeatedly reported to the Committee that there is a deficit of approx. \$30,000, but is still hoping for ways to adjust that figure before the close of the fiscal year, perhaps with late spring grant money or other accounts where money can be saved. However, if the town wanted to create a stabilization account for special ed students, he was sure the Committee would embrace it.

The budget the Committee received tonight is the budget being given to the Finance Committee. Dr. Young said he would be much more comfortable if the town could increase the schools by \$200,000 rather than \$100,000, or \$150,000. Ms. Dunlavy noted that she never remembered a budget this short. Again, Dr. Young said requesting a \$200,000 increase would be better than \$100,000, adding you could not take a zero and look at a two to three year trajectory that made sense; adding perhaps splitting the difference to \$150,000 would made sense.

Finance Committee Member, Frank Aquardo, asked what amount of money was in the Choice Account. While Mr. Waskiewicz did not have the exact figures in front of him, he verbally reviewed the figures.

MOTION: (Kelley/Grant) move to submit a FY12 School Department budget figure of \$5,459,272 to the Town. VOTE: Unanimous.

NEW BUSINESS

1. School Calendar for 2011-2012

Dr. Young noted that the Hadley Teachers Association was given two calendars. Under the contract between the School Committee and HEA, the teachers have the right to vote on the first day of school if the start is before Labor Day. In the final vote the calendar suggesting an Aug. 26 start didn't make the cut, but the calendar starting on Aug. 29th did, with a three day start for students, followed a four-day week, then a full five days in session.

MOTION: (Dunlavy/Kelley) move to approve the recommended school calendar for the 2011-2012 school year with a start date of August 29th for teachers, with students starting on August 31th. VOTE: Unanimous.

2. School Choice

Dr. Young said this is an annual requirement for continuation of the program. Dr. Young provided the Committee with a current receiving choice count of 70 students and sending out of 32 to choice and charter.

Dr. Young reported that Hadley is receiving a number of inquiries for kindergarten and grade 1, but he understood from last year that we are steering clear of those grades in order to keep enrollments small. This vote allows Hadley to continue with the Choice Program.

MOTION: (Grant/Michalak) move to continue the School Choice Program. VOTE: Unanimous.

3. Land Acquisition Committee

Mr. Waskiewicz said this has been discussed over the course of a year. The Trustee President, Mr. William Dwyer, made a presentation to the Committee and related that the Trustees are now in a position to offer this land for sale to the schools. Mr. Waskiewicz noted that the Trustees have held this land for approx. 20 years and would like to recoup their investment, first purchasing it with the intent of one day making it available to the schools for the expansion of the playing fields. Chairman Waskiewicz is recommending that the Committee form a Land Acquisition Committee with representatives from the Park & Rec Department, Boosters Club, the Hopkins Athletic Director, a School Committee member, perhaps a community member-at-large who has an interest or knowledge of athletics and field development and a member of the Board of Trustees who perhaps should be a non-voting member. That would make five voting members and one non-voting member. This committee could do the preliminary work before it goes to the town for a vote.

MOTION: (Kelley/Michalak) move to form a Land Acquisition Committee as discussed. VOTE: Unanimous.

OTHER:

Reports, and/or Informational Items, etc.)

1. **HES Principal Search Process** – There was an advertisement period for the elementary principal position, with Hadley receiving sixteen (16) applications. The first meeting was held with the Screening Committee this day and they will review all the applications. There are seven people on the Screening Committee. Once the Screening Committee has completed its task, with candidate interviews, site visits, etc., there will be opportunities for teachers and elementary students to be involved and a public meeting where parents can attend and rate the candidates. The open interviews should be held in mid-April.

2. **MSBA** – Hopkins Roof Update – Nothing new to report, Hadley has completed all the required documents and are waiting to hear from the state.
3. **Virtual School Update** – Dr. Young said our contract is pending review by the Commissioner and has been addressing any questions that have come from the town including how the monies will come into and out of the town.

Mr. Waskiewicz asked the Committee to authorize him to sign the contract when it comes back from the Commissioner with minor revisions only as long as our school attorney gives his approval. If the School Committee did not grant the Chair the authority to sign the contract, it wouldn't matter if minor changes were made because he wasn't granted authority to sign because he wouldn't have a vote of record.

Dr. Young noted that the only significant change could be the back and forth about what account to use with the town, that being 71E or 71F to receive virtual money. Members agreed that if they feel the changes are significant, then they will ask for a meeting. If not the Chair can sign.

MOTION (Kelley/Michalak) grant the Chair authority to sign the Virtual School contract with Kaplan, with minor changes that are furnished to the Committee by Dr. Young and reviewed by the school attorney and further, that the Committee has the right to call a meeting or ask for it to be an agenda item for further discussion once it is received from the Commissioner if there are major changes requiring further discussion by the School Committee. VOTE: In favor: Michalak, Kelley, Dunlavy and Waskiewicz. Opposed: Grant.

4. **2010 Annual Reports** to the Town by the Superintendent, Hopkins Principal, Elementary Principal and School Committee Chairman.
5. **Balance Sheets** to March 1, 2011.
6. Mr. Dyjach, parent of a school choice student asked the Committee about taking kindergarten students under Choice for next year. Dr. Young said Hadley does get a number of inquiries for all of our grades with much enthusiasm for kindergarten and Grade 1. The School Committee, last year, decided to keep those grades small and not accept students in those grades. Mrs. Kelley said she believed it was dependent on class size, not wanting to go over 20 per class. Dr. Young said that was not his understanding, but would favor revisiting that if the Committee so chose. The Committee agreed to revisit the numbers at a future meeting.

NEXT MEETING DATE

April 13, 2011, 5:30 PM, at the Hadley Elementary School.

This meeting will includes the Public Hearing on the Budget and Elementary Principal interviews.

RECOGNITION

Chairman Waskiewicz said he realized that Hadley has tremendous organizations in town that support the community and schools in a big way. Unfortunately, the Trustees could not join the other organizations due to a conflict but the Committee wanted express their appreciation to the following contributors:

Hadley Booster's Club – Mr. Waskiewicz first reminded everyone that the Boosters were having a Spring Dance on Saturday, March 19 at 8PM at the American Legion. Mr. Waskiewicz said the Boosters have been very generous to Hopkins Academy. They purchased a new PA system, contributed to the championship field hockey jackets, championship golf jackets, the golf and soccer banners, cheerleading replacement uniforms and the sports banquet. Purchased Middle School Boys and Girls soccer uniforms (\$1,400), purchased the Boys home and away basketball uniforms (over \$4,000), purchased the championship baseball jackets (over \$1,000), making the total contributions this past year exceeded \$16,000. The Booster's Club has four fundraisers a year. The spring dance, the soccer under the lights weekend, the concession stand at the basketball games and said they print and distribute the finest program in the Hampshire League. The annual Chicken-To-Go event is a must for all of Hadley.

Called forward to receive their inscribed plaque were three members of the Booster's Club, Mr. Peter Bemben, Mr. Steve Konieczny and Ms. Kathy Egan. Mr. Bemben said the Booster Club proudly accepts this award and he acknowledged all the past and present members for volunteering, noting the Boosters are getting stronger every year. He thanked all who have donated money and time, notably thanking the Hadley Legion Post 271 and the Hadley Young Men's Club. Mr. Bemben also acknowledged the contributions of the Cheerleaders and Pep Band.

Hadley Mothers Club – Mr. Waskiewicz noted that the Club's president; Mrs. Denise Devine could not attend this evening, but provided the Committee with a list of some of their endeavors. Every years Mother's Club runs the vendor fair, the pancake breakfast, recycling day and the Hillside pizza fundraisers. The Club sponsors and provides refreshments at Candidate's Night and both town meetings. Their yearly giving to the Hadley schools includes two scholarships for \$300 each; they contribute to Boys and Girls State, sponsor the 6th Grade Celebration, purchase ads in the Hopkins Yearbook, support the Sports Banquet and have purchased recorders for all the 3rd grade students. Special contributions have been made to support the Hopkins Band trip to Florida, the Boy Scouts Eagle Project and providing speakers at Hopkins Academy for Career Day. Representing Mothers Club was: Maureen Jacque and Susan Waskiewicz who accepted the award. Mrs. Jacque thanked the Committee for the recognition.

Hadley PTO – Sponsored the Arts Murals, the Back to School Lunch, Family Dinner Night and the Teacher Appreciation Lunch. They provide refreshments for the school's Open House and Snacks for students who take the MCAS. They developed a school directory for parents. They run Arts Day, the Carnival and the Book Fair with every child in the school receiving a book. The PTO organized Math Day with every grade receiving math games to keep. PTO helped fund seven field trips with funds from the calendar raffle. They purchased music recorders for the music department and finally, the PTO keeps the communication lines open

with both ChalkTalk and their website. Called forward President of PTO, Terri Earle, along with Mary Tudryn and Roxanne Downie. Mrs. Earle thanked the Committee for the honor and thanked the many volunteers that make the Hadley PTO a successful organization. Mrs. Earle said she is fortunate to work with a solid group of people who have a common goal, that being enhancing the educational experience for our children. Mrs. Earle said there are some wonderful traditions set in place, many of which were recited by Chairman Waskiewicz and wanted to promote the PTO website where there is a wealth of information not only about PTO but many of the other Hadley organizations. Again, Mrs. Earle thanked the Committee for the honor.

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Mr. Waskiewicz thanked everyone for coming and invited all to enjoy some refreshments and stay for the basketball game.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: (Michalak/Kelley) move to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 PM. VOTE: Unanimous.