

# HADLEY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

HADLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## HADLEY, MASSACHUSETTS

June 23, 2011

6:30 PM Regular Meeting  
Room

Hopkins Academy Music

**PRESENT:** Chair: Ms. Robie Grant, Vice Chair: Mr. James Michalak (arrived at 7:15PM).  
Members Present: Ms. Linda Dunlavy and Ms. Molly Keegan. Mr. Waskiewicz had a family emergency and was unable to attend.

Dr. Nicholas Young, Superintendent of Schools, Carol Trane, Administrative Assistant, Gazette Reporter, Nick Grabbe, TV5's Chris Garand, Hopkins Academy Principal, Diana Bonneville; Teachers, Cathy Niedziela, Janet Slocum, Jack Horrigan, Chris Garand for Channel 5 and community members Jo-ann Konieczny, Heather Earle, and Scott Payne.

**I.        CALL TO ORDER:** Chair, Ms. Robie Grant called the meeting to order at 6:31 P.M.

### **II.        APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

MOTION: (Dunlavy/Keegan) move to approve the minutes of the May 23, 2011, meeting as presented. VOTE: Unanimous.

MOTION: (Dunlavy/Keegan) move to approve the minutes of the June 1, 2011, meeting as presented. VOTE: Unanimous.

### **III.       PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

NONE

#### IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Grant had hoped to have out-going member, Tracy Kelley, present to receive a plaque in recognition of her service as a SC Member; but Mrs. Kelley was unable to attend. SC will invited her to the August meeting,.

Dr. Young reported that he had the opportunity to recognize some individuals at the close of school. The were: Mike Klimoski and Marianne Wanczyk for Distinguished Service to the District; three retirees: Sue Jekanowski after spending 11 years in the cafeteria, Margie Strauss for 25 years of service as an elementary teacher and Phil DiPietro for his 10 years of service to the district as the elementary principal.

Also awarded two golden apples, which are equivalent to “Employee Of The Year” awards to: Deb O’Neil, a Hopkins secretary and Peter Klimoski, the lead custodian at the Hadley Elementary.

#### V. SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE

a. **Meetings on Varying Content and Purpose** – SC policy on academic presentations, proposed June 2011. Ms. Grant said Mr. Waskiewicz had expressed a concern on requiring teachers to appear before the SC for presentations. Ms. Grant checked with MASC and learned that his policy is basically directed at administration. The presentation months would be Sept., Nov., Jan., Mar. and May. While this policy addresses the administrative team, asking teachers to join the presentations is welcomed but not mandatory. This constitutes the first reading.

b. **School Committee Self-Evaluation Tool** .

Ms. Grant said that at the May meeting there was some discussion about this policy. Some members wanted to do the self-evaluation without outside help instead of calling in the school committee association to facilitate the results. Ms. Grant talked with Pat Correia, area rep with MASC, who discouraged going it alone and said the association does it all the time. Once the results are final, a representative will come to Hadley to meet with the members to dissect the information. Since neither Mr. Michalak nor Mr. Waskiewicz were present, the decision to hold a separate meeting will be decided at a later date when all members can be consulted.

c. **Subcommittees: Proposed for Consideration: Finance; Buildings and Grounds; and Policy and Curriculum.**

Ms. Grant said current SC policy does not allow for standing sub-committees, therefore she is recommending the current policy BDE be replaced with a two-page School Committee Subcommittee Policy as presented for consideration and first reading at this meeting. Ms. Grant said the goal of a subcommittee is to spread the work around and act as an advisory board to the School Committee subject to the Open Meeting Laws. Dr. Young said there are other districts that use liaisons rather than subcommittees to avoid all the extra postings and

paperwork. Ms. Keegan suggested subcommittees be appointed and then if it becomes burdensome, the SC could revisit its options. It was noted that the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee is separate from the Ad Hoc Committee currently working on the Hopkins playing fields and land acquisition. This committee has already met and a report is expected when Mr. Michalak joins the meeting. This committee is working on their best recommendation for the development and expansion of the Hopkins playing fields.

**d. Liaisons to Town Boards**

Ms. Grant wasn't sure if the SC had or wanted to have designated members to serve as a liaison to other town boards. The BOS has appointed Mrs. Joyce Chunglo as their liaison to the SC, but the SC has not designed anyone to serve in a similar capacity. Ms. Keegan offered to serve as the liaison to the Finance Committee; however, she felt that if there is a finance subcommittee of the SC, this task would be covered. It was also agreed that if the BOS asked the SC to join them at a meeting, the entire SC would make an effort to attend, not just a liaison or subcommittee.

**e. Financial Decision Making and Oversight**

Ms. Grant noted that some school committees sign payroll and warrants in meetings. However, it was determined that not signing warrants and payroll in a timely manner is unlawful, therefore waiting to bring the paperwork to a SC meeting would not reflect the proper dates or time requirements.

**f. Goal Setting and Strategic Framework to Create Continuous Improvement**

Ms. Grant believes that school committees engage in this all the time and would like to talk with MASC representative, Pat Correia when she visits. Dr. Young reminded the committee that there currently exists a Strategic Plan adopted approx. five years ago and would be up in another year. With surveys going out and other fact gathering, Dr. Young suggested that it all be incorporated when a new plan is adopted.

**VI. POLICY BEDG – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS (Second Reading)**

Ms. Grant announced this would be the second reading of this policy and noted that Mr. Waskiewicz had an issue with #3 because it said members of the SC would not respond to speakers during the public comment period. The language now reads ...will generally not respond...giving the SC the options to respond if so desired.

**MOTION: (Keegan/Dunlavy) move to adopt Policy BEDG-Public Participation at School Committee Meetings. Vote: Unanimous (Grant, Keegan and Dunlavy)**

## **VII. DATA GATHERING ON FAMILIES OPTING OUT OF HADLEY SCHOOL SYSTEM**

Dr. Young said there was discussion last fall to have some sort of a survey for late spring or early summer or early fall. There was also additional discussion to collect data on the reasons why parents send their students to the Hadley Public Schools. Dr. Young provided the SC with one survey entitled Hadley Public Schools Survey and other entitled Hadley Public Schools-School Choice Survey. Both surveys have gone through the editing process and he has received input from many sources. Dr. Young believes the survey offers anonymity, yet provides the opportunity to be contacted by giving their name if they wish and to raise concerns or suggestions but at the same time makes it clear that this is not about identifying any particular employee in the district; adding, this is not a finger-pointing exercise.

Dr. Young felt this survey is ready to go, but he does question the late date and sending this over the summer. He felt we could start fresh after people are back from vacation and are more likely to respond. While he didn't recommend the survey go out the first week of school since many times students are overwhelmed with papers; he suggested sending out the survey the second week.

The flipside is the second survey asking parents why they opted to enroll their child in the Hadley Public Schools under the School Choice Program. This is a draft and will require some editing before it is ready to go out. Members questioned #12 on both surveys, as it pertained to asking survey takers to note if their concern was with an individual staff member and then is asked to Please Specify. This section should ask them to Please Specify the situation, not a particular individual. \_

## **VIII. INNOVATION SCHOOL**

Dr. Young offered a few updates, noting that there are some key legislative leaders that are feeling the need to offer a bill to have virtual schools back on the map for public schools, adding this issue is not dead.

Now switching to innovation schools, Dr. Young said this is predominantly a Secretary of Education initiative working for the governor in answer to the increase in charter schools that came about as a result of Race To The Top grant funding requirements. Massachusetts received these funds, and as a result, had to agree to increase their number of charter schools. Since there was an outcry from public schools because of the charter school costs, they came up with the idea of an innovation school or a school that could compete with a charter school and be creative in design, etc. The early example of an innovation school called for an urban center school that would receive the same amount of funding as the other schools within that district. That was widely interpreted as an innovation school at the same per pupil expenditure. Dr. Young went on to explain the funding behind this program, noting it would be impossible for a small district to fund this type program. In response to Ms. Dunlavy, Dr. Young said you could convert a school like Hopkins to an innovation school, but doubted that the community would embrace such changes in a school so steeped in tradition. Dr. Young reminded them that they have the authority to approve an innovation school, it does not require outside consent.

Ms. Keegan asked if Hadley should withdraw their Virtual School application. Dr. Young responded that the application has been denied and therefore no longer on the table. However, Ms. Keegan believed the waiver was denied but the application was still out there. Dr. Young responded that the SC approved a Virtual School. The only thing the state has jurisdiction over is the waiver request. There is no application to withdraw.

Ms. Keegan then asked if the Committee wanted to have any on-going discussion about pursuing possible changes down the road under the innovation laws. Dr. Young said he had to admit that the financial end of it really took away his enthusiasm because Hadley can't afford to augment the kind of money it would require. Ms. Keegan said she would like to see community input up front in the process, and from the teachers, and school councils.

## **IX. SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE**

### **(Mr. Michalak joined the meeting at 7:15)**

**a. School Lunch Update**- Dr. Young distributed a letter from USDA citing Section 205 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2011, Hadley has to bring lunch prices of paid students to equal the amount that the federal government reimbursement is for free students. Right now Hadley is reimbursed at the elem. school \$2.46 a meal where our students are paying \$2.25. The recommendation from the Food Services Director, Diane Zak, is that we raise the elem. school lunch price from \$2.25 to \$2.50 to be in compliance with this regulation by July 1, 2011. Mrs. Zak also suggested that the committee raise the Hopkins' lunches from \$2.50 to \$2.75 citing the fact that food costs are generally going up. Dr. Young said he did not support raising the Hopkins' lunches at this time, but it's a warning of what's to follow. There is about \$48,000 in the food services revolving account and it's been holding steady with the lunch prices that we have. The revolving account has dropped slightly, but Dr. Young felt it could go another 12 to 24 months before the need for an increase.

**MOTION: (Keegan/Dunlavy) move to increase the Elementary school lunch to \$2.50; and further, to keep the Hopkins lunch price at \$2.50. VOTE: Unanimous.**

### **b. MSBA – Hopkins Roof Project**

Dr. Young provided the committee with a small packet of information on this project. He noted that the competitive grant monies were suppose to be used by December 2011; however, at each stage of the process it took the state weeks or even months to get back to us. We are just now at the point where we have a OPM (Owner's Project Manager) and an Architect given to us by MSBA. They set the fees and contracts. Hadley was not able to have the roof built by December since it would be disruptive while school is in session. The state has said they are willing to work with us around an extension. MSBA should receive documents from the architect in August, the MSBA board should review it in Sept. at that point they will formally grant Hadley an extension. Then the project will go out to bid before the holiday break with a start date during April vacation or the summer of 2012.

### **c. Secondary Curriculum Update**

(Art, Consumer Science, Technology/Computer Science, Health and PE)

Dr. Young said years ago Hadley did not have an established curriculum for the district. Over the years, the teachers and administrators developed a game plan about how to get a curriculum in place. This process took about five years and vowed collectively that we never put the district in that situation again. Each school has an instruction and curriculum committee in each school and there are two things that happen every year. One is we have a five-year review cycle laid out in our Strategic Plan and every year we ask our teachers to review their curriculum to see if it needs to be fine tuned at the end of the year. Every effort is made to insure that our curriculum documents are not obsolete. The review is also linked to financing with two priority areas in any particular year. Looking back over the last five years, when it's been a priority year, like we had Social Studies, English/Lang./Arts and we made major purchases for textbooks. Then everything comes back around again on a cycle and can be predicted. It is usually when books start to become dated in certain subjects.

Dr. Young said he wanted to acknowledge the hard work of the teachers and principal that capture the changes and the more extensive reviews in several areas. Dr. Young pointed out that along the way you could have a course change request and offered an example where the Hopkins Science teachers brought forth the idea of changing the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade integrated science class to a physics class partly because integrated science is a very general class and the teachers wanted the class to be more MCAS focused. Dr. Young added that our AP Physics test scores historically haven't been our strongest scores in the district and the idea of having two years or two parts physics program (one in 9<sup>th</sup> and one in an upper grade) would help strengthen that program. Dr. Young acknowledged Hopkins teacher Cathy Niedziela for bringing this forward and also Principal Bonneville.

**d. 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Science Course Change**

There is also a request to change 9<sup>th</sup> grade integrated science to a 9<sup>th</sup> grade physics that would be more aligned with MCAS and higher level science expectations. Ms. Dunlavy asked if this is an established curriculum for freshman and was told yes.

After general discussion, the superintendent said this would require a vote since this was a major course change.

**MOTION: (Michalak/Dunlavy) move to change the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Integrated Science course to 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Physics. VOTE: Unanimous.**

**e. Code of Conduct for Hopkins and Hadley Elementary**

Dr. Young reported that the Code of Conduct is the one thing in a student handbook that is a school committee policy, where regular handbook changes are general information non-school committee policy. Noted that the Anti-Bullying policy that has already been approved and is now imbedded in the handbook language at both schools.

The Hopkins changes are consolidated on one-page in the very front of the handbook. Dr. Young noted that there are changes in the “Disciplinary Procedures” section, again pointing out that these constitute policy changes.

**MOTION: (Keegan/Dunlavy) move to approve the recommended changes to the elementary and secondary Code of Conduct as presented. VOTE: Unanimous.**

**g. Renewal Application for Delegation of the Administration of Prescription Medications**

(Note: Dr. Young took this agenda item out of order.)

He explained to the Committee that the schools have to be adequately staffed with school nurses noting this is not a way for school districts to avoid having adequate nurse coverage. This deals with the times and situations where someone might need an epipen on a trip and it’s impossible to take the nurse out of the building. Each and every medication is controlled. When someone is entrusted to handle meds on a field trip, etc. they must receiving training. No one is trying to get around the nursing element and that is simply not true.

**MOTION: (Keegan/Michalak) move to authorize Dr. Young and Chairman Grant to sign the renewal application for the Delegation of the Administration of Prescription Medications. VOTE: Unanimous.**

**h. Virtual Towns and Schools**

Members were referred to the website development proposal for the virtual towns & schools. Dr. Young admitted that the school department website is not the strongest part of the Hadley Public Schools. There are many frustrations with the current website and also the lack of manpower to maintain one. The town has a similar problem. What this proposal would allow us to do is work together to develop a website that would address the town’s needs and the school’s needs, would allow for a better exchange of information across the town, and great for employees to access information. Dr. Young addressed the proposed costs noting that the school department’s cost would be more because we had more users. He said this could be started in late fall and would take about three months to complete. This is an opportunity for the school and town to work on a project together. Dr. Young said he fully endorses this proposal. There was general discussion on how the site would be set up and managed. In response to cost, Dr. Young said he was not certain where the funding would come from, adding the school budget has not set any money aside for resources. If the town does not ante up all of the money, the SC will then discuss making up the difference in the fall. This project will also require planning with teachers and staff.

**MOTION: (Michalak/Dunlavy) move to support joining the town in securing funds to convert the school and town website to Virtual Towns and Schools. VOTE: Unanimous.**

**f. Review of District Goals – Superintendent Self-Assessment**

Dr. Young said each year he develops a list of Administrative Goals and offered to review some highlights. Completed a successful comprehensive elementary principal search that resulted in hiring Mr. Jeff Udall. Unit A and C contracts were settled; time and effort was devoted to exploring a Virtual Innovation School; secured competitive funding from MSBA to replace one of the Hopkins roofs; continue to update the Capital Plan in the fall; developed a plan to identify MCAS assessment weaknesses; improve the district website, adding this is now in progress; improve communication, developing anti-bullying policies. Hopkins was involved in organizing a Career Fair, worked on school climate; continued to work on NEASC; continue to work on a data warehouse project with the state; did additional category 4 ELL training which is a mandated requirement; been involved in professional development and involved in the use of PLATO for credit recovery; involved in NAEYC accreditation for kindergarten; involved in student success plans for students at risk in grades 3-6. Dr. Young said there are 50 areas of which he only highlighted a few, believing there has been involvement in a number of important things over the course of the year trying to improve the district.

Dr. Young also included a two-page Self-Assessment for the 2010-2011 Academic Year. He also shared with the Committee that he wrote a forward to a new education textbook.

The complete documents are filed with and made a part of these minutes.

**X. OTHER (Reports, and/or Information Items, etc.)**

**a. Balance Sheets** were not available. The copy machine in the superintendent's office was out of order. Dr. Young also explained that the bottom-line was changing hour-by-hour as we approached the end of the year.

**b. School Field Committee** – Mr. Michalak reported that as the SC representative to the Field Committee they met on June 10, 2011 and offered a two-page recap of the meeting. The field committee looked at all of the Hopkins fields and the Trustee land. All agreed that the current fields at Hopkins are inadequate. Also discussed how the Hopkins baseball field is right on the parking lot with no protection for foul balls. The field committee looked at the most ideal configurations for fields with the inclusion of the Trustee land. Mr. Izer will prepare a schematic showing 3 full size soccer fields, 2 half size fields for practice; 2 baseball diamonds, 2-3 softball diamonds, track around the field for PE classes; a pavilion with restroom/water/electrical; dugouts; fencing around field complex; new backstops, storage for field equipment; and storage for bulk materials plus expansion of the current parking lot. Dr. Young reminded the SC that the state has competitive community bloc grant money for recreation and Hadley has never tried to access these funds. Dr. Young also interjected that it might be cheaper in the long run to level everything and start from scratch and do a complete overhaul.

Mr. Michalak said in the short-term, a lot of money has been put into renovating the soccer field but it needs water. Last year the fire hydrant was used to get enough water on the field. Mr. Michalak is recommending a 2" facet be installed outside Hopkins to water the field in the summer and secure some used fire hose to run a cannon.



**MOTION: (Keegan/Dunlavy) move to authorize the expenditure of up to \$2,500 for the installation of a 2" water main for the purpose of making water available to water the fields. VOTE: Unanimous.**

**XI. NEXT MEETING**

August 22, 2011, at 6:30 PM, Hopkins Academy Music Room.

**XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Purpose of the Executive Session was read aloud by the Chair**

**MOTION: (Keegan/Michalak) move to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of strategy planning with respect to collective bargaining with Unit A and Unit C; and further state, that conducting the aforementioned business in open session will have a detrimental effect on the public body's negotiating position. The committee will not reconvene in Regular Session at the conclusion of the Executive Session.**

**The Chair called for a Roll Call Vote: Voting Yes: Michalak, Dunlavy, Keegan and Grant. (Absent: Waskiewicz)**

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**XII. ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION: (Dunlavy/Michalak) move to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 PM. VOTE: Unanimous.**