

The Regular Meeting of the Brockton School Committee was held this evening in the George M. Romm Little Theatre, at seven o'clock. These minutes contain a summary of the meeting and list items that were under discussion.

Present: Mayor Carpenter, Chair; Mr. Minichiello, Vice-Chair; Mr. Henningson, Mr. Jordan, Mrs. Joyce, Mr. Robinson, Mrs. Sullivan, Mrs. Smith, Secretary

Absent: Mrs. Wilson

Mayor Carpenter called the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m., followed by a salute to the flag.

## Consent Agenda

Mayor Carpenter explained the purpose of the Consent Agenda, and asked Committee members whether there were any list items they wanted to remove for discussion; there were none.

**Mr. Minichiello moved the Superintendent's recommendation to approve the following items on the Consent Agenda.**

- *Minutes of March 17, 2015 Regular School Committee Meeting*
- *Report of March 17, Finance Subcommittee Meeting*
- *Minutes of December 10, 2015 CSAB Meeting*
- *Report of April 1, 2015 Bid Review Subcommittee Meeting*
- *BHS Girls Cross-Country Team Field Trip to Orlando, FL*
- *Downey School Grade 5 Field Trip to Canobie Lake Park, Salem, NH*
- *Notification of Personnel Appointments: Non-Certified*
- *Notification of Personnel Actions: Leaves of Absence, Resignations, Retirements*

Voted: to adopt the recommendation, unanimous.

## Superintendent's Report

### **BHS Student Representative Report**

Jessica Freeborn reported on current events at BHS, and then speaking on behalf of the student body, thanked teachers, administrators, and all involved in the evacuation of students from the high school yesterday. She said she polled some students, their response was that the situation was handled with great care and staff reacted quickly, and due to great control by administrators and teachers, students felt comfortable returning to school today. She said the evacuation was completed in approximately 15 minutes and student attendance rate today was 93.4, consistent with regular attendance.

### **Safety and Security Update – Response to Threats to BHS**

Superintendent Smith followed up by saying she concurred with the students' feelings that the response was excellent. The Superintendent said that the response to each threat has been made with respect to the level of the threat. She said a lot of time was spent with the Mayor, law enforcement, I.T. and district administrators prior to Monday morning, and when the third threat came in students were already on the grounds. A debriefing was already planned for the morning, but the addition of the third threat Monday morning caused a change in the plan; a full incident command center was set up at BHS. She thanked all who were involved with Monday's handling of the situation, there was not one complaint from business or community about the students, and said they all felt confident

reopening the school today. The Superintendent invited Deputy Superintendent Thomas and Lt. Mills, Supervisor of School Police, to give a report of the situation.

First, Mr. Thomas thanked student representative Jessica Freeborn for her comments, he said it is appreciated; the students are the number one population we are trying to protect. Mr. Thomas reviewed what the district has done in the past five years:

- Hired Emergency Management Specialist Tobias Cowans through a REMS grant. When the grant ended, the school committee made the decision to keep the position.
- Brought in Lt. Mills from the Brockton Police to oversee School Police.
- Allowed the district to apply for the COPS grant three years ago--this was a shared grant between school and city police which school committee was required to fund \$500,000; we were able to provide Incident Command System trainings for city and school police and other security measures.

Mr. Thomas said the safety of the students and staff is the number one priority, they have to feel safe when in a building. He said the result of all of these efforts showed yesterday, when they were able to evacuate approximately 5,000 people smoothly.

#### Questions and Answers

Mr. Henningson: how and when are assessments done after going through situations like this? Lt. Mills responded that an annual meeting is held where a review of policies and procedures, responses to incidents is done; a lot is learned and brought back from these meetings. With respect to Monday's incident, Lt. Mills reported they met as early as Monday afternoon to assess. Mr. Thomas added there are many other agencies involved in these assessments, including Brockton police, fire, BAT.

Mr. Henningson: how was staff was dispersed? Mr. Thomas responded that staff have a building assignment and were required to accompany the students to the closest site: red and yellow buildings went to the Campanelli; azure and green went to Marciano stadium.

Mr. Robinson: how did the district manage non-certified personnel at the high school, particularly food services staff who would be responsible for all school meals? Mr. Thomas responded that Mr. Burke, Director of Food Services, has in place a bag lunch system at each satellite school in case of emergency; this system was used.

Mr. Minichiello said that as a parent of two students at the high school, he wanted to thank everyone involved. He asked whether anyone could comment, for the public, on the involvement of other agencies that have better capability to track the threats; Lt. Mills responded that all law enforcement agencies covering the areas of the schools that received threats are involved, as well as involvement at the state and federal levels. Lt. Mills acknowledged that assistance is needed from agencies that have technology not available at the local level. Mr. Minichiello thanked Mr. Thomas and Lt. Mills.

The Superintendent asked Mr. Thomas to speak to current security measures that will remain in place; Mr. Thomas listed the following:

- No student can enter BHS before 6:45 a.m., anyone entering must have an ID;
- All exterior doors will remain closed and locked at all times; no entry after school begins except through the main office;
- Students entering for the start of school will report to their house via respective cafeteria entrances, staff are at the doors and ID's are checked;

- All visitors must check in through the LobbyGuard, which requires a valid id then runs a quick background check;
- Lt. Mills stated there is now an increased and earlier police presence, he added that no longer are people being allowed to check in with LobbyGuard and travel through the building for menial purposes, resulting in fewer visitors in the building.

Lt. Mills said that, as a police officer, he wanted to thank the students and staff, there was not one problem during the evacuation; students responded appropriately and did what they were asked, he said "Brockton can be proud of its schools and students".

The Mayor assured the public that a very active, multi-agency investigation is ongoing. He said it is important that people realize the investment Brockton has made into school safety, including cameras, lighting, controlled door locks, technology, training of police officers, he said Brockton is now on the leading edge. He said that during Monday's incident, working closely with law enforcement, everyone felt confident reopening school today, and parents should feel very confident about the level of safety here. He thanked everyone involved.

### **PARCC Update**

The Superintendent reported that the district has just finished the performance-based assessment, and unfortunately, there will only be a two-week break before we go right into the PARCC end-of-year assessment. There are concerns across the Commonwealth, and the Governor has set up community forums across the state, our area forum will be at Bridgewater State University and she will provide the exact date and time. To parents who have expressed concerns about our using PARCC as our high-stakes assessment, the Superintendent reported that it is the decision of the Board of Education.

### **SY2015-16 Calendar**

The Superintendent reported that the district is still in negotiations with the teachers' union which includes the calendar. At this point, she can announce that teachers will return to work on Tuesday, September 1, 2015, students return to school on Wednesday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>, and she expects to have a calendar for approval next month. She added that she received good news from the DESE today; they will not require BHS to make up Monday's absence. On another note, the Superintendent reported that staff attendance on Good Friday was 95%, on par with the previous Friday; student attendance was 84%, down about 10% from the previous Friday.

### **FY2016 Budget Update**

The Superintendent reported that her recommended budget, which includes everything, is now being reviewed by administration and school committee, to pare it down to have a *school committee recommended budget* to submit to the Mayor. The Mayor said that we will do the best we can with what we have to work with, and said the current \$4.2 million snow removal deficit must be paid within the next year. The amount the city receives in reimbursement for snow removal will affect the city's budget next year, to date Brockton has been ensured \$700,000, last year's deficit was \$1 million. He said the school department and city are working hard to put together the most efficient budgets possible.

### **Chief Supervisor of Attendance Report – Change of Format**

The Superintendent said she has spoken with legal counsel about the need to have this report approved by School Committee, she was assured that the attendance report does not require school committee approval. She said if there are no objections, she will remove

the report from the school committee agenda, and send it as an informational item in the weekly bulletin. There were no objections.

### **Facilities Update – Reconfiguration of the Raymond School**

The Superintendent began by reviewing the need for a facilities master plan, citing the district's growth by 1,600 students since 2010 with no new buildings being added except the reopening of the Barrett Russell. She said she has discussed a citywide facilities master plan with the Mayor, and she informed the community that this is a priority and she will want their involvement in the process when the time comes.

Moving toward this goal, a facilities planning team was put together in October to look at the lack of space at the elementary level; they determined that there was a good amount of space available at the middle schools. Input was sought from across the district, including middle school principals, Principal McGrath was involved, and after a number of meetings, the Superintendent announced her recommendation that the Raymond School be reconfigured from a K-8 to a K-5 school. She reported she has met with Raymond staff and parents to notify them of her decision. Approximately 250 students, next year's 6, 7, and 8 grade class, will be displaced to other middle schools. She assured families that the Raymond School has done an excellent job with the student population and talked about the supports the district will provide to help families through the transfer process.

Mr. Henningson said he has spoken to a number of parents and the news was not well-received; concerns include disruption, why the Davis is not being reconfigured, and whether the timing of this, before a master plan is in place, could possibly result in more disruption at a later date. The Superintendent responded that she can assure the community that there are middle schools with quite a bit of space right now, and elementary schools with class sizes of 29 to 30, we will have a master plan but there are some short-term goals in the meantime. Mr. Henningson asked what the ramifications might be if we wait for the master plan, and why the district doesn't just redirect the new students. The Superintendent responded, saying the move will relocate 250 students, there are middle schools that have 200 – 300 empty seats. She also said she does not see any benefit to waiting a year, there will still be large classes at the elementary level.

The Mayor agreed with the Superintendent with respect to the citywide facilities master plan, stating he is committed to this but the exact timing and how we will pay for it will evolve over the next 60 days, how it will be funded will be up to the City Council. This will be part of the budget process for this year. The Mayor added that he plans to work closely with School Committee and the Superintendent to apply to the MSBA next year for a new school. He reminded everyone that it all comes back to budgetary decisions. He said a lot of tough decisions will need to be made in order to preserve good student learning environments with good class sizes. Mayor Carpenter said he is sensitive to the concerns, but we need to make more efficient use of our middle school space.

After the discussion, **Mr. Minichiello moved to accept the report of the Facilities Planning Team.** Mr. Robinson seconded the motion, the vote was unanimous.

**Mr. Minichiello then made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Facilities Planning Team with respect to the reconfiguration of the Raymond School as presented in the report.** Mr. Jordan seconded the motion. On the motion, Mrs. Joyce said there were specifics that need to be included in the motion, at Mr. Minichiello's request she restated the motion as follows:

**Motion to accept the recommendation of the Facilities Planning Team to implement the reconfiguration of the Raymond School and facilitate the students, parents and staff in a smooth transition to a K-5 school, following a Tier 2 schedule, with an opening date of September, 2015.**

Mr. Minichiello expressed School Committee's concerns for the students, he said this is not an easy item to vote on, but we have abundant space at middle schools and overcrowding in elementary schools. He said this is not something the Committee takes lightly, it is the role of the school committee to make decisions in the best interests of the district, to do what makes sense. In the long run, he felt this will provide many students with better learning environments. **Seeing no further discussion, Mayor Carpenter called for a vote on the motion as restated by Mrs. Joyce.**

Voted: to approve the motion 5 -1 – 0 (Mr. Henningson opposed)

**Items to Refer  
To Subcommittee**

The Superintendent said she would like to schedule a Safety/Security/Transportation subcommittee meeting on April 28<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 p.m., in a large auditorium to accommodate parents, at which officials will be present to answer questions about the recent threats and security measures the district has taken. Mr. Minichiello recommended that the Safety/Security/Transportation subcommittee meet prior to the open forum meeting, he clarified that the public is welcome to attend the subcommittee meeting. The open forum would follow and will include Chief Crowley, Lt. Mills, Mayor Carpenter, and appropriate school administrators. This would give parents a chance to hear about procedures and ask questions. The Mayor said he will be away April 28<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Minichiello offered to choose a new date, the Mayor said he would like to be able to attend.

There were no further items for discussion.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Smith, JD  
Secretary

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