



School Committee

Provincetown School Committee Meeting

**PROVINCETOWN HIGH SCHOOL
ELMER I. SILVA LEARNING CENTER
12 Winslow Street
PROVINCETOWN, MA 02657**

**Tuesday
January 18, 2011
5:00 p.m.**

Members Present: Kerry Adams, Cass Benson, Peter Grosso, Shannon Patrick, and Lory Stewart.

Members Absent: none

Staff: Dr. Beth Singer, Superintendent
Kim Pike, District Principal

The meeting was called to order by Peter Grosso, Chair, at 5:02 p.m.

AGENDA

Public Comments

Lori Welch, a teacher, asked the PSC to keep in mind that some of the teachers would like an online presence to present information to their students and would keep any personal references out of it. (She was referring to the Facebook and Social Networking policy which was going to be voted on later in the evening.) Also she suggested that the newly penned stipend positions might be given to some of the teachers who had received decreased positions in the budget. Bottom line: "Maybe some of these positions could be folded into the ones decreased."

Minutes: December 21, 2010

Motion: Move to accept the minutes as written.

Motion: Kerry Adams Seconded: Cass Benson Vote: 4-0-1 ab (SP)

PUBLIC HEARING:

FY-12 SCHOOL BUDGET DISCUSSION/REVIEW

David McGlothlin, a high school social studies teacher and PAE representative, presented a list of questions he'd like answered by the PSC. He stressed that he was not representing anyone but just speaking personally. He continued saying that one of the things that has become glaringly apparent in this community is that it seems as though the schools are constantly in a defense mode. He doesn't understand this and has never seen anything like it. Frankly he's sick and tired of it and having to defend what we do here. Please look at these questions and make sure there is something equitable in your decisions. I know you have an agenda on the 20th to approve the budget. Please delay it until these questions are answered and that a real discussion is held. David said he gets the message that schools are not the priority and then he quoted "it takes a village" and that hasn't been done - it's time for the village to step up. We shouldn't be used as a political pawn.

His list numbered 13 questions, i.e., definition of head teacher position, the manner of staff reductions, qualifications of some of the teaching staff, etc.

Mr. McGlothlin left after presenting his list and was told that a response would be made to his questions at the next PSC meeting on January 20th. David M. also requested a response in writing.

Peter Grosso responded briefly that the meeting is on Thursday (20th) because we're under the gun to give the budget to the BoS. The meeting with the BoS and FinCom will take place on Monday, January 24th.

Unfinished Business:

FY-12 Budget Discussion

Dr. Singer graciously gave thanks to all who aided her in fleshing out the budget. She thanked Betty White, Kim Pike, and the many teachers, parents, who all gave her opinions she had sought. Also she said that the School Committee had assisted her greatly in this undertaking. There have been additional changes and now we have more secure figures. We also have a tuition rate from Nauset (\$13,583) and we have preliminary high school student selections. The key goal, according to Beth, is to have the budget as transparent as possible and she sees great opportunity in a strong middle school and then moving forward with our International Baccalaureate application.

The budget represents a significant reduction in personnel and that part is never pleasant. We're trying to match students and staff, phase out the high school, and combine all the students K-12 in the high school building. (Next year we'll be looking at a two class high school.)

Lori Welch asked if Beth anticipates making further adjustments. Answer: Yes.

Kerry Adams said, "You referred to our budget as lean – can we "regrow" the budget if our IB program takes off?" Beth said that she thinks this town is supportive of the IB program.

Cass Benson asked, "Does this reduction mean that we're getting pressure from the town?" Answer: No.

Beth proceeded to go line by line and page by page explaining the budget as she went along.

Lory Stewart asked about the PSC money in the budget since none of the School Committee members get paid. Betty W. said that she has that category broken down separately and none of these expenses are stipends. They include: the amount for the recording secretary, insurance, MASC dues, etc.

There was a bit of discussion about the stipend amounts (\$35/hour). Lori Welch said that if it's an after school job and the model we have now no longer works because it's – not equitable – making it a stipend at an hourly rate. Beth explained that the hourly rate is what we pay now and have paid others in the past. It needs to be negotiated.

Then the definition of the "head teacher" was questioned and explained. The head teacher is the #1 person to go to if the principal is not available. S/he is responsible assisting with school-wide climate – supervising students in the hallways – liaison with after school children and programs.

Beth said that the next agenda will look at job descriptions.

Kerry asked, "Is the head teacher position a new position – or what?" Beth responded that the head teacher is a common position in elementary schools and the position does a set of finite tasks – but typically in elementary schools. There were a whole lot of questions about the "head teacher" position.

There was also a reduction in a school social worker and reduction in guidance. Beth's feeling is that these cuts are appropriate.

Petra Farias, the guidance counselor, said that reductions need to be made and she thinks that equity is really important BUT she finds it troubling that student services should be cut so severely - her position was cut last year and now cut even more this year. She would ask you to look at why and how you're cutting these positions. Please look at this more carefully. She may wind up working with more students than she does now and she's being asked to expand her workload - she has a masters in counseling. She's qualified to work with however many students are left and, addressing the group, said - if any of you would like to talk to me further about this, I'd be happy to discuss it.

Beth answered a couple of questions on Amy Rokicki regarding the library, etc.

Shannon Patrick asked about the library. The libraries are being combined into the one at the high school. Beth felt that the elementary school library is a very big space for very little people. We will build a preschool/parent library.

It was also stated that pre-school can have as many as 30 kids.

Pru Sowers, the Banner reporter, asked - are you eliminating a French teacher? Beth said that all our students will be taking Spanish next year.

Lory asked if the science teacher selected is certified to teach chemistry. The answer is no and it's going to be an environmental chemistry course. Lory then asked what happens to the biology MCAS? Beth said that in the future they'll take the test wherever they go. We have a biology tutorial offered this year for someone who has to pass the Biology MCAS.

Cass asked - how common is the reduction of FTE's? Beth said that when she came here we had made up schedules that pretended that teachers were working full time and now the schedules reflect real hours of teaching.

Kerry asked - have you polled the kids about what their plans are for next year? Beth said that this is what this budget is based on.

The graduating class of 2011 will have 16 students.

Currently there are 5 high school students on IEP's. There have been no changes in paraprofessional personnel; the reduction in amounts is due to different funding sources, i.e., grants & revolving accounts.

Kerry asked - when are you going to finalize the schedule – you won't know the needs until the spring?

High school students will finalize selections in early spring and then we build a master schedule.

In answer to some of the questions about enrollment – there will be 5 seniors in the class next year and 9 or 10 in the following year.

Lory asked about the two SPED students who are one-on-one.....so that doesn't allow the paraprofessional FTE number to be dropped? Answer: We have one student with an individual paraprofessional.

Stipends on extracurricular include graphics – scheduling athletics – data collection – publications - MCAS – IB coordinator, etc.

Lori W. said that by putting them in as stipends – you can get them to do these off the pay scale.

Beth said when we're an IB school the IB Coordinator position may change.

Carol D'Amico had questions about negotiated job descriptions.

Beth answered that from our last meeting with the PSC we talked about some of these positions as part of someone's workload. This would not offer equitable access. They don't necessarily equate – just because they have the time – it doesn't mean they are the best for the job or want the job

Lori said that all of this is hard to hear when there are so many cuts – think about the morale. If there is work available and the person is qualified – then it would be nice to see the lowered positions get the stipend positions.

Beth said we pay teachers their salaries to teach. Paying the same to do administrative tasks would be irresponsible.

Lory asked about full time custodians? Beth said that with three full time custodians – it would service VMES daily for about two hours. Lory felt that the

custodian amount should come out of the Wee Care budget. Beth said that we need all 3 people when snow intervenes and the preschool is our responsibility.

Kerry asked about the plan to provide kids with computers – do they turn it in at end of school year?

Beth said that we haven't decided exactly what we will purchase, but they will be on loan to students.

Kerry – does the school assume responsibility if the things are lost?

Answer: We'll have insurance.

Next the discussion flew into the consumption of fuel oil for both schools. Betty W. joined in the discussion and said that the usage of fuel oil is outrageous. She said that sometimes the thermostat in her office is set at 55 and the actual temperature is 78.....and then if you go to the library at VMES the kids are shivering and the thermostat is set at 78! The problem is due to faulty heating systems in both schools. It was decided that this repair of the heating systems should be placed under Capital Improvements. The subject was promised to be discussed with the BoS and FinCom at next Monday's meeting. Beth said that in discussions with Sharon Lynne, it was decided that the School would pay for 1/3 of the VMES consumption of oil.

Kerry asked - have we looked at alternative energy, i.e., solar, wind, etc.

Lory suggested that if the academy mentoring is dropping – then the salary could be reduced. The opportunity is for juniors and seniors only and that is what we will have and it's still a popular program. We're hopeful that we can also move academy-like programming into the middle school.

The public hearing which had opened at 5:05 closed 6:40 p.m.

Cass Benson said that she is concerned about the budget. She wants it to be a healthy school and wants to make sure that we have enough money to operate properly.

Beth thinks the townspeople will be sympathetic and she feels we have to go to town meeting with a reasonable budget. Everyone expects that this budget will be less but it won't be enormously less. Maybe next year there will not be a decrease and all we can do is put forth a budget that is realistic – one year at a time.

Peter said that the town has been prepped from his last year's report. He told the town at that meeting that the net savings would be only around \$200K.

Beth commented that there weren't people at this meeting from the town – just our own community.

Peter said that he'll take David McGlothlin's questions and answer them at Thursday's meeting. Beth said that David was speaking as a citizen of Provincetown and, as such, doesn't require a written response.

Facebook & Social Networking IJNDD 2nd Reading

Motion: Move to accept the revised Facebook and Social Networking policy.

Motion: Kerry Adams Seconded: Cass Benson

The motion and its second spawned a discussion on the title of the policy which culminated in the next motion:

Motion: Move to amend the policy with a slightly changed title eliminating the word Facebook and entitling it Social Networking policy.

Motion: Peter Grosso Seconded: Lory Stewart Vote: 5-0-0.

New Business:

Provincetown Library Request:

Desk Donation

The Provincetown Public Library has requested the donation of a desk. There certainly will be a surplus and Peter suggested that someone come up with a potential list of surplus furniture and/or technology and then the PSC can peruse the list and vote on whether to approve of the items as surplus or not.

PSC Comments

Kerry thanked Beth, Kim, and Betty for all their hard work on the budget. He also feels that it may be too lean and he'd prefer seeing a bit of a buffer in there.

Shannon said that we've always done right by the town.

Beth cautioned - don't think so much about leanness or fatness but that it allows some flexibility. She also said that if we don't come to town meeting with a reasonable budget we may have it cut there.

Adjournment happened at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Evelyn Rogers Gaudiano

Approved by the School Committee on February 1, 2011

Peter Grosso, Chairperson