

The Regular Meeting of the Brockton School Committee was held this evening in the George M. Romm Theater at Brockton High School.

Present: Mr. Minichiello, Vice-Chair; Mr. Robinson, Mr. Donegan, Mrs. Joyce, Mr. Healy, Mrs. Smith, Secretary

Absent: Mayor Balzotti, Mr. Carpenter, Mr. Sullivan

Note: These minutes contain a summary of the meeting and list items that were under discussion.

Mr. Minichiello called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m., followed by a salute to the flag. He announced that Mr. Sullivan, who was unable to attend the meeting tonight, had called him to request a moment of silence for the passing of a former beloved Brockton teacher, Mr. Paul Burns.

Hearing of Visitors

Mr. Minichiello explained that during the Hearing of Visitors portion of the agenda speakers should limit their comments to three minutes and that the School Committee will take comments under advisement, but not respond.

Mr. Jarred Tagger, Mrs. Donna Jones, and Mr. Milton Strumpf, from the Helping to Unite Brockton “Clean Up Crew”, addressed the Committee with regard to the clean up work they have been doing around school grounds, their focus being to ask the School Committee to consider how the schools can engage families and youth in this type of community service, with the intent of community spirit and giving students a sense of pride and ownership.

The Superintendent responded that she would like to meet with them, she thanked the group, stating that community service is important to her.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Minichiello explained the purpose of the Consent Agenda, and asked if School Committee members wished to remove any items from it.

Mrs. Joyce wished to remove Item B, Personnel Appointments for discussion.

Mr. Donegan moved the Superintendent’s recommendation to approve the following remaining items from the Consent Agenda:

- *Minutes of Sept. 4, 2013 Regular School Committee Meeting*
- *Personnel Action: LOA, Resignations, Retirements*

Voted: to approve the Superintendent’s recommendation, unanimous.

Mrs. Joyce inquired about the hiring of 19 MTA’s versus paraprofessionals, specifically what criterion is used to hire an MTA over a paraprofessional, and the impact on the budget. The Superintendent responded that the MTA’s have a different skills set and are able to work with students differently than the paraprofessionals, who support the

teachers. The Superintendent commended paraprofessionals for the excellent work they do in support of the teachers. Dr. Moran, Executive Director of Human Resources, explained that these recent hires have filled vacated MTA positions, these are not additional positions. Mrs. Joyce stated that, knowing the district is looking to hire paraprofessionals, she wondered about the reason not many paraprofessionals were hired. Dr. Moran responded that paraprofessionals were recently hired and this will be reflected in the appointment notification at the next School Committee meeting. Dr. Moran said she will provide the School Committee with hiring data; Mrs. Joyce asked for a “snapshot” of the skills required for each as well, stating that this information will help the Committee with budget planning based on need.

Mrs. Joyce then moved to approve Item B, Personnel Appointments.

The motion was seconded; the vote was unanimous.

**Superintendent’s
Report**

Recognition of Arbella Insurance Foundation

The Superintendent stated she was excited to report that tonight the School Committee would recognize the Arbella Insurance Foundation for a generous donation to the Hancock Playground Committee. She then asked Mr. Minichiello to speak to the issue.

Mr. Minichiello explained that in recognition of their 25th year in business, Arbella initiated “50 for 25” plan that would award a \$50,000 grant each to 25 worthy groups. He went on to say that Beverly Souaiden, member of the Hancock School Playground Committee, applied for, and was subsequently awarded, one of the 25 grants. Mr. Minichiello invited Mr. Matt O’Brien, President of the Hancock Playground Committee, and Mrs. Souaiden to come forward as the School Committee presented a certificate of appreciation to Mr. David Pettinato, who represented Arbella Insurance Foundation. Mr. Pettinato is also a Brockton resident. The money will be used toward building a new playground on the Hancock School property.

First Day of Kindergarten

Mrs. Smith reported that 1,452 students started in kindergarten today and that the day went very smoothly. Mrs. Elizabeth Barry, Executive Director of Learning and Teaching PreK-8, reported that by the end of the week she expects to see 1,500 students enrolled in the kindergarten program, as well as 291 pre-k students. She reported that 240 kindergarteners showed up at the Barrett Russell School. Mrs. Barry said she was there for the opening and she remarked that by 10:00 a.m., the students were all in the classrooms, learning. She also said there were many photo ops on the stairs of the recently renovated school and that all across the city the start of kindergarten, aside from lots of tears, went “extremely well”.

Huntington School – Summer Program at Bridgewater State University

As part of the Superintendent’s goal to include every school across the district on the agenda for school committee meetings throughout the year, and in response to Mr. Donegan’s request to hear about the Huntington School /Bridgewater State University summer program, Mrs. Smith invited Principal June Saba of the Huntington School to give an update on the Footbridge Program.

For two weeks during the summer, Huntington grade 4 and 5 students attended classes at Bridgewater State University. This was part of an ongoing partnership between the school and BSU. Ms. Saba showed a power point presentation and described the reciprocal nature of the partnership: professors come to the Huntington School and provide professional development for staff, the Huntington School accepts student teachers and pre-practicum students and helps to prepare them to become future educators, and the students benefit from on-site programs conducted by the college. Ms. Saba said that one of the greatest benefits to the BSU students is the experience in urban education.

Ms. Saba recognized the following Huntington teachers for their involvement with the Footbridge Program: Marybeth O'Brien, Val Sever, Nick Robbin, and Beverly LeBlanc.

Mr. Donegan pointed out that this is not a common experience in schools. Mrs. Joyce asked whether there was an expectation that the pre-practicum students would then return to the Huntington to perform their student teaching, Ms. Saba said that is happening. Mrs. Smith stated that she will be meeting with BSU to discuss expanding this opportunity to other schools. She said this is a pilot program that has grown by leaps and bounds and she would like to spread the success to other schools, and that there are other local colleges and universities that are interested in this type of involvement. Mr. Robinson asked how the students were selected, Ms. Saba responded that the entire fourth grade class, 89 students, was invited. When all seats were not filled, they then selected students from grade five, by recommendation. Mr. Minichiello stated that BSU has benefited by a partnership with the best school system around, and that the students' experience and exposure to the college program is immeasurable.

Mr. Healy asked that a Building Naming Subcommittee meeting be set up.

Items to Refer to Subcommittee

New Business

Mr. Healy visited the Plouffe School to observe the STEAM initiative in action, and he encouraged his colleagues to take the time to go and visit a school to see the teaching. He stated that he was observing an English class and was amazed to see the students learning about physics.

Mr. Minichiello announced that the Mayor was unable to attend tonight's meeting due to a City Council session, and Mr. Carpenter was ill.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Smith, JD
Secretary/Superintendent

wka