

***PRELIMINARY MINUTES***

**TOPSFIELD SCHOOL COMMITTEE (TSC)  
REGULAR MEETING  
PROCTOR SCHOOL LIBRARY  
TOPSFIELD, MA**

**February 1, 2012  
7:30 p.m.**

**Members Present:** Susan Archer, Jeanine Cunniff, Rosemarie Lucey, Joe Quigley and Gordie Spater  
**Members Absent:**

**Others Present:** Dr. Bernard Creeden (Tri-Town Union (TTU) Superintendent), Michelle Costa (Principal, Steward School), Sarah O’Leary (Principal, Proctor School), Sue O’Brien, Sandy Ragan, Lisa Mann and Cathy Craven (Steward), Dan Shugrue (Finance Committee/Parent), Christine Elliot (TTU Director of Curriculum), Melanie Sandman (Proctor), Missy McSweeney (TESPTO), Steve Greenberg (TTU Director of Finance and Human Resources), Sharon Lyons (TTU SPED Director), Kathy Curran (Proctor/Steward Teacher/Videographer) and Ellen Gaskell (Recording Secretary)

***ROUTINES:***

1. Call to Order: Chairperson Jeannine Cunniff called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.
2. Remarks from the Public: None

***REPORTS:***

3. Reports from Other Committees:
  - a. Technology Advisory Committee
    - i. M. Costa spoke about having a technology awareness meeting for parents on a Monday in March. At the recent technology advisory committee meeting, TESPTO was invited to attend.
  - b. Math Curriculum Review Committee Update:
    - i. C. Elliot reported. The committee will meet next Tuesday and hopes to have a curriculum recommendation by next week. The committee hopes to bring in the company whose curriculum is chosen in for a presentation.
    - ii. The Writing Curriculum was also addressed. At the next TTU meeting, the Writing Committee will report on creating 3 rubrics per grade level in accordance with Common Core Standards.
1. Reports of the Building Principals:
  - a. Sarah O’ Leary, Proctor School
    - i. On 1/23, there was a Professional Development Day with multiple workshops; see the Principal’s Report for further information. The 2<sup>nd</sup> parent meeting for the Olweus Anti-Bullying Program has happened; a 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting is planned and will include community members. The bullying discipline protocol has been sent home with students.
  - b. Michelle Costa, Steward School
    - i. Last week, there was a data day. On Monday evening, M. Costa met with the Playground Committee; M. Costa thanked this committee for their report. M. Costa referred to possibly adding a position not already included in the Teacher Contract; Dr. Creeden will address this in his report. L. Harrington, the Foundations

representative, recently met with Grade 1 teachers to teach a lesson and problem-solve; Ellen Boiselle made a presentation at the last Professional Development Day on how to identify students with disabilities in mathematics; it was well-received by the teachers. J. Cunniff thanked C. Elliot for her invitation to hear the morning speaker at the last Professional Development Day.

2. Report of the Superintendent:

a. Personnel Update

- i. There are upcoming 2 maternity leaves at Proctor School: Mrs. Markos & Mrs. Kleinpeter. There is an upcoming teacher maternity leave at Steward for Mrs. Rec; she is due in July. Dr. Creeden acknowledged employees with 5, 10, 15, 25 and 30 year anniversaries this school year. Ms. Boucher & Nancy Rudder's mothers both passed away recently.
- ii. There is a need to add a behavior specialist at Steward School. The addition would be a mid-year change and approval by the TSC is needed. The new job has been posted. The cost of the behavior specialist depends on both the hiring date & the experience of the candidate; the cost should be within the range of \$158/day to \$200/day and there may be a stipend on top of that if the candidate has a Masters' Degree. S. Greenberg said the position was essential and Steward would have to make the cost of the position fit into the budget. Since it is a new position, it is not on the Teacher Contract. The position is in next year's proposed budget. It will be a full-time position at Steward. Dr. Creeden said that the budget may have to be amended this school year to provide for this position. There may be a need for a Special Town Meeting to amend the current school budget to add this position. M. Costa thanked the staff who have helped cover for this position thus far.

***S. Archer motioned to approve the hiring of a new behavior specialist at Steward School, seconded by R. Lucey. Motion passed unanimously.***

- b. Dr. Creeden spoke to the event calendar, included in his report. Next he covered the Educator Evaluation Process. In March, the MA Teachers' Association (MTA) will present to the Topsfield schools' staff regarding this; Dr. Creeden asked if any TSC members would like to attend this meeting. 3/27/12 is MA Association of School Committees (MASC) Day on the Hill.

***NEW BUSINESS:***

1. School Calendar Draft #3 for 2012-2013:
  1. Dr. Creeden presented. There was a copy of calendar included in the packet.
  2. The 2/4 Early Release Day should be 2/8; the parent conferences will be moved from Tuesdays and Wednesdays to Thursdays and Fridays. C. Elliot spoke to adding additional Professional Development Days for writing programs; she is consulting with other school communities on how they're handling this. Other communities are also being consulted on how they provide student day care on Early Release Days. Topsfield's school calendar will align with the other 2 towns in the Tri-Town whenever possible.
  3. Dr. Creeden said that the school year will start after Labor Day. The 1<sup>st</sup> day for Grades 1-6 will be 9/6; the 1<sup>st</sup> day for Kindergarten can't be set until the final Kindergarten enrollment number is known, since that number will be needed to determine the number of days needed for Kindergarten pre-screening, which must occur before the first day. Dr. Creeden spoke about the vacation weeks in the calendar. He then spoke about this school year's last day. The TSC spoke about the MCAS dates on the 2012-2013 school calendar.
2. FY 2013 Budget Development: Dr. Creeden presented.

1. Governor's House 2 FY 2013 Budget:
  - i. The House 2 FY 2013 Budget came out. Dr. Creeden is hoping for an early Local Aid agreement. The Local Aid estimate is included in the Cherry Sheets for the Tri-Town; see the Local Aid Estimates for FY2013 included in the packet. Dr. Creeden noted that the Chapter 70 aid is the same as last year for Topsfield. Aid is down a net \$11K from FY12. The overall charges to the town are down \$6,300. Overall assessments are down \$9K.
2. Essential Services Budget Options
  - i. J. Cunniff asked the TSC what they thought the strategy for the upcoming FinCom meeting should be.
  - ii. G. Spater said the he thought the Math Curriculum should be a warrant article. G. Spater asked, "Since the new Math Curriculum is a TTU initiative, what happens if the warrant doesn't pass in Topsfield, but passes in other the other 2 towns?" S. Greenberg responded that Topsfield would have to find another way to pay for it. Dr. Creeden said that if an item is in the budget, voters can take it out of the budget, if an item is a warrant article, the schools have to find another way to pay for it if it doesn't pass. A budget worksheet was handed out at the meeting.
  - iii. S. Greenberg said that items included in the budget were: 5Day Kindergarten, the new Math Curriculum for Steward & Proctor, technology, Professional Development, the proposed reduction in Local Aid and SPED costs.
  - iv. S. Lyons addressed SPED costs and said to the TSC, "Do we reduce SPED expense in the budget at the risk of being caught "flat-footed" if a SPED student enrolls in the summer?" There are Individual Educational Program (IEP) meetings every 6 weeks. S. Lyons said that there would be a decision on one of the students by year's end.
  - v. Regarding the new Math Curriculum, Topsfield schools are committed to the book and can pay for the new curriculum over 2 years. \$110 K is the cost of new Math Curriculum.
  - vi. G. Spater said that the current budget for next year shows a 4% increase next year. There was an Educational Technology handout distributed at the meeting. S. Greenberg said that there was technology hardware in the budget. One part of the proposal acknowledges that wireless is an important part of the structure of technology. S. Greenberg then explained the budget wireless expense. S. G said that the cabling would be going from obsolete to less obsolete (5e). G. Spater asked what the cost of non-obsolete cable (6e) would be; S. Greenberg said that he will check on this. A phase-in for wireless cable may make sense. S. Greenberg said that he may ask the FinCom for an appropriate number to back into and then decide what to fund to get to that number. Masco is currently pulling 5e cable; the TSC wondered if the elementary schools could re-use it. The TSC conversed about technology options.
  - vii. The TSC said that they planned to meet after their upcoming meeting with the FinCom.
3. Facilities and Maintenance Budget
  - i. Steward School
    1. The Facilities and Maintenance Budget. For Steward School was presented by S. Greenberg first; see the Budget Book for details. There is level funding of many of the expense lines. The custodial budget will have a small increase. Custom equipment will be up slightly. Heat, fuel & electric expenses will be decreased. S. Greenberg spoke to the reduced energy expense; the cost/dekatherm went down from about \$9/hr. to approximately \$ 7.90/hr. Grounds maintenance expense is an issue. It was

hoped that the Park & Cemeteries Department would pick up some school grounds maintenance expense, but that hasn't happened. Dr. Creeden said that getting Park & Cemeteries to pick up some of the grounds maintenance cost will be addressed at the next FinCom meeting. Most facilities budget expense is level-funded.

2. Proctor School

- a. Proctor will have level-funded facilities maintenance expenses. Energy expense will be reduced. See the Budget Book for further information.

3. The job description for the Facilities Maintenance Mechanic I was included in the packet; the cost of the position will be apportioned to the 3 towns based on their total school square footage; Topsfield will pay the least of the Tri-Town towns. This position is built into next year's budget. J. Cunniff said that the TSC will have to report their portion of the position's cost of health insurance and pension to the FinCom. S. Greenberg said that he would get TSC that number. S. Greenberg said that the final verdict on this job will be determined by the TTU in March. The TSC supports adding this position and noted that building maintenance is not dependent on student enrollment.

4. Number of Kindergarten Sections Based on Current Registrations – 3 Day Core and 5 Day Tuition

- i. M. Costa spoke to the number of Kindergarten sections based on current registration. There are 55 Kindergarteners registered; 33 for the 5 Day & 22 for the 3 Day. This is an unprecedented number for the 5 Day Kindergarten and there are a number of Kindergarteners on the waiting list. Dr. Creeden said that the ratio of boys: girls in Kindergarten must be considered. M. Costa said that there will be more boys than girls this upcoming school year. She said that multiple siblings will be on the same lottery ticket. M. Costa said that (regarding 3 Day Kindergarten), she hasn't set the days of the week yet. J. Cunniff spoke to the IEP students that would have to be in school 5 days. J. Cunniff also spoke of the volatility of Kindergarten enrollments. Dr. Creeden wondered how many Kindergarten classes should be offered; the TSC said that Steward can't offer 3 (5-Day) classes. R. Lucey appreciated that M. Costa always looked to the needs of students when putting together classes. The TSC wants to have more information before it supports a particular number of Kindergarten sections. Dr. Creeden said that M. Costa needs to have the authority to do the 5 Day Kindergarten lottery now; parents need to know this in February so if they don't get the 5 day program, they still have time to find another program. R. Lucey said that two 5 Day Kindergarten and two 3 Day Kindergarten sessions make sense. There could be 17 students and 16 students in the 5 Day Kindergarten sessions, respectively and 2 classrooms of 13 students in each of 3 Day Kindergarten sessions. S. Lyons suggested determining the number of Kindergarten sections, then determining the number of children who can attend each section after seeing who the Kindergarteners with IEPs are. R. Lucey said that she did classroom analysis. J. Quigley said that 2 5 Day Kindergarten and 2 3 Day Kindergarten sections is what he'd recommend. J. Cunniff said that Steward "won't take a financial hit". S. Greenberg said that the scenario of two 5 Day Kindergarten and two 3 Day Kindergarten sections is better than cost-neutral. G. Spater said that regarding the lottery, the 1<sup>st</sup> 30 students are definitely in and the last 3 are "on the bubble". J. Cunniff said that with two classes with 15 Kindergarteners, 3 Kindergarteners would be "on the cusp".

5. Potential Warrant Article Language: Copy included in the packet.
  - i. Mathematics Program Adoption
  - ii. Technology Infrastructure and Equipment
  - iii. J. Cunniff said that the TSC needs to submit warrant article by this Friday. Warrant articles are the jurisdiction of the Board of Selectmen (BOS).

***S. Archer motioned to approve the new Math Curriculum as a warrant article at the upcoming Town Meeting, seconded by J. Quigley. Motion passed unanimously.***

***S. Archer motioned to approve new wireless installation in the schools in the amount of \$124,443 as a warrant article at the upcoming Town Meeting, seconded by G. Spater. Motion passed unanimously.***

3. Preparation for Meeting with Finance Committee on February 6<sup>th</sup> : This was covered in the above discussion.
4. Correspondence: None.
5. Other: There will be 2/16 TSC meeting whose purpose is to get guidance on the warrant articles.

***CONSENT AGENDA:***

1. Meeting Minutes of Previous Meetings: No minutes to approve at this time.
2. Bill Warrants and Payrolls (as read by J. Cunniff; handout distributed at the meeting):
  - i. Bill Warrants and Payrolls – Sign and Vote to Accept:
    1. BW#12-51 1/25/12 \$2.48
    2. BW#12-52 2/01/12 \$47,753.09
    3. BW#12-53 2/01/12 \$3,615.54
    4. TTU BW#12-11 1/26/12 \$613.02
    5. Budget Adj. #12-13 1/25/12 \$0
    6. Payroll #16&13&11 2/09/12 \$211,807.68
    7. Total \$263,789.33
  - ii. Bill Warrants and Payrolls – Vote to Accept Only: None.
    1. Total \$0
    2. Grand Total \$263,789.33

***Motion made by S. Archer to pay the Bill Warrants and Payrolls as read by J. Cunniff, seconded by J. Quigley. Motion passed unanimously.***

***ADJOURNMENT:***

At 10:30 pm, ***R. Lucey moved to adjourn, seconded by S. Archer. Motion passed unanimously.***

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Gaskell

Recording Secretary

Per the new Open Meeting Law, here is a list of the documents that were either distributed to the TSC before the meeting in a packet, or at the meeting:

1. Agenda
2. Attendance Log
3. Superintendent's Report
4. Bill Warrant and Payroll Sheet
5. Principals' Reports 2/1/12
6. Potential Warrant Article Language
7. Technology Warrant Article Detail 2/1/12
8. Facilities Maintenance Mechanic I Job Description and Rationale
9. Topsfield Elementary Schools 2012-2013 School Year Calendar
10. Capital Plan Recommendations for Fiscal 2013 – memo from G. Wilder, Town Administrator  
1/17/12
11. Masco School Calendar 2012-13
12. MA DOR – FY2013 Local Aid Estimates