

Southern Berkshire Regional School Committee
Mt. Everett Regional School
Sheffield, MA
April 2, 2015
Meeting #1,490

School Committee: Mr. Stewart, Ms. Silvers, Mr. Sears, Mr. Valentini, Ms. Sahn, Ms. Lartigue, Ms. Rundle, Mr. Batacchi, Mr. Flynn

Absent: Ms. Sparhawk

Administrators: Mr. Hastings, Mr. Turner

Press: CTSB Television

Student Representative: Nolan Dupont

Others: Ms. Sarah Siket, Mr. Christopher Thompson, Ms. Linda Higgins

1. Chairman Stewart called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Ms. Silvers then moved, seconded by Mr. Sears, to approve the minutes of Meeting #1,489. It was so Ms. Silvers moved, seconded by Mr. Flynn, to approve the minutes of Meeting #1,488. It was so voted.
3. **Communications from the Audience Pertaining to this Evening's Agenda**
 - A. Student Representative Report: Student Representative Nolan Dupont, Grade 9 Class President, reported on efforts of the Mt. Everett Student Government to collect nonperishable foods for local needy families in conjunction with other local high schools. Nolan also updated the Committee regarding a recent fund raiser for "Charlie's Fund", which was conducted by the students in conjunction with Monument Mountain Regional High School.
 - B. Ms. Rene Wood, member of the Sheffield Select Board, read a letter signed by the Sheffield Select Board and the Sheffield Finance Committee (copy on file with these minutes). The letter requested that the School Committee level fund the District's FY'16 budget.

School Committee members responded, expressing disappointment in receiving such a letter, given that Sheffield's assessment was \$160,000 less than in FY'15. They also pointed out that the increase in the FY'16 budget was due mainly to an unanticipated sharp increase in health insurance costs. They said that the only possible way to cut the budget back to FY'15 levels would be to cut at least nine positions, and that such cuts would severely affect the education that students receive.

Mr. Valentini also voiced his disappointment that the Finance Subcommittee had not been invited to give a presentation to the Sheffield Finance Committee this year. It was noted that although the towns of Egremont and Monterey both face double digit percentage

increases in their assessments this year, neither had objected. It was also pointed out that payment for the boilers and roof will not have any effect on the budget until FY'17. It was suggested that the towns who object to the school budget might conduct a survey of their citizens to see whether they support the budget or not.

4. **Updates/Presentations**

- A. Solar Net Metering: Prior to the presentation, Mr. Sears stated that Mr. Mayland had already made a presentation to the Finance Subcommittee, and yet to submit a sample contract or a written proposal, as requested by the Subcommittee. He then moved to ask Mr. Mayland to come back to the School Committee after he has sent them a proposal and a sample contract for review. Mr. Bachetti seconded the motion.

Mr. Mayland stated that he had sent the materials, as requested. However, as he felt that his presence was causing animosity, he offered to withdraw his proposal.

Mr. Valentini suggested allowing approximately fifteen minutes to hear the presentation. Mr. Stewart called for a vote on the motion. It was clarified that a “yes” vote would equal no presentation this evening. The vote:

Mr. Flynn	no	Mr. Batacchi	yes	Ms. Lartigue	no
Ms. Silvers	no	Ms. Sahn	no	Ms. Rundle	no
Mr. Sears	yes	Mr. Valentini	no		

Mr. Mayland then explained that his company produces power that goes out onto the distribution lines. National Grid does not pay for the power; rather, they issue net metering credits to publicly owned entities, who in turn pay Reservoir Road Holdings LLC 80% of the value of those credits. The value of the net metering credits is determined by the state of Massachusetts. Should the District contract with Reservoir Road Holdings LLC, the District would send them a check for 80% of the allotted credits each month. It was Mr. Mayland's contention that through this plan, the District would save approximately \$1,000,000 over the twenty year life of the contract. Mr. Mayland said that his company has entered into such agreements with Hamden Wilbraham Regional School District, Berkshire Hills Regional School District, and the town of Great Barrington, and is in negotiations with Cheshire and West Stockbridge.

A question and answer session then took place. In response to a question regarding the time line for the District to come to a decision, Mr. Mayland said that he would hold the credits for the District for 30 days. He explained that these credits may be the last to be available within the territory covered by National Grid.

Mr. Flynn moved to refer the matter to the Finance Subcommittee for research and to come to the School Committee with a recommendation. Mr. Valentini seconded the motion, and it was so voted, unanimously. Mr. Mayland will work with Mr. Valentini to provide necessary information for the Finance Subcommittee.

5. **Business**

- B. Request for a Waiver for a Student Born Beyond May 1, 2011 to Attend Monterey Early Kindergarten Program in 2015-16: The Committee received a letter from Ms. Carly

Detterman, parent of a child born in mid-May of 2011, requesting a waiver so that the child can attend the early kindergarten class in Monterey in the fall of 2015. Mr. Flynn moved, seconded by Ms. Rundle, to grant the waiver, as requested. (Mr. Flynn noted that the issue will need a second vote, as it requires a waiver of policy.) The motion was approved, unanimously. (Mr. Valentini was not in attendance for this vote.)

A. Superintendent's Report: Mr. Hastings reported the following:

- The performance of *Footloose* was great last week. *SHRECK, The Musical* is next, May 15-17.
- Four students and a teacher visited from Hong Kong this past week, arriving last Sunday Evening and departing Friday for New York City. There was a very successful spaghetti dinner and art auction conducted last week, raising over \$1,000 for the visit. Students stayed with host families and visited art museums and other places of interest in the county. One student asked if it ever got green here.
- The District is planning an event at the end of the month (April 30th) to honor and thank those in the community who help the district in so many ways. This event will coincide with the normal spring parent-teacher meetings and will feature the ribbon cutting for the Paul O'Brien Outdoor Classroom, student exhibits, music programs, and possibly a pep rally. Due to parking issues, this could become a two-evening event.
- Kari Giordano presented at a national Art Education Conference in March in New Orleans. Her article, *Gratitude Cards*, appeared in the April 15th edition of *School Arts Magazine*.
- The Elementary Principal Screening Team met on March 24th with Glenn Devoti. We have a team of teachers, ESP's, and parents representing PTA/PTO, School Council, SBREA, and Administration. I hope to have recommendations by the end of April.
- The National Honor Society Induction Ceremony will be held on April 13th.
- The Higgs Bots Robotics team will participate during April vacation in the International Championships in St. Louis. The team has already passed its fund-raising goal (ten days). Thanks to our corporate partners and community individuals who contributed.
- The Robotics Team also hosted a post-season event for Berkshire County teams this past Saturday at BCC. Chris and Paul have worked closely with Doug Crane and the Berkshire Applied Technology Council for the past 2 years in an effort to get more Berkshire county teams participating in the FIRST Tech Challenge. The event featured the Mt. Everett junior varsity robot along with Lenox, McCann and St. Joe. Students from Wahconah and Taconic were present as well. Chris refereed the matches, Paul performed inspections on the robots, and Jake Christina and Kosta Casivant did a great job running the field control system. It's hopeful that these county teams will be a part of the new FTC Western Mass. League forming next year.
- *Benny Everett's First Day*, a children's book written, illustrated and produced at Mount Everett last year, received its copyright certificate this week. The book, the accompanying button, and the certificate have been being framed. Kari Giordano and Stephanie Graham mentored the project. The book is included in SWAG BAGS that are being placed in Pediatricians' offices in the area.
- Fifth grade students have been visiting the Sheffield Historical Society to study genealogy.
- The UME PTO will sponsor "Bubbleology" on April 9 in the TAC-PAC. This is a fascinating performance that explores the art, math and science of soap bubbles.
- The Girls' Science Club will begin again at Undermountain on April 10th.

- The fifth grade was also featured in an article in the Eagle about a Freedom Trail program that was hosted here recently.
- Undermountain will host a Food Adventures program for grades 3-6, to begin after the April break.
- Tonight the NMC PTA is sponsoring a family game and pizza night;
- We had a Young Audience performance on 3/25 called “Do Re Me ABC” sponsored by the PTA and the New Marlborough LCC.
- April 7 is the NMC ice cream social/open house.
- On April 8, NMC Grades 1-2 will have “Muffins with Mom”; Grades EK/K will have a Ladies Tea. Moms, grandmas and other community members are invited to join in.
- On April 15, grade 4 will be going to the Connecticut Science Museum.
- June 18 will be the annual family potluck dinner and recognition night at New Marlborough.
- In late May and Early June, Dale Abrams and the New Marlborough Land Trust will be combining science and nature with the Joffe Trust. The students will explore the trails and property. This is for grades EK through 4.
- Experiential learning continues at South Egremont through gardening, handwork, birding, movement and field trips.
- We are excited by all of the interest in South Egremont for next fall. Five families have already scheduled a school visit..

Brief discussion took place regarding an update on progress toward providing Southern Berkshire students with vocational education opportunities. Mr. Flynn requested that this topic be a future agenda item.

- C. Appointment of Roof/Boilers Project Governmental Officer: Chairman Stewart explained that it was necessary for the Committee to appoint an official designated “signer” for the project. He suggested that the Committee appoint the Business Manager. Mr. Valentini moved to appoint Bruce Turner, Business Manager, to be the Project Governmental Officer for the roof and boiler project. Ms. Lartigue seconded the motion, and it was so voted, unanimously.

D. Subcommittee/Representative Reports

1. Collective Bargaining Subcommittee
 - Mr. Stewart reported that the subcommittee had not met, due to the illness of the District’s attorney.
2. Finance Subcommittee
 - Mr. Valentini stated that the Finance Subcommittee felt that they had presented an extraordinarily well-crafted budget that was reviewed in a timely fashion. They had recommended approval of that budget; however, subsequent to that the Committee has received two communications from towns challenging the budget. He said that the Finance Subcommittee will meet on Tuesday, April 7 to discuss those letters and to craft a carefully considered, sensitive answer to be presented at the town meetings. He said that the letter will first be brought to the full School Committee for their approval.

- E. Financial Updates/Transfers: Mr. Turner reported that he was waiting for certifications of the recent votes from two of the District's towns in order to be able to borrow some funds for the project thus far. He also reported that several contractors had come for the bid conference(s) held earlier in the day.

There were no transfer requests.

4. **Communications from the Public:** None

On a motion by Mr. Flynn, seconded by Ms. Sahn, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Documents presented at this meeting:

- *Agenda, School Committee Meeting #1,490*
- *Minutes of Meetings #1,488 and #1,489*
- *Letter from Ms. Carly Detterman & Mr. Shawn Tryon*
- *Request for Approval of Overnight Field Trip to St. Louis, MO, April 20-26, for the Mt. Everett Robotics Team*
- *Request for Approval of Overnight Field Trip for Grade 12 to Lake George, June 1-2, 2015*
- *Sample Certification Statements Re: Capital Project Governmental Officer*
- *Letters from the Town of New Marlborough, dated March 23, 2015 and January 12, 2015*
- *Letters from Officials of the town of Sheffield dated January 29 and April 1, 2015*