Rowe School Committee
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 14, 2011

The Massachusetts Open Meeting Law requires minutes for all school committee and subcommittee meetings. The recorded minutes are open to the public for inspection within 10 days of the meeting. Minutes are recorded to provide a brief overview that reflects the subject matter discussed and any decisions made. Motions made are to clearly indicate who made the motion and who seconded the motion. Record who was in favor, who opposed, or who abstained. The names of any person(s) appearing before the committee are to be indicated.

Documents:

May 2011 letter from Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education to Superintendent Michael A. Buoniconti re: Approval of Rowe Tech Plan
E-mail from Jenn Morse-Sprague re: Rowe Late Bus
E-mail from Eli Buck to Bill Loomis dated 6/3/11 re: Letter to Superintendent Requesting to meet new principal
E-mail from Lisa Miller to Mr. Buoniconti dated 6/7/11 re: Middle School Spanish Program
E-mail from Michael Buoniconti to Bill Loomis dated 6/7/11 re: 6/14/11 - Agenda items including information on Nurse position, SIP, DIP, Budget Balances and Conflict of Interest Disclosure
E-mail from Joanne Blier to Bill Loomis dated 6/7/11 re: 6/14/11 - Agenda items including executive session for non-teacher raises and review 2010-2011 budget balances
E-mail from Judy Willis to Bill Loomis dated 6/6/11 re: Rowe Principal Selection Committee Members/Candidates & Resumes
Letter from Carol Lively to Rowe School Committee dated 5/20/11 re: Questions about School Lunch Program
Letter from Charles Garbiel II to whom it may concern re: Physical Education Program
E-mail from Lisa Danek-Burke to Bill Loomis dated 6/7/11 & re: 6/14/11 Agenda items including; Rowe School Media Policy & Media
E-mail from Superintendent Michael Buoniconti to Bill Loomis dated 6/8/11 re: Spanish Program
MASC Legislative Bulletin dated 5/20/11 re: Senate Ways and Means School Finance Report
The Three-District Joint Transportation Committee 5/3/11 meeting minutes
Lisa Miller Ethics Disclosure – Lisa Miller conflict of interest- 2010-2014 Superintendent of Schools
2011-2012 Rowe School/Dupere Legal Council Contract – See Appendix T
Superintendent Michael Buoniconti Conflict of Interest Disclosure Request for Advice from the Ethics Commission.
Employment Contract – Elementary principal – See Appendix DD
Teachers Contract – August 15, 2011 – August 14, 2014 – See Appendix EE
Letter from Principal Robert Clancy to the Rowe School Committee – See Appendix FF

1. Call to Order:

Bill Loomis called the meeting to order at 6:33pm
Roll Call: Liz Buxton, Ruth Manna, Pat Bell, Joanne Blier, Superintendent Michael Buoniconti, Lisa Miller, Bill Loomis, Russell Dupere, Bob Clancy and Laurie Laffond were present.
Chair Bill Loomis introduced School Committee Attorney Russell Dupere: According to the Media Policy and the Public Participation Policy that in order to speak at the meeting you need to submit it in writing to the chair. Tonight the committee decided to allow public comments without written comment to the chair based on the May 24th School Committee meeting. In accordance with Open Meeting Laws no one will be allowed to make verbal complaints about other individuals during the meetings. Complaints should be presented in accordance with Open Meeting Laws.

2. Audience of Citizens/Citizens Comments:

A. Dan Burke: I served on the Rowe School Principal search committee and I see from the minutes from the last meeting on May 24, 2011 that it is believed that the Superintendent had put together a search team that stacked the deck against Principal Clancy. There is only one person who is responsible for hiring the principal and that is the Superintendent The superintendent is not required in any way to put together a search team or anything. However he did assemble a search team of nine people from our school of 60 students. (At

this time Lisa Miller Principal Clancy's wife excused herself from the School Committee table to sit in the audience). My children have been students here at the Rowe School for the past 10 years. I have 10 years of evaluating the job performance of Principal Clancy. Of the 9 people on that Principal search committee 7 of us are putting our kids through Rowe School with Bob Clancy as Principal. The search team did not recommend Principal Clancy to the hiring authority as a finalist. At the same time (as the search team was interviewing candidates) a voter petition was being circulated to immediately stop the hiring process and offer Bob Clancy another contract. The principal is a supervisor of our teachers; this petition was circulated here in this school building during school work hours. That petition was put out there, on that desk, feet away from Principal Clancy. It was put there so he could see who was signing it and who wasn't.

Attorney Dupere interrupted at this time to let Mr. Burke know he should not identify any individuals, if you talk about the general situation that's ok. Dan Burke continued by saying putting that petition out there in this building while school was going on created a work place of intimidation and coercion. Lisa Miller was very aggressive in getting people to sign that petition. She has repeatedly characterized –

Attorney Dupere interrupted to say please make general comments.

Dan Burke continued by saying The Superintendent has been repeatedly characterized as a bully. Who is the real bully here? It seems to me that this School Committee is going to fire the Superintendent and replace him with Lisa Miller's husband.

Bill Loomis responded that there has been no discussion what-so-ever in that line.

Laurie Pike – Spoke and said that she was responsible for the petition at the school. Bob Clancy had nothing to do with it.

Janice Lapointe: As a staff member she stated she did not feel intimidated at all by the petition.

Lisa Burke addressed the chair that she wanted to make a comment that as a School Committee member she did receive calls and was approached by parents at the school who did feel uncomfortable by that and did feel they were put in a position where you're damned if you do or damned if you don't. They felt they had to sign it and felt uncomfortable.

Patricia Tierney: She never heard anything negative from the teachers or parents regarding this issue.

Elizabeth Buck: Would like to know the roll of the New Principal. This will be discussed during Unfinished Business.

Jack Packard: If this is the last meeting Bob Clancy will be at he wanted to express his personal disappointment that things worked out the way they did. My feelings on this have been quite clear I think the process of not checking with our community and in the background maybe done by the proper people to cause such a disruption to have a person functioning beautifully in our school with great records and great interactions with the community without a process where we as the community would have had a chance to have some input in such a critical part not only in our personal lives but the lives of the children in town.

I wish it had come out otherwise. I know that it isn't what it is. I would like to thank Bob both on a personal basis and on interaction that he's had about the school we appreciate your attitude and the way you deal with people. We wish you the very best in your future career.

3. Approval of Minutes:

A. Motion to approve the April 12, 2011 School Committee Meeting minutes with amended items. **A motion was made by Lisa Danek Burke and seconded by Bill Loomis to approve the April 12, 2011 Rowe School Committee Minutes as read with amended items. Unanimous yes vote.**

B. Motion to approve the May 9, 2011 School Committee meeting minutes. **A motion was made by Lisa Danek Burke and seconded by Bill Loomis to approve the May 9, 2011 school committee minutes as read. Unanimous yes vote.**

C. A motion to approve the May 24, 2011 School Committee Meeting minutes. **A motion was made by Lisa Miller and seconded by Bill Loomis to approve the May 24, 2011 school committee minutes as read. Unanimous yes vote.** Lisa Danek Burke abstained from the vote as she was not in attendance.

4. Correspondence:

A. May 2011 letter from Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education to Superintendent Michael A. Buoniconti re: Approval of Rowe Tech Plan – See Appendix A

B. E-mail from Jenn Morse-Sprague re: Rowe Late Bus – See Appendix B

C. E-mail from Eli Buck to Bill Loomis dated 6/3/11 re: Letter to Superintendent Requesting to meet new principal – See Appendix C

D. E-mail from Lisa Miller to Mr. Buoniconti dated 6/7/11 re: Middle School Spanish Program – See Appendix D

E. Superintendent Michael Buoniconti put out an email that on Wednesday, June 22nd from 6:00pm-7:00pm we will be having a meet and greet for new Principal Mr. Bill Knittle.

F. E-mail from Michael Buoniconti to Bill Loomis dated 6/7/11 re: 6/14/11 - Agenda items including information on Nurse position, SIP, DIP, Budget Balances and Conflict of Interest Disclosure – See Appendix E

F. E-mail from Joanne Blier to Bill Loomis dated 6/7/11 re: 6/14/11 - Agenda items including executive session for non-teacher raises and review 2010-2011 budget balances – See Appendix F

G. E-mail from Judy Willis to Bill Loomis dated 6/6/11 re: Rowe Principal Selection Committee Members/Candidates & Resumes – See Appendix G

H. Letter from Carol Lively to Rowe School Committee dated 5/20/11 re: Questions about School Lunch Program – Appendix H

I. Letter from Charles Garbiel II to Whom It May Concern re: Physical Education Program – See Appendix I

J. E-mail from Lisa Dane-Burke to Bill Loomis dated 6/7/11 & re: 6/14/11 Agenda items including; Rowe School Media Policy & Media – See Appendix J

K. E-mail from Superintendent Buoniconti to Bill Loomis dated 6/8/11 re: Spanish program – See Appendix K

5. Handouts:

A. Evaluation of Superintendent Rowe School Policy CBI – See Appendix L

B. Superintendent Evaluation Schedule Rowe School Policy CBI – Seep Appendix M

C. MASC Legislative Bulletin dated 5/20/11 re: Senate Ways and Means School Finance Report – See Appendix N

D. 2010-2011 Superintendent Performance Goals – Appendix O

E. The Three-District Joint Transportation Committee 5/3/11 meeting minutes – See Appendix P

F. Lisa Miller Ethics Disclosure – Lisa Miller conflict of interest- Lisa is on the School Committee and her husband is the principal. This is a disclosure of appearance of conflict of interest as provided by the government. Lisa stated: I'm married to Robert J. Clancy who is the principal of the Rowe Elementary School at this time until June 30, 2011. – See Appendix Q

G. 2010-2014 Superintendent of Schools Contract of Employment Item 19 (Performance Evaluation) – See Appendix R

H. 2011-2012 Proposed School Committee Goals – See Appendix S

I. 2011-2012 Rowe School/Dupere Legal Council Contract – See Appendix T

J. 2011-2012 Rowe School Improvement Plan – See Appendix U

K. 2011-2012 Rowe District Improvement Plan – See Appendix V
L. Rowe School Committee Public Comment Policy – See Appendix W
M. Rowe School Committee Media Policy – See Appendix X
N. Superintendent Michael Buoniconti Conflict of Interest Disclosure: Request for Advice from the Ethics Commission – See Appendix Y
O. MTRSD 7/1/07-9/30/08 Superintendent Evaluation - page 8 of 9 – See Appendix Z
P. Budget Transfer – 3/5/11 Principal Account to Advertising $2,657.45 – See Appendix AA
Q. Budget Transfer - 6/9/11 Miscellaneous – To tuition and vacation buyout $23,627.14 – See Appendix BB
R. Principals Report – see Appendix CC
S. Employment Contract – Elementary principal – See Appendix DD
T. Teachers Contract – August 15, 2011 – August 14, 2014 – See Appendix EE
U. Letter from Principal Robert Clancy to the Rowe School Committee – See Appendix FF

6. Report of the Superintendent:

A. Meet and greet with Mr. Knittle next week on Wednesday, June 22nd from 6:00pm-7:00pm at the Rowe School.
B. Review of District Improvement Plan:
- 1st Goal – All students will be educated in safe environments that promote learning.
- 2nd Goal – All students will be provided diverse learning opportunities.
- 3rd Goal – To increase professional development opportunities for staff.
- 4th Goal – All students will reach high standards across the curriculum.
- 5th Goal – District will foster a culture of community building.

- See Appendix V

7. Financial Information:

A. 2011-2012 Budget has been approved
B. Fiscal 2010-2011 is on track to end the year on budget.
C. Transfer – **A motion was made by Bill Loomis and seconded by Lisa Danek Burke to accept the budget transfer of $23,627.14 from various accounts to the Mohawk Tuition, Tech tuition and the Principal-Vacation-by-Out. – If buy out is more than expected then could pay out from teacher salary line. Unanimous yes vote.**
D. Transfer – **A motion was made by Lisa Danek Burke and seconded by Bill Loomis to approve budget transfer in the sum of $2,657.45 from various lines under Principal Office to School Committee Advertising. Unanimous yes vote.**

8. Report of the Principal:

A. School Improvement Plan – Similar to the District Improvement Plan
- 1st Goal – All students will be educated in safe environments that promote learning.
- 2nd Goal – All students will be provided diverse learning opportunities.
- 3rd Goal – All students will be taught by highly qualified and inspiring staff.
- 4th Goal - All students will reach high standards across the curriculum.
- 5th Goal – The district will foster a culture of community building.

B. Principal Report – As Read – The Washington DC trip went like clockwork, the kids were great, the chaperones outstanding and they did everything on the agenda. It was a very good trip all around.
C. Principal Clancy read letter addressed to the School Committee – See Appendix EE
D. Direct Energy is now our energy supplier. A check with National Grid is to be done to see if any changes with meter reading and billing due to the new Solar Array.
E. Under New Business on the Principal Report – Mr. Clancy had recommendations for the 2011 REAP Grant. Where do the new recommendations go? Do they go to the new principal? Lisa Danek Burke said that would be something that would be brought to the committee on suggestions.

9. Report of the Chairperson:

A. Bill Loomis was questioning the Chain of Command – Liz Buxton stated to Carol Lively that Carol is to report to Liz. Mr. Loomis checked Mrs. Lively's job description and it stated that the Principal is the immediate supervisor to the Cafeteria Manager. Superintendent Buoniconti stated that the principal is the supervisor. But the process is to have the Food Service Director provide significant amount of the input to minimize the principal's time working on administrative duties outside of instruction.
Attorney Dupere stated by state law that if there are disciplinary issues then those are the types of things the principal handles. But on a day to day basis it would go to the Director of Food Services. For employment related issues the principal by law is the supervisor.
Lisa Danek Burke asked if any employee at the school should really be working through their Chain of Command rather than through the School Committee. Lisa Danek Burke said at the May 24th School Committee meeting there was a letter to the Rowe School Committee from the Cafeteria Manager which outlined a number of things that the manager asked the committee about. I would think this would go through the Food Service Manager.
Lisa Danek Burke said that there was a motion made at the May 24th meeting that this letter was to be forwarded to the Business Manager.
Bill Loomis said this was forwarded to the Business Manager because most of the questions were financial.
Lisa Miller stated that Carol Lively had these questions and she asked these questions in the past and she hasn't gotten an answer yet. That is why she wrote the letter to the committee.
Joanne Blier stated that Liz Buxton and Joanne Blier reviewed this letter and these questions were not asked of Liz. Liz stated that the 1st question was asked and Liz Buxton did not have an answer.

B. School of Choice: Potential Conflict of Interest of Superintendent – Bill Loomis stated in the past evaluation of the superintendent by the Mohawk Trail Regional School District in comment of goals. Goal was to slow and reverse district enrolled attributable to school choice (personal goal).
Superintendent Michael Buoniconti state that he represents 3 School districts and he represents each of these schools within those 3 districts – and his efforts are to help each of those schools become whatever it is they want to become. As he represents the 3 districts he is mindful of the community and there is not a strategy to take from one to give to another.
Bill Loomis asked that when we advertise is it and in house responsibility?
Lisa Danek Burke stated that that the school committee does have a school choice policy. The school committee designates the number of seats. But the advertisement which goes into the local newspapers is the roll of the principal.

C. Bill Loomis congratulated Ellen Miller and Laurie Laffond for obtaining free copy paper for the school from Solid Waste Management and the school will be able to receive free paper also.
Lisa Miller inquired if we would be able to receive other free paper items. That will be looked into.

D. Bill Loomis asked if he or any other School Committee member would be able to attend staff meetings and if not is there any good reasons why?
Superintendent Buoniconti told Mr. Loomis that it is appropriate for School Committee members to come to meetings when they are invited. It is not appropriate for School Committee members to show up unannounced or declare they are coming to meetings. One reason it if any discussions regarding students should not be taken place in front of school committee members.

Lisa Danek Burke asked Mr. Loomis, as the chair, she would look for Mr. Loomis to work with the Superintendent. He is the one individual that the School Committee is responsible for. She would respectfully ask that Mr. Loomis work through the Superintendent because it is important that we are able to have communication and that way it keeps us all informed. She stated that she as seen a number of recent emails where that communication seems to have broken down. Regardless of what peoples differences are we should try to work together professionally. Mr. Loomis stated that this can go two ways and will take her advice.

Jack Williams as a former School Committee member asked: How can a School Committee evaluate a superintendent when the time comes if they have not been able to observe him in action.

Superintendent Buoniconti stated that he doesn't think it is realistic to expect School Committee members to observe 1st hand a number of the types of things that he handles on a day to day basis. Personnel matters are a major area of responsibility and cannot be discussed with school committee members. One of the most effective ways the school committee can evaluate the superintendent is at the subcommittee level.

E. Media Policy – Lisa Danek Burke said that requests from media should be directed to the Superintendent or Principal.
Public Comment Policy – As a person who worked on this policy the intent was if the committee was over burdened by an issue or a number of issues it gave the committee an opportunity to request something in writing if it became necessary.

F. Lisa Miller was appointed to the Policy Subcommittee of Rowe School.

H. Bill Loomis was appointed to the Transportation Subcommittee of the Rowe School.

I. Lisa Danek Burke was appointed to Negotiations Subcommittee

10. New Business:

A. 2011-2012 Appointments – Chairperson Bill Loomis; Vice Chairperson – Lisa Miller; Secretary – Lisa Danek Burke
A motion was made by Lisa Danek Burke and seconded by Lisa Miller to authorize the chairperson to appoint any necessary subcommittees. Unanimous yes vote.
Lisa Danek Burke: In the past we (the School Committee) had not appointed a Treasurer or Vice Treasurer and did not do an Authorization to Borrow. In the past there had not been a Budget Subcommittee it had been the full 3 member committee working on the budget.

B. Bill Loomis appointed Lisa Danek Burke to continue on the Negotiation Subcommittee through the 2011-2012 school year. Appointment accepted by Lisa Danek Burke.

C. Bill Loomis appointed himself the seat on the Mohawk Trail School Committee.

D. Legal Council Appointment – Bill Loomis wanted to clarify that Attorney Russell Dupere is the School Committee's Council. He will give advice to the Superintendent but he is the School Committee's Council.
A motion was made by Bill Loomis and seconded by Lisa Miller to accept the Retainer Agreement with Rowe Public School and the Dupere Law Office for the FY11-12 School Year as read. Unanimous yes vote.

E. The Rowe School Committee will meet the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 6:00pm.
A motion was made by Bill Loomis and seconded by Lisa Danek Burke that we (The School Committee) put out a regular meeting schedule that the School Committee will meet the 2nd Tuesday of every month. Unanimous yes vote.

11. Unfinished Business:

A. Public document sent by Judy Willis to the school committee it lists the principal search committee members. It lists the volunteers who did not serve on the committee. It also gives the resumes of the 6 finalists and Bill Loomis included the resume of Mr. Bill Knittle.

B. School Lunch – It doesn't look like the school committee ever voted on a charged lunch program.
Joanne Blier stated that when the budget was built we moved some costs from the Operating Budget to the Revolving. So when we built the budget we talked about charging $1.00 for lunch. There was no vote but the budget was voted on. Attorney Dupere stated that would be sufficient as long as there was discussion throughout the budget process.
A motion was made by Bill Loomis and 2nd by Lisa Miller that Joanne Blier research the lunch program to see what is legal transfers, non-legal transfers and state laws and review the budget to see if we can afford free lunch and if not come up with the figures with the caveat that the school committee would prefer to re-instate free lunch. And will be reviewed at the July meeting. Unanimous yes vote.

C. Physical Education Program: There may be some significant down time where the Physical Education Teacher is doing other duties such as custodial duties. The School Committee supports a 2 days a week for Phys. Ed. This is the responsibility of the principal to set up the Master Schedule to reflect 2- ½ days of Physical Education.
Lisa Danek Burke added that the School Committee did not take a vote previously on this budget to eliminate a day of gym.
Superintendent Buoniconti added we looked at the schedules of the PE teacher and felt that there was a lot of time that was not being used and that we thought we could deliver the same programming for 1/2 the FTE amount.

D. Nurse Position: Superintendent Buoniconti stated the situation has been resolved. The Nurse Leader called Superintendent Buoniconti saying that there was a change in the clinical diagnosis of one of the students and that clinical need drove the need to have a nurse at the school full time at a 1.0 FTE.
A motion was made by Lisa Danek Burke and seconded by Bill Loomis that the Rowe School Committee increase the nurse FTE back to 1.0 FTE. Unanimous yes vote.

E. Spanish Teacher at Mohawk: Lisa Miller would like to evaluate the program and has a list of questions for students and families.
Superintendent Buoniconti will ask the Mohawk Principal to survey the existing Spanish students and those in the High School who went through the middle school Spanish program.

F. Rowe Late Bus: Joanne Blier stated that we can always cut days when the late bus is not being utilized. This will create a large savings.

G. New Principal: The contract and job description was passed out by the Chairperson Bill Loomis. The principal's responsibilities will stay the same as team chair. Reading Recovery will not be offered and will be a new program which will be taught in the classroom. Special Education will still be delivered by the teacher and the Special Education Teacher will still be the liaison.

H. School Committee Goals: Bill Loomis stated that the School Committee should have goals and be evaluated. Lisa Danek Burke also thought that goals would be a good idea.

I. Superintendent Goals: The superintendent's contract states his ownership in the evaluation process. The Superintendent by contract negotiates with the school Committee his Evaluation Form. Normally the goals are voted on in November. The evaluation would be completed after the evaluation period is over. The School Committee would like have the staff more involved in this process.

J. Mr. Loomis will discuss this with Superintendent Buoniconti and report back to the committee.

K. Music & Art Teachers: There will not be a reduction in hours for these two positions.

L. Spreadsheet for Washington DC Trip – Joanne Blier did not have a spreadsheet for this meeting but there was a savings of around $7,000.00 on the budget.

12. Audience of Citizens Comments:

A. Dan Burke made a comment about bullying. Attorney Dupere said you could make general comments but not to say names. If you have a complaint it has to be submitted in writing to the chair and then notify the person who the complaint is about and give them 48 hours to respond.

13. Subcommittee Items:

A. Policy Subcommittee: Lisa Miller was appointed.

B. Transportation Subcommittee: Bill Loomis appointed himself to Transportation Subcommittee.

C Negotiations Subcommittee: Lisa Danek Burke was appointed.

14. Executive Session:

A. **A motion was made by Bill Loomis and seconded by Lisa Miller to go into Executive Session to conduct strategy sessions with preparations in negotiations with non-union personnel and reconvene in open session. Roll Call: Lisa Danek Burke-yes; Lisa Miller-yes; Bill Loomis-yes. Time into Executive Session: 9:52pm Time out of Executive Session: 10:00pm**

15. Adjournment:

A motion was made by Lisa Danek Burke and seconded by Bill Loomis to adjourn at 10:00pm. Unanimous yes vote.

Respectfully submitted,
Laurie Laffond

Approved:

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William Loomis, Chairman

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Lisa Miller, Vice Chairman

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Lisa Danek Burke, Secretary