

**Rowe School Committee
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 8, 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 in Packet:

Rowe School Committee 11/8/2011 Meeting Agenda
Rowe School Committee Minutes Tuesday, September 13, 2011
Rowe School Committee Minutes Tuesday, October 11, 2011
Bill Loomis email dated 9/15/11, Subject: Re: Fw: P06 & W06
Bill Loomis email dated 10/14/11, Subject: school warrants
Bill Loomis email dated 10/25/11, Subject: Warrants – signatures needed
Lisa Danek Burke email dated 10/31/11 Subject: Re: Warrants – signatures needed
DRAFT MTRSD Three-District Shared Expense Agreement
Bill Loomis email dated 10/20/11, Subject: Draft 3- District Agreement w/ one (1) attachment
10-14-11 3- district agreement email.doc
Judy Willis email dated 9/30/11, Subject: Rowe requested information w/o attachments
Bill Loomis email dated 10/17/11, Subject: More info and questions
Joanne Blier email dated 10/21/11, Subject: Fwd: More info and questions
Michael Buoniconti email dated 10/21/11, Subject: Fwd: More info and questions w/o attachments
Bill Loomis email dated 10/22/11, Subject: Re: More info and questions
Joanne Blier email dated 10/24/11, Subject: Re: More info and questions
Michael Buoniconti email dated 10/24/11, Subject: Fwd: More info and questions w/o attachments
Bill Loomis email dated 10/25/11, Subject: Re: More info and questions
Michael Buoniconti email dated 10/25/11, Subject: Re: More info and questions
Michael Buoniconti email dated 10/31/11, Subject: Fwd More info and questions w/ two (2) attachments:
1) Merger Calculation-Rowe secondary 10-28-11 - 1.pdf, 2) Merger Calculation-Rowe secondary 10-28-11 - 2.pdf
MTRSD Calculation used to establish Rowe Tuition Rate, dated 9/15/2001
Superintendent's Report Rowe School Committee Meeting – November 8, 2011 w/ six (6) attachments
1) Professional Development 2011 – 2012, 2) Professional Development – Late September through November 2011
3) Professional Development Day Workshops October 28, 2011, 4) M.T.R.S.S. Professional Development 2011-2012
CALENDAR, 5) Level 3 Sex Offender – Detail Flyer, 6) District Analysis and Review Tool (DART)
M.T.R.S.S. 2011-2012 CALENDAR (Late Bus Schedule – Based on Sports Seasons)
Rowe School District FY12 – Budget Reduction Proposal
Rowe School District Budget Summary FY13, dated 11/3/2011
Rowe School District FY13 Proposed Budget, dated 11/3/2011
Principal's Report – School Committee Meeting – November 8, 2011

Correspondence/Handouts (A)
Lisa Miller email dated 10/27/11, Subject: Warrant
Joanne Blier email dated 10/27/11, Subject: Fwd: Warrant
Judy Willis email dated 10/27/11, Subject: Re: Warrant

Correspondence/Handouts (B)
William Knittle email dated 10/29/11, Subject: November School Committee
Bill Loomis email dated 11/1/11, Subject: Re: November School Committee

Correspondence/Handouts (C)
Noel Abbott email dated 10/14/11, Subject: Replacement date of Rowe School Windows
Jack Packard email dated 10/24/11, Subject: Re: Replacement date of Rowe School Windows

Correspondence/Handouts (D)
Bill Loomis email dated 10/25/11, Subject: Questions

Correspondence/Handouts (E)
Michael Buoniconti email dated 10/26/11, Subject: Rowe MTRB System Security Administrator

Confidential Envelope - Executive Session
HANDOUTS at MEEETING
Letter from Russell J. Dupere, Esq. to Judy Willis dated November 8, 2011 w/ example policies
Bill Loomis email dated 11/6/11, Subject: Fw: Draft 3- District Agreement (w/ attachments)
10/20/11 email and attached 10-14-11 3- district agreement email.doc
MTRSD Three-District Shared Expense Agreement
Appendix A - Determining Shared Administration Expenses Example of Calculation
Appendix B- Determining Shared Administration Expenses Pro Forma Analysis
Rowe Elementary School LEC Meeting Tuesday October 4, 2011
After School Program Survey Results – November 2011

Lunch Program Survey Results – November 2011

Town of Rowe Energy Reduction Action Plan (Criterion 3) Green Communities Submission, November 2011

1. Call to Order:

Attendees: Bill Loomis, Lisa Miller, & Lisa Danek Burke (School Committee), Michael Buoniconti (Superintendent), Joanne Blier, (Business Administrator), Patricia Bell (Director of Pupil Services, and Bill Knittle (Principal). Bill Loomis called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm.

2. Audience of Citizens:

Audience: Patricia Tierney, Jack Packard, Noel Abbott (arrived late) Paul McLatchy (arrived late). Chairman Loomis recognized the Audience.

Jack Packard, Chair Rowe Energy Committee addressed the Committee regarding the Green Communities designation. Mr. Packard needs a letter of support from the school (Superintendent) regarding the work that has already been done at the school under the energy performance contract. Mr. Packard answered questions regarding energy savings, measurement, and verification.

There was a discussion regarding options for the window replacement at Rowe School, including the application procedure to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA), Rowe Capital Improvement Stabilization funding, and Green Communities money. In order to apply to MSBA for funding, a Statement of Interest (SOI) would need to be prepared and submitted to MSBA.

A motion was made by Lisa Danek Burke and seconded by Lisa Miller to request Joanne Blier draft a SOI for the window replacement at the School. Unanimous yes vote.

3. Approval of Minutes:

Approval of the September 13, 2011 School Committee Meeting Minutes.

A motion was made by Bill Loomis and seconded by Lisa Miller to accept the Rowe School Committee Meeting Minutes from September 13, 2011 with removal of reference to 2.5% in Section 7. Financial Information, A. 4). Unanimous yes vote.

Approval of the October 11, 2011 School Committee Meeting Minutes.

Chairman Loomis has comments/changes to the minutes and stated that there were conversations missing and would like to make a motion that the minutes be tabled until he (and Lisa Miller) can comment on them and hopefully comment back & forth through email and then come to next meeting for approval.

A motion was made by Bill Loomis and seconded by Lisa Miller to table the Rowe School Committee Meeting Minutes from October 11, 2011 until next meeting.

Discussion: Lisa Danek Burke stated the minutes were done using the tape recording noting it is difficult to include everything from a 3.5-hour meeting, and further stated, the tapes from the meeting are available at the Rowe School. Noel Abbott suggested Lisa Danek Burke get any changes electronically from Lisa Miller and Bill Loomis individually, incorporate their changes, & review at the next meeting indicating this would avoid any deliberation and violation of OML. Chairman Loomis added that it is the responsibility of the individual requesting changes to review the tapes for verification. **Unanimous yes vote.**

4. Report of the Chairperson:

A. Signing of School Warrant

The committee discussed signing of the warrants. Chairman Loomis stated he had been conversing with Lisa Danek Burke via email, feels it is important for the entire committee to sign the warrants, and asked Lisa Danek Burke why she would not sign the warrants. Lisa Danek Burke stated she never refused to sign the warrants, the practice of the current committee is the chair & vice-chair have been signing the warrants, and requested the Chair deliberate with a quorum of this committee at open meetings only and to stop the email & phone deliberation. Chairman Loomis concluded with a request to have all three members to sign all warrants, if possible.

B. School Committee Secretary

Chairman Loomis stated he had not yet met with Superintendent Buoniconti and Judy Willis to review the needs of the Committee with regard to secretarial support. Superintendent Buoniconti offered again to meet with Chairman Loomis to help determine the School Committee Secretary duties. Chairman Loomis indicated he met with Ellen Miller and reviewed other Town of Rowe Stipends, mentioning one was \$12/hr. and a second was \$12.50/hr. Chairman Loomis would like to have the position in Rowe if possible, but stated in the end it may work out better to use a Central Office person.

C. Rescheduling the December meeting to 12/20/11

It was agreed that the next meeting would be on 12/20/11 @ 6:00 pm, due to the Rowe School Cultural event on Italy scheduled for 12/13/11. Superintendent Buoniconti stated he and Business Administrator Blier might be late to arrive (~6:30) due to the regularly scheduled Hawlemont School Committee meeting earlier the same evening.

Chairman Loomis stated the meeting would be posted for 6:30 pm.

D. Schedule Special Town Meeting (STM) to address budget deficit

Town of Rowe Free Cash will probably not be certified until after 12/31/11. Chairman Loomis consulted with Ellen Miller & suggested a date for a Special Town Meeting (STM) on 12/6/11. Noel Abbott, Chair Rowe Selectboard indicated the Selectboard was trying to have a STM get funds for a Town forensic audit, but 12/6/11 would be too soon to have the meeting.

A motion was made by Bill Loomis and seconded by Lisa Danek Burke requesting the Town of Rowe increase the FY12 School Budget High School Tuition Line by \$63,000 to cover additional tuitions (at Mohawk & Tech). Unanimous yes vote.

E. Three District Agreement

Chairman Loomis reviewed some of the changes & referenced his 11/6/11 email (Handout at meeting) commenting on the draft agreement. The Hawlemont School Committee recently approved the DRAFT Three District Shared Agreement after independent attorney review. Lisa Miller asked about using the Town of Rowe attorney (Kopelman & Paige). Noel Abbott stated Kopelman & Paige cannot review the draft agreement because they represent other District towns. Business Administrator Blier and Superintendent Buoniconti answered questions about the Three District Agreement. Chairman Loomis stated the Three-District Chairs have not met to discuss this version of the draft agreement and "they" are looking for a response from Rowe. Lisa Danek Burke understands the reasoning for an increase but requested a justification for the 1.5% to 3% increase for to Rowe (similar to the Appendices A & B in the current shared agreement). Lisa Miller added that Rowe seems to have been left out of the current regional expense agreement discussions. Business Administrator Blier answered questions about the transportation contract, including, how the transportation contract was bid, the costs per bus, and how costs are apportioned.

A motion was made by Bill Loomis and seconded by Lisa Miller that the Rowe School Committee not act on the 2011 Draft of the Three District Agreement until such time as further information has been received, reviewed by the Rowe School Committee and the three District Chairs have had at least an initial discussion of the draft. The FY2013 Shared Expenses for the three districts be apportioned in accordance with the 2009 Three District Agreement.

Discussion: Chairman Loomis explained the need to delay & put more thought into the agreement and get more information before Rowe enter into this contract. **Unanimous yes vote.**

F. Rowe Tuition Agreement

Chairman Loomis referenced the questions (via email) from him to the Central Office & responses from Central Office about tuition and the pro forma calculations for Rowe to become part of the Mohawk District for grades 7-12 (in packet). Business Administrator Blier indicated DESE provided verbal support of the calculation assumptions but has not provided anything in writing. Business Administrator Blier and Superintendent Buoniconti reviewed the pro forma calculations with the Committee. Business Administrator Blier and Superintendent Buoniconti explained how Chapter 70 and Minimum Contribution work and explained that there have been significant changes to state aid calculations since the time Rowe left the District. Rowe being a member would flatten out the ups & downs caused by student number changes and could be a significant yearly savings (~50k) to Rowe. There would be a negligible impact to the other Mohawk member towns if Rowe were to join the District. The Pro forma calculations do not consider future capital costs. Superintendent Buoniconti indicated that regional planning grant money may be available to help Rowe further study rejoining the Mohawk District 7-12 and he would help pursue the funding if requested by the Committee. Lisa Danek Burke felt the Committee should further explore this option, including getting confirmation from the DESE in writing and resolution to the transportation issue (ref. 10/5/11 letter to DESE's Christine Lynch from David Newell). Superintendent Buoniconti stated that the pro forma calculations have been shared with the Mohawk Budget Subcommittee. Chairman Loomis stated that he is not interested in Rowe joining the District unless there is a financial benefit to Rowe and feels the current agreement is broken because of the transportation issues, but appreciates the information and feels further study is needed. Lisa Miller asked about capital costs. The cost for Rowe, if part of Mohawk District 7-12, would be about what Hawley pays as the populations are similar. The current cost to Hawley for the current roof work at Mohawk is ~100k over 10 years.

5. Action Items

None.

6. Report of the Superintendent:

A. Professional Development

The Superintendent discussed professional development to give the Committee a sense of what has been made available to the Rowe Staff. Principal Knittle discussed recent DESE training on instructional changes and strategies with the adoption of the Common Core Standards. Principal Knittle discussed his goal for professional development is for the staff to feel it is "time well spent". Superintendent Buoniconti reviewed the Common Core Standards and explained that Massachusetts has chosen to adopt the optional standards. The ELA MCAS standards align very well with the Common Core Standards but the Math MCAS standards are not aligned as well and will need more work.

Pat Bell, Director of Pupil Services, discussed an upcoming DESE program quality review. The review focuses on SPED compliance, ELL compliance, and civil rights compliance. The self-evaluation phase is going on right now. The DESE site visits will be in about 1½ years from now.

B. Administrator Evaluations

Superintendent Buoniconti discussed the positions he does evaluation for and is currently working on the evaluations for the Director of Pupil Services and the Business Administrator.

C. Student Safety

Bus Safety – Video cameras have been installed on all busses.

Level 3 Sex Offender – Detail Flyer. Following questions from the Committee about posting requirements and sensitivity to student(s), Superintendent Buoniconti indicated he would consult with Judy Willis on the posting requirements.

D. FY13 Budget

Superintendent Buoniconti clarified the roles & responsibilities for budget development & the process used to develop FY13 preliminary budget numbers. Superintendent Buoniconti also discussed the District Analysis Review Tool (DART). This online DESE tool allows one to view & compare many metrics between what school districts, such as spending on professional development.

Jack Packard (following departure & return to the meeting) addressed the Committee and clarified what he needs in a letter from the School Committee/Superintendent for the Green Communities designation and the Reduction Action Plan. Jack stated a motion is needed to accept the Green Communities Reduction Action Plan and proceeded to review the plan with the Committee.

A motion was made by Lisa Danek Burke and seconded by Bill Loomis to approve the Town of Rowe Energy Reduction Action Plan for the Green Communities submission with the addition of a Table on Page 7 (item c) and assuring the town name referenced in the document is "Rowe". Unanimous yes vote.

7. Report of the Business Administrator:

A. Late Bus Schedule

Business Administrator reviewed the late bus schedule provided in the packet showing the days the late bus will not be provided. The proposed late bus schedule would essentially follow the fall, winter, and spring sports schedules and eliminates ~30 days from the past late bus schedule.

B. Cafeteria Audit

An audit of the Rowe School cafeteria was recently conducted by the DESE Nutrition Services. The auditor was impressed with the school kitchen facilities, as well as, the quality of food served and the recordkeeping being done. Liz Buxton was on-site for the visit. Superintendent Buoniconti stated a written report will be forthcoming for the Committee.

C. FY12 Budget - Proposed reductions to balance budget, if necessary

The Business Administrator reviewed with the Committee some potential FY12 budget reductions should the Town of Rowe not approve \$63,000 in additional funding to cover a deficit at the secondary education level. Principal Knittle discussed the specific cuts that might be considered and stated a deficit of over \$60,000 would almost certainly have to include staff reductions and elimination of field trip(s) and stated this was very difficult task to do. Lisa Miller suggesting cutting the late bus for a \$15,000 savings. It was pointed out that the current late bus savings (~\$3000) is already earmarked to cover previous budget shortfalls. Lisa Miller stated that Ellen Miller had spoken to the state Department of Revenue and Rowe can split the elementary and secondary level budget. Lisa Danek Burke would like to have something in writing from Department of Revenue before the Committee separates the budget. Chairman Loomis requested Lisa Miller obtain a written statement from DOR regarding separating the budget. Noel Abbott suggested the Attorney for the Town of Rowe is asked to review the matter. Superintendent Buoniconti stated he would ask Russell Dupere, esq. to provide a written opinion.

D. FY13 Budget Discussions

Business Administrator Blier and Principal Knittle reviewed a FY13 budget proposal based on providing "level services". The budget would be 6% over last years budget (elementary level). Some of the specific line items discussed with the Committee included, head teacher stipend, teacher aid increase, field trips, guided reading books, and technology. Principal Knittle budgeted for the full cost of technology (not including "E-rate" discount). Bill Loomis brought up using DSL versus a T1 line and that Ellen Miller's calculations indicate DSL at the school could save money. Superintendent Buoniconti stated that with the "E-rate", the School saves 70% over standard rates with yearly approval of a technology plan. A discussion followed about the use of technology, DSL versus T1, and the PowerSchool and Budget Sense software. Superintendent Buoniconti noted that the calculations from Ed Skutnik do not match Ellen Miller's calculations. Noel Abbott discussed the Massachusetts Broadband Institute. The FY13 budget will be based on the technology (T1 line) used now. Principal Knittle continued discussion of FY13 budget lines, including; battery replacements for some computers, more/improved professional development for teachers, speech supplies, IEP required summer speech therapy, fuel oil based on 1.5 deliveries and \$3.20/gallon (to be bid with the Lower Pioneer Valley Collaborative), biannual septic services, the energy loan, and furniture. Business Administrator Blier explained the costs budgeted for Food Services. The projection for students at the secondary level (7-12) is: twenty-seven (27) at Mohawk and five (5) at Tech.

If the Committee would like an only 2.5% increase (at elementary level), \$33,000 would need to be cut from the level services budget and two proposal options were provided. Increasing the Secretary stipend was discussed. Lisa Miller suggested increasing the secretary stipend to \$1,800 to match other similar town stipends. Lisa Danek Burke noted that no guidance from the Town has been received with requested budget parameters. Business Administrator Blier asked that the Committee members review the budget and come to the next meeting prepared to discuss what they would like to see included or not included in the FY13 Budget. Business Administrator Blier reviewed the revolving accounts and the budget assumes larger school choice revenue for FY12 and FY13. The Committee discussed the revolving accounts, including spending, revenue, and use of funds. Business Administrator Blier reviewed capital expense projects and asked for Committee input. Next items listed are windows, carpets, and computers. Principal Knittle is meeting with Ed Skutnik next week to continue evaluating technology needs but will not plan any computer replacement for FY13. Business Administrator Blier asked Committee members to be prepared to discuss the capital project funding at the next meeting.

8. Report of the Principal:

Principal Knittle provided his submitted report as read - **Principal's Report – School Committee Meeting – November 8, 2011** and provided the additional information.

Reading Intervention Update: Teachers are five weeks into a ten-week program. Students will be reassessed after the 10 weeks. There are currently three reading groups. Feedback from the Primary Class teachers is that they like the program, their students are engaged, seeing results already, and it fits well with the guided reading program.

Guided Reading Update: Students have all been benchmark tested and are in common reading groups based on reading level.

MCAS: MCAS results over the past several years have been reviewed and the results have been consistent. The areas in ELA we need to focus on are: open response, composition writing 4th grade, questions related to fiction, non-fiction, genre, and theme. The areas in Math we need to focus on are: open response, geometry, measurement, patterns, relations, and functions.

Professional Development: Specialized professional development for Guided Reading is happening soon, as well as, writing professional development for the Primary Classroom teachers.

Lunch Program Survey – Ref. Handout at meeting. Some changes to menu being made to include favorites more often.
After School Program Survey– Ref. Handout at meeting. Seems to be enough interest in an after-school program that would charge enough to cover the costs and there might be some grant money available.

Chairman Loomis referenced his email about the REAP Grant and asked who the primary contact is now. Business Administrator Blier stated the primary contact is Sandy at the Central Office. Business Administrator Blier and Chairman Loomis discussed the REAP year and balances and how money is requested and disagreed about which fiscal year each grant was in and the deadlines for obligating the money.

A motion was made by Bill Loomis to bring the REAP Grant back to the Principal. The motion was not seconded.

A motion was made by Bill Loomis that the REAP Grant primary contact be the Principal. Lisa Miller seconded the Motion.

Discussion: Chairman Loomis stated he used to be able to get all the REAP information from the former Principal. Business Administrator Blier stated she was never able to get the REAP information from the former Principal. The Primary contact was transferred to the person who is doing the REAP Grant for Hawlemont. Superintendent Buoniconti indicated that if REAP Grant information is needed, it can be requested in an email and the Central Office can turn it around fairly quickly and he is more concerned about keeping the the Principal focused on education. Further discussion ensued about fiscal year and obligation dates. Business Administrator Blier stated the money each year needs to be obligated by December. Chairman Loomis indicted he would put his request about REAP in an email. **The Motion was not moved to a vote.**

Chairman Loomis asked if there was anything else and mentioned the executive session minutes in the packet. Superintendent discussed with the Committee procedures and suggestions for releasing executive session minutes once they no longer need to be kept confidential.

No other listed Agenda items were discussed, including the following:

9. **Report of the Chairperson (2)**
10. **Unfinished Business**
11. **New Business**
12. **Subcommittee Reports**
13. **Correspondence/Handouts**
14. **Audience of Citizens (2)**
15. **Executive Session**
16. **Adjournment**

A motion was made by Bill Loomis and seconded by Lisa Miller to adjourn at 10:40pm. Unanimous yes vote.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Danek Burke

Approved:

William Loomis, Chairman

Lisa Miller, Vice Chairman

Lisa Danek Burke, Secretary