MEETING MINUTES

NAME OF SCHOOL DISTRICT: Rowe NAME OF COMMITTEE: Rowe School Committee

DATE AND LOCATION OF MEETING: Tues, November 26, 2013 – 6:00PM, Rowe Town Hall

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Lisa Miller, Lisa Danek-Burke, Cindy Laffond

ALSO PRESENT: Supt. Michael Buoniconti, Business Manager Joanne Blier, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Leann Loomis, and Rowe School Principal Bill Knittle

CITIZENS/STAFF: Barbara Griffin, Laurie Pike, Roberta Baker

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY: Chair Lisa Miller at 6:00pm.

1. **Audience of Citizens:** No comments.

2. **Staff Comments - 11-12-2013 letter from Rowe staff re Superintendency and Central Office Services:** Chair Lisa Miller (LM) reported that the School Committee received a letter from school staff concerning possible changes with the school superintendency. She stated that a lot of the answers to their comments/questions will be answered in the minutes of that meeting (10/10/2013). Cindy Laffond (CL) asked Michael Buoniconti (MB) about the first bullet item in the letter: "*A change in Superintendency and Central Office would not affect the 7-12 grade students; the change would apply only to the Rowe Elementary School.*" CL stated that the matter concerns the elementary grade students—it's not about grades 7-12, and she's concerned that there are a lot of scare tactics going around, one of which is that it's being said that Rowe students are going to be kicked out of Mohawk, which is untrue. MB confirmed that Rowe hiring a separate superintendent for Rowe students has no bearing on Rowe's tuition agreement with Mohawk for grade 7-12 students. Lisa Danek-Burke (LDB) stated that she believes there would be an effect on the 7-12 students at Mohawk. MB clarified his comment stating that there would be no impact on the ability of Rowe's 7-12 students to attend Mohawk; however, he stated it adds a layer of complexity, and you would want some connection between what's happening in grade 6 and going into grade 7; i.e., aligning curriculum, making sure the students are where they are supposed to be coming into Mohawk. There would need to be some coordination. CL agreed that there would need to be good communication in order for it to work. MB asked CL if she wanted to go over the other items in the letter. CL said no, not at this time; however, she added that one item concerning the cost to the town of NBSU (North Berkshire School Union) vs MTRSS (Mohawk Trail Regional School System) is not an item that the staff should be addressing. Bill Knittle (BK) responded saying that he did not believe that the staff is looking for answers to the points and questions they raised—he thinks they just wanted to be sure that these items were considered. LDB stated that the first four bullets were asking for verification, and the second set of bullets were asking that the items be considered, so she looked at each section differently. She added whether we want to spend time discussing the items or not is up to the rest of the committee. Leann Loomis (LL) asked: As far as hiring decisions...if we share someone that has a .2 position in Rowe and their other positions in Mohawk schools adds up to a FT position in the other Mohawk schools, do they still have the state health insurance? If they leave Rowe, does it affect them? Joanne Blier (JB) responded that the current process would not change—if we have a 1.0 employee working in the district who is .2 Rowe, .2 Hawlemont, and .6 Mohawk—Mohawk carries the insurance and bills out 20% to Rowe and 20% to Hawlemont. If the staff member continued to work for Rowe, Hawlemont, etc., this arrangement would not change. Conversely, if the employee works a higher FTE in Rowe than the other school(s), then Rowe picks up the health insurance and bills the other school(s) accordingly. Chair Miller stated that the staff members can read the meeting minutes and perhaps find the information they are

looking for. Staff member Barbara Griffin joined the meeting later on to see if the School Committee had any questions concerning their letter. It was agreed that the School Committee meeting minutes will be sent to school staff.

3. **Rowe SD/Hawlemont SD joint meeting:** Not held.

4. **Minutes:** The following action was taken on meeting minutes:

   - **June 27, 2013:** LDB made motion to approve the minutes as submitted; CL seconded motion. No discussion; unanimously approved as submitted. Chair signed the minutes.
   - **August 15, 2013**: CL made motion to approve the minutes; LDB seconded motion with two corrections: 1) Item III—remove April 23, 2013 and replace with not held; and 2) Item VI:D - Principal's Report: Cory should be Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI). Unanimously approved as corrected. Chair signed the minutes. The page needing correction will be corrected.
   - **October 10, 2013**: Withdrawn by CL. She will resubmit at next meeting.
   - **October 17, 2013**: Withdrawn by CL. She will resubmit at next meeting.

   CL reported that she has been trying to catch up on minutes with Judy Willis. CL does not know what to do because Paul McLatchy III who had been taking minutes says he does not have any of the ones that are missing. CL stated that she emailed a list of minutes that are missing to the committee members.

5. **Action Items:**
   - **Budget Transfers** (see attached): CL made motion to make the following transfers. LDB seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous. JB noted that these transfers were necessary to cover SPED services for a new pre-school student. These costs will be refunded to the town through school choice spending credits.

From	$ Amount	To	$ Amount
Professional Development Principal	1,800	SPED Contracted Services	8,969
Other Instructional Contracted Services	1,000	REAP SPED Contracted Services	1,594
Speech Assistant Salary	2,500		
School Committee Clerical	450		
Professional Development Out of District	639		
Teacher Substitute Salary	500		
Principal Dues	100		
Principal Clerical Sub Salary	180		
Textbooks	500		
SPED Textbooks	300		
Building Furnishings	500		
SPED Supplies	500		
REAP Textbooks	1,594		
TOTAL	10,563	TOTAL	10,563

   - **Purchase Requisition:** CL made motion to approve PR#1480182 for $49,257.00 to cover the additional bus needed for FY14—funds to come from Rowe Fire Account "Loss of Income". LDB seconded motion. Motion passed unanimously. At CL's request BK will have Laurie Laffond put the notation "Loss of Income" on any requisitions or invoices that are to come from the School Fire Account Loss of Income.

6. **Principal's Report** (see attached): BK reported some recent highlights:
   - A few weeks ago Ms. McLatchy took her Gr 2 math class across the street to Avery's to do some real life math. The kids made shopping lists which they got approved by their parents along with $5. They totaled up how much they would need, explored the store, and accounted for their change. They spent about an hour and had a fabulous time.

- Gr 3-4 class did a project on Ellis Island and immigration. They replicated what it would be like to come over from Europe and pass through Ellis Island. They came dressed in period clothes of the early 1900's. They researched where their ancestors came from. Laurie and Claudine set up three stations: medical check in, interview, and money changing. They did quarantine some students. It was a great way to involve families. Six staff members were involved. Great way to make learning real for the kids.
- CST and Intervention: Through the Child Study Team process we have identified a few more students that need a little more work in reading and/or math. BK has been encouraged as to how this process is working.
- Activities: Skating tomorrow, Cultural study starts next week, going to the Nutcracker at the Academy of Music in Northampton on Fri, Dec 13th. Skiing starts on Thurs, Jan 9.
- Safety: Next safety drill is going to be a shelter in place on Tues, Dec 17th. Lock down training went well. State Police were pleased with how both the students and teachers reacted.
- Educator Evaluation System: Progressing. Just about everybody has their goals written. Half of the teachers have their plans in and they have been approved. It is encouraging to see that we've used this process to come up with a school-wide goal to improve writing. This is an area that needs the most focus this year.

7. **Chairperson's Report:** No report

8. **Superintendent's Report** (see attached):
   - Josh Rode from Heath received Superintendent's Award. Dinner next Wednesday at Tech School.
   - 2013 MCAS data: MB provided written results
   - FY2015 Budget Preparation:
     - Do you want to budget any rental money for next year in case the building is not ready? MB recommended 3 months. It would be effective July 2014. Unsure at this point if MIIA insurance will cover any of the rental expense. It was agreed to budget for 5 months (July to Nov) at this time. BK has a School Building Committee/Finance Subcommittee meeting on Monday. He will find out if what the penalty clause says about payment to the town if the building is not completed by contract deadline. Perhaps some of these funds could be used towards rental.
     - Central Office expense: It was agreed to budget what Rowe's portion of the 3-district agreement would be if there was one in place.
   - Educator Evaluation/Smart Goals: Part of agreement that will be discussed in executive session budget discussions.
   - Student Enrollment Past 5 Years: There was a dip after the catastrophic school fire loss. Drop off is not bad though. Net change 2013-14 (56) is down 9 from 2009-10 school year (65). BK reported that two new 5th grade students are moving into town. We currently have three open choice seats in grades 2-6.

9. **Report of Director of Pupil Personnel Services** (see attached)**:** MB has requested that Leann Loomis (LL) submit monthly written report.
   - LL informed the committee that even foster children are considered homeless and fall under McKinney Ventor Act.
   - Once homeless student enters your school, they have option to remain in your school if they so choose.
   - LL asked that if anyone has any specific questions, please email her and she will include her responses in her monthly report.

10. **Report of K-6 Director of Curriculum** (see attached): MB has requested that Ms. Lagoy submit monthly written report. Report was reviewed. There were no questions on the report.

11. **FY2015 Budget:**
    - JB presented proposed schedule. She reminded the committee that they had asked that a budget be prepared "starting with level services and make it realistic and sustainable."
    - She prepared an historical operational budget going back to FY11. Heat will be considerably less for FY15 as the tank is already full. It was agreed to put $8K in the budget for fuel oil at this point.
    - JB said we need to ascertain if there will be any preventive maintenance costs or service contracts associated with new systems in the new school building. BK will work on this.
    - JB will work with BK on the rest of the operations numbers.
    - Salary increases and staffing will be worked on in executive session.
    - JB provided projected grants for FY2015.
    - JB reported that she projects we will be at $23K in school choice funds for 6-30-2104. We may be getting additional choice money for new students. She recommends expending $120K from school choice in FY2015. It was agreed to leave it at $120K at this point.
    - FY15 Enrollments: JB reported that there may be (2) 8th grade Rowe students going to Tech next year for 9th grade.
    - FY15 field trip spreadsheet prepared by BK along with estimated funding sources.
    - LM bought up her interest in having a science teacher brought back. LDB agreed that this would be nice to do. LM asked if a FT science teacher could be added to the proposed budget so they can see what the cost would be. LDB said perhaps a .8 position would suffice. Laurie Pike said there may not be time in the schedule to provide for this FT position. LM said it would be a good pull for the school. We should look at how it worked it in the past. Combining functions/cross disciplining could get us to the end result. JB will add science teacher cost to the budget.
    - LDB said we had talked before about reducing Library costs. We talked about using a para. LM wondered if we could use the town librarian. We have the whole process about setting up the new library. BK said the SBC is looking at grants for this.
    - Spanish program analysis: LDB asked MB for support in preparing this analysis. We have prior information from students, but would like higher level input. She is wondering if it is really helping the students. Both LDB and LM said from personal experience they have questions about the program. MB will speak with Jen Lagoy about this.
    - Roberta Baker asked if there was a way to budget for APPS for the IPads that the teachers have. JB said Massachusetts is very strict about how APPS are purchased. MB said it's not so much about the money, it's the process for purchasing. Roberta said that the IPads would be used much more if APPS could be purchased. MB said that we will look at the process. Roberta asked if teachers could purchase the APPS and get reimbursed. MB said we will work out a process.

12. **Computer Equipment:** BK asked if we could go to the town and ask for another $10K for computer equipment. LDB said she would like more information before saying yes on this. BK will report on current equipment, where we are, what we need for the future at a subsequent meeting.

13. **YES Computer Invoice:** CL asked JB about a $12,233.45 invoice for YES computers (IPads) that was coded incorrectly when paid by the town hall. JB said that $10,000 should have come from the capital account set aside for this equipment, and the remainder was to be paid from the REAP account. CL stated that when the bill was paid $4,000 was charged to the New School Building account and $6,000 was charged to the correct capital account. The remainder was charged to a third account. CL will speak with the town accountant tomorrow about the bill.

14. **Remote Participation**: CL reported that she will be away for four months (Jan 1 through April 30). She would like to participate in School Committee meetings via Skype. She will be available by email. MB said that he will check with Russ Dupere to determine what the requirements are for this.

15. **Subcommittee Reports:** Reports were reviewed.

16. **Correspondence/Handouts:** Correspondence and handouts were reviewed.

17. **Next Regular Meeting**: December 19, 2013

18. **Executive Session:** At 7:53pm LDB made motion that the Rowe School Committee go into Executive Session under Section 21A to conduct strategy with respect to collective bargaining and contract negotiations with non-union staff, and to reconvene in open session for the purposes of a potential vote and then adjournment. By roll call vote: LDB yes, CL yes, LM yes.

19. **Reconvene Open Session**: At 8:13pm the Rowe School Committee reconvened in open session and unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Laffond,

Signature: _____
Lisa A. Miller, Chair

Date Approved: 1/16/14