MEETING MINUTES – FY2014
School Committee Meeting

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

DATE AND LOCATION OF MEETING: Thursday, May 29, 2014 – 5:30PM, Rowe Town Hall

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Lisa Miller (LM) and Lisa Danek-Burke (LDB), Susie Zavotka (SZ)
Audience Members: Principal Bill Knittle (BK), Leann Loomis (LL), Ellen Miller, Barbara Griffin, Laurie Laffond, Gail May, Claudine Poplawski, Cindy Laffond, Rosie Gordon

I. **Call to Order**: Chair Lisa Miller called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

II. **Reorganization:**

1. **Chair:** LM made a motion to nominate SZ as Chairperson. SZ responded that she appreciated the nomination, but with the amount of work she has right now as School Building Committee (SBC) Chair, and being new on the School Committee and trying to get oriented she is a little concerned about taking that on right now. She stated she would like to hear from LDB what her thoughts are about how she sees the committee running, what she would do if she were chair, and would she be willing to support the move to the new Union. LDB responded that if she were chairperson of the committee that she would run an organized meeting, that she would hope that people would come prepared, that the committee would have packets for the meeting mailed to members ahead of time (as is done now) to give ample time to review materials before each meeting, and that even though she was not in favor of the move to the new superintendency (related more to her frustration with the lack of discussion about the matter), that the committee voted and this is where we are. She thinks it's important to evaluate how the summer and transition is going, and the first few months; and then come up with a solid plan moving forward—a considerable time before we look to the town for a budget. SZ stated that she recognizes that LDB has the organizational skills and experience with the committee to do the job, but she was just concerned that we didn't start reinventing and going backwards as decisions had already been made, and that we need to move forward in a respectful way of one another and try to work together as a team as there is a lot to do. SZ then nominated LDB as chair. LDB seconded the motion. LM asked that LDB be diplomatic as chair. The motion to elect LDB as chair passed two in favor, one opposed (LM)—(2/1/0). LDB then took over as chair of the meeting.
2. **Vice Chair:** LDB nominated SZ as Vice Chair, to act in the Chair's behalf if the Chair is not available. LM seconded the motion. The motion to elect SZ as Vice Chair passed unanimously (3/0/0).
3. **Secretary:** LDB stated that MGL does require that a secretary be appointed. She realizes that the committee at this point has Ellen Miller attending meetings and taking minutes. She would like to appoint LM as secretary solely for things such as executive sessions. LM agreed to serve as secretary in this capacity. LDB stated that this is solely for executive session items; however, if Ellen Miller can be invited into the executive session, we can consider that as well.
4. **Authorization to Appoint Subcommittees:** SZ made a motion to authorize the chair to appoint the Negotiations, Policy, and Transportation Subcommittees. LM seconded the motion. LDB stated that these subcommittees are all committees of one—as two or more would constitute a quorum of the school committee. The motion to authorize the chair to appoint the Negotiations Subcommittee, the Policy Subcommittee, and the Transportation Subcommittee passed unanimously (3/0/0).
5. **Negotiations Subcommittee:** LDB stated she would be willing to continue in this capacity. SZ asked if another committee member could sit in on some of these meetings to gain experience for the future. LDB stated that she would discuss this with the school attorney. Perhaps this could be done by posting it as a school committee meeting/executive session. If that's not possible, perhaps some training sessions could be held.

6. **Policy Subcommittee:** Involves bringing forward to the committee any policies that need updating. LDB would like to see a schedule set up to review the current policies one at a time. SZ offered that it might be a way for her to familiarize herself with the committee. The policy book will be requested from the Central Office. LDB appointed SZ to the Policy Subcommittee.
7. **Transportation Subcommittee:** Mohawk Transportation Subcommittee meets monthly. A new 5-year contract was recently negotiated (Rowe has its own contract), which is the bulk of the work of this committee. Not expected to be a large time commitment at this point. LDB appointed LM to the Transportation Subcommittee.

III. **School Committee Calendar:** LDB stated that as well as setting a schedule for regular meetings, there is a short term need for some extra meetings. LM cannot do the last Thursday of the month, and thinks that the third Thursday is not good as it falls on Thanksgiving (usually) and during vacation weeks. She checked with Supt. Lev, and he is available 3rd & 4th Mondays and 2nd, 3rd & 4th Thursdays. It was agreed to tentatively set the 4th Monday each month as the regular meeting date. LDB will contact Jon Lev. If that works for him this will be formalized at the next meeting. Extra meetings to discuss transition will be held Monday, June 4th at 5:30pm and Tuesday, June 10th at 5:30pm. LDB will contact Jon Lev to see if he can attend these meetings. LM stated that Judy Willis contacts the Rowe Town Hall to set meetings up. LM turned over her town hall key to LDB. LDB will contact Judy to post these meetings, and as we transition to NBSU we will set up a new procedure going forward. She will also have Judy cancel the June 19th meeting (LM is not available).

IV. **Goals:** SZ stated that she had put together some items she would like to see happen:
1. **Short-Term:** 1) Move to new building: Teachers and staff have held up well, but she'd like to make sure their transition to the new school is as smooth as possible. Dan Pallotta has helped. She feels that the RSC should be communicating with them and take leadership to make sure the move happens in a positive, helpful way. BK and Laurie Laffond need work space for the summer. BK does have an office upstairs. Where will orders be delivered over the summer? They are taking on a huge load and need some help. 2) NBSU: I'm aware of concerns by the community concerning the move. Think it's important that we evaluate the move this year. Set up evaluation criteria. Would like to hear from parents, teachers, staff and principal on how it's going. Make sure that decision is a good decision.
2. **Long Term:** When planning the new school SZ sat down with staff asking how they wanted the building to represent the students and community. Their answers: Lifelong learning, social responsibility, stewards of the environment, connection with the community. SZ thinks these are goals the RSC can look at, supporting the teachers within the bounds of our responsibility. LDB thought that this would be good for the LEC to be involved in.
3. **Mohawk and area schools:** SZ thinks it a good idea to maintain a good relationship with Mohawk and the schools in the district. LDB agreed that this is an important goal for her.

LM asked if we should have a written list of goals. SZ thought that was a good idea. LDB stated that after some of the transition items are ironed out, it will be good to have a written list of goals.

V. **Transition Items:** BK presented two documents: 1) Superintendent's Report listing contracts shared by Mohawk-Hawlemont with Rowe, staffing shared by Mohawk-Hawlemont with Rowe, and Other transition items, and 2) BK's 2-page list of questions/action items for the next two months.

A. **Contracts:**
1. **Baseline Edge (Educator Evaluation):** Expensive for us to continue on our own ($3500/year, and $1500 for 1st year set-up). Alternative is TeachPoint for $375/year (based on number of users). BK has proposals from both. LL stated that she is not impressed with Baseline Edge. If going with TeachPoint then data collected over the past year should get transitioned from Baseline Edge to TeachPoint this summer.
2. **Powerschool (student information system):** Will continue with this. NBSU also uses this. Files live in the cloud. Don't know cost to sign up on our own vs. signing in with NBSU. Laurie working on quotes.

3. **E-Sped (special education software):** same as above
4. **School Reach (mass voice communication):** Both Mohawk and NBSU use this. Research cost. Since we're using Mohawk calendar do we want to stay with Mohawk School Reach?
5. **Destiny (library software):** We want to stay with this. Cost unknown at this time.
6. **Nutrikids (online payment of school breakfast/lunch):** Outside service/software that manages reimbursements to each school. Does NBSU use this? Rowe purchase this ourselves?
7. **Atlas Rubicon (web-based platform to post/share curriculum):** BK reported they have not been using this.
8. **NWEA (MAP...Measures of Academic Progress):** Compares students' scores to other students' scores across the country. Rowe is missing a solid math assessment. This would be an important piece of data. We tag on with Mohawk now and only use it for 6th grade so Mohawk knows where our students will fit in 7th grade. Mohawk uses it for grades 7-10. BK would like to look into it; however, one more thing for the teachers to be trained in. Can our students go to Mohawk and take the test? Research this further. BK will find out cost for just 6th grade.
9. **CES (Collaborative for Educational Services):** Still want to belong to this. Cost is $125/year.
10. **BudgetSense (business software):** Mohawk's financial package. Need to find out what NBSU uses. Will need to transition current FY2014 data into NBSU's software.
11. **Email System:** Dwight helped create gmail accounts for all of the Rowe teachers a few months ago. Emails from the current system (xxx@mohawkshools.org) need to get forwarded into new gmail accounts (xxx@roweschool.org). Perhaps Graham can help with this.
12. **Website:** Now have option to create our own website. Perhaps Dwight may take this on.
13. **E-Rate:** Joanne Blier uses the consultant E-rate Online, but they would be expensive for us to use alone. Need to discuss this with NBSU (Jon and Graham). SZ thinks they will take care of this for us.
14. **MASC (MA Assoc. of School Committees):** Agreed to keep our membership in this. If NBSU is a member perhaps we can get a better rate through them.
15. **SNAP (student health records):** Barbara Griffin, school nurse, would like this program to be looked at. Does NBSU use this?

B. **Staffing Shared by Mohawk-Hawlemont with Rowe:**

1. **Health Insurance for part-time shared staff:** There is a concern about health insurance coverage for shared staff. Rowe's portion of health insurance costs for Central Office staff is currently billed to Rowe via monthly shared services invoice. We should be able to continue the same way for shared staff. At this point the Art teacher will not be continuing, and possibly the Music teacher may not continue. LDB thinks we should get clarification from the school attorney on the health insurance benefits for shared personnel. BK did state that he heard from Joanne Blier that Mohawk would continue to bill Rowe for Rowe's share of any health insurance premiums for staff that are shared.
2. **Art & Music:** BK needs to hire Art teacher (.2FTE) and Music teacher (.36FTE). Current ones not returning.
3. **Shared Staff to Continue:** SZ made a motion that the Rowe School Committee inform the Mohawk Central Office that we are interested in continuing to share the following employees:

Physical Education (.2FTE)	Speech Pathologist (.2FTE)
Occupational Therapist (.1FTE)	Speech Pathology Assistant (.2FTE)
Physical Therapist (.1FTE)	Psychologist (.2FTE)

LM seconded the motion. LDB stated that she will work on making these things happen. BK offered his assistance. The motion to continue sharing with Mohawk the six (6) part-time positions listed above passed unanimously (3/0/0).

C. **Other transition items:**

1. **School Committee postings/agendas/packets:** Presume that NBSU will handle this.

2. **End of year financial reconciliation (purchases):** RSC needs to know where we are financially and where we're ending the year. Will get this from Joanne.
3. **Letters of employment assurance:** Letters need to go to staff ASAP. Discuss at June 4th meeting. Need to decide who will send the letters.

4. **Student records:** Will be moved from Central Office to Rowe School. Sped records will be transferred to NBSU. The SBC has ordered a fireproof cabinet for Rowe School for important records.
5. **Staff records:** Will be moved from Central Office to Rowe School.
6. **Business records:** Will be moved to NBSU/Rowe.

It was agreed that Superintendents, Business Managers and Directors of Pupil Personnel Services need to meet. Barbara Griffin asked for staff contact list. LDB stated her first goal as chair is to contact both Superintendents to get them working together. She expects by June 10th that they will have gotten key individuals together—at least by phone—to discuss transition items. LM suggested that list prepared by Supt. Buoniconti be sent to Supt. Lev. BK did send his 2-page list to Jon Lev. LDB will email MB's list to Jon Lev. SZ offered LDB her assistance.

D. **BK's Questions for the next two months:** Reviewed list. Discussed following:

- **Early Childhood Coordinator:** NBSU Director of Pupil Personnel Services Deb Rosselli handles ECC. Should we keep Kate Dwyer (Mohawk ECC) or use NBSU? If we use Kate we'll be paying double. Does NBSU do training for staff? Kate is the contact with REACH/Greenfield. Will there be contact with Franklin County REACH via NBSU? Need to find out what Deb Rosselli will provide.
- **Custodian/Facilities:** SZ received list from Robin Pease, Mohawk Facilities Manager, of maintenance items that need to be taken care of; i.e., septic pumping, water operator certification, etc. SZ will send Robin's list to the committee. BK mentioned that during month of July he is not sure what there will be for the custodian to do as we will have left the Hawlemont facility, and the Rowe facility won't be ready yet. Robin did tell BK that there will be work available at Mohawk for the times we don't need our custodian. He asked if that was something that would need approval by the School Committee. SZ stated that there may be training that he could be doing during this period. It was suggested that perhaps he could use this time to obtain the required water license.
- **Cafeteria:** SZ stated that there will probably be additional duties that Carol Lively will need to pick up now that she will be in charge of cafeteria; i.e., menu reporting to the state. BK has spoken with Carol about this. He will get from Carol a list of items that need to be taken care of.
- **Secretary's Duties:** BK stated that he believes Laurie's duties may increase.
- **Job Descriptions:** SZ asked BK if he could get job descriptions—with additional duties—of custodian, cook, and possibly secretary for discussion next week (June 4th). BK said he could get descriptions for cook, and maybe custodian, but additional workload for secretary is unknown at this time.
- **Temporary Office Space:** LDB stated that SZ had asked earlier where Laurie can work this summer until the school is ready. BK will be using the empty office on the 2nd floor of town hall. Summer school will also be held at the town hall for five weeks, so there is limited extra space. BK: Laurie had mentioned working out of her home this summer. She'll need her files and paperwork. BK will confirm she has adequate internet access. LDB will speak to selectmen about space availability.
- **Negotiations:** BK asked if Supt. Lev should be involved with the teacher negotiations.
- **Keys & Access to Educational Materials:** Staff will get keys to the new building. They would like to have access to their materials by August 15th if possible so they can start setting up their spaces. Will there be any access before August 15th?
- **Payroll:** Need to understand NBSU's interface with the payroll process.

- **Purchasing/Delivery of Supplies:** BK asked where supplies should be delivered during the summer. SZ asked if deliveries can be postponed until sometime in August. To be discussed further.

VI. **Minutes:** To be handled at next meeting. Process for minutes needs to be set up. Hard copy should be in packets mailed to each member.

VII. **Action Items:**

- **2014-2015 School Year Calendar:** The 5-1-2014 draft version of the Mohawk calendar was reviewed. Laurie Laffond also prepared a Rowe School version of the calendar that coincides with the Mohawk calendar. LDB would like to review both calendars. Action on the calendar was tabled.
- **Budget Transfers:** None
- **Purchase Requisitions:** None
- **Treasury & Payroll Warrants:** SZ asked for clarification of process to sign warrants. Two out of three signatures are required on a bi-weekly basis. SZ needs to know what day she needs to be at the town hall to approve the warrants. LM stated that she stopped at the town hall on Tuesday to sign the warrants and could not access them as they were locked in the Accountant's office. The warrants are forwarded electronically by Suzanne Sumner at the Central Office to each school committee member for review (approximately one week in advance). The originals are sent to the town hall by Tuesday. After July 1st a new process will need to be put in place.

VIII. **Next meeting**: Wednesday, June 4th at 5:30pm at the town hall. Agenda will be posted Monday. Members should get any agenda items they have to LDB by Monday morning, June 2nd.

IX. **Executive Session**: LDB made a motion that by roll call vote at 7:58pm the School Committee enter into Executive Session pursuant to Mass. General Law Chapter 30A, Section 21A to conduct strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the intention to come out of executive session for adjournment. Lisa Danek-Burke – yes, Susie Zavotka – yes, Lisa Miller – yes. All present left the room except for the three school committee members.

X. **Re-enter Open Session/Adjournment:** At _____pm the committee came back into open session, and _____ made a motion to adjourn the meeting. _____ seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously (3/0/0)

Respectfully submitted by Ellen Miller,

Signature: _____

Lisa Danek-Burke, Chair

Date Approved: _____

Meeting Packet/Handouts:

- Agenda
- Superintendent's Report with list of transition items (dated 5-29-2014)

- Principal's 2-page list: Questions for the next two months
- Mohawk 2014-2015 Calendar (5-1-2014 draft)
- Rowe School 2014-2015 Event Calendar