MEETING MINUTES – FY2015
Rowe School Committee
Monday, April 27, 2015 – 5:30pm – Rowe School

Present: Lisa Danek-Burke (LDB), Lisa Miller (LM), and Susie Zavotka (SZ)
Also Present: Supt. Jon Lev (JL), Business Manager Carrie Garivaltis (CG), Principal Bill Knittle (BK), Ellen Miller (EM);
Audience: Gail May, Kerri McLatchy

1. **Call to Order**: Chair Lisa Danek-Burke called the meeting to order at 5:38pm.

2. **Minutes:**
   - **February 12, 2015:** SZ made a motion to approve the February 12, 2015 minutes as presented. LM seconded the motion and it passed unanimously (3/0/0).
   - **March 4, 2015:** The meeting was held to discuss school fire expenditures. SZ made a motion to approve the March 4, 2015 minutes as presented. LDB seconded the motion and it passed two in favor and one abstention (2/0/1). [LM abstained as she was not present at that meeting.] Ellen was commended for her transcription of the incredibly detailed narrative on the meeting tape.
   - **March 30, 2015:** LM made a motion to approve the March 30, 2015 minutes as presented. SZ seconded the motion. Discussion: It was agreed that the matter concerning students that did not participate in the Washington DC field trip the week of March 30th should be clarified in the minutes of this evening's meeting. The motion to approve the minutes then passed unanimously (3/0/0).
     Field Trip absences: LDB stated that her recollection of the conversation was that students not participating in field trips should not be penalized with absences, and that in the future an alternate school program should be put in place for such students. JL recalled that it was agreed that next year if any students don't participate then a program needs to be set up for them at the school. SZ recalled that this year their absences were to be considered "excused" absences.
   - **April 8, 2015:** SZ made a motion to approve the April 8, 2015 minutes as presented. LDB seconded the motion and it passed two in favor and one abstention (2/0/1). [LM abstained as she was not present at that meeting.]

   All minutes were signed by LDB and turned over to Supt. Lev for filing.

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

4. **Report of the Chair:**
   A. **FY2016 Budget:** LDB reported that at the April 8th meeting the School Committee voted to reduce the FY16 budget by $16,000 for a total budget request of $1,583,076. The Finance Committee met that same day and approved a 1.0% budget reduction. The school's capital requests were also approved (new tractor and IT equipment) and will be placed on the ATM warrant. LDB received an email from the Select Board thanking town departments for working within the levy limits.
   B. **Letter to DESE re Tuitioning of Grade 7-12 Students**: The annual notice to DESE informing them that we do not maintain secondary education in Rowe and that grade 7-12 students will be tuitioned outside of town for the subsequent (2015-16) school year has been sent to DESE by Ronna Brandt of NBSU. JL will provide copies for SC members at the next SC meeting.
   C. **Town Warrant article re Rowe Joining Mohawk 7-12**:
      1. **Information for voters:** LDB drafted a handout to be sent to voters concerning this article, which she forwarded to school counsel Russ Dupere for review. Russ stated that this document could not be copied and/or mailed using school/town funds, but could be used as notes for talking points at town meeting. It was agreed to have an information session for citizens at a school committee meeting before the town meeting on May 11th at 5:30pm. LDB shared copies of the draft handout. Russ did say that the PTP could disseminate such a document.

2. **Status of Proposed Change to Regional Agreement:** Russ Dupere informed LDB that he had heard back from Attorney Comfort of the DESE Legal Department, and that DESE is indicating that they are going to require special legislation in order for Rowe to become a member of the Mohawk District 7-12. Attorney Comfort's rationale is that the district budget does not comply with the state's regulations; i.e., K-6 members do not have an equal vote regarding the budget because they only have one unit, whereas the K-12 members have two units toward the two-thirds vote necessary to pass a budget. She indicated that the special legislation allowed the exception, and also adding Rowe will require special legislation. Russ will draft the special legislation to meet this requirement. It's possible that the town votes can still happen, pending the new legislation—which would need to pass by December 31, 2015. If the towns are not going forward with votes by the time we have our town meeting, we can table the warrant article concerning Rowe joining Mohawk 7-12. SZ questioned if Rowe would be required to pay capital costs if they join Mohawk 7-12; whereas currently we do not. LDB: That is correct. Rowe would be required to pay towards future capital costs. Gail May stated that it should be clear to voters what the costs of both scenarios are; i.e., tuition vs. being a district member. SZ stated that that would be important. If Rowe does join Mohawk 7-12, the Rowe School Committee would then have jurisdiction only over PreK-6. Mohawk would send an assessment directly to the town—not via the School Committee.

D. **Mohawk Update:** LDB reported they are still moving forward with the proposal to provide free preschool. Mohawk District meetings are generally the second Wednesday of each month; however, the May meeting has been moved to May 20th. LDB will forward any information she receives to SZ.

E. **Annual Town Meeting:** It was agreed that LDB will read the school articles at the town meeting.

5. **Report of the Superintendent:**

A. **FY2015 Budget:** Budget vs. Actual as of April 17th was reviewed. LDB: Line items should be at roughly 70% at this time. There are lines that are considerably more. The largest being electricity which is 200% over the budget. She asked for assurance that the budget is OK. JL and CG stated that the report shows there is $223K left at this point, but using the actual appropriation figure there is a $278K balance.

B. **FY2016 Budget:** JL presented a one-page handout for town meeting. The projected enrollments will most likely increase. BK: We know of 3 first year preschoolers so far. Preschool registrations are this Thursday so that # may increase. Won't definitively know until first day of school. This year we have 64 or 65 students. The budget is broken down on the sheet by elementary and secondary, which is very helpful. The elementary budget is actually going down (3.0%) vs. the secondary budget that is increasing overall 31.0%. Total budget increase (PreK-12) is 6.0%. Some minor modifications will be made to the handout (font size, etc.).

C. **Sick and Personal Days:** JL stated that current information was given to Laurie and she got it out to the staff. BK stated that a few folks had some questions. People were wondering where a couple of the amounts came from. JL stated they will deal with questions as they come in.

D. **Electricity/Hampshire Power/Solar Credits:** The school electric bill is being reviewed. JL looked into some options. He contacted Hampshire Power, and they are interested in coming out to the school. They feel they can save the school some money, and could make a presentation at the June meeting. The SC agreed that they would like them to attend the June meeting. CG stated that she is still looking into the solar panels with National Grid and BPVS. She received this information from BPVS (who installed the solar array): *System installed in 2010-2011. After the fire we sent an updated Schedule 7 to National Grid to allocate the solar credits to the town hall account. In May 2014 we submitted a Schedule Z assigning 100% of the credits back to the school; however, apparently the wrong meter was installed at the school.* Also National Grid had an incorrect address for the school (0 Pond Road). Chris Kilfoyle of BPVS did come out last month and worked with Graham Coterwas to correct some items. CG will continue to work on this.

6. **Principal's Report: Just finished spring session of Track My Progress.**

- 2nd part of PARCC end-of-year assessment starts in early May. Science MCAS takes place May 19th (PARCC does not have a science component).
- Mary Lyon spring "Lyonnaise" showcase is this Sunday May 3rd. Rowe School's Maple Syrup project will be shown. Will be held at the Shelburne-Buckland Community Center from 2-5pm.

- Started compiling list of students to be invited to summer school.
- Teaching staff met last week to talk about our math program. We decided to continue with Everyday Math, and will purchase the latest edition. It is aligned to CommonCore.
- Recycling demonstration the week before vacation was put on by Amy Donovan of FCSWMD. Students were given recycling containers to take home.
- Evacuation practice tomorrow morning at 10am. Local and State emergency officials will be involved. Students will be evacuated to the Park. Next year we will also involve the bus company.
- Next community luncheon is Thursday May 7th. PTP meets Wednesday and will decide on date for next Community Potluck.
- Art & Music Show Thursday May 28th
- Graduation, Last Day of School Thursday June 18th.
- Big crowd coming out for baseball. Enough kids for a team. 3-4 parents help with coaching. It is a Cal Ripken League. They will be playing other towns.
- Will get After School Program survey out to families to assess interest. The ones we have had on Tuesday afternoons had a big response. Wednesdays of PLDays we had a good turnout also.
- PLDays: 4/29, 6/3, 6/10
- Building Issues: Warranty Specialist from DEW was here for a few days and fixed some things. Some items will be handled during the summer. We're in good shape. We have a year to get items straightened out.
- Website: LDB asked about the status of the school's website. BK stated Graham has not had an opportunity to work on it. Laurie and Dwight have been working on documents to upload to the site.
- School Improvement Plan: JL stated that we hope to have something for the June meeting. NBSU and schools use a 3-year plan. Union plan almost complete. That is launching point for school plans. The SC reviews them and can comment and provide input, but they do not actually approve the plans. We also need a Local Education Council. BK stated he has had a problem getting people to show up for the meetings. BK will discuss this at the next PTP meeting.
- School Calendar: JL asked if Mohawk approved next year's calendar yet. LDB thinks at their May meeting that they may decide on it. After that the Rowe SC can vote on it.

7. Unfinished Business:

A. Retirement Benefit for Gail May: SZ stated that this should be handled before Gail May gets on the committee. She is retiring this June after 29 years of service. The latest support staff person that retired (Evie Dandeneau) received benefits in line with what the teachers receive. LM stated that she thinks that due to timing, we should be vote on this matter now, and for the future develop a policy. Based on the teachers' contract Gail would be eligible for approximately $7700 (see March 30th minutes). VOTE: SZ made a motion that we approve a payment of approximately $7700 to Gail May for accumulated retirement benefits and sick leave payout in line with benefits in the current teachers' contract, with date of payout to be determined. LM seconded the motion and it passed unanimously (3/0/0).

B. School Building Committee: SZ reported that the appointment of the SBC was extended to April 30th; however, the school fire account/insurance funds are still not straightened out. The town has hired an auditor to come this week to work on the account(s). The SBC meets for their final meeting on April 29th. The SC will need to finish up the Library grant as well as the Capital Campaign. VOTE: SZ made a motion that the School Committee accept responsibility for the $50,000 Dollar General Rowe School Library Grant and the Rowe School Capital Campaign Fund, with Susie Zavotka continuing to be responsible for signing off on use of funds, and another signatory if needed, until the funds are fully expended. LM seconded the motion; motion passed unanimously (3/0/0).

8. Action Items: None

9. Subcommittee Reports:

A. Policy Items: LDB will get policy information she has to SZ.

B. Transportation: None

C. Negotiations/Personnel: None

10. **Executive Session:** Minutes for the following executive sessions need to be addressed: June 23, July 28, August 25 and October 8, 2014. LM did not bring the minutes to tonight's meeting. LDB gave to LM the information that she has concerning these meetings.

11. **Next Meetings:** Monday, May 11th at 5:30pm (before town meeting); June regular meeting June 15th at 5:30pm; NBSU meeting Monday, May 4th at 7:00pm at Savoy Elementary School.

12. **Adjournment:** SZ made motion to adjourn meeting at 7:50pm. LM seconded motion; passed unanimously (3/0/0).

Respectfully submitted by Ellen Miller,

Signature: Susan Zawatka

Date Approved: 6/11/15

Correspondence/Handouts:

- Agenda
- Meeting Minutes: 2/12/15, 3/4/15, 3/30/15, 4/8/15
- FY2016 School Budget – approved changes 4/8/15
- FY2016 Capital Stabilization Fund Requests
- Updated FY2015 Financial Statement – 4/17/15
- Hampshire Power information
- Principal's Report 4/27/15
- Information sheet with FY16 school/budget information (handout)
- Information sheet about Rowe joining the Mohawk District for Grades 7-12 (handout)
- Recorder article: Selectmen voice Mohawk budget concerns – 4/13/15
- Recorder article: Mohawk costs in crosshairs at Shelburne town meeting – 4/21/15