

ERVING SCHOOL COMMITTEE
FINAL Minutes
November 15, 2011

PRESENT: Jarod Boissonneault, Chair; Mackensity Bailey, Scott Bastarache, Melanie Burnett, Renee Tela, committee members; Charlene Galenski, Principal; Joan Wickman, Superintendent of Schools; Eugene Klepadlo, Selectman; staff; Beth Lux, G-M Rep and Regional Planning Committee Member; Deb Gerry, Director of Special Education; community members and press.

A.) The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

B.) Public Hearings – None scheduled.

C.) Approval of the Minutes – The minutes of October 18, 2011 were reviewed. After a motion by Melanie, seconded by Scott a discussion was held regarding the minutes. **The committee VOTED unanimously to approve the minutes of October 18, 2011 as amended.**

D.) Warrants – Payroll and Caf. Warrant #111 was circulated and signed.

E.) Report of the Gill-Montague Representatives – Beth Lux reported on the MCAS scores for the Gill-Montague Schools. The middle school did not meet AYP for ELA or math. There is a requirement to do better than the State average or improve. After reviewing the composite columns, they did not perform as well or better than the state average or improve over their scores last year. The high school also did not make AYP for ELA or math. One of the reasons was the graduation and attendance rate, as seen in column D. Gill-Montague has a high dropout rate. This is attributed to a transient student population attending Gill/Montague. Children attending Gill-Montague from elementary school often stay and graduate. There is, however, a large number of students entering the district in middle or high school. They may then leave and not enroll in another school when they move. Unfortunately, Gill-Montague (or the last school those students attend) “own” those students and it contributes to the dropout problem. There may be family factors, but the school cannot do anything about the transient population. They have reinstated the freshman academy. This helps freshman get all of the credits they need. They have also reinstated credit recovery. This allows students to make up credits over the summer. Jarod questioned whether the parents paid for these programs and Beth indicated that it was a part of the curriculum and not something that parents paid for. The elementary schools did well on the MCAS.

The accelerated improvement plan has been approved with contingencies. They are making the adjustments that are needed and will have the final report in by December 30th. The final approval should come in January. Beth feels confident that necessary changes will be made, including aligning the curriculum and seeing places where there were gaps. Even if the report is submitted early, the approval will still come in January. The variety of dates relating to initial

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approval and final approval raises questions about when the two year starting point begins. There has not been a clear answer. Melanie thanked Beth for her continued presence at the meetings to offer reports. She asked if both representatives were attending. Beth indicated they were and that the other representative would be attending soon so that they could share the responsibility.

- F.) Report of Regional School District Planning Committee Representative – Mackensey indicated that there was a meeting scheduled for Thursday, but Jacquie Boyden had a conflict. The meeting was then rescheduled for December 1st at 7:00. At the meeting, they plan to finalize the content of the letters and the mission statement.
- G.) Strategic Development Sub-Committee Report – Scott reported that they met briefly to discuss housekeeping issues before the surveys were distributed. Scott confirmed with Joan that it was going out on January 5th. The electronic preliminary results will be ready for the January Union #28 meeting. The hard copy surveys will take more time to process. The survey will be disseminated in multiple locations. It will be available online via the town, school and PTO websites to encourage participation and to collect as much information as possible. It will also be sent via email to people on Town listservs, so some people will have access from multiple sources. Hard copies will be available at the town hall, library and the school office. The benefit of the electronic survey and data collection is the ability to organize the data and run reports to identify town and school specific data. The online survey allows the survey results to pinpoint specific groups from each town. The next meeting is December 6th. They will review the final version for final edits and see if any additional information is necessary. It will be distributed shortly thereafter.
- H.) Franklin County School Committee Caucus Report – Mackensey reported that the big event is this Saturday. It is a summit focusing on teacher evaluations, principal evaluations and superintendent evaluations. The event begins at 9:00 at the Greenfield Middle School. It will run until 1:00. Dr. Karla Baehr from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is a presenter. Mr. Dunphy from Representative Stephen Kulik's office will also attend. There are two or three additional presenters from a wide variety of groups. There will be a lot of different viewpoints represented. The MASC conference focused on these new evaluations and how the teacher, principal and superintendent evaluations build on each other. There is a lot of leeway for local decision making, but a great deal of work required to implement the plan. Erving is not required to implement the plan until 2013-14. The summit will provide information about what other schools are using for their evaluation tools and provide the opportunity for discussions. It is a timely topic, especially given all of the evaluation discussion currently taking place. Mackensey encouraged school committee members, administrators and parents to attend. There are

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PowerPoint presentations from the MASC conference related to this subject matter. They have been distributed, but are also available on the MASC website. Jarod asked if it could be sent to Tom Smith and placed on the school website. Charlene indicated that Tom has created a school committee page. As documents are available, he can add them to the school committee site. Charlene will work with Joan to add the presentation to the site. Mackensity indicates that they are anticipating a good outcome. It is a topic on people's minds and some schools are already implementing it.

- I.) Collaborative for Educational Services Report – Mackensity was unable to attend the last meeting because she was attending the MASC meeting in Hyannis. She received the packet, but cannot speak to what occurred at the meeting. There was one piece of information she found interesting in the packet. It contained a color-coded listing of their offerings with information about what each member of the collaborative participated in or took advantage of. Mackensity noted that Erving did not take advantage of much and wondered what the reason may be. Joan indicated that she knows Erving is involved in PT, professional development and learning communities. It may be that Erving does not need some of the services being offered. Mackensity wanted some information about researching why Erving was not making use of the offerings, and wanted to review the list to see if there were more items that would be helpful to Erving. Charlene indicated she recently attended a principal learning community where David Schimmel from UMass was the speaker. He discussed the lack of legal advice for staff and principals. He will offer further discussions to principals with the goal of having principals go back to school and share information with the staff. The next meeting is scheduled for December 5th. Charlene indicated it was beneficial for small schools and was a nice place to share thoughts and ideas. Tom Smith is planning to attend a computer information learning community. Mackensity noted that some of the groups on the list focus on older grades and programs that Erving might not need. Mackensity believes they will meet again before the next school committee meeting.

J.) Principal's Report

1. Enrollment – The current enrollment is 160.
2. Personnel – No changes.
3. Lunch Program Update – Donna prepared a handout that Charlene distributed at the meeting. The program is in the black without the state reimbursement, which has not yet been received. Mackensity questioned whether the after school program provided snacks through the cafeteria and Charlene indicated that they did not. A woman visited the cafeteria and provided a training session in anticipation of the audit. She was happy with the salad bar. She

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provided information on changes that could take place before the audit. There is another time scheduled for her to discuss financial matters with Donna. Charlene and Donna are meeting and will create an action plan to have in place for the audit. This is a training session with schools that need to have some work before the audit occurs. Mackensy asked what some of those recommended changes were. Charlene indicated that one change was the amount of protein for meals and the need to look at the protein member. Donna will need to keep a file of menus containing meals served so that it can be reviewed to see all the components. Another change involves three critical financial forms. All four schools are struggling with the forms. There are discussions taking place regarding a training session for the schools regarding these forms. Joan requested contact information and Charlene will collect that information from Donna. One change to the forms is that you no longer need to enter social security numbers on the forms. Charlene has asked Pat to work on editing the forms. There needs to be a protocol manual and a sample was provided. Charlene assured the committee that the changes will be made and that there were no major issues. Mackensy asked if the salad bar is making money or at least covering the cost of the meals. Charlene was not sure if that was looked at, since Donna is clearly in the black. The salad bar is very popular. It was not offered this week due to preparations for the Thanksgiving meal on Friday.

4. Reverse 911 Process – The first request for information did not receive a large response. Charlene disseminated the form again but asked only those who were opting out to return the form. The safety committee believed it was a way to get a better response. The meeting that was scheduled with Luke Hartnett, Charlene and Pat will be rescheduled. Luke will show Charlene and Pat how to enter information.
5. Invitation to Thanksgiving Dinner on Nov. 18 – Charlene extended a personal invitation to the school committee members for the Thanksgiving dinner.
6. Veteran's Day Celebration – There was a great Veteran's Day celebration last week. They were unable to make it to the park due to rain. Five veterans from Erving attended the celebration and gave a short biography of their military career. They all had a different story and all received a standing ovation. Every child in the school participated in the program. It was very moving and the children joined hands and sang a song of peace at the end. Charlene was very touched by it and hopes to have more veteran's participation next year.

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7. Open House – There was a wonderful turnout at the open house with 93% of families attending. Grades 1, 4 and 5 had 100% participation. The specialists had a lot of visitors. It was evident that there was a lot of interest in the school this year.
8. Charlene offered an invitation to attend the preschool preparation of stone soup. Mary Glabach provides this as an annual event. It will be on November 22nd with both the morning and afternoon preschool classes. Ryan Betters will assist with preparation of the soup.

K.) Superintendent's Report

1. Franklin County Update – Joan reported that the treasurer's meeting, superintendent's meeting and CT Valley meeting were canceled due to the storm and power loss. There is not a lot happening because of that. Joan did meet with teacher representatives from each of the schools and with administrators before that. They are reviewing information and having discussions regarding criteria for online course salary schedule advancement. Joan distributed notes regarding same.
2. Legislative Update – The Union 28 benefit language was distributed. It is going back to the Senate for figuring out a bill to attach it to. Joan reported that currently school districts are partially responsible for transportation costs for students who are considered homeless. If a child's family loses their housing in Erving and move in with family, it would be the responsibility of Erving and the town of the new temporary housing to provide transportation. This is an expense that is essentially an unfunded mandate. All parties involved understand the desire for continuity, but this can become a huge expense. It can go on for quite some time. There is a reevaluation process in place and documentation can be requested to see about whether or not a permanent residence has been established. It is decided on a case by case basis. It can be difficult if they are living with family members. Deb Gerry indicated that the end of the school year is the reassessment time. Mackensy believed this was indicative of emergency situations only. Due to the burden on local towns, Joan will keep an eye out for any legislation regarding this matter. Erving is not transporting anyone this year, but did last year.

There is some movement on a reauthorization for No Child Left Behind flexibility waiver; Currently, 48 states have signed up for the flexibility waiver. The debate is still continuing, but they are closer to having some agreement between both sides of the aisle. One argument indicated that the federal government need not be so involved. There is a lot of back and forth regarding leaving states to make the decision. The federal legislation is pulling back on the teacher evaluation requirement. Joan does not anticipate any change since

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Massachusetts already has its regulations and traditionally maintains a higher standard than other states. Joan distributed information she received from an email received today.

Joan also disseminated information regarding school lunch programs. There will not be a push for better nutrition in school lunch programs. Lawmakers appear not to want to deal with it and no changes have been made.

Mackensy requested that agenda item N be the next matter since there is a vote required. The committee unanimously agreed.

N.) Old Business

1. Nurse Sub Per Diem – Mackensy made a motion to formally increase the nurse sub per diem from \$70 to \$100, Melanie seconded and **the committee VOTED unanimously to increase the nurse sub per diem to \$100.**

- L.) Budget and Personnel Committee Report – Joan reported that the committee met on October 19th and the draft Union 28 budget was in the packet. This is not a level funded budget. It incorporated a formula in which each teacher COLA and enrollment is how you get an increase for Central Office staff. Some also have a longevity increase. They are working to bring the special education secretary up to par with the other secretaries. Thus, her 2.03% increase is due to two additional vacation days in addition to a 1.12% COLA. The superintendent salary is a placeholder based on the CPI since they are still negotiating. The SPED Director position looks like a decrease because Leverett is now a Title I school and received additional funding that is partially used to offset this salary. This made the overall expense to the towns go down. There was a request for history on certain line items and this history was provided through attachments. These include a 5 year history of memberships, superintendent conferences and Union 28 professional development. Use of the Union 28 professional development funds has changed through time. The overall increase to the Union #28 budget is 1.41% increase; however, they are nervous about the computer situation. Those line items were broken out. There will be another Budget and Personnel meeting on December 19th.

Joan asked Mike to speak regarding the computer issues. He indicated that they were notified that their budgeting software and SQL server will be discontinued. Consultants have advised that they need at least two servers to operate. They are still investigating that and bringing in another consultant. The cost estimates currently received are very high and include prices for the hardware. The high price is approximately \$12,000. Joan indicated that they are exploring a “Cloud” or web-based service for a membership fee. Mackensy indicated that the collaborative was looking into it. Mike spoke with them, but they do not provide information to the school

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districts. He also spoke with the Franklin County Business Managers regarding technology service. The network needs of the district are greater than they can provide. They are more involved with computer/PC upgrades. There are approximately 18 users for budget sense, including those accessing remotely through VPN. On June 30, 2013 they will no longer get upgrades or receive support for their system. The 2009 server meets some of the need, but the consultant indicates that two are needed. Mike stressed the importance of being fully functional given that they maintain payroll and accounts payable. This affects all of the districts. He will keep everyone updated regarding the progress and consultant information.

Joan offered that there are other opportunities to comment on the budget. The next B & P meeting is November 28th. The rest of the report will be reviewed in executive session.

M.) Union #28 Committee Report – The next meeting is January 24, 2012 where they will be presenting the budget.

O.) New Business –

1. Preliminary FY13 EES Budget Discussion – Jarod indicated the select board has requested that all departments and committees provide budget numbers as quickly as possible. This was requested after a meeting with the select board after the October meeting. The Erving School Committee FY13 Draft Preliminary Information was provided. Joan reported that they are looking at longevity adjustments for salaries and wages. All information is tentative and negotiations for COLAs with the support staff are not set. Further changes to fuel and power may need some adjustments. Joan expressed that these numbers are estimates and it is very early to provide anything but an estimate. The staffing need is something that they would like to discuss early. Mike, Deb, Joan and Charlene met regarding this issue. In looking at the needs of the children, they feel that more help in speech and language is necessary to do an effective job. That request came out in a staff meeting as well. There is also an increased need for occupational therapy. The current staff member providing this service works in another district, but could offer more time. The documents show a minimal bump in time (.1%). There is a need for another ½ time para or an increase in the hours of the part time para to full time position. They are also seeking to add the instructional piece of computers and technology that was previously removed. The changes mentioned would be the bare minimum for needs. Mackensy questioned whether the .1 increase for the computer position would be enough to provide ½ hour for every grade. Split classes would have to be put back together and it would be necessary for the classroom teacher to be in the computer lab during that time. Jarod's concern at this time is that this is the minimum needed, but would like to know what all of the real needs are.

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Current staffing provides OT services for 20 students. She could possibly increase her time by .1 only since she also works in another district. Charlene reports that the OT time is spent providing services to the students, but is exclusive of SPED meetings. The staff member provides her reports first and Charlene then dismisses her to provide services to students. The services are currently being provided in the required manner, but evaluation write-ups are not being done in the time she is here. Mackensey echoes Jarod's sentiment requesting a look at what staffing at a more comfortable level rather than what would be a band aid fix or just enough to get by. Andrea Elson reports that she is here every day providing speech and language services. She is very busy dealing with students coming in with not talking and articulation issues. She also works with students stuttering. She stressed the importance of how language relates to literacy. There are currently 31 students receiving these services, for a total of 56 sessions per week. Andrea has noticed that there are more kids coming in from REACH, both diagnosed and undiagnosed students on the spectrum. There is no quick or short term fix to these speech and language problems. Some services provided relate to minor articulation issues and others are more severe. She believes that another person would be beneficial for collaboration and visiting Mary Glabach's Preschool class to assist. Andrea is the 7th person in ten years to hold her current position. She believes that it may be a high burnout rate since there are so many speech and language needs at Erving. The school is gaining more students with needs and it is hard to effectively meet the needs. Jarod asked how the 31 are spread out among the grade levels. Andrea indicated that there is a huge increase in preschool students; many are coming in with a lot of speech/language issues and have not had any intervention before they arrive at Erving. REACH is not able to provide the intervention, so they are coming to school without any. Andrea feels she could be in the preschool full time and would look for a .5 in Pre-K. Jarod asked about the older grades. There are still issues in those grades that do not go away. Kathleen Bridgewater says it is a triage situation for services when there is an articulation issue as compared to children not speaking. There is a massive workload that makes distribution difficult. Andrea is full time and feels that another .5 time person will help. Kathleen wants to make sure that the older children are taken care of since these issues do continue into older grades. Joan feels that preventative measures in the early grade levels is important.

Jarod also had a question regarding the increase in computer time. He asked for confirmation that some of the computer woes have gone away. Given that the computer situation has stabilized, they could use some of that technology time for instruction. Charlene reiterated that Tom Smith is interested in the position. Jarod reminded everyone about the budget and that there are not a lot of other places to cut. He agreed that looking at the preliminary numbers was a starting point and it cannot reasonably be assumed that there will be less. That may lead to cutting some essentials. Mike confirmed that staff increases have been included in this draft

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along with any contractual changes. The preliminary numbers represent information currently known, but there are other changes that are unknown and will need to be adjusted. It was also agreed that the secondary budget will need to be reviewed. It was likely that the Gill/Montague tuition will go up.

Mackensity asked Joan to have another meeting to discuss what staffing levels would look like based on a services based evaluation rather than a bare minimum expectation. She and Jarod would like to see a level that will properly service the students of the school. The preliminary information was to prompt discussion about things that they would like to see in the first round budget, evaluate the same and see what direction to take thereafter. It was a common sentiment that staffing be service based first, with numbers added secondarily. This will allow the school committee to see what the actual needs are and have discussions after that. Mackensity also wants to hear from the staff about their needs. Kathleen discussed a need for an after school program staffed by certified teachers or perhaps subsidized as an extension of the day with separate staff. Scott indicated that people he spoke with were not necessarily looking for an enrichment program for students. Charlene reported that the School Council is looking to provide an after school program and are in the process of seeing how much it would be to provide them. Charlene will be seeking someone from the community to use their talents to create and provide the program. She reviewed information available from another elementary school. It showed a \$30 fee for after school programs to regular after school participants for the enrichment program and \$70 for non-after school participants. There are a lot of programs in the area and the School Council will be looking to provide this service and research funding. Kathleen also questioned the bussing of Erving students to Pioneer or Four Rivers. There is such a large population and she wondered if anything could be considered to help those parents sending students to these schools. She wondered is there could be an arrangement where an Erving bus could meet the Pioneer bus. Joan responded that Erving cannot provide transportation for students to another district. Erving students can go to a Pioneer bus stop and get transportation.

The school committee is looking forward to seeing the numbers at the December meeting. Joan also reported that Mike successfully finished the end of the year report for review and sign-off.

P.) Policy Review and Update – None.

Q.) Future Business –

2. Scott and Mackensity attended the MASC conference. Scott reported that there was a huge focus on teacher evaluations. Susan Bump and Tony Wagner were speakers at the event. There were some interesting new philosophies regarding broad spectrum teaching based on

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information based learning and a possible transfer to learning to see what you can do with what you know. You can't test for that, so it does not fit into a test bracket. The evaluation process is a hot button issue for the state. Scott encouraged others to attend, including school committee members, superintendents and even select board members. It was a well rounded conference. Most of the content, including PowerPoint presentations, discussion break downs and blog articles are available on the MASC website.

1. Next School Committee Meeting Date: December 19, 2011

R.) Executive Session On a motion by Melanie, seconded by Scott the **committee voted to adjourn from public session at 8:50 p.m. and enter into executive session for the purpose of discussions of ETA Unit B – Support Staff, Negotiations regarding Superintendent Contract and Proposed Criteria for Online Course Salary Scheduled Advancement not to return to public session. Roll call vote: Tela – aye, Burnett – aye, Bastarache – aye, Bailey – aye, Boissonneault - aye**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura A. Bezio