

ERVING SCHOOL COMMITTEE

FINAL Minutes

October 18, 2011

PRESENT: Jarod Boissonneault, Chair; Mackensey Bailey, Scott Bastarache, Melanie Burnett, Renee Tela, committee members; Charlene Galenski, Principal; Joan Wickman, Superintendent of Schools; Deb Gerry, Director of Special Education; Eugene Klepadlo, Selectman; staff; Jacquie Boyden Regional Planning Committee Chair; Beth Lux, G-M Rep and Regional Planning Committee member; 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 September 20, 2011 were reviewed. After a motion by Melanie, seconded by Scott a discussion was held regarding the minutes. Section F was revised to read that due to conflicts in scheduling, the meeting was cancelled. **The committee VOTED to approve the minutes of September 20, 2011 as amended with Melanie abstaining.**

E.) Report of the Gill-Montague Representatives – Representative Beth Lux was present to report that the plan to get out of Level 4 would be approved or be very close to being approved at the next meeting. They have a project manager to help them move forward and formed a regionalization committee. Joan mentioned MARS referenced at the last superintendent meeting that they have a plan to regionalize with Erving as was referenced in an article in the Greenfield Recorder. Beth indicated they were receptive to receiving a letter and having discussions with Erving regarding regionalization. They are still evaluating options and there was no conversation and only speculation regarding regionalization with Erving. Given the news regarding Leverett and Shutesbury possibly leaving Union #28, Erving needs a plan and Gill-Montague is being proactive regarding regionalization.

D.) Warrants – Payroll Warrant #109 was circulated and signed.

F.) Regional School District Planning Committee Representatives – Jarod asked that the title be changed to add “Representative” so that it more accurately reflect the reporting on the meeting. Mackensey indicated that they have not met since the last meeting and there is nothing to report. Jacquelyn M. Boyden expressed her concerns about compliance with open meeting laws given a quorum of members at the school committee meeting. She had questions regarding the direction of the committee and the plans moving forward. Given issues she has perceived regarding meeting scheduling difficulties, she would like to see a school committee alternate appointed. Jarod pointed out that the moderator appointed Mackensey and that the school committee could not appoint a replacement. He recommended that she discuss it with Rich Peabody, the moderator. Jackie also mentioned that the committee has a huge commitment and there is no funding to support them or to hire consultants. Joan indicated that the positions are required to be volunteer positions. Jackie would like to hire someone to work with the

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committee as an expert. She wondered if the School Committee could discuss an item in the budget for this purpose. Joan indicated that Leverett and Shutesbury do not yet have money, but they are working toward it. The Department of Education provides some funding, but you need to be eligible to apply for regional planning grants. This would take place when a plan was in place or a region formed. One town would not likely be eligible for those funds. They would need to speak with the Town regarding funding. A meeting will take place in November, but there is not a date yet.

- G.) Strategic Development Sub-Committee Report – Scott had nothing new to report. They are working to finalize survey and get it out. There were difficulties with getting a meeting date with a quorum. They will start getting the survey out in hard copy and on Survey Monkey. They will need a meeting to decide how to review, dissect and disseminate the information. Joan is going to procure the survey monkey license and coordinate a retroactive reimbursement for the survey monkey fee.
- H.) Franklin County School Committee Caucus Report – Mackensey reported that there was a meeting on October 3, 2011. The draft minutes were provided. Glenn Koocher, Executive Director of Massachusetts Association of School Committees was able to attend. The discussion focused on the new evaluations for teachers and the guideline for implementing the new regulations. There is a lot of discussion needed to assess the framework for evaluations and the implementation of the new regulation. Level IV schools need to implement the regulation sooner. There was additional discussion regarding evaluation tools, including MCAS scores and other things that apply. In addition, how much weight each tool will have assigned to them. Mackensey indicated that there are a lot of thing to be worked out. MASC/MTA has added their pieces and people are trying to get what they want in the legislation. There will be an event on November 19th from 9:00 – 1:00 at the Greenfield Middle School with a variety of speakers. Mackensey indicated that she would ask for school committee members, parents, teachers, support staff and administrators to attend the event. She will email Joan the specific event and/or overview information for distribution. The next meeting is November 17th. At that meeting, they will finalize the plan for all speakers.
- I.) Collaborative for Educational Services Report – There was no meeting and nothing to report. Joan referenced the September 23, 2011 memorandum regarding educational collaborative updates, proposed next step and recommendation. CES is fine with requirement in place.
- J.) Principal's Report
1. Enrollment – The current enrollment is 157.
 2. Personnel – There was a new person hired, Casey Riddell, as an after school aide. She works 13.25 hours per week Monday thru Friday. She is a certified teacher.

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3. Computer Update – Tom Smith has added a link to the school website for PTO minutes. There will also be a link added for school council meeting minutes. Charlene has asked Tom to attend the PLC meeting at the collaborative and he will do so to develop those relationships.
4. Lunch Program Update – The addition of the salad bar has been a huge hit. Donna LaClaire prepared, and Charlene provided, a copy of the lunch report. It provides specific numbers regarding hot lunch, salad bar and alternate lunches. There are steady salad bar numbers as well as steady numbers for main lunches. The numbers show good daily participation. Donna has looked into obtaining local products, but is not there yet. The program is in the black and received reimbursement for free/reduced lunches. Jarod expressed his thanks to Donna for the improvement of the overall meals. The menu variety and salad bar has provided new and improved opportunities to the students.
5. 2011 – 2012 MCAS Results – Charlene provided a series of paperwork relating to the MCAS test result and gave an overview of scores. The expected projection was for everyone to be proficient in ELA and CPI with scores of 95.1 and 92.2, respectively, for a positive rating and to make AYP. Erving did not achieve either of those scores, even with many scores above the state average. Charlene indicated that other local schools did not make those scores either. The reality of everyone making proficient is not going to happen. The school did make AYP by showing an increase, or demonstrating growth, in math. The scores for this year fell 1.5 below for ELA from last year. Charlene prepared data regarding general percentages of students scoring in each level, i.e. advanced, proficient, and proficient plus etc. The science score relates only to the 5th grade, since they are the only class to take the science test. Charlene feels strongly that the one particular grade that did not score as well may have made the difference in obtaining AYP. She shared information and statistics she received from Kathleen Bridgewater. Of the 941 schools in Massachusetts, Erving's 3rd grade scored better than 61% of other schools in the state. The 6th grade was ranked 19th in the state. Ms. Bridgewater indicated that there could be more than one school at each ranking. The test results for the 5th and 6th grade were incredible. Charlene obtained information from the data warehouse site. The teachers met with Louise Law to review the data of classes who took MCAS last year. Erving scores are in line with the state average, but everyone would like to see those scores move up.

An explanation of the characteristics of CPI was given. It is based on points, with more points given for advanced or proficient scores. There is a discussion regarding the review of student growth profiles as part of the evaluation process. This may be problematic in classes with high or advanced students. Kathleen Bridgewater stated that there is no scientific research that SGP means anything. Joan offered that they are aware that the trajectory was not realistic and are adding other demographic information rather than just measuring growth. It means that as long as consistent improvement and growth are shown, a school will make AYP. Erving needs to make AYP in ELA for next two years to get off the list. Erving showed great improvement in the open responses on the test. The scores were 15% higher

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than the state average in ELA open response. The staff worked very hard on that and was happy to see the improvement. Jarod asked Charlene to continue targeting progress against previous years by class. He believed that measuring progress from year to year would be helpful and give the staff information about areas to focus on. Charlene stated that they would continue to analyze the testing data and improve those areas that they can identify as a problem. They look at trends for targeted areas and track improvement for categories that stay the same from year to year. Kathleen Bridgewater reminded people that the actual group of children may change and the test categories may change, making year to year comparisons harder to analyze. They do, however, always look for area of potential growth and try to improve the following year. There was one class that did not do as well. The staff is aware that they have to make up for time with that group to prepare them for this year. Jackie asked if they analyzed how far from proficient the students were. Charlene indicated that the data has been reviewed. The test also changed by from year to year. The 4th grade involves a long composition piece, which does count spelling/punctuation. The open responses do not.

6. After School Information– The after school numbers are good. There is an average of 14-18 students on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The Monday and Friday numbers are not where they would like, but there is an average of 7-9 on those days. The School Council is working on researching enrichment programs. They hope to have two programs available later in the school year, possibly March and May. There would be a fee for the enrichment program, since someone would have to come in to provide it. The School Council members will continue to research programs offered at area schools and also reach out to see what is available for an Erving after school enrichment program.
7. Charlene provided Steve's building report (handout).

K.) Superintendent's Report

There were no questions about the September Union #28 report provided. Joan indicated that there is a potential for funding a renovation for Massachusetts school buildings. She asked if there were any renovations at Erving to be considered. Kathleen Bridgewater would like to see a greenhouse. Joan indicated that these funds would not assist with that, but there are some other funding sources for it, including some banks. Both Charlene and Kathleen would like solar panels. There is also a need for windows. Kathleen thinks that there may be a fire hazard in the teachers' room as there is only one exit to that room. The room has awning windows that would not allow someone to exit through them. There was a question of whether that room met the fire code. Jarod asked Gene about that and there will be some research. Gene knows that a room with students in it has to have two exits. Jarod remembered that Steve provided a capital improvement plan and believed reviewing that will provide additional ideas Jackie indicated that the Tech School is looking to do community based projects and may be able to provide free labor for projects. Joan indicated that there is a November 30th deadline

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for applying. Jarod asked that they start with reviewing the capital improvement plan previously provided and to check that the teachers' room meets all necessary codes. After that, evaluate the needs and apply.

1. Franklin County Update – Joan stated that the superintendents' meeting was held. Professional development certificates were delivered. Cecelia took it over. There were a lot of workshops offered and people were amazed at the participation level. There may have been too many offerings, so there was the idea to offer fewer next year. A summary of the meeting was provided (handout). The collaborative is offering free ELL training. It would consist of 20 hours of training. Erving does not have ELL students, but it is available. There is more regional planning grant money available and communities are actively pursuing those funds.

The Gill/Montague school committee was selected as a group to receive the pilot coaching program for school committees to help them function better as a committee. Amherst/Pelham was the other.

The Central Office has set up meetings with town treasurers to open lines of communication. There is a meeting scheduled for October 31st with Erving's Town Treasurer. They have already met with the Finance Committee.

2. Legislative Update – There were hearings today, but they are still accepting public input on the bill. Joan stressed how important this is to Erving and encourages people to send comments. House Bill 3597 addresses the inequities around charter school funding. Erving has a large number of students attending the Four Rivers Charter School in Greenfield. The cost to the Town is \$268,334. She recommended reviewing what is offered there that is not offered at the other area schools. Charter schools are outside the jurisdiction of any local school committee. The bill seeks to level the playing field regarding tuition. The tuition paid to a charter school is now measured by the per pupil expense in each town. For various reasons, it is higher in rural areas. That leads to smaller towns and paying a higher rate to attend charter schools. It is not based on the actual cost. Joan provided an example for the Chinese Immersion Charter School. Pelham is paying \$23,000 per student while Easthampton pays \$11,000 for the same education. This legislation is asking for a change to charter school tuition to make it more equitable. Joan did not have any feedback on the hearings. There is a lot of support from small schools. Rep. Steve Kulik set it up so as not to harm charter schools.

A further discussion regarding charter schools took place. Kathleen asked about the possibility of a tuition relationship with a charter school. The admission process is by lottery, but wondered if the possibility existed for a district to build a relationship with a charter school or annex relationship with charter school. Joan was not sure the regulations regarding charter schools would permit that. There is some research regarding innovation schools. It would create a specialized school within the district

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that would answer to school committees and superintendents. This would provide more control over tuition. Jackie provided some information on charter schools from her personal experience.

When No Child Left Behind began in 2002, they developed the AYP trajectory with every child being proficient by 2014. This was not realistic. There is now an alternative that created Elementary and Secondary Education Flexibility. The federal education department may request a waiver that would allow states to not be accountable to AYP. There are other activities required, including, adopting college ready standards and tying student growth/achievement to evaluation. Erving is already working toward the college ready standards with the common core program. Joan noted that they want to have schools categorized as reward (Highest or showing growth), priority or focus (need a lot of attention) schools. In Joan's opinion, Erving would likely be a reward school since they are performing above the state average. Massachusetts may adopt this plan and submit a waiver for this proposal. The application is due by the end of October or early November. Schools would still need to do testing, but won't have the AYP. There will also be new assessment testing in 2014 to comply with national standards. There was a discussion regarding K-2 testing, but no decision has been made regarding that potential testing as a measurement since two measures for growth are required for each class. One of those measures is MCAS testing for 3-6.

An expenditure report was distributed and reviewed. Charlene explained at the September meeting a change from the summer program. There is another change caused by two insurances being placed on one line rather than two separate line items. The report shows that one line is \$461.71 in deficit, but there is money in the other insurance line to cover that expense. Mackensy wanted to be clear that the nurse substitutes are being paid \$100 and that the Erving website should be updated to include that number rather than the previous \$70.

- L.) Budget and Personnel Committee Report – Melanie indicated that they are meeting tomorrow. Scott attended the last meeting. The meeting was held in executive session to discuss a Union #28 matter.
- M.) Union #28 Committee Report – The next meeting is scheduled for January 24th. Scott reported that they met on September 27th in Swift River and discussed Central Office benefits. They voted unanimously to adhere to 32(b) (lead town method) until new legislation adopted. That legislation has made it through senate council. Revisions were circulated to town officials. They are looking to get feedback to Paul Dunphy. The Union #28 goals and super goals and activities were approved. They also had a first read on a policy for contract services. Joan is continuing to research on how towns dispose of Union #28 property. She is seeking input from the towns regarding their policies and hopes to create a Union #28 policy. Jarod asked if another Union may have a precedent.

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N.) Old Business

1. Central Office Benefits – See Section M. above.
2. Meeting with New Salem/Wendell (update) – Jarod and Scott met with New Salem/Wendell. It was a congenial meeting with a discussion about options. There was no forward movement, but more a discussion about possibilities. They agreed to keep in touch and continue to evaluate options. They questioned whether the state would accept three towns with 2 schools union. They will continue to see what movement could be made after the loss of Leverett/Shutesbury. Wendell has moved forward with language for a warrant article regarding regionalization.

A further discussion was held regarding the approval of school moving out of Union #28. If you vote to pull out of Union #28, you need a plan for a place to join. The question is whether you also need a plan for the schools you are leaving behind. They are researching the oversight on this issue. A school leaving the union requires approval of new governance structure. There are questions regarding the financial feasibility and a new governance structure and contingencies for remaining towns. The committee will continue to meet and gather that information. Scott mentioned the Gill/Montague situation that occurred recently. Gene reminded them that it is separate because we are only an elementary school. Scott is continuing to research the issue and will wait for Ray's results. Overall, the meeting was friendly. There was a lot of passion by Erving and New Salem for their small schools. The meeting was beneficial and further meetings will occur.

O.) New Business – None.

P.) Policy Review and Update – None.

Q.) Future Business –

1. The next School Committee Meeting will be held on November 15, 2011
2. Kathleen reminded the committee about a request for negotiations and Jarod indicated dates would be forthcoming.
3. There was a request by Jackie for the school committee meeting minutes to be posted on the school website. Scott reminded her that they would be posted after they were approved and Charlene felt that adding a link to those meeting was a possibility.

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R.) Executive Session On a motion by Scott, seconded by Melanie the **committee voted to adjourn from public session at 9:05 p.m. and enter into executive session for the purpose of discussions of entering into negotiations for Negotiations regarding Superintendent Contract not to return to public session. Roll call vote: Tela – aye, Burnett – aye, Bastarache – aye, Bailey – aye, Boissonneault - aye**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura A. Bezio