

**Jamaica School Board
Jamaica Village School
November 21st, 2013 at 6:30p.m.
Draft Minutes**

Present: Stephanie Amyot, Tom Tolbert, Heather Hallenbeck, Anne Reynolds

Administrators: Dr. Steven John, Superintendent, Dr. Frank Rucker, CFO and Laura Hazard, Principal.

Member of the Public: Janet Hamilton, Jason Gragen, Bruce Parliman

Call to Order: Stephanie called the meeting to order at 6:41p.m.

Approval of Minutes/Pay Orders:

Tom made the motion to approve the minutes from October 15th, 2013. Anne seconded the motion. All in favor. No Opposed. No Abstentions. Motion passed unanimously.

Anne made the motion to approve the below pay orders. Tom seconded. All in favor. No opposed. No Abstentions. Motion passed unanimously.

<u>Pay Order #:</u>	<u>Amount:</u>
#32	\$14,210.20
#34	\$13,240.32
#35	\$4,401.89
#36	\$28,625.19
#37	\$25,288.85

Staff Comments:

Grades 3-6 are doing a Digital Citizenship with Eric Bird. He's doing an online research project with the students regarding the history of Jamaica. Marv Klassen-Landis is visiting the school. He's an artist, resident, and poet. In Grades 5/6 he's doing rap type of work with meters and rhymes. He has them create rap handles and tagging. The students are having a lot of fun with it.

Principal's Report/ Brief reading of preliminary budget proposal:

- I. **Enrollment/Staffing**
 - a. PreK: 8 students; K: 6 students; 1: 9 students; 2: 8 students; 3: 6 students; 4: 8 students; 5: 9 students; 6: 11 students
 - i. Total: 65 students
- II. **Student Learning**
 - a. Academic/Assessment
 - i. Balanced Literacy
 - Marv Klassen-Landis, VT Writer-in-Residence (VT Arts Council Grant) has been working with all students on writing, primarily poetry
 - Family Night with Marv had 20 participants, with 6 families in attendance
 - ii. Math
 - JVS and Wardsboro will work with Mahesh Sharma on December 4th

- iii. Assessment
 - JVS will pilot a CCSS based report card this year
 - b. Technology
 - i. Digital Wish
 - 2nd module in progress for grades 3-6
 - ii. Fiber is up and running
 - c. PBiS
 - i. 2nd All School reward earned; reward on Tuesday the 26th.
- III. **Policy/Regulations**
- IV. **Finance**
 - a. Field Trip Fund: \$4,635.49 (checkbook register; includes \$1,500 Stratton Foundation Grant)
 - b. SoverNet
 - i. bill for Fiber is \$700/month; Town of Jamaica agreed to pay \$2,275.00 annually for 5 years at the May 9, 2011 Selectboard meeting at the request of Laura Hazard
 - c. Frank prepared preliminary budget for your review; this does not include all of my recommendations
- V. **Building and Grounds**
 - a. Request for Board to review Capital plan at its December meeting
- VI. **Informational**
 - a. Jaca Hughes, Abbey Group, prepared an amazing "all local" Thanksgiving Feast for us today
 - b. November 22: Laura Hazard at Special Ed Law Update
 - c. November 27-29: No School
 - d. December 2nd: CLiF grant presentation
 - e. December 3rd: Laura Hazard at a Legal Workshop for Administrators
 - f. December 5th: Jaclyn Hamilton (SAP from LGUHS) here to discuss cyberbullying with our 5th/6th class
 - e. December 11th: WCSU Math Committee meeting; JVS Winter Concert
 - g. December 18th: District Band and Chorus concert at LGUHS
 - g. December 19th: Craft Day
 - h. December 20th: All school trip to "T'was the Night Before Christmas" in Northampton, MA

Frank Rucker presented an overview of Jamaica's Proposed Budget for FY15 in the amount of \$1,189,165.00. The total budget proposal for Jamaica, with no program changes, has a 3.8% budget increase. He explained, the negotiated agreement salary and benefit assumptions into the teachers were integrated into salaries. He has reviewed the staffing salaries based on the present budget. There's one change based on the Special Education budget. Most of the assumptions show no change and the exceptions align the negotiated agreement.

Frank also provided the Jamaica Board with an overview of the WCSU's Budget Meeting held on 11/19/13.

The town auditors will want Jamaica's proposed budget in no later than January 15th, 2013 so it can get in to the printers in time. Frank will receive preliminary figures on equalized students on Dec. 1st. The Governor and Tax Commissioner's recommendations on these numbers are predicted to go up by 5 cents. Tax-rates only effect about 25% of our residents. 75% of our residents are relieved by income-sensitivity.

WCSU Board Update:

The next WCSU Full Board/Exec. Committee Meeting will be held on Dec. 4th, 2013 @ 7p.m. in the Leland & Gray Library. All board members are strongly encouraged to attend. A quorum is essential. The voting representatives of the Jamaica School Board were asked to attend by the Board Chair.

Stephanie made a motion to appoint Heather Hallenbeck as a voting member to replace Laura O'Brien as a WCSU Board representative at the December 4th, 2013 meeting. Tom seconded. All in favor. No opposed. No abstentions. Motion passed unanimously.

RED Study Committee:

Heather Hallenbeck briefed the school board on the previous RED meeting held on 11-6-13 in which the RED Committee reviewed Article 16 re: Defining School Closings and sending out a Memo to the public which will solicit feedback from the public.

New Business/ Preliminary discussion with Townshend School Board re: Possible areas of Collaboration.

The Jamaica School Board welcomed the Townshend School Board in a Joint Meeting regarding possible collaboration amongst the school districts. The Townshend Board joined Jamaica Board at 7:28 p.m.

Present Board Members from Townshend: April Chase, Brian Schmidt, Beth Cutts, Kim Liebow. Al Claussen joined the meeting at 7:35p.m.

April Chase called the Townshend meeting to order at 7:28p.m.

TES New Business:

Introductions. The Townshend Board thanked the Jamaica Board for hosting this meeting.

The boards discussed possible opportunities offered to students through collaboration, continuing possibilities of consolidating into a newer building (opening up that discussion), and possibly inviting other boards into the discussion as well.

The Superintendent thinks the two boards meeting together is advantageous because the boards can have some control over making commitments to asking the administration for definite figures. This discussion could evolve to a joint board between the Jamaica and Townshend School Boards.

Class sizes are becoming too small in both schools. Current enrollment at TES is 76 from pre-k through grade 6. Jamaica's current enrollment is 65 from pre-k through grade 6. Class sizes average from about 8 to 10 students per grade.

Fuel oil, transportation, copiers, etc. are shared through collaborative contracts already, according to CFO, Frank Rucker.

The boards discussed sharing teachers/staff members. Dr. John advocates discussing the benefits of combining in the second-language component of education. Townshend has a Spanish teacher in their school.

One member of the Jamaica Board would rather combine with Townshend to build a new building rather than forming a modified unified school district. Another Jamaica Board member has received feedback from the town's people that they would like to see Jamaica out of the union. She reported that town's people want to see changes in the high school.

The Superintendent explained that the union school district is an entity. All towns in the union have to vote yes to make a change to the union.

Townshend board agreed that people would like to see changes at the high school level; it's hard to get parent involvement. Unless there's a backing of individuals nothing ever gets changed. Very few parents come to the board meetings.

Frank Rucker has previously prepared a financial estimate of a hypothetical new school building, with the location being the junction of route 30 and route 100 in East Jamaica near the ball-field, in which he projected a cost-savings of approximately \$3 million dollars. It was only an exercise that crunched numbers but it was never looked in to further than that.

Tickler: The boards jointly asked Frank Rucker to run a couple of scenarios:

- 1. Building a new school for Jamaica & Townshend only**
- 2. Building a new school for Jamaica, Townshend, and Wardsboro and/or Windham**

The Jamaica Board Chair expressed interest in a new school building if it is super energy efficient with environmental learning opportunities for the students. The potential geothermal and solar system project in NewBrook would deem beneficial to the Jamaica and Townshend boards if they could end up in a similar situation.

Recommendation: There's a document of 25 questions previously prepared by the RED Study Committee re: Building a new School. It included questions regarding staffing, program questions, and building questions. Maybe each individual person should answer these questions on their own.

Frank suggests collaborating with the school's administrators' for insight regarding programming.

This initial survey is informative and Steven does suggest at some point getting back the feedback from the principals.

By consensus the two boards agree to submit responses via Survey Monkey by December 9th to the visioning questions for a new building. Tom Tolbert has volunteered to set this survey up.

Public Comments: Teachers may also be willing to fill out the survey. They may have ideas, too. Jason and Janet would both be willing to fill out the surveys.

By consensus the two boards agree to meet on January 13th, 2013 at 7:00p.m. in the Townshend Elementary School to continue the discussion.

April Chase made the motion to adjourn the Townshend Board meeting at 8:42p.m. Motion seconded. Townshend adjourned at 8:43p.m.

Future Agenda Items:

Last year, the board budgeted for Laura to supervise part-time at Windham. Compensation from Windham Board is anticipated by the Jamaica School Board for the release of missing time. The board will discuss this further at the next meeting.

Tom made the motion to adjourn at 9:02p.m. Anne seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:03p.m.

Upcoming Meetings:

WCSU Full Board/ Executive Committee Meeting: December 4th, 2013 @ 7:00p.m. in the Leland & Gray Library. A strong attendance of board members is essential.

Jamaica School Board Meeting: December 17th, 2013 @ 7:00p.m. at JVS

Tentative RED Study Committee Meeting: January 2nd, 2014 @ 7:00p.m. @ Leland & Gray

Townshend and Jamaica School Boards will hold another joint meeting on January 13th, 2014 at 7:00p.m. in the Townshend Elementary School.

Jamaica School Board Meeting: January 21st, 2014 @ 7:00p.m. at JVS

Red Study Committee Meeting: April 2nd, 2014 @ 7:00p.m. @ Leland and Gray

Respectfully Submitted,
Alison Hescock