



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
October 1, 2013**

**LOCATION:** Swift River Elementary School Library

**TIME:** 7:00 pm

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** Dr. Linda Tsoumas, Chair (present); Ms. Clare Popowich, Vice-Chair (present); Mr. Richard Fritsch, Secretary (present); Ms. Myndi Bogdanovich, Member (present); Dr. Michael Knapp, Member (present)

**ADMINISTRATION:** Mr. Scott Karen, Director of Technology (present for technical support)

**VISITORS:** Dr. Arthur Bettencourt, NESDEC Executive Director; Dr. William Erickson, NESDEC Senior Associate; Ms. Patricia Correia, MASC Field Director/Search Consultant; Ms. Mona Griffin

**MINUTES**

I. Call to order

Dr. Tsoumas called the Regular School Committee meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Public comment regarding items on the agenda

None

III. Items for Discussion/Action

A. Superintendent Search: presentations of proposals and selection of consultant

Dr. Tsoumas stated that the purpose of this evening's directed agenda School Committee meeting is to hear proposals from two vendors for consulting services in the Superintendent Search.

1. New England School Development Council: 7:15 pm

Dr. Arthur Bettencourt, Executive Director, and Dr. William Erickson, Senior Associate, presented the NESDEC proposal for consulting services in the Belchertown Public Schools' Superintendent Search, which is included in this evening's correspondence. Dr. Bettencourt conducted a PowerPoint presentation which outlined NESDEC's history, mission, core service focus areas, etc. He then reviewed the specific steps that are taken in a Superintendent search process, as follows: design; develop candidate profile; NESDEC outreach; preliminary screening; final screening and selection; follow-up. Dr. Bettencourt concluded his presentation with a discussion of the NESDEC cost proposal of \$11,795.00 with additional costs for detailed services. Dr. Erickson then discussed what his involvement as the consultant would be in working directly with the Belchertown Public School district in its

Superintendent search. He noted he is familiar with the area, and provided his work experience as it specifically relates to his insight into the nature of the position.

At the conclusion of the NESDEC presentation, Dr. Tsoumas asked the School Committee to pose any questions they may have for Drs. Bettencourt and Erickson. Discussion then revolved around several questions, as follows: what strategies will be used to attract a successful Superintendent; what are the qualities of a successful Superintendent; what types of questions will be on the community input questionnaire; what are the specific costs for additional services.

The School Committee thanked the representatives from NESDEC for their interest in Belchertown's Superintendent search and proposal presentation. Following their departure, Dr. Tsoumas then asked the School Committee members for feedback regarding this proposal.

Dr. Knapp commented that the answers to questions about what qualities make a successful Superintendent usually focused on managerial skills. He also asked if there had been applicants from out of the area in the last search and Dr. Tsoumas confirmed that there had been such individuals. Ms. Bogdanovich found it interesting that the bulk of the presentation was done by Dr. Bettencourt rather than Dr. Erickson, who would ultimately be our consultant in the search process. She also noted that she liked that NESDEC has a national outreach in place. Mr. Fritsch thought it was beneficial that Dr. Erickson was familiar with the Belchertown area. Lastly, Dr. Knapp asked "how do we choose?" and Dr. Tsoumas said that it was important that there be a comfort level with the vendor.

2. Massachusetts Association of School Committees: 8:15 pm

Ms. Patricia Correia, Field Director/Search Consultant, presented the MASC proposal for consulting services in the Belchertown Public Schools' Superintendent Search, which is included in this evening's correspondence. Ms. Correia conducted a PowerPoint presentation which outlined MASC's history and record of successful searches, its exclusive focus on Superintendent searches, the provision of complete accessibility including the transition period following the appointment of a new Superintendent, compliance with Open Meeting Laws, etc. She then reviewed the specific steps that are taken in a Superintendent search process, as follows: introduction/general consultation; announcement of vacancy and application process; community and staff involvement; screening process and selection of semi-finalists; final selection; follow-up. MASC also provided a specific timeline for the search process, beginning this month and with an anticipated selection of a Superintendent in April 2014 and start date of July 1, 2014. Ms. Correia concluded her presentation with a discussion of the MASC cost proposal of \$9,500.00 with added expenses not to exceed \$2,500.00. Ms. Correia did recommend one added expense for advertising in *Education Week* at a cost of approximately \$1,800.00-\$2,000.00, as it reaches everyone involved in education throughout the nation.

At the conclusion of the MASC presentation, Dr. Tsoumas asked the School Committee to pose any questions they may have for Ms. Correira. Discussion then revolved around several questions, as follows: why do Superintendents typically leave a district within 4-6 years; will there be online advertising as part of the cost; is it advisable to use a search/screening committee; what are the top priorities to most candidates in choosing to apply; is there a large variation in applicants; what is the biggest challenge for a new Superintendent.

The School Committee thanked Ms. Correira for her interest in Belchertown's Superintendent search and proposal presentation. Following her departure, Dr. Tsoumas then asked the School Committee members for feedback regarding the MASC proposal, as compared to the NESDEC proposal.

Mr. Fritsch and Ms. Bogdanovich were pleased that there was no charge with MASC to create focus groups, as opposed to NESDEC. Dr. Tsoumas noted that in the past, focus groups have not typically been well-attended, but Ms. Bogdanovich felt that since there would be no additional cost, it would be beneficial to take advantage of the opportunity for this added input. Dr. Knapp thought MASC had an advantage in that this association is familiar with the area, as well as our specific district, and that it has a commendable record for successful area searches. In that regard, it concerned Dr. Tsoumas that NESDEC reported six successful area searches in the last eight years. Ms. Popowich stated that basically the cost for both groups would be nearly equal, with the potential that MASC could even ultimately cost less. She also feels that already having an established relationship with MASC is a distinct advantage, in that Ms. Correira has knowledge of our district and familiarity with personnel. Mr. Fritsch added that he was pleased to know that MASC would be physically present every step of the way in the search process (all meetings, etc.).

At this time, the School Committee members deliberated the choice of vendor for consulting services in the Superintendent search process, and unanimously agreed upon the choice of MASC.

MOTION: Ms. Popowich moved to select MASC as the consultant to be hired in the Superintendent search process. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

COMMENT: Ms. Bogdanovich noted that a strong deciding factor in this selection was the comfort level on both sides with Ms. Correira since she has worked with our district in the past, and she is quite familiar with our staff and community dynamics. All School Committee members concurred with this assessment.

#### IV. Correspondence

##### A. Agenda: October 1, 2013

V. Adjourn

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to adjourn the Regular School Committee meeting at 9:10 p.m. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

Respectfully submitted by,




Kathryn A. Petersen

Non-Confidential Recording Secretary to the School Committee

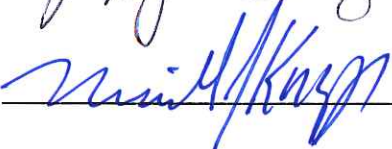
School Committee members' signatures:

  
\_\_\_\_\_, Linda Tsoumas, Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_, Clare Popowich, Vice Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_, Richard Fritsch, Secretary

  
\_\_\_\_\_, Myndi Bogdanovich, Member

  
\_\_\_\_\_, Michael Knapp, Member

*The mission of the Belchertown Public Schools is to ensure that every student meets with success every day. To that end, we pledge to ensure that we have rigorous, standards-based curriculum; instruction designed to meet the needs of diverse learners in every classroom; and access to the global learning community via state-of-the-art technology in schools that are communities of respect and civility for all.*

**2011-2015 Strategic Plan Goals (adopted by the Belchertown School Committee, 3/1/11):**

- Goal #1: To have guaranteed (standards-based and implemented by all), viable (doable and accessible to every student), seamless K-12 curriculum in every content area.
- Goal #2: To have rigorous (standards-based), relevant (grounded in 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills), differentiated instructional practices with the ability to access the global learning community via technology available to every learner.
- Goal #3: To implement a plan to ensure that our students understand the importance of acceptance, tolerance, and respect supported by all adults in the community.

The Belchertown School Committee conducts its business in open session pursuant to Chapter 30A, Section 21 of the Massachusetts General Laws. The public is welcome to comment only on items on the agenda for this meeting as noted above. If you wish to address the School Committee regarding an item not on the agenda for this meeting, please contact the Superintendent of Schools at 413.323.0423 or via email at [superintendent@belchertown.org](mailto:superintendent@belchertown.org) to determine the best way to address your concerns (see [School Committee Policy BEDH](#)).