

OLD COLONY REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

**476 North Avenue
Rochester, MA 02770**

**Wednesday
July 22, 2015**

MINUTES

**Present: Mr. Raymond Andrews, Mr. John Bandzul, Mrs. Evelyn Bouley,
Mrs. Shirley Bourque, Mr. Stephen Cassidy, Mr. Donald Foster,
Mr. Richard Gamache, Mr. Paul Guilbeault, Mr. David Hughes,
Mr. Maurice St. Amand, Mr. Donald Williams, Mr. Sylvester Zienkiewicz**

**Also: Mr. Frank Cote', Superintendent-Director; Mrs. Karen Guenette,
Principal; Mrs. Jacqueline Machamer, Assistant Principal/Vocational
Coordinator; Ms. Krystla Fay, Special Services Coordinator; Mrs.
Sarah Griffith, Business Manager; Mr. Eric Kinsherf, District Treasurer;
Mrs. Rosemarie Canessa, District Committee Secretary**

**Guests: Mrs. Donna Abaray, District Office Staff
Mrs. Dori Maher, District Office Staff
Mrs. Eileen Reece, District Office Staff
Mrs. Loretta Sherman, District Office Staff
Mrs. Debra Smith, District Office Staff
Mrs. Maria Szymanski, District Office Staff
Mr. Stephen Szymanski, New Bedford
Mr. Kevin Gonsalves, Mathematics Instructor
Mrs. Gina Despres, English Instructor
Ms. Nancy Souza, Mattapoissett**

All in attendance stood for the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

Mr. Cassidy recognized the office staff personnel and allowed them to speak.

Mrs. Maher reviewed the comments of the July 14, 2015 meeting. She distributed a handout to the administration and school committee members.

Mrs. Maher requested permission to speak to Mr. Cote' and Mrs. Griffith regarding the comments of the June 8, 2015 meeting with the office staff.

Mrs. Maher stated that the office staff was told by Mr. Cote' at the June 8th meeting that the summer hours were labor law fraud and subject to a \$10,000.00 fine.

Mr. Cote' stated that he did not say that. He stated that he said it was an ethics violation.

Mrs. Maher stated that at the July 14, 2015 meeting, Mr. Bandzul asked Mrs. Griffith what prompted the change of summer hours and Mrs. Griffith replied it was a record keeping problem. Mrs. Griffith replied that she never said that and clarified that she said she was not comfortable certifying a payroll register that appears as though the employees are working thirty-five hours per week when they are actually working twenty-nine.

Mr. Cote' repeated that the summer hours are an ethics violation not a labor law violation.

Mrs. Maher stated that each of the office staff personnel, during their offer of employment, received an hourly schedule and the summer hour schedule was stated verbally. Mrs. Maher added that it has been a thirty year practice.

Mrs. Maher quoted from the handout, Title XXI, Chapter 149, Section 148 of the Massachusetts General Laws, "the word wages shall include any holiday or vacation payments due an employee under an oral or written agreement."

Mrs. Maher also made reference to the memos issued to the office staff personnel from Superintendent Gary Brown listing the summer hours for 2012, 2013, and 2014 regarding summer work schedule.

Mrs. Maher stated that Old Colony website stated that the school committee is the governing body of policies and the budget. Knowing that the school committee is the governing body, she inquired as to why what wasn't the entire school committee notified by Mr. Cote' regarding the change on this practice.

Mr. Hughes replied that that school committee has hired Mr. Cote' to run the school and he does not feel they should be involved in making policy changes.

Mr. Cassidy stated that the administration has contacted the District's Attorney regarding this matter.

Mrs. Maher stated that at the July 14th meeting, Mr. Cassidy stated that Mr. Cote' had stated at the June 8th meeting that he needed the office staff until 3pm. Mrs. Maher stated that Mr. Cote' never made that comment at the June 8th meeting and that he actually stated that the office staff could leave at 1pm and take the time without pay or vacation time.

Mrs. Maher added that by extending the summer hours, the office staff could actually be due compensation for the extra time worked.

Mrs. Maher thanked the school committee and administration for their time.

Mr. Zienkiewicz stated that he felt it was a very minor issue to expect the office staff to work one extra hour per week and that he would try to help them in some way.

Mr. Foster stated that if this information regarding summer hours exploded and became public, the office staff could be held to pay back the time.

Mrs. Sherman stated that this is not correct because over the past thirty plus years the summer hours have been a quoted and distributed memo of this benefit to the staff.

Mrs. Griffith stated that their benefit package states that the office staff are hourly employees that work thirty-five hours per week.

Mrs. Sherman inquired what will happen if the administration finds out from legal counsel that the summer hours are not an ethics violation?

Mr. Cote' responded that if no one ever calls or says anything to the ethics board, than it would not be a formal violation.

The office staff inquired when they would have an answer regarding the summer hours?

Mr. Cassidy stated that as soon as the administration hears from legal counsel, they will be informed of the decision.

Mr. Zienkiewicz requested to receive a copy of the letter from legal counsel.

On a motion duly made by Mrs. Shirley Bourque and seconded by Mr. John Bandzul, it was unanimously

Voted: To accept the minutes of the May 20, 2015 minutes and May 20, 2015 Executive Session minutes.

Mr. Cote' updated the school committee on the FY16 budget. He stated that all five member towns approved and voted on our budget.

Mr. Guilbeault inquired as to the status of the employee handbook.

Mrs. Guenette stated that the employee handbook and student handbook are a work in progress. She stated that she will have something ready by the special school committee meeting in August. Mrs. Guenette stated that there will be a training on August 17 & 18 for new staff.

The District Policy Manual will soon be a public document in Google docs for the staff to access.

Mr. Bandzul inquired how many new staff members are being hired. Mrs. Guenette stated that there are ten new employees so far with a few more positions to be filled.

Mr. Cote' stated that the administration is still waiting to hear from Reliable Bus Company regarding the fuel credit.

Mrs. Guenette stated that the District may be receiving another school safety grant coming this year to help with the security system quotes that the School Committee has asked the administration to obtain. She stated that cameras are being installed in the parking lots this summer with last year's grant funding.

Mr. Foster asked Mrs. Griffith where the District stands on the Performance Contract regarding what the utility costs are.

On a motion duly made by Mr. St. Amand and seconded by Mrs. Shirley Bourque, it was unanimously

Voted: To approve account transfers for the FY15 appropriation.

Mr. Cote' informed the district committee that Mr. Gagliardi, Chairman of the Evaluation Subcommittee, could not be at tonight's meeting and Superintendent's Cote's evaluation is not complete.

On a motion duly made by Mr. Paul Guilbeault and seconded by Mrs. Bourque, it was unanimously

Voted: To table the Superintendent's evaluation and conduct a meeting of the Evaluation Subcommittee on August 10, 2015.

Mr. Zienkiewicz distributed a handout regarding examples of sample letters that he believes should be sent by the District School Committee in reply to letters sent to them by parents and the public regarding concerns.

Mr. Williams stated that he disagreed with Mr. Zienkiewicz. He stated that when he receives a letter at home he responds with a thank you for the letter and their concern, acknowledge that it has been received, and do not get into any details.

Mrs. Guenette discussed the District Improvement Plan. She stated that the administration went back to the model used in the past for writing two-year goals. She stated that the District Improvement Plan drives the goals for professional practice and student learning for the staff for the next two years.

Mr. Gonsalves inquired if the schedule has been changed to nine periods. He stated if more time was added, this time would have to be monetarily compensated. Mrs. Guenette responded that the scheduling has not been fully completed, but that Mrs. Machamer has been working towards this model.

Mr. Gonsalves asked the administration and committee about whether or not they were aware of more teaching minutes added to the day. Mrs. Machamer stated she had not actually figured the schedule to include minutes for the day, only by periods and hall passing time.

Mr. Gonsalves stated he had already done the math and this would be a conversation going forward.

Mrs. Guenette stated the schedule should be ready for the August 19th school committee meeting and Mr. Gonsalves acknowledged this.

Mrs. Bourque asked Mrs. Guenette about training and professional development. She asked if the administration will have the line item amount for Professional Development for the FY17 budget and how much it would cost to support the District Improvement Plan.

Mrs. Bourque inquired if district's goals were being met for 2014-2015? Mrs. Guenette responded that all goals, but one, have been met, and the only goal that was not met was due to DESE's Vocational Competency tracking system not being available yet. She wanted the school goals to be truly improvement goals and not something that they knew that they could absolutely attain.

Mr. Roselli from Roselli & Clark Auditors entered the meeting at 7pm.

Mrs. Bourque asked for some history regarding Roselli & Clark.

Mr. Roselli stated that Roselli & Clark have been conducting the District's audit for four consecutive years. He stated that they perform many audits for school districts.

Mrs. Bourque asked what they audit.

Mr. Roselli responded that they audit the general ledger and the systems in place and they look for ways for the District to make improvements.

Mr. Roselli reviewed the Management Letter for the year ending June 30, 2014 audit.

He discussed the findings of the audit and, issues with postemployment benefits, municipal data breaches, vendor overpayments, scholarship disbursement, encumbrances, energy rebates, deficit balances, refinancing of the MSBA loan, net school spending deficit, student activities, financial policies and procedure manual, protection of sensitive data, the payroll process which has now been outsourced and E & D.

Mr. Roselli stated that the FY2014 retirement payment was held against our E & D.

Mrs. Bourque questioned Mr. Kinsherf how the 2014 retirement billing was viewed as a liability resulting in a \$46,560.00. In past conversations regarding the FY2014 E & D, the retirement billing was never part of the conversation.

Mr. Kinsherf stated that because of the prepayment penalty it is too risky to refinance the MSBA loan. He stated that the lease payment increases by 4% each year.

Mrs. Bourque stated that there had been some previous conversation regarding adjusting the remaining balance of the loan to equal payments, which would make it easier for budgetary purposes.

Mr. Roselli discussed how the District could correct and improve on these matters.

The next meeting of the Evaluation Subcommittee is scheduled for August 10, 2015 at 5 pm in the library.

A special District Committee meeting is scheduled for August 19, 2015 at 6 pm in the cafetorium.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Canessa
District Committee Secretary

Mr. Stephen Cassidy, Chairman

Date