

HEART COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: for the meeting of June 14, 2017

Committee Members Present:

Michele Giarusso, Chair
Tracy Rogers, Secretary
Joseph Arsenaault
Richard Fontaine

Sharon Fontaine
Alan Genovese
Cheryl George
Bob Keir

Sue O'Reilly McRae
Tony Matteo
Bill Wahlstrom

Committee Members Absent:

Lisa Armstrong , Claire Brennan, Jennifer Comiskey, Jennifer Glazier, Lynn Hansell , Renee Keir , Jack Killeen , Shannon Miner, Ginger Robinson

Others Present:

Debbie Lynangale, facilitator

Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Announcements

Michele announced that Superintendent Miller sent an email stating that she can't participate on the HEART Committee any longer. Ruth is also not renewing her contract at the end of the 2017-2018 school year. This period of transition would be good for the Committee to capitalize on.

Sue announced that she has asked a Warwick parent to join as another Warwick rep.

Tracy announced that she secured a Community Compact grant for \$25,000. Sue is talking with Warwick about applying. She found an excellent report that UMass Boston did under the Community Compact on the Adams-Cheshire school system. All Community Compact Best Practices reports can be found here: <http://www.mass.gov/governor/administration/groups/communitycompactcabinet/reports/community-compact-reports-and-completed-best-practices.html>. Michele suggested we get something in the press about receiving the grant and the Committee's progress thus far.

Minutes

Bob moved to approve minutes from the May 24, 2017 meeting as written. The motion was seconded by Rick and carried by a unanimous vote. Sharon and Tony abstained.

Subcommittee Meeting Report

Joe, Bill, Alan, and Michele met since our last full Committee meeting. They produced a handful of questions to pose to the School Committee as a first step in gathering feedback. The Committee helped wordsmith the questions. Joe and Alan will refine the questions and bring them back to the Committee's July meeting.

Introduction to Questions and Guidelines

The Committee discussed how to introduce the questions so School Committee members have context, and what we should be careful to say and what not to say.

- We aren't here to take sides. We're here for information and to form a partnership.

- Collaborative, open communication, transparency (especially with electronic data), deploy open budget solutions, not be specific in our judgment, and not be narrowly focused in our thought processes.
- Want the School Committee to understand there is grant money out there. If we align our areas of exploration and innovation of best practices with what the State is seeking, we might be able to hire expertise to help us through this process. We should tell the School Committee how much money we secured rather quickly by aligning with these best practices and that other districts have received funds as well from the Baker-Polito administration.
- Reassurances that we don't want to step on toes and that we want what's best for the kids. We want to work together.
- We should be cautious to not make statements about personal feelings or perceptions or how functioning of the District has been conveyed to us. We should say something about gaining their confidence and supporting the work they're doing. We would like to form a partnership to help the School Committee meet their goals. Our process should be data-driven and we'll need support in getting that data. It's in everyone's best interest to have them share that data. If they could just point us to where the data is stored, we can search for what we need ourselves.
- We're exploring ways to get the best educational value for our tax dollars.
- We want the School Committee to keep an open mind to our suggestions as we are keeping open minds to theirs.
- We shouldn't say anything about closing schools or changing the District Agreement.

What Needs to Happen Before We Talk with the School Committee?

1. Need to write bio sheet about HEART and an overview/history.
 - a. Should include the mission statement as well as information on members to show how diverse the Committee is.
 - b. Perhaps the mission statement should be another item on which to ask the School Committee for feedback.
 - c. Michele will draft a bio sheet.
 - d. Bill, Tony, and Michele will draft an overview/history.
2. Meet with chair to get on agenda.
 - a. Aim for their August 24th meeting.
 - b. Bill will contact the chair about getting on the agenda and ask her what her take is on the situation, how long she thinks we should speak during the meeting, etc.
3. Finalize/refine the questions and introduction. (Alan and Joe)
4. Put the questions on Survey Monkey.
5. Gather information on Community Compact and an extract from the Adams-Cheshire School District report.

The people assigned above should bring copies of their work to the July 19 meeting (or send them to Deb to make copies).

Summer Meeting Schedule

The Committee's next meeting will be Wednesday, July 19. Debbie will send out a Doodle poll for an August date.

Tracy Approached to Attend Two Selectboard Meetings

Tracy received an email request from the Bernardston town administrator to attend the next Selectboard meeting and report on the Committee's progress. She also received an invitation from the Warwick town administrator to attend the Selectboard's next meeting and explain the Community Compact grant application. The Committee agreed that it is the responsibility of each town's representatives to attend their respective town's meetings and keep their communities updated on our progress.

Adjournment

Sharon moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 p.m. Michele seconded the motion and it was carried by a unanimous vote.

NEXT MEETING: July 19, 6:30 p.m. at the Bernardston Senior Center, 20 Church St.

HOMEWORK:

- Send suggestions for what to ask the School Committee chair to Bill Wahlstrom.
- Send suggestions for the HEART bio sheet to Michele Giarusso.
- Send additional questions to add to the list for the School Committee to Alan Genovese or Joe Arsenault.
- Michele, Bill, and Tony will draft an overview/history of the HEART Committee.
- Those named above should bring copies of their work to the July 19 meeting, or send their work to Debbie to make copies prior to the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Tracy Rogers