**MOHAWK TRAIL REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**MOHAWK’S BEST COMMUNICATION SUBCOMMITTEE**

**April 5, 2016**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

The Massachusetts Open Meeting Law requires minutes for all school committee and subcommittee meetings.  The recorded minutes are open to the public for inspection within 10 days of the meeting. Minutes recorded provide a brief overview that reflects the subject matter discussed and any decisions made.  If any motions are made clearly state the motion and indicate who made the motion and who seconded the motion.  Record who was in favor, opposed, or abstained.  The names of any person(s) appearing before the committee are to be indicated.

**Date:**  Tuesday, April 5, 2016 **Time:** 6:00p.m. **Place:** Superintendent’s Conference Room at Mohawk

**Committee Members in Attendance:** Sarah Reynolds, Susan Mitchell, Willow Cohen, Paul Cohen

Karen Blom

**Committee Members Not in Attendance:**

**School Committee Members in Attendance:**  Glenn Cardinal

**School Administration:**

**Others in Attendance:**

**Documents:**

April 5, 2016, Agenda

March 23, 2016 Draft Minutes

**Call to Order:** Willow Cohen called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes approved by Sue Mitchell, seconded Paul Cohen,

Abstention: Karen Blom

**Report on Action Items:**

School Flyers:

They should be dateless and flexible so they can be updated easily yearly or as things change. Beyond printing, they should also be added to each school webpage. Another suggestion was to include them on Falls Cable as a PSA for the schools. Once printed, distribution needs to be structured, including school open houses, libraries, real estate agencies, local businesses, etc. This list needs to be fleshed out at the next BEST meeting.

Open Houses and Outreach

It was determined that widely advertised district- and school-wide open houses should be scheduled next year. Potential ideas include advertising elementary open houses in Fall. A January or February event may be more appropriate at the MS/HS level since most students are applying to charter schools at that time of year so a spring date is too late.

As stated at other meetings, Mohawk orientation at the elementary schools needs to happen soon than 6th grade. Students should be learning about Mohawk’s offerings as early as 4th grade and Mohawk should continue to invite its district families into its schools for events and programs as often as possible to encourage them to learn about their local public school. The 6th grade orientation and step-up days should happen sooner than spring, rather in Fall/Winter to better compete with charter schools. Also, Mohawk should more widely offer and publicize the option of 6th grade students following 7th grade students for a day.

Can Mohawk Middle/High School offer elementary school enrichment programs during the summer, especially in August when camp offerings are dwindling? It would provide a small amount of revenue, plus open up the school to families throughout the district – and beyond.

Publicity:

Paul Cohen sent Rachel Porter 4 press releases as samples and offered to help set up the structure and begin the PR process. Martha Thurber suggested that one person should be the contact on all press releases for questions to maintain a consistent message.

Collegiate:

At a recently District Leadership Team meeting, Paul Cohen shared the idea of developing a collegiate high school about Mohawk. The idea would be to offer specific courses that provide credit both within the high school and at the college level. This idea generated a lot of interest with middle and high school administrators. Mr. Cohen offered to arrange meetings with college partners with the goal of making connections and discussing future partnerships. Currently these colleges are located in VT and NH. In order for the partnership to work, interested Mohawk teachers would have their courses vetted by partnering colleges and if the curriculums align properly, colleges would enroll students in those courses. Students would receive college credit and transcripts. At Brattleboro High School, where this program is currently taking place, most students are graduating from high school with 15-18 college credits and then attending those colleges. Enrolling in some courses while still in high school also enables students to skip some lower-level general education classes. Currently at Brattleboro High School, there are approximately 48 courses that align with partnering colleges. Karen Blom suggested starting with Greenfield Community College. In Brattleboro High School, the school pays a portion of the cost and the state comes up with at least enough funding for one course per student. Students then have to pay $100 for a 3 credit course. In VT there is a scholarship fund, as well as other avenues of funding that students can access for assist them in affording their portion of the cost. Offering a Collegiate High School at Mohawk could potentially put the school on the map and provide extremely unique and attractive educational opportunities for students. The colleges involved would be happy to spend time with administration reviewing the steps involved.

Academies at Mohawk:

There was a lot of interest in this as well at the Middle/High School. The Academies would create a sense of a smaller community through specialized areas including STEM, Fine Arts, for example. This too could set Mohawk apart from both local public and charter schools.

Facebook:

The District Leadership Team would like to further consider the idea of consistent Facebook pages at each school, especially in regards to the amount of control and security, before moving ahead.

Mohawk District Website suggestions:

The district should update its photos frequently to represent the many offerings within the schools

The website should be reviewed to determine if go-to information is easy to find.

Mohawk should have a list of which colleges students attend after graduation.

There should be a button or link that invites people to “apply to Mohawk.” Once clicked, any interested families would find a list of curriculum offerings, testimonials, list of alumni quotes and achievements, Facebook pages, list of colleges, and how to “apply” to Mohawk.

Charter School Research:

Sue Mitchell spoke to some parents who chose charter schools to better understand their reasons. The reasons included: diversity, educational styles for students who weren’t “typical” learners, small class sizes, individual attention, lack of social cliques. That said, some of the parents that sent their kids to charter schools eventually opted out and enrolled them instead at Mohawk as they wanted a more well-rounded experience for them.

GRANTS/REVENUE:

Sarah, Sue, Rachel will be meeting soon to discuss ideas. Grants are often very specific so research will need to be done on which ones fit the district’s offerings and goals. Also, the group plans to review fundraising ideas include forming an alumni network and annual fund.

It was discussed that a write up of this subcommittee’s goals and tasks at this point would be advisable. When possible, tasks would be divvied out to specific people or areas. An action plan – both short term and long term - should be developed. Once completed, this information should be shared with the Mohawk School Committee, the District Leadership Team and the community at large. Willow Cohen offered to write this up and share at the next BEST meeting on 4/14/16,

**Next Steps – Short Term:**

**Next Steps – Long Term:**

**Other:**

**Citizen Comment:**

**Adjournment:** On a motion by Sue Mitchell, seconded by Karen Blom, the Subcommittee voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Submitted By: Willow Cohen

Next Meeting: