**MOHAWK TRAIL REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**MOHAWK’S BEST FACILITIES AND FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE**

**May 11, 2016**

**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:**  Wednesday, May 11, 2016 **Time:** 6:00p.m. **Place:** Principal’s Conference Room at Mohawk

**Committee Members in Attendance:** John Payne, Martha Thurber, Lark Thwing

**Committee Members Not in Attendance:**  None

**School Committee Members in Attendance:**  Emily Robertson

**School Administration:** Superintendent Michael Buoniconti, Business Manager Mike Kociela

**Others in Attendance**:  Sue Mitchell, Lynn Kelsey and one other citizen (refused to sign in)

**Documents:**

May 11, 2016, Agenda

April 13, 2016 Draft Mohawk’s BEST Facilities & Finance Subcommittee Minutes

Preliminary Scenario Analysis – Payroll Pivot: Central Elementary & 6th Grade at HS/MS

**Call to Order:** Lark Thwing called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Approve Minutes:** On a motion by Martha Thurber, seconded by John Payne, the Committee approved the minutes from the April 13, 2016 meeting.

**Building Usage and Restructuring Report: Michael Buoniconti and Mike Kociela -**

Superintendent Buoniconti presented a preliminary analysis of potential personnel/staffing costs and savings (vs. FY17 budget) under the “Option C” scenario (moving 6th grade to the MS and all pre-k and elementary students into a new elementary facility on the Mohawk campus). He said he choose this analysis to do first because it was likely to achieve the highest level of savings and thus would be a maximum measure against which other scenarios might be assessed. He noted, however, that this scenario also likely involved the highest level of political challenge given the closing of all elementary schools.

The analysis forecast a potential savings of $1.12 million in the first year, largely as a result of consolidation of elementary classrooms/staffing. Mike Kociela noted that these savings would be partially offset by any costs associated with mothballing existing buildings to the extent towns did not re-use the space. Martha Thurber also noted that MSBA might not be willing to forego its “clawback” relative to existing mortgages as well as fund its usual portion (two-thirds) of new elementary school construction. The Superintendent estimated the cost of a new facility at approximately $6 million. The initial analysis did not address the capital costs to towns, which also need to be analyzed and incorporated. John Payne asked about operating savings in subsequent years. Mike Kociela said the analysis done to date was only for the first year; savings in later years would be much less (vs. the first year) because staffing reductions would have been made.

There was then discussion about whether the next step should be to prepare analyses of this scenario over multiple years or do this same preliminary type of analysis for a second scenario (Option A – Keep pre-k to Grade 2 at all schools; move 6th grade to Mohawk MS; consolidate all Grades 3-5 at BSE). It was agreed to do the preliminary (staffing) analysis for Option A.

John Payne emphasized the importance of helping towns assess reuse options for existing buildings. Ken Campbell noted that reduced costs also would have the benefit of reducing per pupil costs that are the foundation for charter school tuition paid by the District..

**Discussion: Are there other building restructuring scenarios to consider?:**

Lark Thwing noted that no scenarios other than Options A-D (outlined in prior meetings) have yet been suggested by subcommittee members or others.

**Existing and future fundraising for Chromebooks:**

John Payne asked about the progress of outside fundraising efforts. Martha Thurber said the Chromebook/Mohawk Tech Fund effort had raised about 40% of its $35,000 goal and that the fundraising subgroup was launching a Mohawk alumni funding effort. Rachel Porter and Sarah Jepzon are looking at grant funding opportunities, but these will be driven by specific elements in the curriculum now under intensive review

**Mohawk Operational Fund: Giving Options and Bequests:** Not discussed separately.

**Discussion: Continuous goal of reducing Operating Budget by 3% through methodology changes, not general staff reduction**

Lark Thwing said he had talked with Superintendent Buoniconti about having a goal to reduce District operating expenses by 3% per year by looking to use technology to become more efficient. He noted as an example using on-line course offerings to expand curriculum choices and reduce FTE staffing. Superintendent Buoniconti said he would be looking to achieve this, but expressed some skepticism that 3% was a realistic goal.

**Regional Broadband Support:**

Recent developments in the broadband effort were briefly discussed, and it was agreed that BEST should continue to do everything possible to support these efforts.

**Other:** None

**Citizen Comment:** None

**Set next meeting Date and Agenda:**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on June 1 at 6p.m. at Mohawk.

**Adjournment:** On a motion by Martha Thurber, seconded by John Payne, the Subcommittee voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Submitted By: Martha Thurber

Next Meeting: June 1, 2016, 6 p.m. at Mohawk