

**RETREAT
OF THE
NEW BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

PRESENT: MAYOR MITCHELL, DR. FINNERTY, DR. FLETCHER,
MR. LIVRAMENTO, MR. NOBREGA, MR. OLIVEIRA, MS. POLLOCK,

ABSENT: NONE

IN ATTENDANCE: DR. DURKIN, MRS. DUNAWAY

The Special Meeting was scheduled as a retreat for the School Committee and Superintendent.

Dr. Durkin explained that the retreat, which is commonly held annually in most communities, is held to define the roles and responsibilities between the School Committee and Superintendent along with strategies to better communicate.

A second retreat will also be scheduled regarding the Superintendent's Evaluation Process in the near future.

Dr. Durkin introduced Dr. Irwin Blumer, former Superintendent of Schools in Newton and Concord. Previous to that, Dr. Blumer served as principal and a guidance counselor. Dr. Blumer recently retired as a research professor at the Boston College Graduate School of Education and is a consultant involving educational endeavors.

Dr. Blumer asked the Committee members to write what they felt were the roles and responsibilities of the School Committee as well as the Superintendent, communication expectations between all parties, and the role of the Sub Committees, and how Community input at meetings should be regarded along with the placement of items on the agenda.

Four roles and responsibilities of the School Committee were defined:

- Responsible for hiring the Superintendent, Business Manager, Special Education Director and several other positions
- Developing district wide policies
- Contract negotiations
- Developing and approving the budget which reflects the values of the district

Carrying out the directives set forth by the Committee is the role of the Superintendent, along with insuring active communication to keep members updated on initiatives and items of importance.

The consensus of the Committee was that they would like more feedback during the fiscal year regarding the budget and as well as more time to evaluate and analyze expensive initiatives. Administration should be more pro-active in supplying updates and evaluations. Currently there are no mechanisms or formal processes in place for updating the Committee.

(Mayor Mitchell left the meeting at 4:45 P.M. Dr. Finnerty – Vice Chair, presided over the meeting)

It was suggested that possibly questions could be submitted in advance to the Superintendent for her to present at a School Committee meeting; timely answers to questions that all members may be interested in could be communicated via email or phone.

The following protocols were suggested:

- Superintendent to propose large ticket items and develop a calendar when they will be presented
- Superintendent to prepare data for possible questions to be asked and submitted by the School Committee
- Individual members may call the Superintendent with concerns, but should advise a parent or a constituent to call the teacher, then principal first
- Members should call the Superintendent first before visiting a school

Dr. Blumer reminded the School Committee that they only have power as a group, not as an individual and that no one member has the power to act on behalf of the School Committee.

- Superintendent is responsible for everything education and to insure students are getting the best education possible
- Superintendent carries out implemented policies

Regarding agenda items, it was suggested that the Mayor, as Chairperson, develop the agenda with the Superintendent (as is current practice).

Dr. Blumer explained that the agenda should describe a school business meeting and should reflect those business items appropriately.

A discussion took place on what protocol should be used when a single member of the Committee would like an item placed on the agenda and the question was asked "should the Chair have total authority" to approve the placement of a particular item. It was suggested that possibly three members must show interest before an individual can ask for an item to be brought up for discussion.

- Agenda item protocol to be formally discussed at a future Sub Committee on Policy meeting.
- In regard to Sub Committee communication, members felt that Chairs of each Sub Committee send communications to other members of their Committee and the Mayor when meeting with administration on official business as Chair of a Committee. The Superintendent will insure that she and members of the administration, when sending updates to the Chair of the Sub Committee, will include all members of the Sub Committee and the Mayor.

Dr. Blumer cautioned members who attend Sub Committee meetings, of which they are not members, attend as citizens and are not entitled to deliberate.

- Community Input policy has been set forth and should be consistently enforced. The written policy will be placed at the podium or other area where the public speaks to the Committee in this forum.

No further discussion was held.

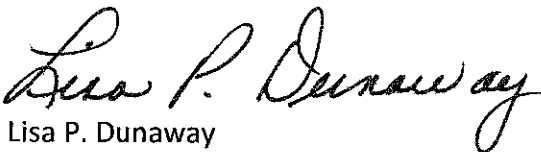
On a motion by Mr. Nobrega and seconded by Mr. Oliveira, the Committee, voted to adjourn the Special Meeting. Dr. Finnerty, as Vice-Chair, adjourned the meeting at 6:00 P.M.

The roll call vote was as follows:


Mayor Mitchell – Absent	Dr. Fletcher – Yes
Ms. Pollock – Yes	Mr. Livramento - Yes
Mr. Nobrega – Yes	Dr. Finnerty – Yes
Mr. Oliveira - Yes	

6 – Yeas 0 – Nays 1 – Absent

Respectfully Submitted,


Lisa P. Dunaway
Recording Secretary

Reviewed by,


Pia Durkin, Ph.D.
Superintendent,
Secretary/School Committee

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