

POLICY / COMMUNITY AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, December 12, 2012

Oliver Administration Building

Present

Subcommittee: William O'Dell, Chair, Diana Campbell and Lynn Wainwright

School Committee, Administration & Guests: Karen Lynch, Susan Rancourt, Melinda Thies, Christy Belisle (6:47 pm), Mark Bourassa, Robyn Cambrola, Karen Cote, Manuel DaSilva, Kristen DosSantos, Tracey Faria, and Kerry Santerre

Meeting called to order by William O. at 6:38 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Diana C. motioned to approve the minutes to the October 1, 2012 meeting; Lynn Wainwright seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 3 to 0.

Hiring Policy for Athletic Coaches

William O. introduced the Policy subcommittee members and administrators to parents in attendance representing Kickemuit Middle School. He stated that his hope for this evening is to have an open discussion on whether a problem exists concerning the hiring of athletic coaches and would a hiring policy be necessary. After the

discussion, he would like to turn any problems identified over to Melinda T. and Christy B. for their determination on the best way to proceed.

Melinda T. stated that currently there are internal protocols in place for hiring within the district, but are looking into “perhaps” a hiring policy specific to the athletic department and the hiring of coaches due to the “elephant on the table”, coaching your own child. There are actually policies like this in place across the state and recently, Barrington implemented one. Diana C. asked if hiring would be different in the case of coaches. Melinda T. responded that because there is a lot of student and family involvement with interscholastic sports programs, certain standards would need to be set and qualifications identified for hiring. All coaching positions are posted through School Spring.

Christy B., Athletic Director for the high school, stated that her goal for freshman athletes is to develop players up to the varsity program. At that time, they can become competitive (as long as they are performing well academically). Another goal is to develop at-risk children by teaching them teamwork so that they can give back to the community. She would hope that the same standards would be in place at the middle school. At the high school level, evaluators are brought in for the selection process. Evaluations are done by numbers with no identifying information on the student associating them with a particular town or coach. They are evaluated strictly on

their merits. However, in the case of returning athletes, it is important for the coaches to be involved in the selection process as well.

The meeting was then opened up to the parents. A common concern voiced was that coaches are favoring their own children and/or friends of their children leaving good talent sitting on the benches. Another concern is that there has been favoritism shown when a coach participates in a team outside the district, ie., Bristol Youth Soccer and will then pick a majority of students from Bristol. A Warren parent said her child already felt defeated to even attempt to try out because she said they would pick mostly Bristol kids. Melinda T. asked Christy B. if there is a history of coaches who work for the district and coach competitively outside of the district, and she responded, yes. Another parent commented that she is not questioning the coach's ability to coach, but she believes that those who pick the teams should be someone outside of Bristol and Warren. Christy B. asked if the district has considered merging the district with outside youth programs with the response, "not in general". The concerns expressed above are not just at the middle school level and can be seen at the high school level as well.

William O. summarized the discussion by noting the following points of concern that need to be addressed: 1) Coaches coaching their own child; 2) Coaches making decisions ahead of time; 3) Coaches not buying into the whole big picture of what it means to coach; 4) Coaches being left on their own setting their own parameters; 5)

Team selection process and 6) Team playing time.

At 7:30 p.m. Kerry Santerre left the meeting.

Diana C. asked the superintendent and high school athletic director whether there is a need for a policy that the school committee guides or just an oversight of the coaches through internal policies by administration and staff. Bill O'Dell responded that he would like to have Melinda T. and Christy B. go over all those issues brought up during this meeting and to report back for the next Policy Meeting on whether this should be monitored through School Committee Policy or through internal policy and present suggestions on how to proceed.

At 7:41 p.m. Karen Lynch, Susan Rancourt, Christy Belisle, Mark Bourassa, Robyn Cambrolla, Karen Cote, Manuel DaSilva, Kristen DosSantos and Tracey Faria left the meeting.

Health and Wellness Policy (JHCG)

Diana C. gave a brief history of the evolution of the Health and Wellness Policy for the new subcommittee members. The previous subcommittee worked hard to create an ideal wellness policy through much research and going through line by line and paragraph by paragraph. The goal was to make this a comprehensive policy. Before the second reading was to take place, it was determined to have Andrew Henneous, the district attorney, review the Health and

Wellness Policy. He responded with an informal email highlighting some concerns that he would like to see addressed. Throughout the evolution of this policy, many documents were created. For purposes of moving forward with review of this policy, all agreed that the only two documents necessary to use at this time would be the “Proposed Draft – Second Revision – Oct. 2012” and “Current Policy posted on District Website”. Diana C. suggested that once the actual policy is established, then the subcommittee can go through the appendices. William O. stated that at our next meeting, he would like to work together using Andrew’s email to go through the policy line by line, paragraph by paragraph in the hopes of coming up with a final policy that the rest of the committee will pass and which will be easy to implement. We want a policy that is usable, but not so vague that it is up for interpretation.

Policy Vision for 2013

Discussion on Policy Vision for 2013 was tabled for the next meeting.

Review of Policies in the Queue

The subcommittee briefly decided that the Dating Violence Policy currently in the queue be included as an agenda item for the next Policy meeting. In addition, it was agreed to look into having the Superintendent’s Evaluation possibly moved back to being the responsibility of the Personnel Subcommittee. Bill O said he would speak to Paul S. about this.

Adjournment

MOTION: At 8:07 pm Diana C. motioned to adjourn; Lynn W. seconded. The motion passed with a vote of 3-0.

/kd