

**Regular Meeting of the Pelham School Committee
June 7, 2012
Pelham Community Room**

In Attendance:

Debbie Gould, Chair	Maria Geryk, Superintendent
Darius Modestow	Lisa Desjarlais, Pelham Principal
AnneMarie Foley	Rob Detweiler, Director of Finance & Operations
Trevor Baptiste	Debbie Westmoreland, Recorder
Kathleen Mailhot	Public

1. Welcome

6:32 p.m.

A. & B. Call to Order and Agenda Review—Since the Pelham School Committee must elect new officers after the recent election, Superintendent Geryk called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. and reviewed the agenda. She asked for approval of the minutes from the April 5, April 12 and May 3, 2012 Pelham School Committee minutes. Ms. Gould made a motion to approve the minutes of all three meetings as presented. Ms. Foley seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Geryk then welcomed the two new Pelham School Committee members, Kathy Mailhot and Trevor Baptiste. Mr. Modestow made a motion to appoint Ms. Gould as Chair. Ms. Mailhot seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Gould then took the lead of the meeting and explained that the Pelham School Committee has two representatives to the Regional School Committee, who also need to be appointed tonight. Mr. Baptiste made a motion to appoint Ms. Foley to serve as vice-chair of the Pelham School Committee. Ms. Mailhot seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Foley moved to appoint Trevor Baptiste to the Regional School Committee. Ms. Mailhot seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Gould nominated Ms. Foley to serve as the second Regional School Committee representative. Mr. Modestow seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Mr. Baptiste moved to appoint Ms. Mailhot as Secretary to the Pelham School Committee. Ms. Foley seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Gould asked for someone to serve on the Budget Subcommittee and as the representative to the Capitol Committee of the Pelham Finance Committee. Ms. Gould noted that she has served in the role and is willing to continue. Mr. Modestow moved to appoint Ms. Gould to the Budget Subcommittee and the Capital Committee and the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Gould noted that since the School Committee now has five members rather than three, it is important to ensure that all voices are heard. Therefore, she will be following Roberts Rules of Order to move discussion forward and will ask that audience questions and comments be made only during the public comment portion of the agenda at the beginning of each meeting.

Public Comments

6:46 p.m.

Dan Rose, Pelham parent, stated that schools that receive federal funding are mandated to recognize Constitution Day on September 17th. He noted that he has been bringing the topic forward for two years and nothing has been done yet in the districts. Ms. Geryk said she will bring it to the Principals attention and the schools will begin to recognize Constitution Day. Ms. Desjarlais noted that the fifth grade classroom teacher does a full unit on the Constitution, and the plan at Pelham is to have last year's fifth graders do a presentation for the younger students on Constitution Day. Ms. Gould noted that the agenda includes the preschool issue, noting that it may be best to have a discussion tonight but to postpone voting until the next meeting to give the new school committee members time to come up to speed on the issue. Mr. Modestow suggested allowing the vote if the new members feel ready after discussion and Ms. Gould agreed.

3. Principal's and Superintendent's Update

6:50 p.m.

DOCUMENTS: Pelham PAWS Values; Pelham PAWS; Update from Superintendent Maria Geryk to the Pelham School Committee dated May 3, 2012

Ms. Geryk noted that there will be a Volunteer Recognition celebration on June 18 from 3:00-4:00 p.m. in the Professional Development Center at ARMS. She also highlighted plans for the Employee Recognition Ceremony at 7:00 p.m. on June 18 in the ARMS cafeteria, the staff ice cream social on June 21 from 3:30-4:40 for district staff, and ARHS graduation on June 8 at 6:00 p.m. Ms. Geryk reported that work has begun around transitioning to the *Everyday Math* curriculum, including professional development for all district teachers and teachers from Leverett. Ms. Desjarlais reported that Pelham is on board to adopt *Everyday Math* in grades K-5, noting that there

was a parent forum about the curriculum last Thursday night and there will be additional forums in Amherst. She noted that the initial up-front cost of *Everyday Math* implementation for Pelham is \$12,000. The cost of consumable materials is comparable to what the district pays for the current curriculum. Mr. Detweiler noted that the funding source for the up-front costs will be come from the School Choice revenue, which will require a vote of the School Committee. Ms. Desjarlais reported that Pelham had a phenomenal field day last Friday including a recognition ceremony for sportsmanship at the end of the day. She noted that the sixth grade musical is scheduled for two performances on June 19. Ms. Desjarlais gave a staffing update. She noted that Melissa Davis, current special education teacher, will be the new second grade classroom teacher; Gisselle Gonzalez will be the new first grade teacher; and Pelham will have a part time ELL teacher for first time. A new special education teacher still needs to be hired. Ms. Desjarlais reported on progress made in setting up the literacy closet. She said the closets have been gutted, they have cleaned out old materials, and the inventory of classroom materials is complete for two grades. Work on the closet is continuing and there will be another day of “all hands on deck” work next week. Finally, Ms. Desjarlais gave an update on School Choice enrollments, noting that there are a large number of students on the waiting list for kindergarten seats.

2. New and Continuing Business

7:10 p.m.

A. Map Testing

DOCUMENTS: *NWEA Report Pages from <https://reports05.nwea.org>; Descartes Samples—Figure 1 Sample Page from Reading and Mathematics Goal Strand: Number Sense and Operations*

Ms. Desjarlais gave background information about MAP, which is the new universal screening tool used by the district. MAP is a computer based test that is administered three times per year in the fall, winter and spring and provides longitudinal data about students' performance and measures growth in math and reading. Ms. Desjarlais noted that kindergarten students were tested for the first time this spring which will provide a benchmark moving forward. Ms. Desjarlais then reviewed the type of data that is available to the teachers through this nationally normed reference test, as well as whole-school data available to her. Mr. Baptiste asked how much weight is given to the subjective nature of teaching and asked what is done for students performing at the highest end of the spectrum on the objective tests. Ms. Desjarlais explained that there are some students who are scoring at the very high end of the percentiles. She distributed information on the Descartes Tool, which is a part of the program that identifies specific skills and concepts to address or enhance based on each individual student's performance. Ms. Geryk noted that there is some real art to teaching and that teachers can be as creative as they want to be as long as it is demonstrable that their students are achieving. Ms. Gould thanked Ms. Desjarlais for the report, noting that she looks forward to continuing to get updates on the MAP testing. Ms. Foley noted that she attended DILT Instructional Rounds this week. She expressed appreciation for being a part of it, noting that it was very impressive. Mr. Rose, parent, asked if there will be any communication with parents based on the data gathered through the MAP testing. Ms. Desjarlais said that MAP data is being used in the same way other benchmark information is used, which is to inform instruction and is not sent home. She noted that if a pattern of significant concern was identified through the data, it would be discussed with the student's parent or guardian.

B. Preschool Discussion

DOCUMENTS: *Pelham Preschool Proposal Financial Forecast*

For the new members, Ms. Gould reviewed the background of why consideration has been given to developing a Pelham preschool. She explained that the assumption was that the preschool would be self-supporting, with understanding that there would be some start-up costs. Since Pelham did not receive grant funding to cover those start-up costs, the School Committee decided it would be too risky to move forward with opening a preschool this September. Mr. Detweiler then provided a brief overview of the financial aspects of the preschool proposal, including projected expenses, revenues and models. Mr. Baptiste asked if the School Committee gauged how many people would want to utilize a Pelham preschool. Ms. Desjarlais reported that she got a lot of calls about preschool last winter, but since families must make a deposit for preschool, Pelham missed the enrollment window for 2012-2013. She said she believes there is very significant interest in a preschool. Mr. Baptiste expressed concern about the ability to maintain a preschool program as expenses rise. Ms. Desjarlais pointed out that the district can continue to seek grant funding for a preschool. She noted that, currently, Pelham children under the age of 5 who qualify for special education services must be tuitioned-in to the Crocker Farm preschool program because Pelham cannot meet their needs. They then return to Pelham in kindergarten. She noted that

having a preschool in Pelham would allow these students to be part of their school community from the start and would also save the tuition fees Pelham currently pays for them to go to Amherst. Ms. Mailhot asked about administration of the program. Ms. Desjarlais noted that she has visited the Shutesbury preschool, as well as several other preschools. In Shutesbury the preschool teacher also manages the program, including handling the billing. Ms. Desjarlais said that, as Principal, she will also help with administrative oversight if a program is put in place in Pelham. Ms. Gould noted that a vote to move forward with preparing to open a preschool in 2013-2014 is a commitment to subsidize the program if the district does not receive grant funding. She said that she does not feel that Pelham is financially healthy at this time, and it makes her nervous to commit to that. Mr. Modestow noted that the theory from the Visioning Committee is that you build your base by increasing the community, which a preschool would do. Mr. Baptiste stated that he would like more details about what type of preschool we are aiming for. It was agreed that that more information is necessary before the new members would be comfortable voting on this issue. Ms. Desjarlais will provide the school committee with the information she has gathered and with her current vision of what the preschool would look like in order to inform their decision.

E. Accept Gifts

DOCUMENT: *Memo to the Pelham School Committee from Mary Wallace, Region Treasurer dated 6/7/12*
Ms. Foley made a motion to accept a gift of \$2,000 from the Pelham After-School Program to offset program custodial costs. Mr. Modestow seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

3. School Committee Planning 8:15 p.m.

A. Calendar—The next meeting will be at 6:30 on Tuesday, July 10 with a hiatus in August.

Warrant Signing Subcommittee—Ms. Gould nominated Ms. Gould, Mr. Modestow, and Mr. Baptiste to serve as the Warrant signing subcommittee during the summer. Mr. Baptiste seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

B. Upcoming Agenda Items—Preschool vote, how to pay for math materials

4. Adjournment 8:31 p.m.

Mr. Foley moved to adjourn at 8:31 p.m. Ms. Gould seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie Westmoreland

Approved August 20, 2012