MIDDLETOWN BOARD OF EDUCATION
POLICY COMMITTEE
Minutes
Tuesday, March 18, 2014
Dr. Alfred B. Tyche Building
3:00 p.m.

Board of Education Policy Committee Members Present:
Sheila Daniels, Chair, and Ava Hart

Also Present:
Dr. Patricia Charles, Superintendent, Kathleen F. Bengtson, Administrative Assistant, Lynda MacPherson, Business Manager, Ed McKeon, BOE member and Chair of the Budget Committee and Brian Kaskel, member of the Budget Committee.

The following policies & bylaws were discussed:

#9121 Board of Education Officers – The Policy Committee reviewed this policy against the policy that is on Cabe’s website. It will be brought back next meeting to determine if it should be readopted by the Board.

#9130 Committees - This bylaw was discussed at the last Policy committee and has been brought forward for more discussion. The Policy Committee reviewed this bylaw and the bylaws on Cabe’s website. The committee felt it was necessary to clarify the language for this bylaw. It was determined to include the CABE Standing Committees language in our bylaw, along with the CABE Ad Hoc Committees language. The Committee will review the revised bylaw again at its next meeting.

#9131 – Community Members on the Board – After the changes were made in the previous bylaw, no changes were needed in this bylaw. It will be brought back next meeting to determine if it should be readopted by the Board.

#3160 – Transfer of Funds Between Categories – At the request of the Policy Committee, Ed McKeon, BOE member and Chair of the Budget Committee and Brian Kaskel, member of the Budget Committee, have attended this meeting to express their views on this policy.

Dr. Pat Charles stated that basically the way the line items are approved by the Board of Education has become cumbersome. In the administration’s efforts to get a handle on the budget and make it more transparent, the major categories were made very specific with many subcategories. Lynda MacPherson said we need a method to transfer fund which is not so cumbersome. Without new software, we can’t make reports to public as we would like.

Ed McKeon said right now we have a Superintendent and administration we trust and he doesn’t have any problem with transfers first and then report back later; but the policy needs to protect the District and Board in the future. He stated we had this policy before but it was not adhered to. It is a matter of trust. The Board wants to see the transfer for individual line items. It does not want to go against the state statute.
Lynda MacPherson showed the Town of Manchester budget categories and how most other communities report the transfers. Those towns can do this because their systems and software handle this process much better. Lynda also stated that in the future we will be required to post online all expenses. Brian Kaskel asked if the business office was in a position to predict fixed costs? Dr. Charles said it is very hard to predict these costs, as equipment can always fail when you don’t expect it. She stated they were asking administrators to reexamine their budgets, to help keep line transfers to a minimum.

Dr. Charles stated the City of Middletown and Board of Education have been working together in the search for a new software program that will work for both. She stated the process has taken a long time. The right software is needed to move forward. The software selected was the MUNIS software, which is used by many towns in our state. We were hoping to get the software this year, but the City is still working on purchasing it. One problem is the conversion issue and the time it will require from both the City of Middletown and Board of Education to institute it. Lynda said she heard it should be on the April agenda for the City’s Common Council Meeting.

Ed McKeon believes this is really important and suggested we make a formal request to the City of Middletown to purchase the software.

Dr. Charles stated that at the present time, she doesn’t think we can change this policy, as it will be against the state statute. She said the ability to be more transparent now certainly outweighs the possibility of combining the categories back together again. We should continue the line item transfers as we are now processing them and in another year or two, maybe we will have new software which will enable us to deal better with the transfers.

The Policy Committee agreed to table this for now.

The Policy Committee suggested the policies and bylaws to review at its next meeting would be:

#9121 Board of Education Officers
#9130 Committees
#9131 Community Members on Board Committees

The next Policy Committee meetings will be scheduled for Tuesday, April 22, 2014, at 8:00 A.M. in the Board Room of the Dr. Alfred B. Tychsen Administration Building.

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