

**Barnet School District and Peacham School District
Joint Board of Directors’ Special Meeting
Monday, April 25, 2016
Barnet School**

Members in Attendance:

Barnet: Board Chair Louis Bushey, Robert Farlice-Rubio, Sue Roberts, Jim Schenck, David Warden; Principal Shawn Gonyaw

Peacham: Board Chair Adam Kane, Mark Clough, Cornelia Hasenfuss, Jess Philippe; Jessica Roy, parent

7:12 PM The meeting was called to order by Peacham Board Chair Adam Kane.

The agenda was modified to reflect that the discussion would not be an Act 46 discussion but more regarding what the two school districts could do now to share resources and create opportunities for students in both buildings.

Discussion began with Chair Kane explaining that the Peacham School Board had recently decided not to renew the principal’s contract for the coming school year and they are exploring several administrative structure options. Peacham also had a teacher resignation and that, combined with the non-renewal of the principal contract, offered an option that would not involve sharing the Barnet principal. Mark Clough apologized to Principal Gonyaw for the calls he received at home from some Peacham residents. The Peacham School is advertising for a Dean of Students who will be teaching 50% of the time; three or four applications have been received. Keeping continuity in the school was a priority for the community. Having a Dean of Students in the building all day will provide that continuity and also address concerns about taking resources from Barnet School. The Dean of Students can work off a license at the CCSU and will be assisted by the Superintendent as well as the Curriculum Coordinator. This position would not be doing teacher evaluations.

There was discussion regarding how Peacham can help Barnet. Principal Gonyaw said it is difficult to know how the two schools can work together without knowing what is possible. It is difficult to see the possibilities while keeping things the same at both schools. If the vision of Peacham School is to keep Peacham Peacham, there is no benefit to Barnet School. If the vision is to share resources for students, then both districts need to look at what is possible.

Some ideas were brought up:

-Send Barnet students to Peacham to utilize the Observatory for half a day and provide classroom space as well. This would have to be middle school students as the Observatory is more for middle schoolers.

-Utilize the Fairbanks Museum’s property that is nearby and take groups of students for field trips and work curriculum around that.

-Make Peacham School the middle school for both towns since middle school students are best suited for the Observatory and have the other grades at Barnet. That would keep students in one building the entire day and not going back and forth. However, this would take away Peacham’s middle school choice.

-Have all students start the day at Barnet, then move them out to Peacham or stay at Barnet depending on classes taken.

-All options should be written down. If one of the options is that Peacham School closes, at least that would be addressed.

-Good idea to utilize both buildings. The Peacham community might be less reactive if those

discussions take place. Thinking about the Peacham School not being there and not being used is very sad. If people heard the idea of using both buildings, parents might be more on board and supportive. Good idea to use the Observatory.

-Put both school budgets together and look at different scenarios. For example, if Peacham became the middle school campus, a behavior interventionist could be brought in. Look at the bottom line and for that same cost say “this is what we can do” instead of the traditional model for Peacham and Barnet. It would be more manageable to have a cohort in one building instead of having two campuses of both to manage. In this case, some students that are going to private school might be pulled back. A survey of those families could be done to see what would bring them back to public school.

-Look at it as getting something and not losing something. This would be the best way to present it, even though some families would be upset. Put an option together to show what the program could be and not show only what might be taken away. For example, Peacham does not have a gym, but a physical education teacher could be brought in and classes held outside.

There was discussion regarding the local self-study group Peacham has organized. Louis Bushey expressed concern that the group would be discussing options that may include Barnet yet there is no representation from Barnet in the group. Adam Kane explained the group to the other Board members. The group will report back to the Peacham Board in three months. Louis said there are now two different groups with different plans who will be discussing different options; this seems like an opportunity to confuse the process. Principal Gonyaw offered to talk with the chair of this group. Perhaps this group should be looking at what is missing and incorporate that into what is best for the students. Both sides need to give a little and stop getting stuck on the barriers. Cornelia said she thought the chair of the group was planning to do an interview with Principal Gonyaw at some point. Louis also expressed concern that this group might jeopardize the conversations occurring with Waterford and Walden.

Next Steps

There was discussion regarding the next meeting and how to get the word out to both communities. It should be clear to people that they can talk about their concerns. The agenda was discussed and whether it should be structured or open. It was suggested that both Boards listen to the concerns from the public and not structure the meeting.

Some ideas to start working together:

-Explore doing the Winter Wellness program together next winter. There may be some savings with transportation and explore the two schools working together.

-The Fairbanks Museum idea should be explored.

-Invite Peacham to Stewardship Day at Barnet.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 9, 2016 beginning at 5:30 PM at the Peacham School. The joint portion will continue until 6:30 PM with input from the public. Following that, each Board will have their regular meeting. Louis Bushey and Adam Kane will work on wording for the meeting warning.

Adjournment

Having no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Jim Schenck and seconded by Sue Roberts to adjourn; the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Approved

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Hinman, Meeting Recorder