Regional School District 12
Board of Education
Education Meeting Minutes
Shepaug Valley School
June 12, 2017

The Education Meeting of the Board of Education was called to order at 7:00 p.m., on Monday, June 12, 2017, by Chairman James Hirschfield. Present were Board members: Anthony Amato (7:45), Valerie Andersen, Alan Brown, Gregory Cava (9:13), Michelle Gorra, Stephanie Kolnick (7:02), Jennifer Pote, Lisa Roush, Michael Sinatra, Julie Stuart, and Peter Tagley.

Patricia Cosentino, Ed.D., Superintendent; and Robert Giesen, Director of Finance were also present.

Also present were: Cathy Colella, Principal at BFS / BS; Teresa DeBrito, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Lori Ferreira, Associate Principal at SVS; Karen Fildes, Director of Technology & Communications; Kim Gallo, Principal at SVS; Emily Judd, Principal at WPS; and Allyson O'Hara, Director of Pupil Services.

The Board of Education meeting began with a thank you to Board of Education member Valerie Andersen who has given 20 years of commitment to the Region 12 Board of Education, its students, families, taxpayers and faculty. Valerie thanked the Board for the wonderful chair that she had been presented and followed up with a few words of thanks and thoughts for the Board members.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Erin Metz, New Milford – representing five tuition-in families, spoke on reducing the tuition-in fee with a reduction for siblings.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Mr. Hirschfield referenced an email from Howard Barnett questioning the composition of the Building Committee. Mr. Hirschfield stated that the current membership consists of six members. Two Board members, one of which is the chairman of the committee, and four community members. There is equal representation of the towns with each town having two members. Mr. Hirschfield also stated that he had responded to the email with this information.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Cosentino shared that there has been an anonymous donation to Washington Primary School in the amount of $10,000.00 for enhancing the music program, library program, Makerspace and the lead gift for a Ben's Bells Kindness Wall.

MOTION: made by Valerie Andersen, seconded by Jennifer Pote, to accept the donation to Washington Primary School as long as the resolution complies with Board Policy.

Michelle Gorra stated that the donation had been discussed in the policy committee and that there was a policy covering such donations. Wordage from the policy was read stating that such donation would need to be shared throughout the Region with all three elementary schools. Alan Brown read from the policy in reference,

that a donation may not be made to a specific school but made to the Region. It had been suggested that the elementary principals meet and derive a list of needs within the schools. It had also been asked that the family be made aware of the Board policy and decision.

VOTE: In favor: Anthony Amato, Valerie Andersen, Michelle Gorra, James Hirschfield, Stephanie Kolnick, Jennifer Pote, Lisa Roush, Michael Sinatra, and Peter Tagley.

Opposed: Alan Brown

Abstained: Julie Stuart

Motion passed (9 – 1 – 1)

Dr. Cosentino stated that she had received an email with questions about a report relating to AgSTEM, which had been presented by Mr. Giesen at the Finance Committee meeting last week. Mr. Giesen handed out and reviewed the report. Discussion followed.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Chairman Hirschfield spoke about the discussion at the last Board retreat regarding public exposure for the schools. Mr. Hirschfield introduced Doug Clement of Boardwalk Media and Communications. Mr. Clement spoke of his background and experience.

Alan Brown left the meeting at 7:40 p.m. and returned at 7:42 p.m.
Anthony Amato arrived at 7:45 p.m.

Mr. Clement handed out a packet which included a list of potential services. Mr. Clement gave examples of the areas in which he would be able to promote the schools and the type of information that would be included. Mr. Clement commented that it would be important to target different audiences. Questions and comments followed.

STATE OF THE SCHOOLS

The report on the State of the Schools began with an introduction by Dr. Cosentino. A summary of the Panorama Survey was presented by Karen Fildes with a handout which provided results of the teacher, student, and parent surveys. Principals Cathy Colella, Kim Gallo, and Emily Judd spoke on topic areas for their school. Lori Ferreira, Associate Principal at SVS, also shared information on the surveys. The presentation concluded with a brief video highlighting each of the Region's schools.

ACTION ITEMS

To consider and if appropriate, approve request from Housatonic Valley Association to use Washington Primary School for their 27th Annual Auction to benefit the Environment on Sunday, December 3, 2017 waiving policy prohibiting alcoholic beverages.

MOTION: made by Michelle Gorra, seconded by Lisa Roush, to approve the request by the Housatonic Valley Association to use Washington Primary School for their 27th Annual Auction to benefit the Environment on Sunday, December 3, 2017, waiving the policy prohibiting alcoholic beverages with the provision, alcohol must not be served while students are on the campus and insurance be provided.

VOTE: unanimous.

Discussion of Region 12 Multi-family Discount and Reduced Tuition at SVS for Out-of-district Students.

Greg Cava arrived 9:13 p.m.

Alan Brown began the discussion with questions on how this might affect the agreement with the Town of Sherman. Mr. Giesen aided in the discussion clarifying Sherman's tuition. Mr. Hirschfield also stated that the discussion is only for Grades 6-8. Board members expressed their opinions regarding tuition, potential class sizes and taxpayer impact.

MOTION: made by Alan Brown, seconded by Julie Stuart, to make the K-8 tuition $5000.00 with a multiple family discount of $3500.00 for each sibling.

Discussion followed. Chairman Hirschfield clarified comments that according to the policy, the Superintendent has the unilateral right to say no if need be. It was asked that a policy be made to govern the Board in such cases. Michelle Gorra addressed the question stating that there is currently a policy but the policy does not set a tuition fee.

Alan Brown amended his motion, Julie Stuart accepted the amendment.

AMENDMENT: To leave the K-5 tuition as voted on at the previous meeting (May 15, 2017) and changing the middle school Grade 6-8 tuition to $6000.00 and introducing a $1500.00 reduction for siblings in Grades K-8.

Discussion followed.

MOTION: made by Peter Tagley, seconded by Valerie Andersen to move the question.

VOTE: In favor: Valerie Andersen, Alan Brown, James Hirschfield, Jennifer Pote, Lisa Roush, Michael Sinatra, Julie Stuart, and Peter Tagley.

Opposed: Anthony Amato, Greg Cava, Michelle Gorra, and Stephanie Kolnick.

Abstained: None.

Motion passed (8 – 4 – 0)

Vote on the Amended Motion:

VOTE: In favor: Alan Brown, Michelle Gorra, James Hirschfield, Jennifer Pote, Lisa Roush,

Michael Sinatra, and Julie Stuart.

Opposed: Anthony Amato, Valerie Andersen, Greg Cava, and Peter Tagley.

Abstained: Stephanie Kolnick.

Motion passed (7 – 4 – 1)

MOTION: made by Peter Tagley, seconded by Jennifer Pote, to add item 8.3 to the agenda regarding funding for Booth Free School.

VOTE: In favor: Anthony Amato, Alan Brown, Gregory Cava, Michelle Gorra, James Hirschfield, Stephanie Kolnick, Jennifer Pote, Lisa Roush, Michael Sinatra, Julie Stuart, and Peter Tagley.

Opposed: None.

Abstained: Valerie Andersen.

Motion passed (11 – 0 – 1)

Dr. Cosentino explained the ADA situation at Booth Free School. A student in a wheelchair does not have access to the playground. Booth Free School is handicap accessible but modifications need to be made to the playground area. Mr. Giesen stated that the construction cost would not be in the upcoming budget but in the following year's budget. It was also noted that an architect needs to be hired to do specs, construction needs to be done, resurfacing of the playground, and a bid must go out for the work.

MOTION: made by Valerie Andersen, seconded by Michelle Gorra to proceed with spending $12,500.00 to make Booth Free School ADA accessible.

VOTE: unanimous.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: made by Greg Cava, seconded by Julie Stuart, to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussion of Non-Certified Staff 2017/2018 Salaries and Contracts, Central Office Personnel Matter, and Superintendent's End of Year Evaluation.

VOTE: unanimous.

At 9:58 p.m. Chairman Hirschfield gave a 10 minute recess before reconvening into room D24.

ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS

The Board returned to regular session at 10:48 p.m.

MOTION: made by Alan Brown, seconded by Michelle Gorra, to increase the salaries of the front office non-certified staff as set forth in the handout from the Superintendent re: same by 2.5% for the period of July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018 with the following exceptions: Bob Giesen is not included; Debby Bliven, Administrative Assistant to Superintendent increased by 3%.

VOTE: unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: made by Valerie Andersen, seconded by Michael Sinatra, to adjourn at 10:50 p.m.

VOTE: unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 p.m.

SH/June 2017