

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held April 6, 2020 via Zoom Meeting

Present: Janet Morgan, Pam Zmek, George Bauer, Carol Ann Brown, Ed Decortin, Mike Devine, Jim Crocker, Maryanne Van Aken, Wayne McAllister and Joseph Olzacki. Also in attendance were, Pam Sordi, Wendy Nelson Kauffman, Donna Marcinek, William Nemecek, Suzi Greene, Nadine Pratt, Mark Harutunian and BOE clerk, Karen Daley.

1. Call to Order

Ms. Morgan called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mr. Bauer motioned to approve the minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting of March 2, 2020. Seconded by Mr. Crocker. Ms. Brown asked for a change on the minute's approval from 6-0-0 to 7-0-0 for the meeting on 2/3/2020. **The motion carried 7-0-1.** *The minutes were correct as originally recorded and will remain as 6-0-0.*

3. Superintendent's Report -

- a. **Distance Learning** – Distance Learning is underway at all schools. The administrative team worked together to develop a plan when the process began with an emphasis on the goals being clear, the directions be even more clear and to make everything reasonable. The group provided the needed training, made sure the technology was in place and that curriculum is adhered to during this process. Ms. Sordi, Principal at NHS works with teachers daily to reassess and make adjustments as distance learning evolves. Students and parents have been surveyed for their input and those results are taken into consideration when further developing the distance learning. Education is the priority but there is still attention given to school climate and culture to keep students connected. Mr. Nemecek reported that Woodbury Middle School teachers get together virtually via Zoom every day. Students and staff took the time to get comfortable with the online learning and daily attendance is extremely good. Support staff reach out to students who may be having difficulty with the distance learning. Teachers are working together and sharing ideas to provide the best learning opportunities to students as possible. Collaboration has been key in the success of the program at this point. Mr. Harutunian gave a report from the elementary schools. Mr. Komar and Mr. Harutunian are working together as one elementary school. The teachers in each grade, from both schools work together. Technology issues have been resolved and students are able to access their learning. Parents do find it challenging to work with their students at home but administrators and support staff are available to offer suggestions and advice. Administrators are looking at whether to grade students as pass/fail or use regular grading for this time period and the discussion is ongoing. AP exams are being worked out by College Board but there is talk about them providing an at home exam.

4. Committee Reports

- a. **Building** – Meeting was on March 24, 2020. Construction will continue at NHS during the school closure. Water testing results were discussed and will be looked at with the experts at the next meeting.

5. Board Chair Comments –

Ms. Morgan thanks everyone for their hard work during this time. From custodians, teachers, lunch workers, social workers and support staff, all should be commended for their efforts during this time. Ms. Morgan is also very thankful for the efforts, patience and understanding of parents and guardians and the PTO's. Without their cooperation none of this learning would be possible. These sentiments were reiterated by Ms. Van Aken.

6. Old Business –

- a. **Policy** – Ms. Zmek *moved that the Region 14 Board of Education approve the Nonnewaug High School updated graduation requirements now requiring 25 credits for graduation as presented.* **Seconded** by Ms. Van Aken. Ms. Van Aken asked if the State would be considering not pushing forward on the increased graduation requirements in light of the current situation. Dr. Olzacki confirmed that there is now expectation of seeing this change. These new requirements will begin with the class of 2023. **Motion carried 8-0-0.**

- b. **Budget Update** - Debt service will create a budget increase of 3.77%, and a 1.17% operations budget increase is being requested. Of the operations budget 0.73% is for special services and the regular program increase is 0.44%. This will create a total budget increase of 4.94%. Capital projects that were in the budget for next year will be completed this year. Ms. Morgan reiterated that the 1.17% is the only portion that the Board has control over. The 3.77% for the debt service was voted on and approved 8 years ago. The budget will be posted on the website as well as a separate email address that will be established for budget question by the general public. Residents are urged to send email questions to the designated email. The Board will have a budget workshop on Monday, April 13th and a Board vote will be planned for Monday, April 20th.

7. New Business

- a. **Textbook Revision** – A request has been submitted by Nadine Pratt to obtain an updated version of the AP Biology book. They are currently using the 8th edition (2008) and the publisher has now produced the 12th edition. The book is 12 years old and some of the information is quite out of date and the latest developments in biology are not even in the text. The books themselves are very worn and students no longer have access to the digital elements that come with the books that are only good for 6 years. The request is for 25 books for a total cost of \$4769.51. There is money available in this year's textbook budget to cover the cost of these textbooks. Mr. Bauer *moved that the Region 14 Board of Education approve acquiring the AP Biology textbook from Pierson Campbell Biology the 12th edition.* **Seconded** by Mr. Crocker. **Motion carried 8-0-0.**

- b. **Early Retirement Package** – Mr. McAllister presented an early retirement package to the Board for approval. Ms. Van Aken is in support of the program as it is a good plan for the teachers as well as the district. This plan is similar to the one that was offered 5 years ago. It has been reviewed by the Board of Education's attorney. The Board will take more time to review and will vote on it at the meeting on April 20th.

8. Other Business - none

9. Adjournment

Ms. Van Aken moved to adjourn and seconded by Mr. Bauer. **Motion carried 8-0-0.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Karen Daley, BOE Clerk

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Karen Daley, Board Clerk, 4/7/2020