

**Minutes**

Regular Meeting of the BoE  
**Monday, December 7, 2020; 7:00 p.m.**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/97601728289>

Meeting ID: 976 0172 8289

Phone: 646-558-8656

**Present:**

George Bauer, Chairman  
Pamela Zmek, Vice Chairperson  
Janet Morgan  
Carol Ann Brown  
Michael Devine  
Jonathan Kapstein  
Tikva Rose  
James Crocker

**Absent:**

None

**Also Present:**

Dr. Joseph Olzacki, Superintendent  
Wendy Nelson Kauffman, Coordinator of Teaching and Learning  
Wayne McAllister, Director Finance and Operations  
Tina Tanguay, Assistant Director of Finance and Operations  
Edward Belinsky, Director of Agriscience  
Mark Harutunian, Covid 19 Liaison  
Patricia Paige, Board Clerk  
Patrick DiSarro, Communications Specialist

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**1. Call to Order**

Mr. George Bauer called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**2. Introductions**

Members of the Board were asked to introduce themselves

**3. Approval of the Minutes**

**A. Special Meeting, Wednesday, November 11, 2020**

A motion was made by Jonathan Kapstein and seconded by James Crocker to accept/approve the minutes as presented; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.

## **B. Regular Meeting, Tuesday, November 17, 2020**

A motion was made by James Crocker and seconded by Janet Morgan to accept/approve the minutes as presented; all in favor; none opposed; George Bauer abstained; motion carried.

### **4. Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Olzacki addressed several of the communications that had been sent to him since the last meeting - Mark Harutunian, the district's Covid 19 Liaison, provided the latest update on Covid19 diagnoses in the district, the number of those quarantining and the involved processes that Region 14 follows when notified that someone has been diagnosed. The challenges in securing substitutes were also addressed.

#### **A. Project Based Learning**

A survey was recently provided to parents to gauge where they are within the sphere of the distance learning environment; what are the struggles? The survey evaluated a student's workload, screen time, and the most difficult component of synchronous learning; mastering technology, student engagement, supervision or none of the preceding. Across the board, the survey results revealed overwhelmingly that parents had concerns with the amount of screen time that students had to tolerate, which ultimately affected their engagement in the learning process. Plans are to examine a schedule modification at the next Admin Council meeting scheduled for Wednesday.

Superintendent Olzacki asked Ms. Nelson Kauffman to elaborate on the Columbia model the district is current utilizing.

#### **B. Agriscience update**

Edward Belinsky, the program's director, recapped some of the goals he and his team accomplished since his meeting with the Board last winter, despite the consequences of Covid. He publicly thanked and acknowledged several students who represented the district nationally. He also recognized his team for their part in attaining the NAEE award. Nonnewaug was one of six schools across the country to be acknowledged for their outstanding curriculum.

Mr. Belinsky is looking forward to expanding the facilities and wants to bring the programs to next level; focusing on vet and horse management with the hopes of enticing new students to the district.

He was happy to announce that a grant has been secured, which will start the first phase of the indoor horse arena and storage garages.

He suggested that the drop in enrollment will not be a trend. Hybrid or distance learning and/or out-of-district student travel may have scared some students away. Applications are being received for the program. He obtained 90 applications for 65

slots. Surveys, guidance counselors, social media, and promotional videos are being used as a means of showcasing the programs.

5. **Committee Reports**

There were no committee reports, however, Carol Ann Brown described some of the activities that had been occurring in the towns.

6. **Board Chair's Comments**

George Bauer read correspondence he received, into the record. A summation follows:

**Wesley Schivera**

Inquired when students would be going back to school, especially those who attend at the elementary level; if there is distance learning on snow days, stated that they should be a half day so kids can enjoy the snow.

**Russell Zinn**

Biggest fear, students are being left behind – others are benefiting from in class learning; students can't get the attention they need.

**Catherine Ringeisen**

Shared feedback that they are experiencing with regards to remote learning- daughter kicked out of google meets; not able to access work that needs to be done; paid homage to Region 14 IT department; worried that if students are not able to get back to school full-time, they will fall behind and will never be able to catch up.

**Ron and Heather Jones**

Concerned about the well-being of students during remote learning time –daughter finding participation difficult from lack of socialization and constant technological challenges; wants to keep daughter engaged and not burned out.

**Marc Poliquin**

The departure from in person to full remote learning has had an incredible negative effect on the children and families of Region 14. Many parents are in the position where they have to choose between ensuring a quality and meaningful education for their children and a potential loss of livelihood. Even more frustrating is the lack of data driving the decision to learn from home. Asked to switch from remote learning.

**Liz Gannon**

Asked the board to consider opening just the elementary schools

7. **Old Business**

A. 21/22 Region 14 School Calendar

A motion was made by Janet Morgan and seconded by Pamela Zmek to accept/approve the 2021/2022 Region 14 school calendar as presented; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.

8. **New Business**

A. Regular Meetings of the BoE 2021 Calendar

A motion was made by Janet Morgan and seconded by James Crocker to accept/approve the Board of Education 2021 Regular Meeting Schedule as presented; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.

B. Executive Session

George Bauer moved that the board add an Executive Session to the agenda as discussion and possible action regarding the contract with the Superintendent of Schools; seconded by Jonathan Kapstein; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.

James Crocker made a motion; seconded by Tikva Rose to enter into Executive Session at 8:30 p.m. regarding the contract of the Superintendent of Schools; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously. The board invited Dr. Joseph Olzacki and Mr. Wayne McAllister into the session.

**Return to Public Session**

The board returned to public session at 9:53 p.m.

**Motion**

Tikva Rose made a motion that the Region 14 Board of Education approve the revised contract with the Superintendent effective as of July 1, 2021 and ending on June 30, 2024 based on the terms discussed in Executive Session and pending any necessary further legal review; seconded by Jonathan Kapstein; no further discussion; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.

Tikva Rose made a motion that the Region 14 Board of Education authorize the Board Chair to execute said contract with the Superintendent on behalf of the board based on the terms discussed in Executive Session and pending any necessary further legal review; seconded by James Crocker; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.

9. **Other business**

There was no other business.

**10. Adjournment**

A motion was made by Janet Morgan and seconded by James Crocker to adjourn the meeting at 9:55 p.m.; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patricia Paige". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

*Patricia Paige  
Board Clerk*

*Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Patricia Paige, Board Clerk*