

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held on June 17, 2019 at the Nonnewaug High School Library Media Center, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, CT, 06798.

Present: Janet Morgan, Maryanne Van Aken, Mike Devine, George Bauer (by telephone), David Lampart, Carol Ann Brown and Pam Zmek. Also in attendance were: Dr. Joe Olzacki, Wayne McAllister, Julie Luby, Pam Sordi, William Davenport, Jennifer Jedd, Ed Belinski, Thomas DeMarco, parents, members of the public & Steven Pendergast from CT Voices.

Absent: John Chapman

1. **Call to Order** - Ms. Morgan called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance** - Ms. Morgan led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Ms. Morgan requested a motion to approve the minutes of Regular Meeting of June 3, 2019, Ms. Van Aken *moved* and seconded by Ms. Brown. The **motion carried 7-0-0**.

#### **4. Superintendent's report**

Dr. Olzacki announced that a "mini graduation ceremony" would be taking place in the auditorium for three students on the Dairy Judging Team in the Agriscience program. They won third place at National Convention and secured a spot to compete in a world dairy competition in Scotland and would thus miss their graduation ceremony. Dr. Olzacki moved the Board meeting to the auditorium where the three students were given their diplomas in a ceremony presided over by Julie Luby and Dr. Olzacki.

Following the ceremony, the meeting continued in the Library Media Center and Dr. Olzacki advised he had posted two vacant positions in the District - Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the Principal position at Mitchell Elementary School. He is very pleased with the number of applications the District has received and

advised he had recently visited Mitchell Elementary to meet with the faculty. The purpose of this meeting was to gain faculty insight into what qualities and skills they feel are most important for a new incoming principal to possess. He explained that a hiring team will be formed for the purpose of interviewing selected candidates to bring forward to him before a final decision is made.

Dr. Olzacki then introduced Vice Principal Pam Sordi and announced that he had appointed her as the new principal at Nonnewaug School.

Ms. Sordi stated she is honored to be the new principal and that she is excited to continue the positive momentum at the high school. She is especially looking forward to continuing the staff's good work on improving school climate and completing curriculum work that was begun.

Dr. Olzacki recognized Mr. Bill Davenport for his 33 years of teaching in Region 14 and thanked him for his tireless service. He turned the floor over to Mr. Davenport who explained that it was a very difficult decision to leave the Region. However, he is excited to be working with the UConn 4H Extension in Torrington and will continue to ensure a seamless transition and to be a presence in our District as the Chair of next year's 100-Year Celebration Committee.

Dr. Olzacki and Mr. Davenport introduced Ed Belinski, who has been appointed as the new Director of the AgriScience program at Nonnewaug and Jennifer Jedd, who will be the AgriScience Department Chair. Mr. Belinsky, a former student of Mr. Davenport, stated that after graduating from Nonnewaug's Agriscience program, he spent 10 years as an engineer before returning to Nonnewaug to join the faculty at Ellis Clark. He stated that this is his "dream job," and feels proud to be given this opportunity. Ms. Jedd is excited to work with Mr. Belinsky as Department Chair.

Karen Kalinauskas, the Chair of the Ag Advisory Committee, gave a short presentation on the mission of the Committee, which is to bring community input into the schools to help with curriculum development.

**5. Board Committee Reports - none**

**6. Board Chair Comments -**

Ms. Morgan congratulated Nonnewaug student Kaitlyn Meyer for being the Connecticut State Winner at the National History Day contest in College Park, MD for her work on the Nuremberg Trials.

Ms. Morgan also announced that Mr. Dave Lampart's term as a Board of Ed. member was coming to an end on June 30th. She thanked him for his service and presented him with a gift from the District. Ms. Morgan also announced that Mr. John Chapman had submitted his letter of resignation to the Woodbury Town Clerk, effective July 1, 2019. Ms. Morgan read the pertinent policy regarding replacement of a Board member and announced that a District meeting would be held at 7:00 p.m. July 9, 2019 at the Woodbury Middle School Cafeteria to elect a replacement for this one-year term.

**7. Privilege of the Floor**

Ms. Anne Marie McGrath of Bethlehem read a letter to the Board informing them that her eighth grade daughters had been the victims of racial slurs and had been racially discriminated against by some students at the Woodbury Middle School. She stated that once the discrimination was reported, the administration took extreme measures and a full investigation was begun. She commended social worker Joy Geraci and Vice Principal Suzi Greene for making a safe space for her daughters to be able to talk about their experiences. She also wanted to thank Superintendent Olzacki for recognizing the severity of the problem and that it is an area to be addressed is bringing in more training in the area of diversity for staff and students in the Region. She commended Ms. Geraci for helping her daughters fill out the necessary and proper paperwork to report these issues and she thanked the Board for its time. She looks forward to working with WMS to help rectify this problem.

Ms. Latoya Maia of Woodbury informed the Board that she has a son who was a student at Woodbury Middle School who also experienced racial slurs. Her daughter, who no longer attends the school, experienced the same and had racial and sexual slurs spoken to her. Although her daughter is not at WMS, she also looks forward to working with the school in any way she can to help rectify this problem.

Ms. Christine Shugrue of Woodbury wanted to thank the Board for reading her recent emails. She is pleased that there will be continuity with our new Agriscience Director and Department Chair and with the new principal at Nonnewaug. She wants a strong school system with positivity.

## **8. Old Business**

Ms. Van Aken *moved and seconded by Mr. Lampart*: “That the Region 14 Board of Education approve and adopt the following Bedford, Freeman and Worth textbook for Nonnewaug High School: *American Government, Stories of a Nation, APEdition, First Edition*, as presented.” Ms. Brown is concerned that the book was already out of date and with the cost of the book, which is \$111. She asked whether the district could use e-books since the students have Chrome books. She also expressed concern with some of the political cartoons contained in the book. Dr. Olzacki stated that the cartoons are relevant to today’s political discourse, which is why they were contained in the book, and did express that the textbook would need to be supplemented by the faculty to ensure a deep understanding of the U.S. Constitution. After further short discussion, the **motion carried 6-0-1, Ms. Brown voting nay.**

Ms. Morgan thanked the Nonnewaug Chiefs Football parents and Booster Club for their hard work and participation in discussions regarding the possibility of joining a Co-op for the 2019-2020 season. Unfortunately, it was too late to co-op this year but she stated that the District will begin earlier discussions in the upcoming year to ensure all options are explored. Ms. Lori Grant thanked the Board and players and looks forward to a successful football season.

## 9. New Business -

*Ms. Van Aken moved and seconded by Mr. Lampert:* “That the Region 14 Board of Education assign the student transportation contract for the year expiring June 30, 2020 to Student Transportation of America as noted in section 21 of the Board of Education contract with All-Star Transportation, as presented.” Mr. McAllister stated that under this new contract, the District would still be working with the same bus management staff and set of bus drivers. Mr. Bauer stated that the details of this new contract were discussed in Finance Committee. **The motion carried 7-0-0.**

*Ms. Van Aken moved and seconded by Mr. Lampert:* “That the Region 14 Board of Education extend the 2016 contract of Charles Heaven Company, located at 207-231 Bank Street, Waterbury, CT 06702 as auditor for the fiscal year ending 2019, as presented.” Mr. McAllister stated that he reviewed his records and informed the board that Charles Heavens has been serving Region 14 since 1991. He feels they are a very valuable resource to the District since they have extensive knowledge of the building project. **The motion carried 7-0-0.**

Ms. Morgan thanked Ms. Luby for her hard work and dedication while serving in Region 14 and wished her well in her new position as Assistant Superintendent in New Fairfield.

## 11. Adjournment

Ms. Van Aken *moved* to adjourn and seconded by Ms. Brown. **The motion carried unanimously 7-0-0.** The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 pm.

Respectfully Submitted this 24th day of June, 2019

*Pamela J. Zmek*

Pamela J. Zmek, Secretary  
Region 14 Board of Education

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval