

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held March 2, 2020 in the Cafeteria at Bethlehem Elementary School, Bethlehem, Connecticut.

Present: Janet Morgan, Pam Zmek, George Bauer, Carol Ann Brown, Ed Decortin, Mike Devine, Jim Crocker, Wayne McAllister and Joseph Olzacki. Also in attendance were, Pam Sordi, Wendy Nelson Kauffman, Donna Marcinek, Wendy Yatsenick, Taryn Fernandez, Alyce Misuraca, Jason Bouchard, Jane Caruso, Matt Graves, Erik Birkenberger, Ed Belinsky, Jenn Jedd, Tyler Cremeans, a reporter from the Voices, 10 students, 15 residents and BOE clerk, Karen Daley.

Absent: Maryanne Van Aken

1. Call to Order

Janet 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 motioned to approve the minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting of February 3, 2020. Seconded by Mr. Bauer. **The motion carried 6-0-0.**

- 4. Student Representatives – BES** – Natalia and Christopher Calabrese, Markus Wesaw, Madeline Meeker and Alexandra Zulpa, students from BES presented their Science Fair Projects. Ms. Misuraca thanked the teachers for their support of the science fair. The students thanked Ms. Carol Ann Brown for attending the Science Fair at BES on January 23rd.

5. Superintendent's Report -

- a. **Band Uniforms** – Dr. Bouchard had 2 students present the new band uniforms that were donated to the district. When asked about the uniforms the students commented that they loved them and were very excited to have uniforms to wear.
- b. **Budget** – The budget books will be distributed to the Board members after the meeting.
- c. **Teaching and Learning Restructure** – Wendy Nelson Kauffman presented the Board with the status of Curriculum development and implementation. She also shared how the Teaching and Learning structure has been reorganized to better satisfy the needs of the students without adding any additional positions.
- d. **BES Principal Search** – A committee will be formed to select the new BES Principal. There should be a Principal in place by the end of the school year.
- e. **CDC Update** – The district held a meeting last Thursday with local emergency management officials, health department officials, school nurses, BOE members and the facilities manager. A letter was sent home to families this week regarding the COVID 19 virus. At this time the district is monitoring the spread of the virus and has proactively doubled down on cleaning efforts at the schools. Cleaning supplies have been inventoried and the district is in good shape to maintain clean, safe schools. The district will explore the possibility of students working from home in the event that it became necessary but does not expect anything like that at this time. The group will meet as needed if the current health situation changes.
- f. **VoAg Funding Update** – Ed Belinsky has been working tirelessly to support the passing of Bill 310 which will help with the funding for Vo-Ag schools. All 19 schools that have a Vo-Ag program are working together to finally get this situation resolved. The date that Bill 310 will be brought to the house is still to be determined but once it has notification will be sent out to encourage people to go out to show support for the Bill.

6. Committee Reports

- a. **Finance** – Both the YTD Operating budget and the YTD High School Renovation budgets are on track. The debt service was discussed to help further understanding of the impacts it has on the budget for next year. The financial groups that handle the districts pension funds are closely watching the stock market and will be working with the district if any moving of funds becomes necessary.
- b. **Building** – Meeting was on February 19, 2020. Change orders were approved. The Administrative area is mostly complete. The District Office area is now underway. Lights, bleachers and handicap accessibility are being priced out.

7. Board Chair Comments –

- a. Budget – The budget process has begun and all members were provided with a calendar of important dates and meeting.
- b. Health – Ms. Morgan reminded everyone of the importance of handwashing as the first line of defense against the spread of viruses. Age appropriate videos will be played for students in the schools and handwashing posters to give students visual reminders.

8. Public Comment – none

9. Old Business –

- a. **Policy** – Mr. Bauer **moved** that the Region 14 Board of Education approve the following mandated policies supplied and revised by CAFE Policy Services in addition to Pullman and Comley, having been reviewed and recommended by the Policy Committee: **Seconded** by Ms. Zmek. **Motion carried 7-0-0.**

5141.214 Sunscreen
5100 Attendance
1112 News Media Relationships
5131 Bus Conduct

- b. **NHS Trip to Spain 2021** – Mr. Bauer **moved** that the Region 14 Board of Education approve the Nonnewaug High School trip to Spain in the spring of 2021 for 10-12 students, 2 background checked chaperones, via air, bus and train, funded by the students. **Seconded** by Mr. Crocker. Ms. Caruso supplied the Board with a letter from the travel company regarding the spread of the COVID 19 virus and how they handle situations such as this in addition to the information she had already sent after the last BOE meeting. At this time, she has 16-19 families seriously inquiring about the trip and attending an informational meeting with the travel company next week. With the increase in student interest Ms. Caruso requests to add a third chaperone to the trip. Four students attended the meeting and spoke to the Board on why they are eager to have approval for this trip. They see it as a way to tie their classroom learning to the real world and to see a different part of the world that until now, they have only been able to explore through text books. It is also an opportunity to use the language skills they have acquired over the years of school in real life situations. Ms. Caruso invited the BOE members to attend the parent information evening on March 10th at 6:30 pm in room A28 at the High School. This may be a perfect opportunity for the Board to have their questions answered by a representative of the travel company. After discussion of the types of insurance available including the option of a \$50 extra insurance policy that allows cancelations for any reasons.

Mr. Bauer **amended** the motion that the Region 14 Board of Education approve the Nonnewaug High School trip to Spain in the spring of 2021 for 16-19 students, 3 background checked chaperones, via air, bus and train, funded by the students; reserving the Board of Education's right to cancel the trip at any time and requiring that parents purchase the additional, higher level travel insurance. **Motion carried 7-0-0.**

- c. **World Language Curriculum** – Mr. Bauer **moved** that the Region 14 Board of Education approve the World Language Curriculum as presented. **Seconded** by Mr. Crocker. **Motion carried 7-0-0.**

10. **New Business**

- a. **NHS Horticulture Trip to Washington, DC.** Mr. Bauer **moved** that the Region 14 Board of Education approve the Nonnewaug High School VoAg Horticulture trip to Washington, DC. from March 19th – 21st 2020 for 28 students, 4 background checked chaperones, via bus funded by the students. **Seconded** by Mr. Crocker. This trip is to visit greenhouses, conservatories and a wholesale production facility. These are not public places though they do have plans to visit the Holocaust museum while they are there. The Board is concerned about the possible health impacts and will table the motion until the March 16th meeting and then decide based on the current state of the health concerns with COVID 19. **Motion tabled 7-0-0.**
- b. **NHS VoAg Trip to Chicago, IL.** Mr. Bauer **moved** that the Region 14 Board of Education approve the Nonnewaug High School VoAg trip to Chicago, IL from July 2nd – July 6th 2020 for four students, 1 chaperone via air and funded by scholarship and the students. **Seconded** by Mr. Crocker. This trip is for 4 students, three of whom will be graduating in June so will no longer be NHS students at the time of the trip. The other student will be a Senior at the time of the trip. The Board is concerned over the potential effects because of the COVID 19 virus and were hesitant to approve the trip. **Motion carried 5-2-0.**
- c. **Timber Sports Team** – Mr. Bauer **moved** that the Region 14 Board of Education approve the Nonnewaug High School VoAg Timber Sports Team proposal. **Seconded** by Mr. Crocker. Ms. Jedd, Mr. Belinsky and Mr. Zielinski introduced their proposal for a Timber Sports Team. This a great way for Ag students to be able to participate in a sport that is more geared to their interests. It is not a CIAC sanctioned sport. Mr. Zielinski has a great deal of experience with Timber Sports both as an athlete as well as program advisor during his time at Wamogo. Safety protocols are the first part of the lessons and student will be required to wear the proper protection for their events. This would only be open to students in the VoAg program for at least the time being as the program gets started. The Timber Sports Team will be a club sport and will not require any financial support from the region. An MOU could be written for the teachers to include this as an FFA function and therefore not requiring additional compensation. **Motion carried 7-0-0.**

11. **Other Business** - none

12. **Adjournment**

Mr. Bauer moved to adjourn and seconded by Mr. Crocker. **Motion carried 7-0-0.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Karen Daley, BOE Clerk

March 2, 2020

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Karen Daley, Board Clerk, 3/6/2020