

Minutes of the FFA Advisory of the Board of Education  
Regional School District 14 www.ctreg.org  
Wednesday, January 16, 2019

Start: 7:02 pm End: 8:50 pm

In attendance were: Karen Kalenauskas, Jenn Ayers, Jim Frey, Tim Armbruster, David Ferris, Judie Ferris, Linda Muller, Carol Haskins, Jesse Frey, Richard H. Lewis, Katie Lewis, Joe McAllister, Jim Brooks, Pete Sepe, David Carey, Laura Miller, Alice Wilkinson, Susan Bedron, Marisa Bedron, Tyler Cremeans, Bill Davenport, Ed Belinsky, Liz Webb, Eric Birkenberger, Dylan Albert, Hannah Ferris, Riley Kennedy . Also in attendance were: Republican American reporter Steve Bigham, and BOE Clerk, Natascha Schwartz.

Karen Kalenauskas called the meeting to order 7:02pm and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

She then asked if there were any changes to the minutes from the November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018 meeting. Hearing none, Ms. Kalenauskas requested a motion to approve the minutes. Ed Belinsky moved to approve the minutes from November 14, 2018, and seconded by Tyler Cremeans. Motion carried.

Chapter Student Advisor, Dylan Albert, presented the FFA report. Since they last met, the chapter has done the following: sent a group of student to the IMAGE workshop, held a toy drive with FBLA to benefit Woodbury Santa's Workshop and collected enough toys to fill 2 cars, held the holiday plant sale/pet adoption whereby all adoptable pets found homes and the wreath sale was successful. They also held an FFA bowling night at Thomaston lane, held an annual citrus sale and held the American degree workshop with an attendance of approximately 15 people.

The officers have held an officer Friendsgiving potluck, attending the alumni wreath making night, gathered for the holiday party, and went to escape room for team building with Sophomore Block officers.

The officers are currently: updating social media to keep parents and students informed about what's going on, preparing for a Cocoa and Cram night, beginning to plan for FFA week, preparing for the Underclassmen awards banquet, preparing for Sophomores to take the Chapter degree test, beginning preparations for the Spring CDE's, planning a State and District application workshop with past and present State officers, collecting FFA apparel forms which are due January 18, 2019, going to attend Litchfield County Farm Bureau dinner, participating in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade electives, preparing to host an FFA District dance at All In farms in Woodbury on March 1, 2019.

Mr. Albert wanted to remind people that the chapter and officers appreciate the support from everyone and that the students are successful because of the strong support.

#### SAE Presentations:

Hannah Ferris presented her SAE working on Westwood Valley Farm. She advised that she works with Oxen and they participate yearly in the State fair. She explained what is entailed during the oxen pull competition and explained in great detail the harnesses and attachments to keep the bulls in line. She has learned a lot from her Father and Grandfather in showing her she has shown her bulls. She went on to explain that they practice a lot before going to the fairs by the use of pulling tires and adding more weight each time so that the bulls get used to the routine. She also makes sure that the animals are groomer with heads shaved and tails trimmed so they look good. The farm's largest bull weighs approximately 2500 lbs.

Hannah talked about preparation for competitions whereby she not only prepares the bulls for show, but the cattle trailer as well, by shining up the wheels, preparing the grain, hay, water, and sawdust for the bed of the trailer. She mentioned that the trailer can hold from 8-10 animals depending on how large they are. Hanna placed 1<sup>st</sup> place in show at the Terryville fair this past year.

Senior Riley Kennedy presented her SAE, who works for “The Farm” which is a large scale production farm. She has been working there for 4 years and is in Ag Production this year at NHS. The farm has over 360 workable acres of land which is mainly produce and hay. They have land in Woodbury, Bethlehem, Southbury, Roxbury, Washington, and Watertown. They have a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program, offer wholesale products as well as to the public. Their products can be purchased including their grass fed beef can be purchased at Woodbury Floral design. They also offer perennials, annuals, etc. Riley’s work days are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. She has a multitude of job tasks including but not limited to harvesting crops from the greenhouses, such as special Japanese peppers, broccoli, lettuce, cauliflower, tomatoes, and garlic. She went on to state that the farm is a diverse crop farm and they rotate crops and she also checks rate of crop growth, germination rate, and root growth. In the 3 high tunnels they plant directly in the ground and are able to get an earlier crop of tomatoes and variations of peppers.

Riley mentioned that she loves working with the public and mans the farm stand, participates in public events in handing out samples and educating the public regarding crops and plants, helps with getting the word out via social media, and helps with CSA.

#### Agriscience Program Review:

Mr. Davenport gave a brief overview of the Agriscience Program and was very excited to announce that next year will mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the program which started in 1920. NHS is up to 335 students from 22 sending towns which represents approximately 48% of the school population. The components of the program are the hands on learning in the classroom and outside, the FFA, and the SAE work experience.

#### Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) Program Review: Bill Davenport and Jenn Jedd

Mr. Davenport gave a quick overview of the SAE Program requirements. Each new student is interviewed and part of the interview process involves asking them what their plan is for the work portion of the program. Every freshman must have a plan coming into the program and by the end of freshman year, they must have their plan in place so that they can begin accumulating hours from June 1 of freshman year to June 1 of their sophomore year for their sophomore year. They start during the summer before their sophomore year to figure out where they want to work, get the application process done, and eventually start the job that they’ve applied for. He went on to state that the students receive High School credit for each of the 3 years (Sophomore, Junior and Senior); 1.5 credits for the class each year and one credit for the SAE work for each year.)

Jenn Jedd introduced herself and provided a little of her background experience. She went over common questions that potential SAE employers have:

- Can I have a 14 or 15 year old student work for me?
  - Yes, as they are enrolled in an Agricultural program and the SAE (Supervised Agricultural Experience) is monitored by the State Dept. of Education and State Dept. of Labor, NHS is able to have students work at 14/15 years old. It is always up to the employer as to whether they would like to hire a student or not. There is special paperwork that must be filled out to be able to work.
- Do I have to pay the students I hire?
  - Students must be paid as long as they are working anywhere and it is not considered a non-profit with a 501(c) 3 designation. Students are not allowed to displace another worker. Students have a lower Agriculture minimum wage which is 85% that of the regular minimum wage. Students must get working papers from high school counseling office.

- Does lower wage only work for certain number of hours and considered training wage?
  - The wage should increase with experience and while it is not a requirement to do so, it is preferred that they would get paid more as they acquire experience.
  
- Are the students covered by the high school's insurance?
  - Yes they are covered for liability under the high school's insurance and the employer is responsible to cover workman's compensation.
  
- At what age can they use machinery?
  - Students at the age of 14 may use electric trimmers, leaf blowers, hand weeding or using hand operated clippers. They cannot use blades, nor drive as part of the SAE. Students can be considered a gardener under the age of 16. Over the age of 16 and by filling out the appropriate State form, the students may use bladed equipment.

Ms. Jedd explained that there is a CSDE (Connecticut State Department of Education) placement manual which explains everything in detail.

There are certain exemptions in what a student can participate in, which are Agriculture specific jobs such as production agriculture. A crossover-horse farm is not agriculture specific unless they are breeding and selling foals. Students cannot drive a tractor more than 20% of the time during their SAE and cannot work directly with a breeding facility throughout their high school career.

NHS Agriscience students must fill out the SAE application and must keep electronic records regarding hours and type of work, as they are graded on it. Once students have been accepted at a job, they will work with their employers to set goals which are handed in to Ms. Jedd.

Lastly, the committee had a very constructive roundtable discussion including current and prospective SAE employers which encompassed the question & answers period.

Hearing no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Natascha Z. Schwartz

Regional School District 14 Board Clerk

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Natascha Z. Schwartz, Board Clerk, 1/24/19