

Minutes of the FFA Advisory of the Board of Education
Regional School District 14 www.ctreg.org
Wednesday, November 20, 2019

Start: 7:00 pm End: 9:00 pm

In attendance were: Karen Kalenauskas, Jennifer Jedd, George Lyman, Peter Lawler, Tom DiMarco, Lori Trovato, Laura Miller, Tim Armbruster, Liz Webb, Jennifer Ayers, Ed Belinsky, Ira Stone, Richard Lewis, Katie Lewis, Tyler Cremeans, Susan Bedron, Marisa Bedron, Eric Birkenberger and BOE Clerk, Karen Daley.

Karen Kalenauskas called the meeting to order 7:05pm and had committee members to introduce themselves. Ms. Kalenauskas mentioned that she was happy to see some Alumni members present.

She then asked if there were any changes to the minutes from the October 8th meeting. Hearing none, Ms. Kalenauskas requested a motion to approve the minutes. George Lyman *moved* to approve the minutes from October 8, 2019, and seconded by Marissa Bedron. Motion carried.

FFA Report: The FFA report was given by Julia Nielsen Chapter Vice President. The FFA group hosted a College and Career Fair afterschool on October 16, 2019. This event allowed our members to talk to potential colleges or careers they may pursue after graduating from the program. The Sophomore Block Team held their first Sophomore Block meeting on October 11, 2019. We sent three Chapter officers to the Litchfield Farm Bureau Dinner on October 17, 2019. Officers listened to the Bureau discuss current issues and met influential legislative representatives. Attended the District Safe Operation Tractor Driving competition at Housatonic on October 18. Our two students, Matt and Thomas both did very well in the competition but unfortunately did not place. Sent Chapter Officers to the Diebold's Topland Farm Open House on October 19. The officers helped to run the event by performing duties such as tending to the petting zoo, food prep, and assisted with parking. Hosted the 8th Grade Open House on October 24. Perspective students were able to tour the building and meet our staff and students, along with getting to know our program and ask questions. Our Sophomore Block Team held an angry birds themed room at Thick or Treat Street on October 26. The Chapter sent students to the FFA National Convention in Indianapolis from October 28 to November 2. Parliamentary Procedure placed bronze. Conduct of Chapter Meetings, Dairy Cattle Evaluation, Veterinary Science, and Meat Evaluation placed silver. Floriculture placed gold. Shea Rennason placed gold individually for Dairy Cattle Evaluation, Meghan Kostka placed gold individually for Veterinary Science, and Aiden Usher placed gold individually for floriculture. On November 8th we sent our horse management students to the equine affair. On November 14th we held the in school FFA meeting period 1. Also on November 14th we held our creed speaking LDE competition, we had a total of 6 participants with our winning pair of students Eliana Groben and Ava who will be competing at districts in a few weeks. This past Friday we sent our Floriculture, Milk quality and products judging, Landscaping, meats evaluation, horse evaluation, poultry judging, and livestock evaluation teams to the UCONN fall field day where they competed against a varied number of other teams in our state. We are very proud of our teams, have not been released yet but should be very soon. In upcoming events: November 25 we have our IMAGE workshop. December 3 we have our alumni wreath making night. Saturday December 7th we have our holiday plant sale and pet adoption. In conclusion, I'd like to say thank you for your time and all the support we have received from you, our program would not be as successful without your help.

SAE presentation: Anna Demagistris presented her SAE. She does her SAE at Clover Nook Farm in Bethany. She works with transplanting plants, planting in the fields, working the register at the farm stand and talking with people which has been a great experience readying her for college. She also participates in competitive Bass Fishing in catch and release tournaments and regular tournaments. She likes the idea of the catch and release because they keep the fish in their proper area which is better for them and their environments. Hannah plans to pursue her college education at University of New Haven majoring in Forensics.

Introductions of members, staff, and stakeholders – All members at the meeting introduced themselves.

Recruitment Video Suggestions – Mr. Birkenberger goes to all the sending towns in the fall to recruit students for the next school year. With grant money they were able to update the recruitment videos. The old ones were from the 90's. The videos are also posted on social media and he brings them to career nights at different schools as well.

Building Project Updates – Still taking bids, trying to get costs down to within the budget. The sugar house has been incorporated into the storage shed. Hope is to have everything complete for the start of the 2020- 2021 school year.

Determine necessary committees and purpose / Advisory Committee Discussion – The goal is to make sure all towns have representation within the committee. Ms. Kalenauskas wonders who is communicating to the SAE partners to transfer them over to the Shepaug program. Ms. Jedd and Mr. Birkenberger have a great deal of resources to share with Shepaug to get them up and going. Ms. Ayers asked if this is the first year for Shepaug, they said yes, and that they are currently running a freshman class only. Shepaug doesn't want to take an SAE business that is working with R14 and pull them to the Shepaug program. Mr. Lewis says, as an employer, that geography matters, students that are close are a benefit because they don't have transportation concerns. Mr. Armbruster talked about how NHS can let the employers know that there is a transition is going on, to keep current students working but understand that students may be coming in from a new school. Ms. Jedd asked if the group could look at the advisory committee list and note what town they are from so she can update her records and be sure that each sending town is represented. Ms. Kalenauskas feels that the members are good resources even if we aren't seeing them at meetings. By keeping and sending out the meeting minutes the members are kept up to date with what is going on. Ms. Kalenauskas asked the committee needs to identify which towns do not have representation and then come back to the committee with suggestions on who can fill in the gaps. Mr. Lewis recommends reaching out to past graduates for feedback. Mr. Belinsky does a 5-year survey after graduation, perhaps adding a question about attending advisory meetings could be a part of that survey. Mr. Stone suggests actual phone calls can be more effective than emails. Moving forward the "action items" will be put into the body of the email when the minutes are distributed, not as attachment. Phone calls will be looked into and Ms. Jedd will work on the script to discuss the importance of the meeting. Jenn spoke about adult education options.

SAE placement committee – Ms. Miller asked if we had a FAQ flyer. Mr. Lewis said that we need to educate the employers on what students can or cannot do.

Student outreach committee – Grip and Grin – Ms. Kalenauskas explained the program – what students need to do, how to be a good employee, soft skills, resume creation. The dates for the Grip and Grin need to be included in the action items to go over the needs and committee members needed to get involved. Must be done in small groups. Helps talk students through how to work through their SAE's. Teachers feel like the grip and grin are positive, Mr. DiMarco gave evidence and the students do appreciate the program. Send call to action to Alumni list. Mr. DiMarco will handle.

Discussion – Ms. Kalenauskas would like to see presentations to the sending towns Boards of Education about what is going on in the VoAg program. This should involve the committee members and students from the sending town. It's important that the towns see why that money is money well spent. Eric B spoke about the limit some towns have.

Other Business - Dates for future meeting and calls to action will be listed in the body of the communication emails. Lori form Shepaug – Saturday, November 23rd from 9-11 there will be an open house to tour their facility.

Public Comment - none

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Karen Daley,



Regional School District 14

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Karen Daley, 11/22/19