

Minutes of the FFA Advisory of the Board of Education
Regional School District 14 www.ctreg.org
Tuesday, January 21, 2020

Start: 7:02 pm End: 9:06 pm

In attendance were: Karen Kalenauskas, Tom DiMarco, Jennifer Jedd, Dr. Ira Stone, George Lyman, George Dietrich, David Golembeski, Eric Birkenberger, Ron Bridge, Susan Bedron, Marisa Bedron, Ed Belinsky, Tyler Cremeans, Andrew Zielinski, Liz Webb, Jennifer Ayers, Laura Miller, David Carey, Michael Lavoie and BOE Clerk, Karen Daley.

Karen Kalenauskas called the meeting to order 7:02 pm.

Ms. Kalenauskas asked if there were any changes to the minutes from the November 20th meeting. Hearing none, Ms. Kalenauskas requested a motion to approve the minutes. Ron Bridge moved to approve the minutes from November 20, 2019, and seconded by Eric Birkenberger. Motion carried.

FFA Report: The FFA report was given by Anna Graf Chapter President from Seymour.

Since the last meeting the FFA have been involved in the following activities.

Competed at the UConn Fall CDE Field Day on November 15th. The Meat Evaluation team placed 2nd, Horse Judging placed 3rd, and Livestock Judging placed 10th. The teams that placed first and will be moving onto Nationals next year are Landscaping, Poultry Judging and Floriculture. The Forestry CDE team competed at the state competition on November 22nd. They placed fourth. Sent students to the IMAGE workshop held by the state officers on November 25th. This is an awesome event where students worked on their leadership and public speaking skills. Held the Alumni Wreath Making Night on December 4th. Held the Holiday Plant Sale and Pet Adoption on December 7th. At this event the chapter was able to sell plants, pewter ornaments, apparel and our aquaponics class' greens, as well as adopt out dogs and support GradNite. Ran the Holiday Toy Drive from November 18th to December 13th. Attended the December Region 14 Board of Education meeting, where students discussed Nationals events with Board of Education members. Participated in weekly meetings of the Community Service, Chapter Enhancement, NCA, and Scrapbook Committees. The Chapter Enhancement Committee held a Wildfire Medical Supplies Drive with the Connecticut Veterinary Center to benefit animal rescue organizations in Australia. The community really showed up in a big way for this event, so if you participated, thank you.

Officers have:

Attended weekly meetings to discuss the success of past events and plan for future ones. Participated in Alumni Wreath Making Night. Attended the Holiday Plant Sale and Pet Adoption. Facilitated committee meetings weekly. Sent a box of Connecticut-related items to the Warden FFA Chapter in Washington State.

The officers are currently working on:

Various committee projects. Preparing for FFA week in February, including events like the Bowling Social, Faculty Breakfast, and Underclassmen Awards Night.

SAE presentation: Jack Lawlor presented his SAE. Jack works at Kalenauskas Farm and Karen's Lambs LLC. Jack is responsible for feeding and watering the animals at the farm. He also tags and treats, based on their size and weight, the animals on the farm. The alpacas live with the sheep to protect the sheep from predators. Jack specifically enjoys driving the tractors on the farm. During the winter they stay busy fixing things up around the farm like fences, gates and tractors. He has learned a great deal about how to care for and treat animals during his time with his SAE. Jack also works in the shop fixing and cleaning the tractors. Jack's future plans are to work construction with his father. Jack was the recipient of the outstanding sophomore award last year. Ms. Kalenauskas is very proud of all his hard work and she loves the way he takes initiative to attend to things that need to be done before he is asked.

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

Recruitment numbers discussion –

FFA advisory group - Ms. Kalenauskas would like to figure out how to increase the number of representatives on the advisory committee. In the past the Curriculum meeting was very well attended as well as meetings that were focused on grants and funding. A note has been added to the agenda mailing asking any members to send suggestions if they cannot attend the meetings but there were not any suggestions sent prior to this meeting. In the future all of the upcoming meeting dates will be included on the bottom of all the minutes and agendas. Some suggestions to increase attendance were a pot luck or moving the meeting to 6:00 or 6:30. The committee agreed to try an earlier meeting time next school year. Some suggestions for the Agenda email were to send it out BCC so it doesn't appear to be junk mail and to also send out a reminder email the day before the meeting. Another suggestion was to add quotes from members about why being a part of the committee is important to them. The committee would like to have a flyer to distribute to people they meet along the way in their daily interactions to recruit them to become a member. A suggestion was to look at past attendance and see if anyone on this list hasn't attended in some time, if this is the case a member could follow up with a phone call to let them know that they are still needed on the committee. Work should be done to be sure that each sending town has a representative that is present at the advisory committee meetings.

Recruitment numbers Students – Application numbers are in for this year. 106 applications were received for out of district students, 3 of which were upperclassman. The numbers are good as there are 65 out of district spots to fill. There will be some rejections by students who choose not to go at which point the team will review the wait list and call up other students who were not originally chosen. With these numbers it can be expected that there will be a waiting list of about 20 students who wanted to be in the program but there is not space for. Recruitment efforts are shown to have pay off. Towns are required to allow recruitment efforts but it is up to them on how much time is given to recruit and how they allow our team to do the recruitment. Videos can be a great way, if there isn't much time, to meet with the students from the sending towns. Recruitment can also happen outside of the schools where students who may be interested in the program are spending their time outside of school. There is a network of home school students that should be looked into, educating faculty and staff about the Ag program to help understand what goes on in the program is another way. Members can attend PTO meetings at the middle schools to give out information about the program. When Mr. Belinsky went to do recruiting at the sending schools he brought a student from that town with him. 4H, sporting events, camps and private schools could all be places to recruit new student and advisory committee Local realtors could be educated on which towns are sending towns to the VoAg program so they can inform their clients on which schools are options for them. As of this year 65 out of district students is an agreed upon number that the facilities can hold while still providing a proper Vo-Ag education. Mr. Belinsky would eventually like see the program grow but for now the efforts are to sustain the program with the loss of the sending towns that went to Region 12. The 8th grade VoAg open house is where any students who have any interest can come look at the program. The 8th grade open house may be an opportunity to bring in the community as well to see what is going on in the Ag program and possibly recruit committee members. Community demonstrations may be another way to get the public in to see the program and get families interested. The celebration of 100 years of the Agriculture program in Woodbury is planned for the last weekend of August the 28th-30th, 2020.

BOE Meeting Visits - Mr. Belinsky stressed again that it is important to get students, advisory committee members and teachers out to Board of Education meetings in the sending towns. The goal of the committee is to get 2 members from each sending town on the FFA Advisory Committee. A schedule will be planned for the visits to the Board of Education for each town and then the group will work on making sure that each visit has one or two students, a teacher and an advisory committee member. Watertown, Naugatuck, and Southbury/Middlebury will be the first focus.

Grip and Grin – The Grip and Grins will be February 11th and 12th for the Freshman and these are adequately staffed by members of the committee. Sophomores are February 18th and 19th and members are needed to assist with these sessions. They are large groups for both days but more so on the 19th with 58 students in the group. The

groups should be around 10-12 students and it works well with 2 adults with each group. Ms. Jedd will reach out again to recruit adults to work with the students. The grip and grin teaches the students how to go out and look for a job and what skills they need to work on to do that. Jenn Ayers will attend the Alumni meeting to look for grip and grin participants from the community. Mr. Birkenberger would like to see less focus on the resume and more on the personal skills for the Freshman. Sophomore teachers would like to see less on the slideshow and more on scenario based role play if possible. This role play would need to be geared to the students particular SAE's. Teaching students how to effectively communicate with their employers and how to communicate what they need to be working on at their SAE if they are not doing it are important skills. Phone skill are also a key focus for these sessions.

CDE's – Ms. Jedd is looking for a list of resources of community members who may be able to help with some of the CDE's. The students enjoy having community members come in for the afterschool programs and the specialized knowledge is a huge asset to the students. The students tend to be flexible with their time if it is something that they are interested in. Resources will be provided to the leaders of the group and the teachers will work to get the volunteers to get the best result for the students. The Fall CDE's are Forestry, Horse Evaluation, Livestock Evaluation, Poultry Evaluation, Nursery/Landscape. The Spring CDE's are Milk Quality, Ag Sales, Employment Skills, Ag Mechanics, Ag Communications, Environment and Natural Resources, Food Science, Veterinary Science, Marketing Plan, Quiz Bowl (Not a national CDE), Prepared Public Speaking/Extemporaneous Public Speaking?, Safe Tractor Driving (Not a national CDE), Ag Issues, Aquaculture (Not a national CDE).

SAE Master List – To be review at the next meeting on Tuesday, March 24, 2020.

Other Business - The focus for the March meeting will be continuing the recruitment conversation for students and Advisory committee members. Dates for meetings for next school year. The vision for the program in 1, 3, 5 and 10 years. How to set Region 14 apart from other VoAg programs in the area.

Public Comment - none

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:06 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Karen Daley,



Regional School District 14

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Karen Daley, 1/28/2020

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 24, 2020 – 7:00 pm.