

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held March 20, 2017 at the Board of Education Room, 67 Washington Avenue, Woodbury, Connecticut.

Present: Board members: Michael Devine, Carol Ann Brown, George Bauer, Maryanne Van Aken, Janet Morgan, Pam Zmek, Superintendent Dr. Anna Cutaia, Interim Director of Finance and Operations Ed Arum, Administrators Mike Rafferty, Kim Culkin, Christina Fensore, and BOE clerk, Natascha Schwartz. Also in attendance were Towns of Woodbury & Bethlehem Selectmen & Finance, approximately 4 members of the community and Mike Preato of CT Voices.

Missing: David Lampart, John Chapman

### **1. Call to Order**

Ms. Morgan called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

### **2. Pledge of Allegiance**

Ms. Morgan led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **3. Presentation of the Superintendent's Proposed 2018-19 Budget**

Dr. Anna gave a budget presentation to the Boards of Selectmen & Finance from the towns of Woodbury and Bethlehem along with a printout of the recommended budget.

Dr. Anna introduced Mr. Ed Arum as the interim Director of Finance, who is sitting in for Mr. McAllister and handed the meeting over to him to share updates to the budget books that were given out to the Towns prior to tonight's meeting. Mr. Arum handed out a spreadsheet showing the excess cost information of what was discussed last year in regards to giving back the funds to the Towns in revenue if the region were to receive the money from the State. This year the excess cost will be \$387,823. The State sends the amount in 2 installments; the district received \$290,000 in February and the balance is to come in May. We will add that amount to the revenue for next year. Right now the revenue shows as \$3,046,257 and \$387,823 will be added to bring the total revenue to \$3,434,080, the net budget to the Towns is \$30,703,322.

### **4. Discussion of Superintendent's Proposed 2018-19 Budget**

Q: Steve Sordi of Bethlehem commented that as the enrollment percentages change from year to year and wanted to know if the monies from last year are moved and calculated at this year's percentages or do the towns just receive a refund/deduction off of what the towns send to the district?

A: Mr. Arum explained that it will be a reduction to the overall increase in both towns by adding to revenue that is in the budget.

Q: Mr. Assard asked if the excess revenue is for next year and how is it being handled?

A: Mr. Arum said it is for next year and as per usual, is netted out in next year's budget.

Q: Bill Monti asked is the giveback figured out of current year's % or next year's.

A: Mr. Arum said it would be for next year

Bill Monti commented that State statute requires that the BOE take surpluses in appropriation lines and apply to the following year, and there is no mention of revenue surplus. He went on to advise that he didn't have any objection to apply to next year but wanted the BOE to verify if the region must give it back this year. Dr. Anna advised that the Business office will verify with the State to see if the region can use this as revenue surplus.

Q: Mr. Sordi asked what the reason is for including the amount in revenue rather than deciding to add it to the budget for next year?

A: Mr. Arum advised that it is just a different way of accounting and by taking it as revenue, each town will receive a deduction to the payment amount that will be owed.

Q: Len Assard advised that there is a bill before legislature for an increase in appropriation from the State to Voag. He wanted to know if legislation doesn't pass this, how the BOE will treat this.

A: Dr. Anna and Ms. Morgan advised that the BOE hasn't discussed it as of yet.

Mr. Assard advised that the town would rather see it recognized this year rather than being a surplus for the following year.

Mr. Arum gave information on preschool. He went back to the last 3 years and took the October 1<sup>st</sup> numbers on each year. In 2015, as the preschool was STAR preschool, there were more pre k students enrolled:

2015	Bethlehem 11	Woodbury 37
2016	Bethlehem 11	Woodbury 26
2017	Bethlehem 8	Woodbury 13

Mr. Sordi of Bethlehem would like to see the pre k financials – Ms. Morgan advised that the region would get that to him.

Q: Lenny Assard asked if pre k is part of the enrollment numbers in elementary? In the event the region has to add a teacher to a grade, are there any thoughts of bringing kids in from another district and if yes would it be on a tuition basis? He also asked if the BOE has met with Mayor of Waterbury.

A: Dr. Anna advised that they have not spoken to the Mayor to date and the BOE and Dr. Anna have not discussed this at all. The discussion would need to be much larger than just money.

Q: Alex de Sorbo of Woodbury was wondering why the region decided to put \$88K into a new culinary program, losing STEAM, and that the region is only investing \$12K into Math?

A: Dr. Anna advised that there is a lot more that goes into Math that is not identified in a numerical sense. Culinary is completely offset by STEAM. She wanted culinary last year and believed it would be created as a through line of career preparedness, and because the region wrote a math and science curriculum, they were able to roll STEAM into that curriculum. In another slide it shows that there is an instructional leader who will also be doing WMS work and the Director of Teaching and Learning is in school every week and that salary is not on there either.

Q: Dave Butkus of Bethlehem wanted more information on the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade possibility of going to 3 classrooms. He wanted to know if we could move the lines that define which school students go to balance out students in schools.

A: Dr. Anna said that there are a standard set of roads that were already established before she arrived and Mr. Sordi did advise that the line has changed from time to time. The BOE could certainly have a dialogue as an option. It could come in at a good time since DAC will be conducting a demographics assessment.

Q: George Hale of Woodbury said he received letter from a 4<sup>th</sup> grade constituent stating that he is not satisfied with the condition of outdoor basketball court at MES and can we please look into it?

A: Dr. Anna advised that it is not in the plans for maintenance in the coming year but will have someone look into it and get back to him.

Mr. DeSorbo wanted to make a point that student enrollment is down approximately 10% over the past 3 years. He understands the point of shift of application of revenue from this year, but has a problem with having money going back into the town general fund rather than going straight back to the citizens. He would prefer that the money stay in the education budget and not get used for things other than education.

Mr. Assard stated that the Boards of Finance have control of how the money is spent.

Bill Monti of Woodbury commented that the key is to determine if giving money back as region as proposed is legal and in accordance with the statutes, because it is a revenue surplus.

Q: Steve Sordi of Bethlehem asked the BOE to look at page 59 of town budget book which shows an included amount of 0.8826 for entitlement factor, how did they come up with the number?

A: Mr. Arum advised that like excess cost, each district sends in their form to the State. As an example: the State is only funding 74%. The Vo-Ag entitlement of 88.26% represents the funds for all districts. It will total \$9,972,873 instead of \$11,299,200.

Q: Mr. Desorbo asked what the plan is for the \$36M payback.

A: The finance committee will be looking at debt service options and will make a recommendation to the BOE.

#### **5. Adjournment**

Ms. Van Aken *moved to adjourn and seconded by Mr. Bauer.* **Motion carried unanimously 6-0-0.**  
Meeting was adjourned at 8:25pm

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, 4/12/2018