

A Special Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held Monday, May 23, 2016 in the library at Nonnewaug High School, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, Connecticut.

Present: Board members George Bauer, Carol Ann Brown, Charles Cosgriff, Michael Devine, Janet Morgan, Mary Ann Van Aken and Pamela Zmek. Also present were Region 14 administrators Dr. Anna Cutaia-Leonard, Wayne McAllister, Alice Jones, Eric Bergeron, Susan Ruddock, Holly Wrenn, Kim Culkin, Michael Rafferty, Bill Nemece, Susan Greene, Pamela Sordi, and Jodie Roden; about fifteen members of the community, and board clerk Deb Carlton.

Absent: John Chapman

Mr. Bauer called the meeting to order at 7:31 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Dr. Cutaia-Leonard provided a list of recommended reductions to the budget. She described them as ones that stay away from kids, still inspire excellence, and allow the district to catch up, accelerate growth and begin to fill in gaps. Savings can be realized, she said, without touching new programming and maintaining the integrity of those plans.

Board members weighed in on the proposed cuts.

Ms. Morgan felt the gym mats replacement should stay in, as that is a safety issue.

Mr. Bauer and Mr. Devine agreed.

Mr. Bauer asked and received confirmation that the tech lease savings would be created by restructuring payment, and there would be no loss of services.

Ms. Morgan asked for clarification that other providers would be looked at for the services currently offered to us by Social Sentinel.

Ms. Zmek asked how the condition of the gym mats were assessed, and was told our PE teachers gave that information. She also asked whether it is known that other companies will offer better rates than Social Sentinel.

Ms. Van Aken could not support cutting Social Sentinel, and she also asked to keep freshman orientation, as a way to engage kids as they enter the high school.

Mr. Bauer favored staying with Social Sentinel while doing research on other options, and keeping the gym mat replacement dollars.

Mr. Cosgriff agreed with keeping Social Sentinel while doing research, and with keeping freshman orientation to create a positive environment for incoming students.

Ms. Morgan reviewed a list of line items with corresponding questions, and identified one on p.111 that had not been spent in prior years and that could potentially fund freshman orientation.

Mr. Devine asked clarifying questions about the savings for auditing services.

Ms. Morgan raised concerns about the swim team, reporting that community members had identified that as a reason for voting the budget down.

Ms. Van Aken urged staying away from cuts that affect kids, and activities that keep kids engaged.

Mr. Bauer agreed, feeling that the high school had done its homework, the cost is reasonable and a great opportunity for kids.

Mr. Devine had also heard from the community that the swim team is a want and not a need. He feels the gym mat replacement and Social Sentinel meet the needs of more students.

Ms. Brown expressed concern over the liability of having our students swimming off campus.

Dr. Cutaia-Leonard reminded the Board that we are 14 months in to exploring this proposal. Surveys have been done, names of student swimmers in grades 3-12 have been identified, and due diligence has been done.

Mr. Bauer cautioned about the effect of families leaving the district if there is no team for their students.

The financial impact of the budget was analyzed with/without the swim team; it was determined to have a 0.07% impact on the total increase.

Moving funds from tech repair/maintenance and district wide trash was seen as a way to fund freshman orientation.

Moving \$16,000 back in to the budget for Social Sentinel and the gym mats was favored.

This brought the increase to 0.89% and net impact to towns to -\$42,530 for Bethlehem and +\$67,078 for Woodbury.

Mr. Bauer requested the following: *Move that the Board of Education approve and adopt the Superintendent's proposed budget with modifications as identified for the fiscal year 2016-2017 in the amount of \$33,028,116 as presented to the Board.* Entered by Ms. Van Aken and seconded by Mr. Cosgriff. Mr. Bauer noted this budget represents a reduction of \$126,290 and is a 0.89% increase over the current year's budget.

Ms. Zmek expressed satisfaction with the budget.

Mr. Devine still wanted to consider removing the funds for the swim team.

Ms. Morgan asked about funding the team by half. Costs for the team were identified as: \$14,000 for the pool rental, \$3,300 for officials and lifeguards, and \$7,700 for coaches. Transportation would not be included for the team.

The **motion carried 4-3**, with Mr. Bauer, Mr. Cosgriff, Ms. Van Aken and Ms. Zmek voting yes, and Ms. Brown, Ms. Morgan and Mr. Devine voting no.

Mr. Bauer requested the following: *Move that the Board of Education schedule a District Meeting for Monday June 6, 2016, at 7:30 pm, at Nonnewaug High School in Woodbury, CT concerning the 2016-2017 budget, with said Meeting to be adjourned to a referendum on Tuesday, June 7, 2016 from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm in the towns of Bethlehem and Woodbury, CT.* Entered by Ms. Van Aken and seconded by Ms. Zmek, the **motion carried 7-0**.

Mr. Bauer requested the following: *Move that the Secretary of the Board of Education is authorized, in such official's discretion, to prepare and to cause to be printed and distributed explanatory text regarding the 2016-2017 budget referendum scheduled for June 7, 2016, with such explanatory text subject to the review and approval of the District's legal counsel and to be prepared and distributed in accordance with Section 9-369b of the Connecticut General Statutes.* Entered by Ms. Van Aken and seconded by Ms. Zmek, the **motion carried 7-0**.

Ms. Van Aken entered a *motion to adjourn*. Seconded by Ms. Zmek, the **motion carried 7-0**.

The special meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 9:09 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol Ann Brown, Secretary
Regional School District 14 Board of Education

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Debra W. Carlton, Board Clerk, 5/26/16