

A Special Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held Tuesday, April 12, 2016 in the Nonnewaug High School Library Media Center, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, Connecticut.

Present: Board members George Bauer, Carol Ann Brown, Charles Cosgriff, Michael Devine, Janet Morgan and Maryanne Van Aken. Also, Wayne McAllister, Kim Culkin, Michael Rafferty, board clerk Deb Carlton, one member of the public and one member of the press.

Absent: John Chapman and Pamela Zmek

The meeting was called to order at 7:54 pm by Mr. Bauer, who then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Bauer began with a brief statement expressing confidence and satisfaction with the budget and budget process. The proposed budget identifies programmatic improvements for next year, but also includes long term planning and cost neutral improvements. The Superintendent has been aggressive in terms of staff reductions while working to improve teaching and learning.

Mr. McAllister was asked to share new information, as of this afternoon, detailing changes to the Educational Cost Sharing Grant (ECS) and resulting changes to the impact to the two towns in budget distribution. After review of the documents, Mr. Bauer asked Board members for comments.

Mr. Devine did not expect this curveball and wondered if waiting to adopt the budget until the most correct numbers came from the state made sense. He also reviewed issues raised at last night's public hearing, and his fellow board members commented on those, as well.

Ms. Brown also expressed concern over these new numbers from the state and the way they keep going up and down. She worried they could change again.

Ms. Van Aken reminded the Board that the budget process began in October, and has included taking it on the road to the people. She cautioned against 11th hour panic over the ECS, which she perceives a moving target. She urged the Board to remain focused; their job is to put forth and pass a reasonable budget. To this point, no one has suggested any cuts; the budget is tied to BoE goals, the board should allow the taxpayers to speak.

Mr. Cosgriff expressed confidence in the budget, prepared by the Superintendent the Board hired to help us, and put together with guidance from people who know what they're doing, and who are looking to get the most for what we can afford. He sees the district achieving more in more efficient ways. The ECS news is unfortunate, and we need to get our voices to Hartford to get relief and help, not more regulations.

Ms. Morgan does not see the ECS issue ending tonight; it's a moving target that could change throughout the season and something the Board cannot control. She urged backing what the Board believes is a good budget, supporting it as presented, and not putting that off.

The Board discussed the timeline moving toward the statutorily required 5/3/16 referendum date. Considerations for ballot printing and noticing were discussed, and how much time could actually be bought by delaying approval tonight.

Ms. Van Aken entered the following: *Move that the Board of Education approve and adopt the Superintendent's proposed budget for the fiscal year 2016-2017 in the amount of \$33,154,406 as presented to the Board.* Second by Mr. Cosgriff.

Motion carried 6-0.

Mr. Bauer requested the following:

Move that the Board of Education schedule the Annual District Meeting for Monday, May 2, 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, May 3, 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 Mr. Cosgriff, **motion carried 6-0.**

Ms. Van Aken entered a *motion to adjourn*, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff. **Motion carried 6-0.**

The special meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 8:36 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

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