

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held on Monday, November 18, 2013 at Nonnewaug High School, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, Connecticut.

Present: Superintendent Jody Ian Goeler; Board members George Bauer, Carol Ann Brown, John Chapman, Charles Cosgriff, Janet Morgan, John Swendsen, and Maryanne Van Aken; Director of Finance and Operations Wayne McAllister; Director of Instruction Susan Domanico; NHS Student Representative Stephanie Lewis; WMS Principal Alice Jones, Assistant Principal Eric Bergeron, and faculty members Mary Louise Barta, Eileen Carey and Kim Musket; NHS Principal Andrew O'Brien and faculty members Sue Rossner, John Dominello and Conor Gereg; NHS Senior Class President Jonas Berry; Energy Specialist Lisa Gombos, Director of Buildings/Grounds Mike Molzon and Cenergistic Energy Consultant Matthew Stellar; and Board Clerk Deb Carlton

Absent: Board member Sophieazane Bartlett

Audience members included: Bethlehem BoF member Mike Devine, R14 faculty members Kate Peterson and Katie Yocis, and about 8 additional members of the public.

I. Call to Order

Mr. Chapman called the meeting to order at 7:36 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Presentations

Mr. Chapman invited Ms. Jones to present Region 14's Finest Awards for Woodbury Middle School. Ms. Jones spoke of WMS as a special place for kids, a rich academic environment with a great and caring staff. She recognized three faculty members who go well above and beyond what they are expected to do and are always thinking of "one more thing" they can offer students. Describing the extensive and thoughtful planning that went into a recent school-wide trip to the CT Science Museum, she honored Ms. Barta, Ms. Carey and Ms. Musket. On behalf of the Board, Ms. Brown presented certificates to all three and read the personalized message included on them, and the Board and audience responded with a standing ovation for the teachers.

Ms. Gombos and Mr. Stellar acknowledged the efforts of the BoE, administration and every staff member for making it possible for the district to save \$1,318,805 on energy costs and to sustain the effort over time. Ms. Gombos accepted a plaque on behalf of the district. Mr. Molzon thanked a number of people who assisted in the district's success and was able to elicit some excitement and applause for the achievement.

Mr. Goeler read the press release provided by the College Board for Nonnewaug's inclusion in this year's AP Honor Roll. Mr. O'Brien offered a powerpoint detailing statistics on NHS's AP courses demonstrating both increasing participation among students – up 32% since 2011 and comprising as many as 25% of the total senior class - and their success on AP tests. In turn, he welcomed Ms. Rossner, who spoke about courses offered at NHS and teachers who have been committed to teaching them for many years; Mr. Gereg, who spoke of the practical savings to families when college credit is earned during high school, as well as the open enrollment policy at NHS which allows any student to attempt an AP, not just those on an "AP track"; and Mr. Dominello, who spoke about the number of AP scholars NHS has produced, and who credited AP teachers for getting kids into the schools of their choice. Jonas commented that AP classes are all about the teachers and NHS has great teachers and great AP classes. He told of the upcoming academic pep rally, on 11/27, that he would like to see become an annual event. There will be a physics demonstration, music and, who knows, maybe even iambic pentameter raps. Mr. O'Brien invited the Board to attend if possible, noting that Angelo Casagrande will be honored for 14 years teaching AP European History, Leeza Desjardins for 18 years teaching AP Art, and Mary Ann Martins for 24 years teaching AP English Literature before turning that class over to Mr. Gereg this year.

III. Review of Minutes

Mr. Chapman requested a *motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 4, 2013*. Entered by Mr. Cosgriff and seconded by Ms. Van Aken, the motion carried 6-0-1 with Ms. Morgan abstaining.

IV. Correspondence

Mr. Goeler acknowledged two items of correspondence: one from Art McNally regarding the Common Core, and one from Karen Miller to which he responded with the information she requested.

V. Report from the Chairman

Mr. Chapman commented on how satisfying it was to hear the three presentations this evening and how fortunate he feels to serve on the Board and represent the community, to see resources well used, and to see the fruits of that on display. The energy and volunteer hours on the part of the school staff in growing programs is contagious.

VI. Report from the Superintendent

Mr. Goeler congratulated the soccer and field hockey teams for successful post seasons and has also enjoyed watching the football team giving it their all. He reported meeting with Ms. Brown, Will Michael and Paul Ciotti regarding NEAT TV and has made good strides in working to improve programming. He urged keeping a look out for the SRO roundtable discussion. He also enjoyed the BES Flay Day celebration, noting participation by the Cuccia family. He attended a DMC conference in Boston along with Kim Culkin and Ms. Domanico and many other districts from around the country and gained context for the report we will soon receive from them. He attended the CABE/CAPSS convention along with Mr. Bauer, and also met today with the editor of *Voices* about ways to increase our presence in that publication.

Stephanie reported on various activities in the four schools. At BES, a second spirit day, Halloween dance and writing celebration; at MES, a Mad Hatter ball, study of Native American culture and student council elections; at WMS, a school-wide trip to CT Science Museum, a Warrior celebration, support of breast cancer awareness month with \$500 raised; and, at NHS, food donation from Trick or Treat Street, SATs on 11/2, Homecoming dance, karaoke night, FBLA collection for Philippine relief, and upcoming academic pep rally on 11/27.

Ms. Domanico commented that it is practically a full time job traveling to all the meetings she attends, and doesn't know how Mr. Goeler did it. She spoke about an online assessment workshop, Ed Connection Curriculum Council, CAPSS Executive District Leaders Roundtable, and CSDE Assessment Literacy Workshop that four of our staff will attend, too. In district, she is proceeding with rollout of an assessment tool called MAP – Measures of Academic Progress; updating elementary report cards; aligning elementary reading units; and reviewing school improvement plans. Mr. Chapman asked if MAP is similar to Smarter Balance assessments and was told it is.

Mr. Bauer added a few comments about the CABE/CAPSS convention, where the theme was keeping the focus on student growth during a time of great change. Dannel Malloy and Stephan Pryor spoke to CT related initiatives and there were national speakers, as well. BoE operational issues were covered, as well as evaluation, and learning environments with heightened security; also, climate, 21<sup>st</sup> Century leadership, networking, and the current state of education.

Stephanie commented that she attended the convention on Saturday, and found it very interesting to see what other schools do.

VII. Privilege of the Floor (agenda specific)  
None.

VIII. Report from Director of Finance and Operations

Mr. McAllister recognized Mr. Molzon as the hub of the wheel that makes energy conservation roll; his leadership makes it happen.

He gave an update on legal fees associated with the two lawsuits. The figure through September is \$23,673.92 with an additional October bill of \$8,678.74 for the Litchfield case, and \$9,592 for Waterbury. He gave a YTD figure of \$41,944.66 for the building referendum lawsuits, and also indicated we are approaching our budgeted amount for all legal fees for the fiscal year.

Mr. Bauer confirmed that legal fees numbers are complete for Litchfield, but that more are expected for Waterbury. Ms. Van Aken would like numbers for the two cases broken out from the start.

Mr. Chapman confirmed that Mr. McAllister is studying the impact these bills will have on the 2013-14 budget.

IX. Committee Reports

For Policy, Mr. Swendsen and his committee met on 11/12. A number of policies in the 1000 series were ok as is and were added to the website. A number of others are under review by the committee for possible revisions and still others may be deleted. Next meeting 12/10.

For Public/Community Relations, Ms. Brown reported that her committee met tonight and is working on increasing programming on NEAT TV – there are a number of new short films on there now that she recommended. She reported participation by one of her committee's community members at the welcoming school initiative at NHS, and also reminded everyone of the upcoming safety update meetings, which are open houses of a sort for community members. She feels R14 is ahead of the game on security. Next meeting 12/16.

For Facilities, Ms. Morgan's committee was blocked out by the holiday and will resume regular meetings on 12/9.

For Finance, Mr. Bauer and his committee will also resume meetings on 12/9.

Ms. Van Aken reported that the Ad hoc Safety Committee will meet this Friday at noon.

For Negotiations, Mr. Cosgriff noted that administrator negotiations are ongoing; mediation is scheduled for 12/9.

X. Old Business

A. Revision to Board Bylaw 9321(a)

Mr. Chapman requested a *motion to discuss revisions to Bylaw 9321(a)*. Entered by Ms. Van Aken and seconded by Mr. Cosgriff, the motion carried 7-0. Mr. Goeler explained that legal counsel had recommended removing language about date/time/place of meetings as none of these is required. This would eliminate the requirement of meeting on first and third Mondays although, for the most part, that will still be done. It would allow flexibility for moving a meeting date when conflicts occur. The Board reviewed a revised version of the bylaw, after which Ms. Van Aken entered a *motion to accept the revision to Board Bylaw 9321*. Seconded by Mr. Cosgriff, the motion carried 7-0.

B. Approval of 2014 Regular Meeting Dates

The Board had previously received the proposed meeting list. Having revised the bylaw governing meeting dates, Ms. Van Aken entered a *motion to approve the meeting list for 2014 with the following changes: 5/20/14 in place of 5/19/14, and 11/18/14 in place of 11/17/14; the motion was further clarified to change 7/14/14 to 7/7/14*.

Second by Mr. Cosgriff. Mr. Bauer noted that meetings to take place at BES are already identified.

Motion carried 7-0.

XI. New Business

Mr. Chapman expanded on the thoughts behind deciding to dedicate more time to the important discussion of school improvement plans. At minimum, he would like to see two nights, one for WMS/NHS and a second for MES/BES. Comparing and contrasting the elementary schools will have value, and grouping the upper schools together is also a reasonable approach. Ms. Van Aken wondered if these would be done at the 2 December meetings. Mr. Goeler indicated everyone is ready, so that can certainly happen.

XII. Board Announcements  
None.

XIII. Privilege of the Floor

Karen Miller, Bethlehem, read from a prepared letter, attached.

XIV. Adjournment

Mr. Chapman requested a *motion to adjourn*.  
Entered by Ms. Van Aken and seconded by Mr. Bauer, the motion carried 7-0.

The meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

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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, 11/21/13

Karen s. Miller  
287 Main street North  
Bethlehem, CT 06751  
November 18, 2013

Dr. Jody Ian Goeler  
Regional School District #14 Board of Education  
PO Box 469  
Woodbury, CT 06798

Dear Dr. Goeler and Board Members:

First of all, thank you Mr. Bauer for asking the key question of the attorney at the last board meeting: Could the board vote to nullify the vote for the Nonnewaug High School referendum? Unfortunately, the lawyer did not tell you the case law indicating who could declare the vote invalid. The letter from Art McNally very nicely explains this. "The Woodbury Board of Selectmen and the Bethlehem Board of Selectmen could have voted at a regular or special meeting to declare the vote invalid"

Also, thank you Jody for not only sending my request for an organizational chart via e-mail, but also USPS since the e-mail copy was not legible.

I am sure that some of you with a business background recognize the importance of an organizational chart. How a business is organized can mean the difference between success and failure. It also shows "at a glance" where money is being spent on personnel.

The "organizational chart" I received, at best, would be the top page of an organizational chart. An organizational chart should, at the minimum, list all the positions of everyone who works for a company/organization and the number of people in that position, e.g. number of fourth grade teachers in the elementary schools and the number of math teachers in the high school and etc. It would be best if it showed the number of classes per teacher in the middle and high school and number of students per class in the elementary schools. With about 75% of the school budget being for personnel, I believe for the school board and the public to truly see how their tax dollars are being spent, a detailed organizational chart is necessary.

There have been rumors that the board would be looking into having K-8 at the elementary schools. Is this being done? If not, will it be done?

Does the board have a special committee or have they directed the administration to look into ways of reducing the costs while improving the quality of education? Possible ways of doing this might be:

- K-8 at the elementary schools.

- On-line education at all ages.

- Co-teaching: 2 teachers / classroom in the elementary grades and increase the class size to 45-50. Just to list a few advantages, this would give more flexibility to class assignments, students would have two different teachers to relate to, a more seasoned teacher could be paired with a less seasoned teacher, the teachers would like it as they would have less prep time, and etc.

Eliminating small student classes in the high school – perhaps send to community college or  
Skyping from another school, or online class.

Where a teacher at the high school just repeats a class, have larger classes and offer student /  
adult tutoring. This frees the teacher to teach additional classes and also prepares students  
for college as this is how many colleges handle the general education classes. (The one room  
schools worked very well with the older students helping the younger students.)

After school programs in technical areas or other academics not usually offered. Possibly the  
students could still receive credit.

Hopefully this board will think “outside of the box” and do what was suggested to them at the first  
meeting this fall: Direct.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen S. Miller".

Karen S. Miller