

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held on Monday, October 7, 2013 at Nonnewaug High School, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, Connecticut.

Present: Superintendent Jody Ian Goeler; Board members George Bauer, Carol Ann Brown, Charles Cosgriff, Janet Morgan, John Swendsen, and Maryanne Van Aken; Director of Finance and Operations Wayne McAllister; Director of Instruction Susan Domanico; and Board Clerk Deb Carlton

Absent: Board members John Chapman and Sophiezzane Bartlett

Audience members included: Bethlehem BoF member Mike Devine, one member of the press, and 5 additional members of the public

I. Call to Order

Ms. Van Aken called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Review of Minutes

Ms. Van Aken requested a *motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 16, 2013*. Entered by Mr. Swendsen and seconded by Mr. Cosgriff, the motion carried 5-0-1 with Mr. Bauer abstaining.

III. Correspondence

None.

IV. Report from the Chairman

Ms. Van Aken read the following statement:

Regarding the Arras et al. v. Region 14 case, a hearing on the request for a temporary injunction in the Waterbury case has been scheduled for October 17, 2013. In light of the nature of the claims asserted in this case, we believe this case should be stayed pending the outcome of the Litchfield case. In addition, since Region 14 is not performing any work on the project pending the outcome of the Litchfield action, we do not see the need for a temporary injunction. Regarding the Towns of Bethlehem and Woodbury v. Region 14, the case is ready for trial in Litchfield and, as such, the court will hear this case on October 9, 2013. Post-trial briefs will then be filed and a decision will be issued, hopefully, soon thereafter.

V. Report from the Superintendent

Mr. Goeler reported on a meeting with Ron Pugliese regarding economic development opportunities, and a related meeting with members of the school community. All parties will meet again with Mr. Pugliese on 10/22. He is planning a roundtable discussion with the SROs (School Resource Officers) to be televised and rebroadcast. Mr. Goeler attended 3 of the 4 recent open houses at the schools; participated in the Go the Distance 5k run; met for a brainstorming session with music teachers and representatives from the Music Foundation; and received responses from 7 districts about where they hold BoE meetings. Six of the 7 responding indicate they hold meetings at one location. He will attend the Litchfield trial on Wednesday along with Mr. McAllister. He has received a resignation from Lisa Giroux; and the high school has received a draft of the NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) report. He has an online learning policy for review and input by the high school.

Ms. Domanico reviewed her recent activities, including instructional audits at BES, WMS and NHS; developing a handbook for handling ELL (English Language Learners) responsibilities; met with literacy specialists about core values, job descriptions and assessments; worked on elementary progress report revisions; worked on the consolidated grant application; completed data collection for the ED205 and ELL exit and annual notifications;

organized and facilitated the CPDC (Curriculum and Professional Development Council) launch meeting; researched and formulated a proposal for literacy volunteers; and helped to secure transportation for teachers attending the Columbia reunion in NYC.

**VI. Privilege of the Floor (agenda specific)**

Art McNally, Woodbury, read a prepared statement, attached hereto.

Karen Miller, Bethlehem, reiterated statements from the last meeting about history repeating itself and the district spending a great deal of money on litigation. She hopes the Board will learn from past mistakes and asked how much has been spent on the current suits.

Mr. McAllister was not willing to venture a guess at this point, not having been billed for the total amount.

Ms. Miller asked about the number of merit scholars in Region 14, and then told us that we have 1, whereas her school, which is twice the size and has class sizes of 32, has 4. She stressed the need for equal representation on the BOE, which is why meetings should be held in Bethlehem; she explained that many people in Bethlehem don't have cable and cannot access NEAT TV; asked about online learning and relationships with colleges, and was told of our agreement with Naugatuck Valley Community College; asked about online courses for elementary students and was told of our limited licenses with Odysseyware for enrichment, and that elective offerings can only be considered once required courses are completed; and asked about instructional audits and was told they are snapshots of what is occurring in classes.

Adele Taylor, Woodbury, was interested to hear of open houses and wondered if the public is welcome at these.

Mr. Goeler explained that these are meant as opportunities for parents to meet with their children's teachers.

Ms. Taylor felt that similar open houses, such as the ones done before the building referendum, could help the public be more aware. She asked if the roundtable with SROs is open to the public and would be like a town meeting.

Mr. Goeler said that idea had not been considered; that the purpose would be not a question/answer but more of a conversation. Ms. Taylor said there was initially misunderstanding about the role of the SROs and the roundtable could help the public be aware. She asked how, other than online, minutes can be gotten and how to know what the board will discuss at its next meeting. She was told minutes are available at central office (and the town clerks' offices, as was later suggested).

Mr. Cosgriff urged Ms. Miller to contact both the selectman's office and Charter advisory to report the lack of access to cable in Bethlehem.

Ms. Brown believes 9 out of 10 people in Bethlehem have cable and access to NEAT TV.

Kenneth Schultz, Woodbury, read a prepared statement that expressed he has no doubt that principled leadership would have led to a repeating of the referendum process, and stressed that the appropriate process should always be followed.

Tom Arras, Woodbury, informed Ms. Taylor that minutes are available at town clerks' offices. He also read a prepared statement, attached hereto.

**VII. Report from Director of Finance and Operations**

Mr. McAllister offered year-to-date financial figures showing amounts spent, encumbered and unencumbered. He reviewed/compared amounts spent to the same time in 2012-13 and highlighted significant differences, including transportation (because payments are being made), out-of-district tuition, medical benefits, SROs, and building improvements and equipment. With four active negotiations and two lawsuits, legal fees were also noted.

VIII. Committee Reports

For Policy, Mr. Swendsen indicated the board would approve policies tonight as well as receive a new set for first read. As the policy revision project is on track, he is canceling tomorrow's meeting for lack of business.

For Public/Community Relations, Ms. Brown reported that it was interesting for her to see classrooms during her school visits; she would like to help with ELL students; will pursue the idea of public open houses at schools; indicated the senior/community center is great for advertising what is going on in the schools; she is interested in invigorating the volunteer and readers programs; she realizes the difficulty of filming/broadcasting BoE meetings in Bethlehem; her next meeting will be at 6:30 pm on 10/21.

For Facilities, Ms. Morgan's committee has not met and will next meet on 10/22 at 6:00 pm

For Finance, Mr. Bauer reported on his 9/10 meeting, at which photocopier lease, food service RFP, budget timeline, capital reserve, 2013-14 year to date budget, format for reporting to the public and quarterly reports were discussed. Discussion of website dashboard was tabled, and next meeting is 10/22 at 7 pm

Ms. Van Aken reported that Ad hoc Safety met on 9/27 at noon, discussed emergency operations plans, grant money and how best to spend it, and access controls.

Mr. Cosgriff indicated that administrator negotiations commenced with a business meeting on 10/2. The two sides will meet again on 10/16.

IX. Old Business

The Board approved policies received at the last meeting for first read.

Mr. Swendsen entered a *motion to approve Board policy 4100 Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting*. Second by Mr. Bauer. Discussion followed around sequence of actions around reporting. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Swendsen entered a *motion to approve Board policy 5113 Truancy*. Second by Ms. Morgan. Discussion followed. Mr. Bauer referenced the guidance on p.1 to report to parents when student reaches the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> absence. Ms. Brown asked about habitual truancy subject to local ordinances, and Ms. Morgan indicated our towns do not have those. Mr. Bauer recommended including items 1 and 2 in the policy, and Mr. Swendsen made note of this to communicate to our attorney. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Swendsen entered a *motion to approve Board policy 5112 Attendance*. Second by Mr. Bauer. Ms. Brown noted the age at which the option to withdraw is 17 years; Mr. Bauer indicated it had gone from 16 to 17.

**Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Swendsen entered a *motion to approve Board policy 5141.21 Administering Medication*. Second by Mr. Cosgriff. Mr. Bauer preferred the less stringent self-administering protocol on p. 2 for chronic conditions and recommended approving the policy as written in the initial paragraph. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Swendsen entered a *motion to approve Board policy 5141.21 Administering Medication – Administrative Regulation*. Second by Mr. Bauer. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Swendsen entered a *motion to approve Board policy 5145.5 Unlawful Harassment of Students*. Second by Mr. Bauer. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Swendsen entered a *motion to approve Board policy 5145.52 Student Harassment – Administrative Regulation*. Second by Mr. Cosgriff. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Swendsen entered a *motion to approve Board policy 5145.52 Student Notice of Rights*. Second by Mr. Bauer. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Swendsen entered a *motion to approve Board policy 5145.52 Student Complaint Form*. Second by Mr. Bauer. **Motion carried 6-0.** Ms. Brown objected to the word "alienage."

Mr. Swendsen entered a *motion to approve Board policy 6142.1 Exemption from Instruction*. Second by Mr. Cosgriff. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Swendsen entered a *motion to approve Board policy 6146 Graduation*. Second by Mr. Bauer. Discussion followed. Mr. Bauer noted that graduation requirements had been previously updated from 21 to 23. Beginning with the class of 2016, Mathematics credits go from 3 to 4, and Science credits go from 2 to 3. Additionally, item 2 again references 21 credits and will need to be changed to 23. Mr. Swendsen noted that 2010-11 needs to be changed to 2013-14. Mr. Swendsen amended his earlier motion, entering a *motion to approve Board policy 6146 to include all changes noted*. Mr. Cosgriff seconded the motion, and the **motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Swendsen entered a *motion to approve Board policy 6165 Acceptable Use*. Second by Mr. Bauer. **Motion carried 6-0.**

#### X. New Business

Mr. Cosgriff entered a *motion to approve the NHS trip to Paris, France, 4/12-19, 2014 for approximately 20 students and 2 faculty chaperones, via bus and air travel, funded by students' families and customized by Explorica*. Seconded by Mr. Swendsen, the **motion carried 6-0.**

#### XI. Board Announcements

Ms. Van Aken requested that board members forward to her, or Mr. Chapman, suggested agenda items for the board retreat on 10/26.

#### XII. Privilege of the Floor

Mr. McNally assured the Board he wants the students to get the best education they can get but, as for the Common Core, he asked them to make sure it doesn't go the wrong way. When developing the budget, he asked if the costs associated with each cost center will be identified in order to see which expenses go with each town. He was told they would. He asked about cost for SROs and was directed to line #58, Security. He thanked the board for all they do. He knows he took them to task tonight, but felt he had to.

Ms. Taylor, to Mr. Goeler's earlier comment that participation at Go the Distance seemed higher this year, confirmed it was, and that \$39,000 was raised.

Ms. Miller thanked Mr. Cosgriff for his suggestions regarding cable service. She was referred to line #51 of the budget report for legal fees, and realized she didn't have that page. She noted that Board officers are incorrectly listed on the district website. She recalled an unwritten policy that the chair switches back and forth between the towns each year. She asked when US History is taught and was told in 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade. She asked to review a textbook as she has heard history is being rewritten. Mr. Goeler agreed to have one delivered to Bethlehem to avoid Ms. Miller having to travel all the way to central office.

XIII. Adjournment

Ms. Van Aken requested a *motion to adjourn*. Entered by Ms. Morgan and seconded by Mr. Cosgriff, the motion carried 6-0.

The meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 9:00 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, 10/8/13.

Submission at Region 14 BOE Meeting October 7, 2013

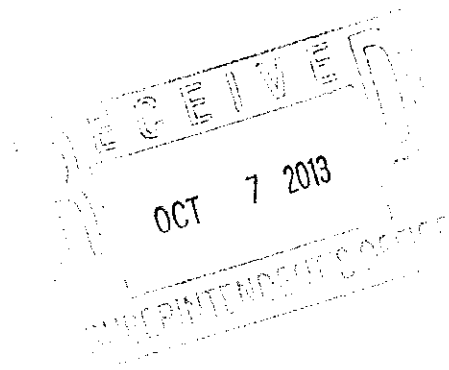
Tonight you have approved the Region 14 BOE Minutes of your meeting of September 16, 2013. Once again, all my questions, as well as the answers given by Chairman Chapman are not reported completely or accurately in the minutes. Not a word about the Illegal High School Rebuilding Vote or the lawsuit, when actually brought and discussed in the meeting. Is this the Board's way of ensuring that what is said at your meetings is given the best slant to the officials running them, as well as not presenting opinions not agreeable to the Board members?

During the September 16<sup>th</sup> meeting VII Privilege of the Floor (agenda specific), I pointed out that my question to Chairman Chapman was reported inaccurately in the minutes for September 3<sup>rd</sup>. I did not say "... and when the Board will take responsibility for the "illegal vote" rather than put the towns through the expense of litigation." It was a matter of content and emphasis. **I asked, Why is the Region 14 BOE putting the towns of Bethlehem and Woodbury, as well as its' residents through the costs of the two (2) lawsuits, when they know the vote was illegal in the first place?** Mr. Chapman did not answer this question directly, which was not reported as stated, but chose to answer a previous question on steps to ensure these errors don't happen again. From the September 3<sup>rd</sup> minutes, "Mr. Chapman indicated that a status report will be given at the next BOE meeting, and that steps for seeing that this type of error does not happen again will include developing and initial/sign off type checklist for QA/QC."

I also asked Mr. Chapman on September 16th, why in his earlier "Report from the Chairman" section of the meeting, he did not address the status of the lawsuits? He stated that he intended to report it later in the meeting. So nothing at this point in the meeting minutes is reported as to what actually happened at the meeting. However, it was covered later under XII. Board Announcements "Mr. Chapman reiterated that there are no changes in the status of the lawsuit(s) and, when there is new information, he will report it." This statement implies he said the same thing earlier in the meeting, which he did, but it is not reported that way.

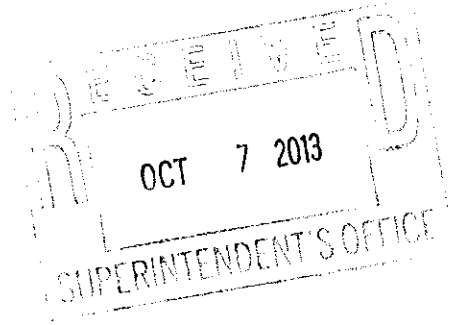
The whole presentation of this issue in the September 3<sup>rd</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes is to gloss over the fact that the Region 14 Superintendent and BOE made an error in not posting a proper Bond Vote Notice, will not admit it and will not drop its' litigation. Perhaps this Wednesday, October 9, 2013 in Bantam, Litchfield County Court, the people of Woodbury and Bethlehem will get some answers and relief.

Arthur F. McNally  
56 Orchard Avenue  
Woodbury, Ct. 06798



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Tom Arras  
PO Box 857  
Woodbury, CT 06798  
203-263-0927  
7 October, 2013



Regional School District # 14 Board of Education,  
PO Box 469  
Woodbury, CT 06798

Dear Board Members:

I'd like to comment on the article "2 lawsuits delay renovations. Referendum vote's validity at hearty of both." By Rick Harrison on October 2, 2013.

Firstly, the fact that the referendum was NOT properly noticed is the reason that any renovations are delayed. It has been admitted that the vote was not properly noticed. Why haven't you decided to scrap the vote results and proceed with another referendum if you deem any of these renovations important? It was a tainted referendum process in which all the legal requirements were NOT met. The results can NOT be valid. Why didn't the previous Board and its chair discuss this in a meeting, and why isn't the current Board and its chair discussing this at a meeting?

You should initiate the process to head towards another referendum if you believe any work is necessary. Perhaps you don't feel you can get such a thing passed if you followed the prescribed process, and that passage stands a better chance when you don't do things right. Could that be true? Do you expect a court to uphold an illegal vote's results? All you are doing at the present is wasting more taxpayer's money when you know you were wrong, while at the same time setting a horrible example for our youth on right versus wrong. Do you wish to teach them by example that it's all right to do anything, legal or not, to achieve their goals? That is what you are in the midst of, and I hope that you are not very proud of that.

Please reconsider and do what most of us know is right.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Tom Arras