

**Minutes of the Public Hearing
Regional School District 14
Towns of Bethlehem and Woodbury**

Date: Wednesday, April 16, 2014

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: Mitchell Elementary School

14 School Street

Woodbury, Connecticut

Present: Board members John Chapman, Maryanne Van Aken, Charles Cosgriff and Carol Ann Brown; Superintendent Jody Goeler; Director of Finance/Operations Wayne McAllister, Principals MaryLou Torre and Alice Jones; Director of Buildings/Grounds Mike Molzon; Director of Network Operation and Technology Paul Ciotti; and Board Clerk Deb Carlton. Also, Bethlehem Selectmen Len Assard and Dave Deakin; Republican-American reporter Rick Harrison; and approximately 12 additional members of the community.

I. Call to Order – John Chapman

Mr. Chapman called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

II. Appointment of Moderator

Mr. Chapman appointed Lou DeLuca to serve at the moderator of the public hearing.

III. Appointment of Meeting Clerk by the Moderator

Mr. DeLuca appointed Carol Ann Brown to serve as the meeting clerk.

IV. Call of the Meeting

Mr. DeLuca read the call of the meeting:

To present and receive questions about the Regional School District 14 Superintendent's proposed budget for 2014-2015

V. Presentation of the Region 14 Budget for the 2014-2015 School Year

Mr. Goeler acknowledged the efforts of Mr. McAllister in preparing the budget, and then read slides on the district's mission statement, core beliefs, strategic planning goals, budget guidelines and reductions before turning the program over to him.

Mr. McAllister detailed how last year's budget funds were spent, highlighting security and technology upgrades and advancements.

He outlined debt service and explained the rationale for a reserve fund to offset the first few years of the building project. He reviewed general fund, personnel changes, class sizes, revenue by source, distribution by town, mill rate impact and, finally, a summary of changes.

VI. Public Comment

Mr. DeLuca invited public comment:

Len Assard, Bethlehem, asked for and received clarification on the debt service reserve fund. Mr. McAllister explained how it would level out the burden to taxpayers during the first few years after the building project is completed, and he reviewed with Mr. Assard the Webster Bank payment summary.

Mr. Assard thanked him, and also noted that the Board had presented a 2.3% budget a week ago, managing now to reduce it to 1%. He knows everyone wants a 0%, but he has not been able to do that himself in Bethlehem. He commended the Board for bringing its budget down to 1% and appreciates their efforts.

Deb DeSorbo, Woodbury, also thanked the Board for continuing to support technology upgrades, which are desperately needed, while also watching class sizes. These are difficult times economically, and challenging times educationally, and not an easy road.

Catherine Ringeisen, Woodbury, added her thanks to the Board, noting she had become involved 3-4 months ago, and has been impressed with the work the Board has done.

Jeanne Ross, Woodbury, asked, with regard to the numbers, what educational components other than staffing are built in to the budget?

Mr. Goeler responded that enhancements are built in to the budget and we are building a K-12 curriculum; there is a new math program at the elementary schools; and we are using existing resources to strengthen intervention programs internally. He suggested viewing strategic plan updates on the district website for more details.

Jessica Tucker, Woodbury, has volunteered in the elementary schools and saw discrepancies in class sizes. She thanked Ms. Torre for listening to parents and communicating their concerns to the Board. She thanked the Board for working with and teaching parents how to be more involved. She believes in our school district and the budget, and she has seen much critical and positive thinking about students and what they need during this budget process.

VII. Adjournment

Hearing no further public comment, Mr. DeLuca adjourned the hearing at 7:47 pm

Respectfully submitted,

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