

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held Monday, December 2, 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, and Maryanne Van Aken; Director of Finance and Operations Wayne McAllister; Director of Instruction Sue Domanico; NHS Student Representative Stephanie Lewis; WMS Principal Alice Jones and NHS Principal Andrew O'Brien; and Board Clerk Deb Carlton

Absent: Board members Sophieazane Bartlett and John Swendsen

Audience members included: Bethlehem BoF member Mike Devine, *Voices* reporter Mike Preato, and 1 additional member of the public.

I. Call to Order

Mr. Chapman called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Presentations

Mr. Goeler invited Ms. Jones to share details of her Woodbury Middle School Improvement Plan with the Board.

Ms. Jones outlined four specific goals for her school aligned with the broad district wide goals: the first related to curriculum, the second around instructional practices and accountability, the third focused on student learning through common assessments that inform and support professional practice, and a fourth devoted to communicating and engaging with the R14 school community to create partnerships necessary for long term success in implementing critical systemic changes. For each goal, she described in detail the action steps, desired outcomes, person(s) responsible, and targets for completion, as well as indicators of achievement, as she executes her improvement plan at WMS. She spoke of the importance of literacy in all disciplines; efforts to develop "smarter teams" to achieve student results with better protocols that are systemic, as well as building leadership capacity in team members; goals of developing students who are problem solvers, thinkers, and responsible citizens and ones who are engaged and involved in their own learning; and her assessment that R14 is ahead of the game in instructional practices because of the work that has been done with Dr. Tony Rigazio-Digilio. She noted the value of Officer Tom and his involvement on the school's crisis team. When asked if a numeracy specialist, similar to what the elementary schools have, would be of value at her school, she responded that certainly one would be.

Following Ms. Jones, the School Improvement Plan for Nonnewaug High School was detailed by Mr. O'Brien. His school is also focusing efforts on the goals stated in the strategic plan. He noted that literacy is supported in all areas; his school is in the first year of the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG); curriculum is being fine-tuned using the Understanding by Design (UbD) format; and teachers are being incorporated in educational rounds with Dr. Tony R-D. The recommendations from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) will be addressed; he is looking at different scheduling options; updates to the program of studies are being considered, including the possibility of Advanced Placement (AP) offerings in literature, math and science; and discussions continue about leveling electives. He spoke of common assessments within departments, and also getting the word out about what is happening at NHS, including the revitalization of a parent group.

Mr. Chapman, and Mr. Bauer, conveyed the Board's willingness to help both principals in any way that is needed.

III. Review of Minutes

Mr. Chapman requested a *motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 18, 2013*. Entered by Mr. Cosgriff and seconded by Ms. Van Aken, the **motion carried 6-0**.

IV. Correspondence
None.

V. Report from the Chairman

Mr. Chapman referenced the AP Honor Roll recognition for NHS, offering kudos to students, teachers and parents. He also noted Jeff Turner's efforts in filing a technology grant application and securing \$94k to help with Smarter Balance Assessments.

He gave an update on legal proceedings, reporting no action in the Litchfield case, which has concluded, but adding that the lawyer for Arras, Suslavich, Miller, Miller and Murphy has now filed an appeal to remove the "stay" granted by the judge in Waterbury pending outcome of the Litchfield case.

He offered clarification and correction to a statement made during privilege of the floor. He said that, at the previous regular meeting during privilege of the floor, Karen Miller, one of the plaintiffs suing the Board of Education, the Towns of Woodbury and Bethlehem, and various individuals, read a letter signed by Art McNally that was addressed to the towns. The particular excerpt of the letter he wanted to respond to was: "We are in this mode of wasting tax payers' money because the Superintendent/School Board failed to provide notice prior to the vote then because the elected officials of the towns failed to vote at a meeting to declare the vote invalid. The Town Clerks at both towns were not at fault because their duty is to file minutes, not to read or act upon them." Mr. Chapman said the Board's Attorney has been consulted, and it is the duty of the clerk to keep all records, including by not limited to the minutes of the Board of Education, in accordance with Connecticut General Statute (CGS) 7-23. He said the Board of Education voted and passed several resolutions related to the NHS building project referendum and these were properly documented in the minutes furnished to the towns. In addition to legally recording these minutes, it is also the duty of the Town Clerks to "act upon them" and to publish the legal notice as passed by the Board of Education and as recorded in the minutes in accordance with CGS 10-47c and 9-226. The reality that is important to note, he said, is that the suit filed by Arras, Murphy, Suslavich, Miller and Miller has and will continue to cost taxpayers. He said any accusation made by those plaintiffs of the Board continuing to waste taxpayer dollars on legal fees is a direct result of the legal actions they have taken and are continuing to pursue.

VI. Report from the Superintendent

Mr. Goeler reported on his recent activities, including attending the NHS v. Lewis Mills Thanksgiving Day football game, the Litchfield County Superintendents' Association Student Awards Banquet, a Tribury Rotary luncheon, and STAR Preschool Thanksgiving feast. He reminded the audience of tomorrow evening's safety meeting at WMS, and mentioned he'll be playing mandolin at the WMS holiday concert on Thursday. He awaits receipt of the District Management Council (DMC) report which will then be shared with the Board.

Ms. Domanico also shared a report. She has consulted with NHS administration and Program of Studies Committee to look at recommendations for leveling elective courses. She has provided updates from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Talent Office on teacher evaluation reporting and data collection to administrators and the evaluation committee. She is planning for ongoing calibration of the evaluation system with Dr. Tony R-D to assure consistency in teacher ratings. She is planning for training to launch the locally controlled assessment tool for English/Language Arts (ELA) and Math to be piloted in grades 1,3,5-7, and 9. The Curriculum and Professional Development Council met and approved drafts of the curriculum review and revision process and the development schedule per the R14 Strategic Plan. She attended the state's assessment literacy workshop to get and share info about the Smarter Balanced testing. She would like to plan for opportunities to do an "open lab" for the BoE and community members to take the practice test.

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

VIII. Report from Director of Finance and Operations

Mr. McAllister reviewed legal fees through October: \$19,589.26 for the declaratory judgment in Litchfield; \$22,355.40 for the ongoing Arras, Suslavich, Murphy, Miller and Miller suit in Waterbury, for a total of \$41,944.66.

He reviewed grants received: \$144,199 for enhanced emergency services with a local match of \$271,963.

Enhancements are completed and exterior cameras will be obtained through a sealed bid process. Expenses already incurred can be covered by this grant. A grant for the installation of wireless infrastructure at BES and MES in the amount of \$93,114 was also received. Cost is \$68,737 for each building. The total cost beyond the grant proceeds are to be paid by the district.

Requests for qualifications (RFQ) for health insurance are due 12/9 and will be presented to the Finance Committee on that night at their meeting. Good representation is expected; 4 inquiries have been received to date, 2 of which are national agencies. He has a meeting on Friday with the state regarding school lunch program. We plan to go out this year for services for the next school year.

IX. Committee Reports

For Public/Community Relations, Ms. Brown reported better TV broadcast of meetings and thinks using power points for BoE presentations would be good for the television audience. Short films coming from the agriscience aquaculture class are showing on NEAT TV and are great. The SRO roundtable was excellent and we continue to be covered well by the press. She also suggested people prefer earlier committee meetings and are reluctant to come back out once they've gotten home.

For Facilities, Ms. Morgan's committee 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 met on 11/22. Ms. Morgan and Sgt. Roden are finalizing the emergency operations plan. Paul Ciotti provided a phone update. WMS will be getting more walkie-talkies, as will MES, purchased by their PTO. Background checks are being researched. She invited public participation at tomorrow's safety meeting at WMS.

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

X. Old Business

None.

XI. New Business

None.

XII. Board Announcements

None.

XIII. Privilege of the Floor

None.

XIV. Executive Session

Mr. Bauer entered a *motion to add Executive Session to the agenda, for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter*. Seconded by Mr. Cosgriff, the **motion carried 6-0**.

Ms. Van Aken entered a *motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter*.
Seconded by Mr. Cosgriff, the **motion carried 6-0**. Time: 9:36 pm.

XV. Adjournment

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

The meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 9:46 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, 12/4/13