

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held on Tuesday, January 22, 2013 at Bethlehem Elementary School, 92 East Street, Bethlehem, Connecticut.

Present: Superintendent Jody Ian Goeler; Board members Sophieane Bartlett, George Bauer, Charles Cosgriff, Maryanne Van Aken and Pamela Zmek; and Board Clerk Debra Carlton

Absent: Board members John Chapman, Gary Suslavich, and John Swendsen

Audience members included: Region 14 faculty member Katie Yocis, *Voices* reporter Meg Spicer, and 3 additional members of the community

I. Call to Order

Mr. Bauer called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

He noted that the second meeting of the month is typically devoted to educational topics; however, the recent focus on school security issues has dominated everyone's time. Next month, we will return to educational issues on the second BoE meeting, he said.

II. Review of the Minutes

Mr. Bauer requested a *motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of January 7, 2013*, entered by Ms. Van Aken and seconded by Mr. Cosgriff. Mr. Cosgriff asked for more detail in his report for the Negotiations Committee. He asked that it be added that he spoke of, in the future, setting dates for mediation and arbitration at the beginning of negotiations sessions in order to prevent having any negotiations period drag out for, possibly, months. With that addition, the **motion carried 5-0**.

III. Correspondence

Mr. Bauer indicated that he had received copies of letters written by grade 7 students responding to school security issues in light of the tragedy at SHES. He found their papers to be thoughtful and age appropriate and thanked them for their input.

IV. Report from the Chairman

Mr. Bauer spoke of the security meetings held at each of the schools last week. He described them as good dialog about safety improvements needed and planned. While there is always room for improvement, there are many safeguards in place that are followed consistently. He thanked all those involved in the meetings, from parents and community members to administrators, staff and BoE members.

V. Report from the Superintendent

Mr. Goeler also spoke of the great turn outs at the 4 security meetings, as well as faculty meetings at which he spoke, as useful and providing insight into what needs to be looked at on the short and long term. He also met with Fire Marshal Janet Morgan and WPD Officer Joe Roden, who offered statistics on crimes which have occurred in the past and the profile of the person who typically commits the type of crime suffered at SHES. Because this profile identifies white males of about 17 years of age as typical, the importance of mental health services and resource officers is illustrated. It is important for learning that students feel safe and valued, he said. The building are being shored up, ID tags worn, and doors locked.

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Also, the first draft of the strategic plan is ready and administrators are reviewing it. He expects to offer it to the board at the second February meeting and it will inform the budget in a number of areas.

He received notification from the State that the district is 100% in compliance with regard to certified staff.

A compliance review of the agriscience program was very positive, too, and resulted in nine recommendations which the district has offered plans to address.

Mr. Cosgriff had been invited to attend on the day of the agriscience review and was struck by how much of what goes on in that program aligns with what the State is asking for with the common core.

Mr. Goeler has narrowed the applicant pool for BES principal to about 20, from which a group to interview will be chosen. Director of Finance/Operations has been the focus; once that process is completed, the BES principal selection will be on the fast track.

Mr. Goeler has been meeting regularly with the SEED committee and he suggested having that group present to the Board at a future meeting. The evaluation piece will be a budget consideration and will cost at least \$40,000.

Asked if collaboration with other districts around teacher evaluation is possible, he said that 10 districts are piloting teacher evaluation programs to determine extent to which alignment with State standards has been met, and those districts can be consulted about this for input on our own evaluation document. Our plan is to be in place by 4/15/13 and staff will need to be trained by the end of the school year on how it is to be implemented. He will plan to present to the Board on this in April.

The first Superintendent's Roundtable was recently recorded. Principals participated in a discussion about strategic planning.

He attended a legislative breakfast at Education Connection which was well attended and offered a full exchange of ideas and concerns.

Paraprofessional negotiations went to mediation and he met with para leaders to ensure they are clear about the proposal being offered.

He also met with Paul Lewis regarding insurance projections and urged consideration of other vendors for better rates.

Mr. Goeler concluded by reporting that work on budget preparation continues in advance of workshops later this winter.

VI. Privilege of the Floor (agenda specific)

Bill Joyce, Bethlehem, thanked the Board for all it does and asked that, if funds are ever available, it consider adding Mandarin Chinese to the foreign language offerings. His company, OEC Group, cannot find potential employees who speak that language. He felt that graduating students with the capability to communicate in Mandarin Chinese would be able to "write their own ticket," and he asked that the Board consider this in the future.

VII. Report from the Director of Finance and Operations

None.

VIII. Committee Reports

Bylaws: will meet on 2/4/13

Public Relations: met tonight about Superintendent's forum, advisory council to meet quarterly, and possible quarterly newsletters to the public. The committee will next meet on 2/4/13 at 6 pm at NHS, at which time members of the Trumbull PTSA will speak about increasing parent engagement.

Facilities: no report

Finance: no report, will plan to meet at 6 pm on 1/28/13

Personnel: no report; has been assisting in interviews for Director of Finance/Operations

Planning: met tonight and will recommend to the Board on 2/4/13 to hire Nate Levinson for special ed consulting, if a better price can be negotiated. Planning will also meet on 1/28/13, along with Offr. Joe Roden, to discuss the

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possibility of a resource officer at NHS for the balance of this school year and from where funds for this would come.

Negotiations: mediation with paras was held and a proposal was left with them for consideration.

Building: has met on two occasions during which flood plain, floor plans, possible K-8 configuration, and other issues were discussed. An enrollment study group will be formed to help with space needs, as well as parallel paths to update both NHS and the elementary schools. Plans and schedule will be posted on the website soon. Next meeting is to be held on 2/5/13.

IX. Old Business

None.

X. New Business

Mr. Bauer requested a *motion to discuss the formation of a school safety task force*. Entered by Ms. Van Aken and seconded by Mr. Cosgriff, the **motion carried 5-0**.

Mr. Bauer described the plan he envisions for such a task force, to be headed by Mr. Suslavich and to include Mr. Goeler, John Turk, Mike Molzon, Jerry Stomski and Offr. Roden from Woodbury, Ed Roden and Offr. Delia from Bethlehem, Ms. Van Aken, Ms. Zmek and Mr. Bauer, as well as local emergency management personnel as key players.

Ms. Van Aken noted that all focus currently is on an active shooter; however, the community has been reminded that a weather event is a more likely threat and it is important to have all emergency service personnel involved in our plans to deal with all types of emergencies.

Mr. Cosgriff noted that these plans will affect both budget planning and the work of the building committee and asked about time frames. Mr. Bauer indicated that both short and long terms goals will be established.

Ms. Zmek confirmed that such planning will be done in executive session, as safety planning is in many ways not a matter to be discussed publicly.

XI. Board Announcements

Ms. Van Aken announced an ASAP town hall meeting on 2/6/13 at 7 pm at the Woodbury Senior/Community Center entitled "Good Kids, Bad Choices." Also, on 2/21/13 at WMS, there will be an internet safety meeting.

XII. Privilege of the Floor

Katie Yocis, Woodbury, thinks many of the ideas she's hearing of are great, but worries about the timing of both a budget and possible upcoming referendum. She stressed the urgency of starting now to sell the proposals to the public now, as time is short. Often, brochures received by mail end up, unread, in the recycling. She prefers such things as posters in the library and other public places frequented by citizens that are short, to the point, bulleted with specifics, and eye catching. Something like this, she said, she would stop for a moment or two to read. If people see this information over and over again, she said, they will start to get it.

Jim Crocker, Woodbury, agreed with Ms. Yocis. He notes that, at each meeting, Mr. Goeler talks about the Common Core and what it will involve. He feels people in the community don't know what this is or what it will cost. He sees that the State/Federal government is asking us to do more with less. He urged, before laying off elementary school teachers, show the people what these things cost, sell the idea of what we are being asked to do, and then see if they will support it. It comes down to communication, he said, and urged not surprising the towns with the costs involved. Show them what it all costs, he said, but don't eliminate second grade teachers in order to fund it.

XIII. Adjournment

Ms. Van Aken entered a *motion to adjourn*, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff. The **motion carried 5-0**.
The meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sophiezone Bartlett, Secretary
Regional School District #14 Board of Education

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Debra W. Carlton, Board Clerk, 1/23/13