

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held on Tuesday, September 4, 2012 in the Nonnewaug High School Library, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, Connecticut.

Present: Superintendent Jody Ian Goeler; Board members George Bauer, John Chapman, Charles Cosgriff, Gary Suslavich, John Swendsen, Maryanne Van Aken, and Pamela Zmek; Interim Director of Operations John Turk; Principals Alice Jones, MaryLou Torre and Andrew O'Brien; NHS Athletic Director/Dean of Students Bill Nemecc; Interim Principal Eric Bergeron; Interim Assistant Principal Carol Tomkalski; Director of Buildings and Grounds Mike Molzon; Board Clerk Debra Carlton

Absent: Board member Sophieazane Bartlett

Audience members included: NHS faculty members Katie Yocis and John Dominello; FFA Chapter President Courtney Nastri; two members of the press and about 10 members of the community

I. Call to Order

Mr. Bauer called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Presentation

Mr. Goeler called upon each principal to give a brief report on the opening of the 2012-13 school year.

Mr. O'Brien reported on his first opening as Principal of NHS, beginning the year with 828 students who participated with their advisory groups right away. He noted his school's Energy Star rating, as well. He introduced FFA Chapter President, Courtney Nastri, who updated the Board on her group's activities: Officers participated in COLT training, Freshman orientation was on 8/23; a tractor pull was attended by about 100; a milkshake booth at the Goshen Fair raised \$4000; teams will compete at the Big E; Hunter Pace to be held on 9/23; grant money was used for a garden this summer, with produce donated to the food bank; and the college/career fair is upcoming.

Ms. Jones thanked Ms. Tomkalski for stepping in to serve in the absence of Mr. Bergeron. She has been putting in long hours and has been a great help. The start of school at WMS was flawless and fluid and custodians were named and thanked for getting the building ready, including 2 student workers. Ms. Jones also thanked her admin assistants for their help during the summer, especially with a number of activities going on in the school. Sixth graders have made a good transition, thanks to the work of Ms. Tomkalski and Jennifer Armour in guidance. Students have been introduced to a model of positive behavior, have begun advisory, parents' sports nights are upcoming, and extra curriculars begin on 9/17. The Secret Life of Middle Schoolers is on 10/2. Ms. Jones concluded by thanking the Board for its support.

Ms. Torre also reported an extremely successful first day. A plethora of staff and PTO members were on hand to help her students, who seem happy to be back. The youngest students, also, are settling in nicely. There are now 4 classes of kindergarten instead of 3, and the kindergarten children show great confidence, she said. Grade 5 classes have decreased by one, and those children have been redistributed to other classes. The new floors look great, the café is brighter, hallways are adorned with banners and the building looks great. She thanked her custodial staff, and Mr. Molzon, as well. The community reading garden has new trees, benches and pumpkins growing. Staff is getting ready for strategic planning and the common core; lesson plans are replete with rigor so students will be ready for new assessments; her school's work with the teachers' college will continue; she welcomes new teachers and staff this year; and open house will be held this week, a time to renew the partnership with parents.

Mr. Bergeron, likewise, reported a successful opening of school. He worked with Melinda McKenna for a seamless transition. He thanked his custodians who, even with the building being used over the summer, had it polished and ready for school as noted by teachers and parents. His staff all pitched in to be sure everyone got where they

needed to be. He thanked office assistants Linda Butkus and Debbie Bernardi. New pin codes are being used in the café and students are learning this process. Open house is on Thursday. Like MES, BES will continue with the Columbia writing project and will be looking closely at student data. Mr. Bergeron concluded by thanking Ms. McKenna and all the staff for a warm welcome.

III. Review of the Minutes

Mr. Bauer requested a *motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of August 20, 2012*. Entered by Mr. Cosgriff and seconded by Mr. Swendsen, the **motion carried 5-0-2**, with Mr. Suslavich and Ms. Van Aken abstaining.

IV. Correspondence
None.

V. Report from the Chairman

Mr. Bauer thanked the principals and staff for a great start of the school year, including convocation and opening day. He reminded the board of the CABE convention, and he spoke of the agriscience ad hoc committee and named member of the marketing subcommittee.

VI. Report from the Superintendent

Mr. Goeler reported that Ms. McKenna's last day was today and we bid her farewell. She was a great member of the leadership team and of her school. Mr. Bergeron, he said, will be an outstanding interim, and Ms. Tomkalski will pick up his role at WMS. An interview committee will soon be assembled to include community members, board members and staff. He offered a hearty hello to John Turk who will fulfill a 4 day work week as head of operations, while Helen Stewart will pick up an extra day to handle the financial piece.

He thanked the custodians, as well as secretaries who number less than last year, for work over the summer.

He spoke of his attendance at an ESEA meeting at which educator evaluation document requirements and common core curriculum in math and language arts was outlined, as well as smarter balance and indexing of performance of both teachers and students.

He thanked Jonathan Costa for his participation in convocation; noted that invitations to participate in strategic planning will go out this week; said that excellent teachers have been hired over the summer; and reminded all that the key is how everything we do impacts students.

VII. Privilege of the Floor (agenda specific)

Jim Uberti, Woodbury, thanked the board for including the Pop Warner proposal on the agenda. That group seeks its home game venue at NHS. Dr. Uberti outlined what the group can bring to NHS, stressed safety as the main concern, believed wear/tear would be minimal with young players, anticipated a probationary period to gauge proper management, and explained the benefit of game day atmosphere.

Peter Masi, Woodbury, also spoke to the reasons for the request to move the Pop Warner program to NHS, including the better link to the high school program, larger anticipated turnout for spectators, more awareness to help financially, safety concerns in Bethlehem, and added his hopes that the Board would consider the proposal.

Mike Molzon, Director of Buildings and Grounds for RSD 14, noted that the varsity football field is also striped for soccer and this would now be a third team using it. He is concerned about wear/tear, turf management is needed, and R14 athletics is his first concern. He wants the fields to continue to get progressively better. Youth soccer, he

said, has not been permitted to use the varsity soccer fields; there are issues with parking, especially on the field, and there may be inadequate power for scoreboards, etc.

VIII. Report from the Director of Finance and Operations

Mr. Turk said it is great to be here, he had a great first day, the support has been fantastic, and he looks forward to coming back tomorrow.

IX. Committee Reports

None.

X. Old Business

Mr. Bauer had included educational specifications to the agenda as a discussion item, and intends to transfer them to the facilities committee as they are key to the work of the building committee. There was work over the summer to update the documents and further revisions should be directed to Mr. Goeler or Mr. Bauer for the next facilities committee meeting. Mr. Chapman requested ed specs for the other three schools, too, to package all together.

XI. New Business

1. Mr. Suslavich entered a *motion to approve the NHS World Language trip to Italy, 7/1-10, 2013 for 15 students and 2 faculty chaperones*. Seconded by Ms. Van Aken the **motion carried 7-0**.

2. Mr. Suslavich entered a *motion to change the full day professional development day from March 18, 2013 to March 11, 2013 to accommodate a NEASC visit*. Seconded by Mr. Swendsen, the **motion carried 7-0**.

3. Mr. Bauer raised a future discussion issue of a more comprehensive review of special education programs and initiating a review of current practices with a third party. Ms. Van Aken would like to have a consultant brought in sooner than later, and before budget season. Mr. Goeler described the process as lengthy, 6-7 months, and we are invested in strategic planning at present, which may include special education goals. Mr. Suslavich encouraged an audit, much like the yearly financial one, but acknowledged there is much going on now with NEASC, etc, and was not sure the bandwidth of staff is available for this. He did encourage identifying groups who offer the service and having them present to the board what they can offer.

4. Mr. Bauer received copies of the Pop Warner proposal from Mr. Nemecek and asked for the administration's assessment of concerns as well as benefits of it. Mr. Nemecek said that Mr. Molzon and Mr. Beardsley work tirelessly on all the fields and expressed concern that the extra use can be supported with the manpower we have. He noted that the fields are in better shape than last year but that hard work is needed to manage that. He did a "T" chart to examine what we gain or lose by this proposal and he believes including the program will enhance the example we set in the BL in football. Supervision with parking and playing around on other fields will be needed. If stipulations are met, he feels the benefits outweigh the negatives. If we say we can't, we can't, but if we say we can find a way to make it work, we will.

Mr. O'Brien also reviewed the proposal and believes including Pop Warner works toward what we are trying to do in making the high school the community center it can be. It will encourage young families to come here, send their kids here, and lend their support to the schools. He agreed with the benefit for the young players to play on the same field as the varsity team.

The board asked and received answers to many questions, including those having to do with number of teams and games, where NHS teams play and practice, damage by bringing equipment in, zoning, quality of field needed for this sport, whether Pop Warner was communicating this as a done deal, the loss to Bethlehem, the idea of a monetary investment by Pop Warner, and the need for a resolution prior to the next board meeting on 9/17.

It was ultimately decided to create a proposal to be reviewed by the board on Monday, 9/10, at a special meeting. If agreement could be reached, the use of the fields will be granted.

5. Mr. Suslavich entered the following motion related to burner conversion project: *"Resolved, that the Board of Education of Regional School District 14 award the RFP to replace fuel oil burners with dual fuel burners at Regional School District 14 to CT Combustion Corp. as the lowest responsive and responsible responder as follows: NHS - \$94,000; WMS - \$72,000; MES - \$61,500; Vo-ag - \$39,160, and authorize the Superintendent of Schools to execute a contract with CT Combustion Corp."* Seconded by Ms. Van Aken, the **motion carried 7-0**.

XII. Board Announcements

Ms. Van Aken announced that on Friday evening at 6:30 pm there will be a walk of remembrance for those lost to substance abuse. The walk will begin at 6:30 pm at the Hollow and will proceed to MES where there will be a remembrance ceremony. Those involved would appreciate some support, she said.

XIII. Privilege of the Floor

Mr. Masi returned seeking clarification on the steps the board will take on the Pop Warner proposal.

XIV. Adjournment

Mr. Suslavich entered a *motion to adjourn*, seconded by Ms. Van Aken. The **motion carried 7-0**. The meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 10:12 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maryanne Van Aken, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer
Regional School District #14 Board of Education

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Debra W. Carlton, Board Clerk, 9/7/12