

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held on Monday, September 6, 2011, in the Nonnewaug High School Library, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, Connecticut.

Present: Superintendent Jody Ian Goeler; Board members Sophieazane Bartlett, George Bauer, John Chapman, Charles Cosgriff, Gary Suslavich, John Swendsen, Maryanne Van Aken and Pamela Zmek; Director of Finance/Operations James Reese; Director of Buildings/Grounds Michael Molzon; Elementary Principals Melinda McKenna and MaryLou Torre; Antinozzi Associates Architect Paul Lisi; and Board Clerk Debra Carlton
Audience members included: approximately 7 members of the community and two members of the press

I. Call to Order

Mr. Cosgriff called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Cosgriff led the Pledge of Allegiance

III. Presentation

Mr. Lisi gave an overview of the project scope for improvements in the agriscience building to be completed using \$192,500 in state grant funds awarded through an ED049 application submitted by the district last year. Changes in scope since the original application will make all the improvements unlikely with the money available. Mr. Lisi recommended approval for the two main items: ventilation system for the large animal room and vented hood over the food lab stove. The other items, he said, could be listed as alternates during the bidding process. He responded to questions from the Board about the specifics of the project.

Mr. Molzon supported the installation of the ventilation system and explained why it is the right choice for our needs, and how the heat recovery unit prevents us from losing money literally out the window.

Mr. Cosgriff entered the following resolution: *That the Board of Education of Regional School District 14 approve the plans, specifications and drawings for a school construction project at Nonnewaug High School (Vo-Ag), with State Project #214-0090.* Seconded by Mr. Suslavich, the **motion carried 8-0.**

IV. Review of the Minutes

Mr. Bauer entered a *motion to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 15, 2011.* Seconded by Mr. Bauer, the **motion carried 7-0-1** with Ms. Zmek abstaining, not having been in attendance.

Mr. Suslavich entered a *motion to correct the minutes from the meeting of July 18, 2011, under Old Business, to read: "Mr. Suslavich entered a motion to move up to 1% of the 2010-11 budget into the non-recurring capital account."* Seconded by Mr. Bauer, the **motion carried 8-0.**

V. Correspondence

None.

VI. Report from the Chairman

Mr. Cosgriff noted that the experiences of last week, hurricane and long term power outages, would not soon be forgotten. He hoped everyone was now well.

VII. Report from the Superintendent

Mr. Goeler noted with admiration how the community rallied during the recent storm and aftermath to help each other. Likewise, the school community came through and he particularly noted the efforts of Jackie Rinaldi, the district's payroll/benefits coordinator, to meet Friday's payroll even though power was not restored at central office

until mid-day Wednesday, the day when she would have normally been transmitting data to the banks. He was proud of how the school employees worked as a team and his hat was off to the entire community for making things work.

He met with his full leadership team at BES on Tuesday to decide on a plan of action. They realized that issues around restocking lost food, and awareness of families still without power at home, made the 9/6 start of school the best decision.

He visited MES today to observe the bus arrivals and to visit classrooms, and Mr. Reese did the same at BES. They were both pleased with the level of support the students received, and felt the buses arrived in a reasonable time frame. WMS and NHS also reported smooth opening days. He will have the principals report on the opening of school in the near future.

Mr. Goeler spoke of the work ahead. Though he brings no preconceived agenda with him, nor bag of tricks, he will consider four themes:

- To provide greater instructional coherence and continuity to the district
- The opportunity to build consensus and support around a shared vision
- The need for our schools to prepare students for the 21st century world they will navigate
- The successful implementation of Scientific Research Based Interventions (SRBI), the goal of which is to increase student interventions and progress monitoring while managing special education referrals.

He is also interested in having the school PTOs involved with each other and meeting regularly together in order to develop a coherent approach to volunteerism.

He'd like the Board to develop an achievers' program to highlight, monthly at meetings of the board, student achievement. He would also like to see increased participation with senior citizens, inviting them to see what our students do, to the benefit of both the seniors and the students.

Lastly, Mr. Goeler provided a handout to the Board of current classroom enrollments at each elementary school for their review.

VIII. Privilege of the Floor

Jeanne Hawley, Woodbury, asked for a review of the route traveled by bus 6 for the elementary run. She feels the number of miles that bus travels is excessive. Freshman orientation was cancelled due to the storm and she asked if it would be rescheduled in some fashion. Also, when CAPT/CMT scores are presented, she asked if AP scores would also be shared.

Cathy Roache, Woodbury, shared that her daughter had been ill and was frightened about her first day at MES, but reported having had a great first day.

IX. Report from the Director of Finance/Operations

Mr. Reese began by thanking Jackie Rinaldi for her outstanding job in meeting Friday's payroll. He also noted the efforts of Don Marsh and Helen Stewart for meeting the 9/1/11 deadline for the ED001, despite the storm, knowing that deadlines are not extended for that important state report. He also thanked Paul Ciotti for his work in getting the technology back up, and for his assistance to Jackie in accessing payroll data. Mr. Molzon, he said, was all over the district and never let up throughout the storm and aftermath, and Maryanne Kaminski was busy testing HVACs and getting motors back up. Food service manager Peter Brooks lost between \$4,000 and \$5,000 worth of perishable food, for which he anticipates insurance recovery. Mr. Reese appreciated the stress he was under in disposing of and replacing so much food.

He reported being at BES for the opening of school today. Bus issues will be addressed immediately, and he expects vast improvements in bus times very soon.

Mr. Chapman asked if there were any lessons learned from this event. Mr. Reese felt an off-site back up location for payroll would have helped, or some form of backing up that data. Generators for the freezers would have helped with food loss. Mr. Goeler planned to discuss this idea with his leadership team this week.

X. Old Business
None

XI. New Business

Mr. Cosgriff entered a *motion to accept the following Board appointments:*

- a. *Sullivan, Schoen, Campane and Connon, LLC
Board of Education Legal Counsel*
- b. *Andrea Needleman, MD, Health Director, School Physician,
MES/WMS*
- c. *Charles McNair, MD, School Physician, NHS*
- d. *Andrew Wells, MD, School Physician, BES*
- e. *James Bauer, DMD, School Dentist*
- f. *Debra Carlton, Board of Education Clerk*

Mr. Swendsen seconded the motion. Discussion followed.

Mr. Goeler recommended approval because it is not his intention to make changes for a year so he can assess how these firms/professionals operate and serve the district.

Mr. Suslavich was not in favor of approving SSC&C as legal counsel, or perhaps just for general matters, and would like to move toward Shipman and Goodwin.

Mr. Cosgriff favored continuing as we are and allowing Mr. Goeler to monitor performance.

Ms. Van Aken noted that the appointment initiates a retainer, which can be used as deemed suitable.

Mr. Goeler agreed, adding that it is his obligation to secure the best legal advice he can, and this appointment will not handcuff him in seeking advice elsewhere if needed. If he finds the need during the year to seek counsel from another firm in order to get good advice, he will offer a strong recommendation next September.

Ms. Zmek has always been impressed by presentations made by Shipman and Goodwin, leaders in educational law, and would support going with them. Current counsel has not demonstrated the level of preparation she would have expected.

Mr. Chapman felt the new Board and Superintendent need a chance to evaluate current counsel.

Mr. Bauer did not favor the wording on the agenda and felt changing that would relieve objections.

Mr. Cosgriff has worked with SSC&C for 8 years and has no reservations about them. In negotiations and mediation, they have been extremely thorough. Ms. Van Aken agreed, having worked with them during her last term on the Board and as Board chair, when she found them to be responsive and thorough.

The **motion previously entered and seconded carried 6-2**, with Ms. Zmek and Mr. Suslavich voting no due to their objection to the first item on the list of 6.

XII. Board Announcements
None

XIII. Privilege of the Floor

Mr. Molzon, of Bethlehem, reported that the emergency management directors contacted the district and requested use of BES and NHS for distribution of MREs and water. NHS had been designated a "point of distribution" during a previous town administration. The Army National Guard arrived with 3 tractor trailers full of supplies and Mr. Molzon was pleased that the district was able to answer the call for help when needed.

Ms. Roache noted difficulty with the emergency notification system, as phone calls from the district went only to land lines and not cell phones.

Deb DeSorbo, Woodbury, noted that the elementary open houses were changed to meet and greets, which were then cancelled by the storm. As many families are new to their elementary schools this year, she felt it would be helpful to reschedule that in some way. Also, the website contains incorrect information, such as staff at different buildings, and needs to be updated.

XIV. Future Business

Mr. Goeler spoke of the principal search. While this is in progress, he has secured the services of Len Fenelon as interim principal through October. Twenty two applications have been received and half are outstanding candidates. An interview committee will be assembled to begin the interview process within the next week.

Mr. Goeler intends to look at the school security issue at NHS, which finished last year with a security guard.

Ms. Van Aken asked that this issue be on a future agenda, as she would like to discuss the concept of a resource officer. Mr. Goeler felt funding would be the issue there, and perhaps increased parking fees would be a solution.

Ms. Van Aken believes the towns may be willing to share the cost of a resource officer.

XV. Adjournment

Mr. Suslavich entered a *motion to adjourn*, seconded by Mr. Bauer. **Motion carried 8-0.**

The Board of Education meeting concluded at 9:19 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Chapman, Secretary
Regional School District #14 Board of Education

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Debra W. Carlton, Board Clerk, 9/9/11