

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

Present: Superintendent Jody Ian Goeler; Board members Sophieane Bartlett, George Bauer, John Chapman, Charles Cosgriff, John Swendsen, Maryanne Van Aken and Pamela Zmek; Director of Finance/Operations James Reese; and Board Clerk Debra Carlton

Absent: Board member Gary Suslavich

Audience members included: about 6 members of the community.

I. Call to Order

Mr. Cosgriff called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Presentation – Region 14’s Strategic Planning Process

Mr. Goeler welcomed Jonathan Costa from Education Connection who will be involved in the strategic planning process for the district in the months ahead. Mr. Costa has done strategic planning in districts throughout CT and beyond and will help Region 14 find “due north,” Mr. Goeler said.

Mr. Costa provided handouts as well as a powerpoint and an approximately one hour explanation of the various state mandates facing school districts which must be addressed, while ensuring students are challenged and successful by acquiring the skills and knowledge needed for 21st century success. He took questions throughout the presentation from both the board and audience.

III. Review of the Minutes

Ms. Van Aken entered a *motion to accept the minutes of the district meeting of May 7, 2012 as written.*

Seconded by Mr. Bauer, the **motion carried 5-0-2** with Ms. Bartlett and Ms. Zmek abstaining.

Ms. Van Aken entered a *motion to accept the minutes of the regular meeting of May 7, 2012 as written.*

Seconded by Mr. Bauer, the **motion carried 5-0-2** with Ms. Bartlett and Ms. Zmek abstaining.

Ms. Van Aken entered a *motion to accept the minutes of the special meeting of May 14, 2012 as written.*

Seconded by Mr. Bauer, the **motion carried 5-0-2** with Ms. Bartlett and Mr. Swendsen abstaining.

Ms. Van Aken entered a *motion to accept the minutes of the special meeting of May 17, 2012 as written.*

Seconded by Mr. Bauer, the **motion carried 5-0-2** with Ms. Bartlett and Mr. Bauer abstaining.

IV. Correspondence

None.

V. Report from the Chairman

Mr. Cosgriff spoke of his intention to charge the superintendent with forming a committee to examine and review the tuition structure of the agriscience program and to recommend action regarding the inadequate funding received for out of district students attending our program, including strategies to approach legislators to request equitable funding. He suggests including community members and elected officials on the committee, as well as board members. As the legislature resumes session in September, he recommended that the committee be formed by July. He asked for input from the board.

Mr. Chapman believes it is important to know, as a district, what was committed to and then find the best path forward, and to put all the cards on the table.

Ms. Van Aken agreed we need an answer to that question. She sat on the board 10 years ago and the same questions were being asked then. We need the number, the cost, and should enlist a third party to look at our numbers and tell us what the cost actually is.

Mr. Swendsen was in full agreement that it should be researched and agrees with moving forward on this effort.

Mr. Bauer agreed, and also wanted to make note of the quality of the program. Attending the legislative open house illustrates its impact. He encourages the inclusion of board members on the committee, and town officials, and working with other districts to see how they report costs.

Ms. Zmek agreed with the idea of the committee, and encouraged a strict timeline, reaching out to other districts, and possibly sharing costs with them if action against the state is considered. She agreed with involving an outside source to examine our numbers, as well as involving local and even state representatives. She urged honest discussion to get answers and proposed a Q&A at committee meetings instead of the traditional privilege of the floor.

VI. Report from the Superintendent

Mr. Goeler updated the Board on some of the events he has recently attended. He spoke of an outstanding FFA banquet, and Principal Andrew O'Brien's equally outstanding speech at that event. Mr. Goeler attended, as well as performed at, the WMS spring concert and again at the WMS talent show, where he played "Yesterday" on piano. He thanked music teacher Michael Gardner for the opportunity to accompany the chorus on guitar at the concert. He also attended a well done Memorial Day event at WMS. He thanked Pam Sordi for her work in putting on the NHS Scholarship Night, and he enjoyed an amazing art show at NHS, too, for which he offered praise to art teachers Leeza Desjardins and Laura Lasker and their students. Today, he attended a unified sports track meet and he thanked coaches Tammy Wolf and John Dominello for their great work. He attended D.A.R.E. graduation at MES and congratulated the grade 5 students. He thanked Walter Culup, music director at NHS, for his great work on Grease, the musical. Finally, Mr. Goeler recognized students who earned creative writing awards and those who won Halo awards for their participation in Grease.

VII. Privilege of the Floor

Duncan McDougal, Woodbury, has hired hundreds of vo-ag students, he said. Discussion of how great the program is should not be the question; rather, funding is what the problem is.

Mr. Goeler responded that the charge of the agriscience committee is to address that.

Mr. McDougal suggested to Mr. Goeler that he "read the fine print" to see that he does not run the program. He suggested immediately involving other superintendents with vo-ag programs to solve the problem.

Tom Arras, Woodbury, cited one of the recommendations of the 1994 vo-ag study committee was to notify sending towns in the subsequent autumn that the district would no longer accept them. The Board at that time ignored that recommendation, which had been meant to shock the state into action. Mr. Arras hopes this board will not ignore the recommendations of the new committee; the towns are paying too much to let these funds slip out. Also, his FOI request from the last meeting has not been responded to, so is now in the hands of the FOI commission. Mr. Arras said it is pathetic to say that documents have been lost.

Pam Gengenbach, Woodbury, asked if action will be taken following executive session, and was told it would not. She felt the agenda item was vague and asked for more detail, which she was not given due to the confidential nature of the topic.

Mr. Arras returned to follow up on Ms. Gengenbach's questions. He read reasons permitted for executive session and asked which category this fell into. Mr. Goeler explained to Mr. Arras that he was comfortable with the legal opinion he received and in the board's ability to go into executive session this evening.

VIII. Report from the Director of Finance/Operations

Mr. Reese spoke to the issue of per pupil cost, and how that is developed. He agreed that the agriscience issue is complex and explained how different statistics are reached, how easily they can be misinterpreted, and the need to be careful in calculating per pupil expenditure. As for true costs of the agriscience program, it may be reasonable to take out transportation, vo-tech transportation and special education costs. In doing so, he predicts a different number may be seen than the one quoted by Mr. Arras.

IX. Committee Reports

Mr. Bauer reported that the Facilities Committee had met on May 14th; topics included building project, future educational requirements, updated ed specs and potential (building) referendum dates. The committee will meet again on 6/11/12.

Ms. Van Aken reported that the Personnel committee had just met to discuss the process for evaluation of the superintendent. She wants to convene the board in executive session; a tentative date of 6/18/12 at 6 pm was set.

Mr. Reese reported for Negotiations; the para group had met and exchanged proposals; an executive session will be needed on 6/18/12 to discuss salary parameters. The secretaries union also met once, and will need to meet with the board, as well, to discuss salary parameters. Teacher negotiations are also ready to begin.

X. Old Business

None.

XI. New Business

Mr. Goeler outlined changes to the 2012-13 calendar which he had received from the school administration. A full PD day had been scheduled for 11/1/12, which is a Thursday. The schools request that PD day be moved to 11/2/12, a Friday. For the purposes of NEASC, and to be also used by the other schools as early release PD days, the schools have requested modified days on 10/5/12 and 2/15/13.

Mr. Cosgriff requested a *motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendations for changes to the 2012-13 school calendar*. Entered by Ms. Zmek and seconded by Ms. Van Aken, the **motion carried 7-0**.

XII. Board Announcements

None.

XIII. Privilege of the Floor

Mr. McDougal stressed the need to determine costs of the agriscience program, and to understand that out of district towns won't be paying for improvements to the facilities, or for teachers' salaries. Funding is the issue; he urged the board to quit trying to prove they are right, and do what is right.

Mr. Arras again questioned the permissibility of the executive session.

XIV. Executive Session

Ms. Van Aken entered a *motion to enter executive session for discussion of the Board's legal options regarding pending claim for reimbursement*. Seconded by Mr. Swendsen, the **motion carried 7-0**. The Board moved to executive session at 9:38 pm.

XV. Adjournment

Mr. Chapman entered a *motion to adjourn*, seconded by Mr. Bauer. The **motion carried 7-0**. The meeting adjourned at 10:24 pm

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, 6/8/12