

(Please note: these minutes are in draft form and not yet approved by the Board of Education)

A Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held on Monday, March 7, 2011, at 7:30 p.m. in the Nonnewaug High School Library, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, Connecticut.

Present: Superintendent Robert D. Cronin, Ph.D.; Board Chair Stephen Sordi, Board members Scott Baider, George Bauer, Linda Bulvanoski, Deborah Corsico, Charles Cosgriff, Gary Suslavich, and Pamela Zmek; also, Director of Finance/Operations Jay Hubelbank

Audience members included: Region 14 Administrators Alice Jones, Melinda McKenna, MaryLou Torre, Kim Culkin and Jose Martinez; Buildings/Grounds Director Mike Molzon; faculty and staff members Nancy Ayre, Melissa Colby, Joyce Brazauskas, Shelly Stone, Alice Pistritto and Katie Yocis; interim business manager Ed Arum; two members of the press and approximately twenty five members of the community.

I. Call to Order

Mr. Sordi called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Sordi led the Pledge of Allegiance

III. Report from Student Representative

Joseph Pistritto regaled the board and audience with a fine impression of former President George W. Bush, and then gave an update of events at Nonnewaug High School, including the Mr. Nonnewaug contest, BL wrestling tournament and boys basketball standing, school play, winter sports banquet, art honors and Denan project news, junior class talent show and upcoming Truth about Hate presentation.

IV. Review of the Minutes

The minutes of the November 23, 2010 special meeting continued to be tabled.

Mr. Suslavich entered a *motion to accept the minutes of the January 3, 2011 as presented*, second by Mr. Baider.

Motion carried 8-0.

Minutes of the regular meeting of February 7, 2011 were tabled, as the board had only recently received them.

Minutes for the special meeting of February 16, 2011 were not available.

V. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

VI. Report from Chairman

Mr. Sordi requested a *motion to add to the agenda, under Old Business and involving the appointment of an interim director of fiscal services, discussion concerning employment terms and conditions (executive session anticipated); approval of an employment contract (action anticipated); and authorization to execute an employment contract (action anticipated)*. The motion was entered by Ms. Bulvanoski, seconded by Mr. Suslavich. **Motion carried 8-0.**

Mr. Sordi requested a *motion to add to the agenda, under New Business and involving a search committee for the interim superintendent position, establishment of a personnel search committee for the interim superintendent position (discussion and action anticipated)*. The motion was entered by Mr. Suslavich, seconded by Mr. Baider. **Motion carried 8-0.**

VII. Report from Superintendent

Dr. Cronin spoke about the budget. He reminded the board that, during the last 3 years, the lowest budgets in the history of the region had been submitted and that, last year, he had indicated that this would not be able to be maintained again this year without impacting student programs. His previous budgets eliminated 11 teaching positions and 30 paraprofessional positions, reduced technology costs and cut preschool costs by bringing that program in house. The 2011-12 budget incorporates those items necessary to bring about the next level of work, including needs of administrators to accomplish their goals, capital improvements, and utilities and transportation costs. There is still much work to be done, he said. Workshops will be scheduled throughout the month of March. The 7.17% budget increase is primarily a result of the major increase areas of: 3.4 additional high school teachers, 3 elementary teachers, increases in health insurance, contractual obligations, and special education costs.

Mr. Hubelbank gave a detailed presentation of the 2011-12 school budget.

Ms. Corsico asked, noting costs for textbooks, whether AP and honors history classes use the same textbook.

Mr. Martinez indicated that he would find that answer for her.

Dr. Cronin additionally indicated that Ms. McKenna, Ms. Torre and Ms. Culkin have been giving much time and effort to both plans and timeline for returning to K-5 elementary schools, for which he thanked them.

VIII. Privilege of the Floor

Jim Uberti, Woodbury, thanked Dr. Cronin and Mr. Hubelbank for their service; challenged the board to keep their pledge not to increase the budget with de-configuration costs; questioned reducing the AD/DoS position to 10 months as a money saver.

Michelle Ecsedy, Woodbury, read a statement from Jeanne Ross regarding her disillusionment over the current board's direction. Ms. Ecsedy added her own thanks to Dr. Cronin and Mr. Hubelbank for their service to the region.

Jeanne Hawley, Woodbury, wished the board luck as they proceed through the budget season with 61% of citizens angry with them and not supporting their direction. She has heard rumors of reduced AP/electives courses and non-tenured teacher cuts.

Anastasia Varanko, Woodbury and NHS student, expressed her concern over possible reduced number of AP courses and her difficulties earning admission to top colleges without them.

Scott Reimhold, Woodbury, agreed that AP courses are necessary to compete; North Woodbury votes should have been counted in Bethlehem; day care arrangements, etc. were not considered.

Elena Bowen, Woodbury, angry that her tax dollars paid for a one-sided brochure about the referendum; felt the referendum question was confusingly worded.

IX. Report from Director of Finance and Operations

Mr. Hubelbank distributed a handout detailing budget % increases around the state that are known as of this date. He added that, as this is his last BoE meeting, his thanks to everyone with whom he had worked, and wished the district good luck in the future. He received an enthusiastic standing ovation from the audience and the board.

Ms. Corsico voiced her concern over a game plan regarding the budget. Dr. Cronin responded that conversations with administrators would be the way to prioritize and identify areas where cuts can be made. Ms. Corsico asked Mr. Sordi whether he intends to meet with boards of selectmen and finance. He replied that he does.

X. Committee Reports

For Facilities, Mr. Bauer reported that his committee had met and reviewed status of tennis courts, elementary school boundary line, capital improvements, fields and well use, track resurfacing, special education transportation costs, and the building project. Ms. Corsico asked at what point the boundary line will be identified, and Mr. Bauer indicated this will be done at the next meeting of the Facilities Committee. She asked for more than 24 hours notice of that, and future, meetings. He agreed to provide that.

For Personnel, Mr. Sordi said his committee is in the process of reviewing resumes for interim superintendent. The committee met today and will look to appoint an interim soon.

For Special Education, though she had no report, Ms. Zmek indicated that a consultant will do a presentation at the next board meeting. Ms. Corsico questioned this initiative because it is not included as a cost in the proposed budget nor is it one that has been initiated by the administration, but rather the board. She does not believe it is something we can afford at this time, given the 7.17% proposed increase.

XI. Old Business

The board would move this agenda item to the end of the meeting, as it required executive session.

XII. New Business

Dr. Cronin requested a *motion to accept the resignation of Michelle Perry, Mathematics teacher, NHS, effective 6/30/11*, entered by Ms. Corsico, seconded by Mr. Suslavich. **Motion carried 8-0.**

Dr. Cronin requested a *motion to approve the appointment of Diana Halas, Speech and Language Pathologist, MES*, entered by Mr. Baider, seconded by Mr. Bauer. **Motion carried 8-0.**

After brief discussion, Mr. Cosgriff entered a *motion to appoint the Board of Education as the search committee for the interim superintendent*, seconded by Mr. Suslavich. **Motion carried 8-0.**

XIII. Announcements

There were no board announcements

XV. Privilege of the Floor

Katie Yocis, Woodbury and untenured Chemistry teacher at Nonnewaug High School expressed that she is, most of all, sad because she wants the students to receive the education they deserve.

XVI. Executive Session

At 9:25 pm, Mr. Suslavich entered a *motion to move to executive session for the purpose of discussing the appointment of an interim director of fiscal services*, seconded by Mr. Baider. **Motion carried 8-0.**

The board returned from executive session at 9:55 pm. Mr. Suslavich entered a *motion to approve, as hereby presented, a contract with Edward Arum to serve as interim director of fiscal services, commencing 3/14/11, consistent with state law and the terms discussed in executive session*, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff.

Motion carried 8-0.

Mr. Suslavich entered a *motion to authorize the chairperson of the board to execute said contract with Edward Arum to serve as interim director of fiscal services*, seconded by Mr. Baider. **Motion carried 8-0.**

XVII. Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pamela Zmek, Secretary
Regional School District #14 Board of Education