

A Special Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held on Monday, May 9, 2011, at 5:00 pm in the Nonnewaug High School Library, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, Connecticut.

Present: Board Chair Stephen Sordi, Board members George Bauer (arriving at 6:40 pm), Linda Bulvanoski, Deborah Corsico, Charles Cosgriff, Gary Suslavich and Pamela Zmek; also, Interim Superintendent Greg Little, Interim Business Manager Ed Arum, administrators Kim Culkin, Melinda McKenna, Alice Jones, MaryLou Torre, Lori Ferreira and Eric Bergeron; and Director of Buildings/Grounds Mike Molzon

Absent: Board member Scott Baider

Audience members included: Faculty members Vinita Chapman and Jodie D'Alexander; three members of the press and approximately twelve members of the community.

I. Call to Order

Mr. Sordi called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Sordi led the Pledge of Allegiance

III. Discussion of 2011-12 Budget

Dr. Little asked for board input on the failed referendum

Ms. Corsico and Ms. Bulvanoski urged acknowledging that results in Woodbury reflected dissatisfaction with returning to K-5 despite the majority's vote to remain K-2/3-5.

Mr. Cosgriff added that people opted not to vote at all because they were upset over the February referendum.

Ms. Zmek stated the board knew the first budget was too high and should now roll up its sleeves and cut further; she reminded the board that both town officials indicated they wanted a 0%.

Mr. Suslavich has been talking to citizens and seniors who support education but cannot afford an increase.

Mr. Sordi prefers to look forward and giving a positive presentation of the budget to help get it passed.

Dr. Little and Mr. Arum gave explanations of each of nine items suggested as cuts. Dr. Little described the curriculum coordinator positions as those which, though they indirectly impact students, do not have direct impact.

IV. Privilege of the Floor

Jeanne Ross, Woodbury, spoke of the value of the math coordinator, who works in all buildings, has direct involvement with students, including remedial and extension activities. We have a spiral math program, she said, which works well with coordination. The math coordinator is a teaching position, and students at all levels benefit.

Tom Arras, Woodbury, asked for estimated NCEP and asked the board to try to preserve what it has, which is better than what the private sector has.

Duncan McDougal, Woodbury, asked where citizens will get this extra money and felt parents should pay for such things as social workers, PT/OT, and psychologists themselves or through insurance. Union workers, he said, are the only ones getting raises.

Art McNally, Woodbury, explained that the state government passed a smoke and mirrors budget, and taxes affect everyone. Teachers have given nothing in 2 years, he said, and are heartless. Only a 0% will be approved.

Jeanne Hawley, Woodbury, agreed with Ms. Corsico's and Ms. Bulvanoski's statements; asked that cuts be made slowly, as what is cut now will be close to impossible to ever get back. She agreed that public dissatisfaction over the February referendum led to the budget failure, because 39% of the population decides how education will be delivered. She also respectfully requested meetings later than 5 pm, which is a difficult time to attend.

Eileen Budrewicz, Woodbury, as an involved parent who worked hard to pass the budget, offered 3 opinions:

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That the vote reflects the people's voice about the reconfiguration referendum; that people do not want to fund duplicate K-5 schools; and economics also played a role in defeating the last budget. She, too, urged cutting slowly and believed with minor cuts the budget would pass next time.

Vinita Chapman, Woodbury, defended the value of the curriculum coordinators, who have brought rigor to the classrooms and overhauled curriculum. Top middle school students are not going to our high school for lack of rigor.

Ms. Ross reminded the board that a monumental effort is needed to pass a budget, including signs and public relations. Also needed is a board unified in its support of the budget. Parents and residents, she believes, want the best we can afford.

Mr. McDougall stated it took him 40 years to pay back the town for the educations his children got in Region 14.

Dr. Little explained to Mr. McDougall that state and federal laws require special services mentioned by him earlier, such as psychologists, social workers, PT/OT and others. He also noted that there is no fat in this or the previous budget.

V. Revision of the 2011-12 Budget

Ms. Corsico entered a **motion to go out with a 2.29% increase, cutting items 1-4, 5,7, and 8 but preserving items 6 and 9**. Second by Ms. Bulvanoski. Mr. Suslavich felt it irresponsible to go out with a budget with marginal chance of passing; urged making tough decisions; said he could not support this motion.

Motion failed 3-3, with, Ms. Bulvanoski, Ms. Corsico and Mr. Cosgriff voting yes, and Mr. Sordi, Mr. Suslavich and Ms. Zmek voting no.

Mr. Suslavich entered a motion to cut items 1-9 and to add \$100,000 in reductions to be determined by the administration, for a total budget decrease of \$466,763.00. There was no second for that motion.

Mr. Sordi entered a **motion to accept the budget reductions as presented**. Second by Ms. Zmek. (Mr. Bauer arrived during discussion of this motion) Clarification of the role of coordinators was sought by Mr. Suslavich. Ms. Corsico commented, with all due respect to Mr. Suslavich, that it should be for the new superintendent to decide whether or not to maintain the coordinator model and, perhaps, even to add a Director of Curriculum/Instruction. The role of the coordinators, she said, is just as important as direct instruction. Mr. Cosgriff added that he suspects coordinators get into the classrooms more often than a single curriculum director could. Mr. Suslavich asked Ms. Jones and Ms. Ferreira to describe the coordinators' impact in their schools.

Ms. Jones explained that they meet with subject area teams weekly; coordinate curriculum; assess teachers' delivery of instruction; create benchmark assessments; do coaching and recommend intervention per SRBI; and are involved in student placement.

Ms. Ferreira said the math coordinator has written a number of curricula; has a phenomenal impact; has created common summative assessments. The science coordinator less so, as she is released for only 2 periods daily.

Dr. Little suggested a placeholder for a Director of Curriculum instead.

Ms. Corsico felt Dr. Cronin had reasons for utilizing coordinators in place of a curriculum director, and felt the new superintendent should determine next steps. She favors adding back the math coordinator; could accept the elimination of the science coordinator. Ms. Bulvanoski agreed.

Motion failed 2-5, with Mr. Sordi and Ms. Zmek voting yes, and Ms. Bulvanoski, Ms. Corsico, Mr. Cosgriff, Mr. Bauer, and Mr. Suslavich voting no.

Mr. Bauer entered a **motion to accept the reductions for a total budget of \$30,304,017.00 with the exception of item #9, which would be moved to the general account**. Second by Ms. Zmek. **Motion failed 2-5** with Mr. Bauer and Ms. Zmek voting yes, and Ms. Bulvanoski, Ms. Corsico, Mr. Cosgriff, Mr. Sordi, and Mr. Suslavich voting no.

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Mr. Suslavich entered a motion to adopt a total reduction of \$466,763 and eliminating items 1-8, and with the balance of approximately \$180,000 to be determined by the administration. Second by Mr. Bauer. Motion subsequently withdrawn.

Mr. Suslavich entered a **motion to take out items 1-8 plus \$80,000 to be at the discretion of the administration, and to bring the secretarial line back to the level it was in 2005 (15.75 secretaries/clerks) for a net savings of \$431,763.** Second by Mr. Sordi. **Motion failed 1-6,** with Mr. Suslavich voting yes, and Ms. Bulvanoski, Ms. Corsico, Mr. Cosgriff, Mr. Bauer, Mr. Sordi and Ms. Zmek voting no.

Mr. Sordi entered a **motion to accept the recommendations for the reduction of staff, with \$30,304,017 as the bottom line, with items 1-8 in place, and item 9 as future reductions to be identified, and in the amount of \$79,855.** Second by Mr. Bauer. **Motion carried 5-2,** with Ms. Bulvanoski, Mr. Cosgriff, Mr. Bauer, Mr. Sordi and Ms. Zmek voting yes, and Ms. Corsico and Mr. Suslavich voting no.

Mr. Sordi requested a **motion that the positions of Science Coordinator, Music Coordinator and Guidance Coordinator be eliminated for the 2011-2012 school year, effective upon the expiration of the current school year, and that the Superintendent of Schools provide written notice of this action to those individuals affected, as may be required by law.** Mr. Suslavich entered the motion, second by Mr. Cosgriff. **Motion carried 7-0.**

VI. Setting Date for District Meeting and Referendum

Mr. Arum read and made available copies of the ballot question and legal notice of district budget meeting.

Mr. Sordi requested a **motion to accept the ballot question as presented.** Ms. Zmek entered the motion, seconded by Mr. Bauer. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Mr. Sordi requested a **motion to accept the legal notice of district meeting, scheduled for May 17, 2011, with referendum to be held on May 18, 2011.** Ms. Bulvanoski entered the motion, second by Mr. Bauer. **Motion carried 7-0.**

VII. Adjournment

Mr. Suslavich entered a **motion to adjourn,** second by Ms. Zmek. **Motion carried 7-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:16 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

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

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Debra W. Carlton, Board Clerk, 5/10/11