

Minutes of the Board of Education
Regional School District 14 www.ctreg14.org
September 15, 2010

A Special Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held on Wednesday, September 15, 2010, at 6:00 p.m. in the Nonnewaug High School Library, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, Connecticut.

Present were: Board Chair Stephen Sordi, Board members Scott Baider, George Bauer, Deborah Corsico, Charles Cosgriff, and Pamela Zmek.

Audience members included: Region 14 Administrators Eric Bergeron, Kimberly Culkin, Lori Ferreira, Alice Jones, and Melinda McKenna; three members of the press and approximately 60 members of the Region 14 staff and community.

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. and the Board moved to Executive Session for the purpose of Acceptance of Resignation of Superintendent Robert Cronin.

Following Executive Session, the meeting reconvened at 6:18 p.m.

During discussion, Mr. Cosgriff related a story about an incident which occurred in his basement while he was doing laundry. He stated that he would rather deal with the snake he found there than the issue at hand. He questioned the aggressive timetable to gather data with regard to reconfiguration and feels the analysis and the report have already been written. Mr. Cosgriff listed Dr. Cronin's accomplishments, including decreased budgets, improvement in communication with the selectmen from Woodbury and Bethlehem, and reducing excess costs from administrative contracts. He stated that Dr. Cronin's resignation is a pirate victory.

Ms. Corsico stated that this is the most difficult issue she has faced in her nine years on the school board. She stated that Dr. Cronin is a man of strength and feels that not many superintendents would continue with reconfiguration knowing it was unpopular because he believed it was the best option for students.

Ms. Corsico listed Dr. Cronin's accomplishments while in the Region, including hiring outstanding administrators at each of the Region's schools and Central Office. She stated that she feels that Dr. Cronin's resignation was due to the issue of reconfiguration and the fact that the new Board has micromanaged the district to such a great extent that no one could properly act as Superintendent in the Region. She hopes that the next Superintendent will be treated differently.

Mr. Baider expressed his disappointment that Dr. Cronin resigned. He stated that he and Dr. Cronin may have disagreed on the issue of reconfiguration but it did not stop them from working together with respect and professionalism.

Mr. Bauer described Dr. Cronin as a good listener and feels that as a Region 14 parent he always listened to his concerns and responded to them. He stated that he appreciates Dr. Cronin's hard work and feels that the Board and Dr. Cronin worked more closely with each other despite their differing opinions on reconfiguration. Mr. Bauer stated that his goal has always been to bring the issue to a vote.

Mrs. Zmek stated that it is always difficult when a Superintendent makes the decision to move away from a district. She stated that she will miss Dr. Cronin's wonderful sense of humor at their meetings. She stated that his decision was a personal one and we must accept that it is the right decision for him. Mrs. Zmek stated that she knows that wherever Dr. Cronin's new endeavors might take him, that she knows he will be happy and successful.

Ms. Carlton read a statement on behalf of Ms. Bulvanoski, who was absent from the meeting due to a family obligation. She stated that when she was seeking a place to live, she was warned against moving to Region 14 for many reasons, including high turnover in staff, difficulty with budget referendums, facilities that were in need of improvement, low teacher pay, mediocre education and that small groups of residents felt they could run the school district. For this reason she moved to Region 15, but watched the history of Region 14 unfold as administrators and teachers moved in and out. After Dr. Cronin became superintendent, she saw progress and new programs being implemented that other districts had for many years, such as teacher evaluations. She feels sad to be losing such a passionate, respectful intelligent visionary administrator.

Mrs. Bulvanoski wrote that she feels the lack of respect directed at Dr. Cronin and the Board by the community during privilege of the floor is deplorable and like nothing she has ever witnessed. She admires his ability to hold his head high and that a void will exist when he is gone. She feels that although teacher and student input is subjective, she feels their voices need to be heard for an accurate evaluation of the school system. She stated the Public Relations Committee should not be made up of four Bethlehem Board members and she disagrees with the way the report is being done and has told Mr. Sordi that she did not want to serve on the committee.

Mr. Sordi stated that he accepts Dr. Cronin's resignation with regret and feels that the Board and he worked well together. He said he spoke with Dr. Cronin after receiving his letter of resignation and Dr. Cronin had indicated at that time that he felt he didn't have the community's support following the recent Board election. Mr. Sordi indicated that it was Dr. Cronin's decision to leave the Region and that there was no suggestion by this Board to ask him to leave. During conversations he stated he would have to leave despite which way the vote went. Mr. Sordi also stated that during his discussions, Dr. Cronin indicated he felt he didn't have the support of the communities because of the election results and that he felt as a professional it was time for him to move on.

Following discussion, a *motion was made to accept the resignation of Superintendent Robert Cronin*. There was a second, and the **motion carried 5-1**, with Mr. Cosgriff voting no.

Ms. Corsico made a *motion to adjourn* at 6:51 p.m., seconded by Mr. Baider, and **motion unanimously carried**.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pamela Zmek, Secretary
Regional School District 14 Board of Education