

(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, December 6, 2010, 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  
Audience members included: Region 14 administrators Alice Jones, Eric Bergeron, Melinda McKenna, MaryLou Torre, Kimberly Culkun, and Jose Martinez; teachers Vinita Chapman, Stacey Calo and Nancy Ayre; three members of the press and approximately fifteen members of the community.

**I. Call to Order**

Mr. Sordi called the meeting to order at 7:39 p.m.

**II. Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. Sordi led the Pledge of Allegiance

**III. Recognition**

Captains from NHS fall sports teams reported to the board on their team and individual successes this season. Reporting were: Steve Aleandri, Steve MacLean, and P.J. Scappatura for football; Caroline Kuzma and Lauren Villanova for field hockey; Brianna Schaar and Mary Harrison for volleyball; Sean Dinallo and Cody St. John for boys soccer; Ashley Mancini, Kara Connolly and Georgia Gibson for girls soccer; Jackie Nicholas and Elise Uberti for girls cross country; and Andre Beresin, Spencer Carey and Mike Vagnini for boys cross country.

**IV. Report from Student Representatives**

Jenny Dressel, Student Council Treasurer, reported on recent and upcoming events at NHS. Mary Harrison reported on her experience at the recent CABA convention as well as on the state student advisory council.

Ms. Bulvanoski requested the *addition of an agenda item, "committee assignments," to be added under Old Business.* She entered that request as a motion, seconded by Ms. Corsico. **Motion carried 8-0.**

Ms. Corsico requested the *addition of an agenda item, "procedure for Board members making individual requests for information," under New Business.* She entered that request as a motion, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff. **Motion carried 8-0.**

**V. Review of the Minutes**

Mr. Suslavich entered a *motion to accept the minutes of the regular board meeting of November 1, 2010,* seconded by Mr. Baider. Mr. Bauer requested a correction on page 4, line 5. The minutes read, "Mr. Bauer said the idea is not to have a line specifically in place." He asked that this be changed to, "Mr. Bauer said the idea is not to have a line specifically stated in the referendum question." Also, under the second privilege of the floor, page 6, Mr. Sordi asked that the word, "none," be changed to something like, "no one spoke," to make it clear that privilege of the floor was offered.

With those changes, **the motion carried 7-0-1.** Ms. Bulvanoski abstained, as she was not in attendance at that meeting.

Mr. Baider entered a *motion to accept the minutes of the special board meeting of 11/23/10,* seconded by Mr. Bauer. A number of issues with these minutes were identified, resulting in Mr. Baider withdrawing his previous motion.

Mr. Baider entered a *motion to table approval of the minutes of 11/23/10,* seconded by Mr. Cosgriff.

**Motion carried 8-0.**

There was no cause to approve the minutes of the 11/30/10 meeting; it was a non-meeting.

**VI. Reconfiguration**

Mr. Sordi reported on Atty. Sommaruga's advice that a question related to a K-4/5-8 configuration not be pursued. Mr. Sordi read a revised version of question #1. The question currently reads: "Shall the Regional School District No.14 plan, as approved by the State Board of Education on May 1, 1968, be amended by revising the plan recommendations so as to a) eliminate grades kindergarten through 5 elementary schools in Bethlehem and Woodbury and b) replace them with a primary school in Bethlehem housing grades kindergarten through 2 and an intermediate school in Woodbury housing grades 3 through 5?"

Ms. Bulvanoski commented that this question is the one she believes the community expects them to present and feels the board owes it to the community to provide them with it.

Mr. Cosgriff entered a *motion to adopt question #1 as the referendum question*, seconded by Mr. Baider. The board discussed the idea that counsel may "tweak" the wording slightly but that the substance of that question is their choice. **Motion carried 8-0.**

Mr. Sordi proposed February 10, 2011 as the date to hold the referendum. Mr. Suslavich entered the *motion to hold the 10-47(c) referendum on February 10, 2011*, seconded by Mr. Baider.

**Motion carried 8-0.**

**VII. Correspondence**

Mr. Sordi identified two items of correspondence. He had a letter congratulating Bill Davenport for his appointment to the State Board of Education. He also had a letter congratulating field hockey coach, Kathy Brenner, for being named coach of the year.

**VIII. Report from Chairman**

Ms. Zmek had asked the board to consider the idea of a retreat, Mr. Sordi said. She noted that CAFE provides facilitation for these at no cost and agreed to look into it and work on possible dates.

Mr. Cosgriff added that he would be interested in a workshop on NEASC; Mr. Sordi would welcome information on high school reform.

Mr. Baider entered a *motion to add to the agenda, under Executive Session, discussion of the letter of understanding between the board and CAFE regarding the superintendent search*, second by Mr. Suslavich. **Motion carried 8-0.**

Mr. Suslavich entered a *motion to go into executive session to discuss the letter of understanding between the board and CAFE regarding the superintendent search*, seconded by Ms. Bulvanoski.

**Motion carried 8-0.**

The board moved to executive session at 8:39 pm and returned at 8:53 pm.

Mr. Baider entered a *motion to accept the letter of understanding between Regional School District 14 and CAFE, and to enter into the service agreement for search services as outlined in the proposal*. Second by Ms. Bulvanoski.

**Motion carried 8-0.**

Mr. Sordi, Mr. Bauer and Ms. Zmek each reported on their experiences at the recent CAFE convention and the value of the brainstorming, networking and learning they did there.

**IX. Report from Superintendent**

Dr. Cronin provided the board and audience with a timeline for de-configuring the elementary schools should that become necessary. He developed the timeline together with Ms. McKenna, Ms. Torre, Ms. Culkin and Mr. Hubelbank.

**X. Privilege of the Floor**

Privilege of the Floor was invited, but no one came forward to speak

**XI. Report from Director of Finance and Operations**

Mr. Hubelbank noted the season's first delayed opening today, urging anyone who did not get an AlertNow call to notify the school their child attends to get on the call list. Automated email messages will be set up for future delays and closings. Those not wishing to receive emails can opt out if desired.

**XII. Committee Reports**

Mr. Bauer offered a PowerPoint presentation of the Facilities Committee's progress on preparing its section of the reconfiguration report. He took comments from the board.

Ms. Corsico noted discrepancies between the numbers he was showing and those presented by the administration. She was under the impression that we were not short classrooms.

Mr. Suslavich commented that there had been the effort to use consistency in methodology in both K-2/3-5 and K-5 enrollment projections.

Ms. Corsico also questioned Mr. Sordi on whether he was using a transportation consultant, adding that he does not have the authority as an individual board member to make such a decision. Mr. Sordi said he was not using a transportation consultant in an official capacity.

Mr. Suslavich reported on his most recent Finance Committee meeting and thanked Mr. Hubelbank for pursuing the money saving refinance. Mr. Baider echoed that gratitude.

Although Personnel had no report, Mr. Cosgriff renewed his objection of Mr. Sordi's involvement in the Dean of Students/Athletic Director position, considering this a conflict of interest. Mr. Sordi denied that one exists here, but Mr. Cosgriff received a different opinion from an attorney at CABE.

Ms. Zmek reported on the meeting of the Special Education committee which had just occurred. Some of the moms from SEPTA attended and a review panel and the high needs program were discussed. The committee will meet again on 12/20/10.

Ms. Corsico expressed concerns about the level of involvement of this committee, feeling that stepping into the processes involved in Special Education is not the board's place, nor is looking at the specifics of cases. While such things as expenses are within the Board's authority, stepping in with consultants usurps the authority of the administration. The board has begun directing, as opposed to overseeing, she said.

Mr. Sordi explained to her that, shortly after being elected the chair, he had begun conversations with Dr. Cronin about consultants and review of the Special Education department, and this is not new.

She said she was questioning whether this was a board or administration driven effort, and also the level of involvement by the board.

Mr. Sordi reported that the ad hoc football committee met on 11/17 and received documentation of player numbers, and concerns over fields and facilities. It appears that NHS can field both a JV and Varsity football team next year, and will likely compete in the Pequot League.

**XIII. Old Business**

Ms. Bulvanoski referenced an earlier meeting where Mr. Sordi noted that all members of the public relations committee were from Bethlehem and all members of the negotiations committee from Woodbury. He said he would move her to negotiations and Mr. Cosgriff would be asked to join public relations; however, as Mr. Cosgriff chairs negotiations, no action on this matter actually took place, she said. Therefore, she was not included in the administrator negotiations currently being concluded and, as a result, those negotiations included no input from any Bethlehem board member.

**XIV. New Business**

Dr. Cronin requested a *motion to approve the appointment of Karen Sandor, Spanish Teacher, WMS*, entered by Ms. Corsico, second by Mr. Cosgriff. **Motion carried 8-0.**

Dr. Cronin requested a *motion to approve the appointment of Evva Anderson, Special Education teacher, BES*, entered by Ms. Corsico, second by Mr. Cosgriff. **Motion carried 8-0.**

Dr. Cronin requested a *motion to approve the appointment of Lauren Steinmueller, Special Education teacher, WMS*, entered by Ms. Corsico, second by Mr. Cosgriff. **Motion carried 8-0.**

Dr. Cronin requested a *motion to approve the extra duty appointment listed on the agenda (Chris York, Science Dept. Chair, NHS)*, entered by Mr. Suslavich, second by Mr. Baider. **Motion carried 8-0.**

Dr. Cronin requested a *motion to accept the resignation of Patti Gabriele, Instructional Support, STAR Preschool*, entered by Ms. Corsico, second by Mr. Bauer. **Motion carried 8-0.**

Dr. Cronin requested a *motion to accept the resignation of John "Scooter" Zappone, Softball Coach, NHS*, entered by Ms. Corsico, second by Mr. Bauer. **Motion carried 8-0.**

After brief discussion, Mr. Suslavich entered a *motion to adopt the list of regular board meeting dates for the calendar year 2011 as presented*, seconded by Mr. Baider. **Motion carried 8-0.**

Mr. Sordi noted that Ms. Zmek had asked to revisit the plan to alternate meetings between Woodbury and Bethlehem. Mr. Hubelbank will look into what that would involve from a taping standpoint.

Mr. Sordi explained that, at the suggestion of CABA and FOI, appointing the Board of Education as the Superintendent Search Committee allows these to be non-meetings with no posting necessary. Ms. Corsico entered the *motion to appoint the Board of Education as the Superintendent Search Committee*, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff. **Motion carried 8-0.**

Ms. Corsico explained her added agenda item. She is aware of a request from a member of the personnel committee for an organizational chart with information such as name and certifications of all teachers. When such a request is made, she feels the full board should be made aware of it. It is difficult for the administration to comply with every request and she believes the board should be functioning as a group and not making individual requests. If this is to be allowed, however, she asked that all board members be apprised of requests and that all members receive the information and not just the person who requested it.

She also noted incorrect information in a local newspaper regarding the approximately \$400,000 grant reduction from the state. Mr. Sordi allowed her to ask Mr. Hubelbank for an accurate explanation for that, which he gave. He explained that the \$12.5 million building project, approved in 1996 and including expansion of WMS, came with the understanding that the entire 5<sup>th</sup> grade would be moved there when the project was completed in 2000. When not all the 5<sup>th</sup> graders did, and when the project was audited in 2007 and this was recognized, the WMS portion of the grant reimbursement was reduced by about \$400,000, prorated over ten years and divided between the two towns. The Region did not, as has been suggested, have to write a check to the state.

**XV. Announcements**

There were no board announcements

**XV. Privilege of the Floor**

Pam Gengenbach of Woodbury and Candace Fernandes of Woodbury addressed the board on areas of concern.

Mr. Baider entered a *motion to add to the agenda, under Executive Session, discussion of Board of Education and Superintendent self-evaluation, and to include Dr. Cronin and Mr. Hubelbank in that session*, seconded by Ms. Corsico. **Motion carried 8-0.**

**XVI. Executive Session**

Mr. Suslavich entered a *motion to go into Executive Session for discussion of Board of Education and Superintendent self-evaluation, and to include Dr. Cronin and Mr. Hubelbank in that session*, second by Mr. Baider. **Motion carried 8-0.**

**XVII. Adjournment**

Ms. Corsico entered a *motion to adjourn*. Second by Mr. Baider. **Motion carried 8-0.**  
The meeting adjourned at 10:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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