

(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 20, 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, Gary Suslavich, and Pamela Zmek; also, Director of Finance/Operations Jay Hubelbank

Absent: Board member Charles Cosgriff

Audience members included: Region 14 administrators Lori Ferreira and Jose Martinez, and teachers Melissa Yard, Katie Yocis, Bill Davenport and Mike Murphy; two members of the press and approximately twenty members of the community.

I. Call to Order

Mr. Sordi called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Sordi led the Pledge of Allegiance

III. Special Student Presentations

Members of the Woodbury FFA chapter from the Ellis Clark Regional Agriscience and Technology Program of NHS who recently competed at the National FFA Convention reported to the board on their impressive accomplishments there. In turn, members of ten award winning teams described their competitions and told how they placed nationally.

Members of NHS Team Beta told of their many accomplishments both in robotics competition and in their efforts to promote an appreciation of science and technology. They displayed their soccer-playing robot, reported on their 2nd seeding, out of 62 teams in CT, and quarter finals finish in state competition, and told the board that they received the excellence in engineering award in competition in NY. They also outlined their goals for next year.

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 December 6, 2010 regular meeting as presented*, second by Mr. Baider. **Motion carried 7-0.**

V. Reconfiguration

Mr. Sordi listed a number of considerations in his decision to delay the referendum until February 17, 2011, a week later than previously planned. He will have the report completed by 12/27/10; make it available to counsel, the board, and administration for review on 12/28/10; will plan to discuss and approve the report at the regular meeting of the board on 1/3/11; and hold public hearings on 1/12/11 and 1/13/11.

VI. Correspondence

Dr. Cronin noted correspondence from a community member interested in surveying students about the value of community service in developing 21st century skills. Participation will be voluntary and anonymous and might yield good data, he said.

VII. Report from Chairman

Mr. Sordi addressed the conflict of interest issue as it pertains to his involvement in hiring a Dean of Students/Athletic Director, as well as a Superintendent. He consulted with Atty. Sommaruga, who said that, per board policy, he is not banned from participation in hiring so long as the position being filled is not one involved in direct supervision of his spouse, who works in the district.

VIII. Report from Superintendent

Dr. Cronin reported that administrators participated in the second set of walkthroughs at BES recently and have now spent time in all BES classrooms. They will next visit MES in February and WMS in April. Many good recommendations for Ms. McKenna resulted from the walkthroughs at her school.

IX. Privilege of the Floor

Candace Fernandes, Woodbury, provided handouts to the board and asked who is making decisions regarding equity, and whether the administration stands behind its presentation of 10/13 and the numbers reported then, both with regards to additional teachers needed for two K-5 schools and space issues. Mr. Sordi asked if her questions could be addressed at the 2nd privilege of the floor, after reviewing her materials.

Pam Gengenbach, Woodbury, shared thoughts with the board in response to points made by the previous speaker.

X. Report from Director of Finance and Operations

Mr. Hubelbank reported that a recent application with the Environmental Protection Agency for Energy Education was accepted and the region has been granted an Energy Star rating.

He also explained a non-certified staff pension fund, leading to the following action by the board:

Mr. Baider entered a *motion that Region 14 adopt the statement of Investment Policy Objectives and Guidelines for the Non-Certified Staff Pension Fund as reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee*, second by Mr. Suslavich. **Motion carried 7-0.**

XI. Committee Reports

Mr. Bauer gave a summary of his recent meeting with the Facilities Committee where information was reviewed concerning field conditions and maintenance, and options for using the well for irrigation.

Mr. Suslavich reported for the Finance Committee, which met and reviewed budget to date, bus contracts, contractors providing services, monitoring of PTO and activities funds, and approved the investment policy objectives adopted this evening.

For Planning, Mr. Sordi asked that the board move forward on the AD/Dean of Students position. He requested a motion to add it to the agenda.

Ms. Corsico entered a *motion to add consideration of the Dean of Students/Athletic Director position at NHS to the agenda, under Old Business*, second by Mr. Baider. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Ms. Zmek reported that the Special Education Committee had met this evening and participated in a workshop led by Kim Culkin.

XII. Old Business

Considerable discussion took place regarding the Dean of Students/Athletic Director position, including: Dr. Cronin spoke to the benefits of including the position in the administrators' bargaining unit, allowing for evaluation of teachers and affording the two current high school administrators time to concentrate on moving the school forward. He asked the board for clarity about the position and its future, because asking candidates for a commitment without knowing if it will be in next year's budget would be difficult.

Ms. Bulvanoski sees the position as a marriage of two – one discipline and one positive and motivating.

Ms. Corsico felt it was time to commit to the needs of the high school – our flagship school. The position is necessary to allow for adequate preparation for NEASC and curriculum work. It is time to commit, including financially, to the high school, she said.

Mr. Sordi recommended keeping the position an administrative one, but 10 months with an option for summer days added.

Mr. Suslavich has heard concerns about the expense of the position from the community and would be unable to make a decision tonight as he needs job descriptions for all three high school administrative positions.

Mr. Baider agreed with Ms. Corsico on the need for this position. He would want to be sure the person coming in is doing the evaluations expected of him/her.

Ms. Zmek agreed more help is needed at NHS but considers there to be a huge cost factor. She agreed with Mr. Suslavich, thought a curriculum director might be more appropriate, and needs more time to reflect.

Mr. Bauer supports relieving the high school administrators of the dean of student responsibilities and supports the continuation of the position.

Mr. Sordi wished to resolve the issue now as the decision has been hanging, and requested a motion.

Ms. Corsico entered a *motion to keep the Dean of Students/Athletic Director position in the budget as a ten (10) month position both currently and in the 2011-12 budget*, second by Mr. Baider. **Motion carried 5-2.** The board was polled: Mr. Baider, Ms. Corsico, Ms. Bulvanoski, Mr. Bauer, Mr. Sordi vote yes; Mr. Suslavich and Ms. Zmek vote no.

XIII. New Business

Dr. Cronin requested a *motion to accept the resignation of Megan Caniff*, entered by Ms. Corsico, second by Mr. Baider. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Dr. Cronin requested a *motion to accept the resignation of Carol Leake*, entered by Ms. Corsico, second by Mr. Bauer. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Dr. Cronin requested a *motion to approve the appointment of Katherine Parlato, softball coach*, entered by Mr. Bauer, second by Mr. Baider. **Motion carried 7-0.**

XIV. Announcements

There were no board announcements

XV. Privilege of the Floor

Ms. Fernandes returned to hear the board's responses to her earlier questions. As to who is making decisions regarding equity, Mr. Bauer responded that, in general, the differences in numbers in recent facilities committee reports are due to determining the number of teachers needed to sustain class sizes at or below a certain number.

Mr. Sordi added that the methodology utilized is the board's recommended class sizes. Ms. Fernandes concluded, then, that the Facilities committee made those choices as opposed to educational experts. Mr. Suslavich stated that consistent standards were applied in order to be subjective. Ms. Fernandes asked Dr. Cronin if he stood behind the 10/13 report. He said he did. She asked if he foresees immediate space issues at BES, which he does not.

Ms. Gengenbach spoke again in response to the previous speaker's points.

Katie Yocis, of Woodbury and NHS science teacher, spoke about the needs of students in the district.

XVI. Adjournment

Mr. Suslavich entered a *motion to adjourn*. Second by Mr. Baider. **Motion carried 7-0.**
The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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