PUBLIC HEARING
Minutes
Tuesday, March 25, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
Auditorium, Nonnewaug High School
5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, CT
Official Minutes – Board Approved – Monday, April 7, 2025

Present:	**Absent:**
Jim Crocker, Chairman	Tikva Rose
Chris Matta	Chris Griffin
Carol Ann Brown	Caren Lipinski
Alice Jones	Michael Carbonneau

Also Present:
Brian Murphy, Superintendent
Tina Tanguay, Director of Finance and Operations
Dina Ericson, Director of Student Services
Taryn Fernandez, Director of Teaching and Learning
Attorney John McDonald, Moderator

Patricia Paige, Board Recording Clerk

I. Call to Order
Mr. Crocker called the Public Hearing to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance/Introductions
The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and acquaintances were made

III. Appointment of Moderator
Mr. Crocker appointed Attorney John McDonald as moderator of the meeting.

IV. Appointment of Meeting Clerk by the Moderator
Attorney McDonald appointed Patricia Paige as meeting clerk.

V. Call of the Meeting
Attorney McDonald read the Call of the Meeting:
To present and receive questions about the Regional School District 14

The Regional School District 14 Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, marital status, national/ethnic origin, age, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or disability in its programs, activities, and employment practices as set forth in compliance with the Office of Civil Rights, Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504. Any person having inquiries concerning Regional School District 14 Public Schools' compliance with Section 504, Title VI or Title IX should contact: Dina Ericson, Interim Director of Student Services, Regional School District 14, 5 Minortown Road, PO Box 469, Woodbury, CT 06798 (203) 263-0416

Superintendent's proposed budget for 2025-2026. Attorney McDonald deferred to Superintendent Brian Murphy to present the proposed budget.

VI. Presentation of the Superintendent's proposed Region 14 Budget for the 2025/2026 School Year

The Superintendent's proposed budget:

- Supports the district's goals and meets the needs of all students and staff
- Notes an increase of $2,060,835 over last year or 4.99%
- Contractual salaries and benefits (health insurance) are the driving force at 73% of the total budget or 94% of the 4.99% increase
- Includes the addition of one new staff member, a 1.0 F.T.E. Elementary Spanish teacher
- Student Services indicated a decrease of $709,075, specifically in the areas of outplacement and transportation costs
- No major capital projects in the budget for 2025/2026
- Significant decreases in federal funding Title I, IDEA, and School Mental Health

VII. Budget Comments and Questions by the Public

Karen Reddington-Hughes, Woodbury

Staffing positions during Covid and how many still exist
Why the decrease in Special Education
Vo-Ag tuition reimbursement formula

Gary Suslavich, Woodbury

Agriscience program enrollment and tuition
Woodbury Middle School teacher salaries
Classes/Class Sizes
Paraprofessional Salary Line
Pre-school tuition and how it compares to private schools
Increase in equipment line/what is the district purchasing
Number of students in PreK
Shift in reserve funds

Steve Sordi, Bethlehem

Agriscience students/special education costs
Huge disparity in costs between in-district and out-of-district students
Is there a waitlist for district students for the Ag Program

Diane Macleod, Woodbury

Local Ag students vs sending districts' students' tuition and fees

Region 14 is getting short-changed

Ray Butkus, Bethlehem
Not only is expense increasing, so is the rate of acceleration. It a rate of change issue
Respectfully requested that the Board of Education examine the budget with a view towards the taxpayers and the voters in their communities
Quoted Bethlehem Taxpayer, "When is enough, enough?"

Phil Dunphy, Bethlehem
Appalled, need to look internally
Is the district contractually obligated to have inbound students
Could not find transparency in the budget
Who develops the budget and when does the process begin

Dr. Karen Miller, Bethlehem
Has the district thought about co-teaching
When was the last time excess money was returned to the towns
Seniors have fixed budget
Need more transparency

George Rehkamp
Are the special education costs for out-of-district students covered by sending towns/do they supply the resources

VIII. <u>Adjournment</u>
Hearing no further comments, Attorney McDonald adjourned the Public Hearing at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Patricia Paige
Board Clerk

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Patricia Paige, Board Clerk