M I N U T E S
Special Meeting
Agriscience Funding Committee
Wednesday, October 8, 2025; 4:00 p.m.
Library Media Center
Nonnewaug High School

Committee Members Present: **Absent:**
Jim Crocker, Chair
Chris Matta
Alica Jones
Carol Ann Brown

Brian Murphy, Superintendent
Tina Tanguay, Director of Finance and Operations
Mykal Kuslis, Principal
Lee Whalen, Director of Agriscience
Barbara Perkinson, First Selectman, Woodbury
Steve Sordi, First Selectman, Bethlehem
Karen Reddington-Hughes, State Representative
Jamie Mclaughlin, Former State Representative/Senator
Ray Butkus, Selectman, Bethlehem
Lenoard Assard, Chair, Board of Finance, Bethlehem
Paul Zulpa, Chair, Board of Finance, Woodbury

I. Call to order
Jim Crocker called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

II. **Discussion of current and future funding sources, mechanisms for agriscience program compensation, and analysis.**

Overview

- Discussion of Region 14 Agriscience revenues and costs and State of Connecticut statute(s)
- Region 14 currently serves 275 out-of-district students from **9** sending districts, with total Agriscience enrollment of 3,722 students statewide

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- Brian Murphy was appointed to the Connecticut State Agri Science and Technology Committee and is the only superintendent representative
- The committee agreed to pursue legislative action for increased state funding and explore the "money follows child" concept as a potential solution
- **72%** of VOAG students go to college, contradicting public misconceptions about the program

Committee mission and objectives

- Jim Crocker stated the committee's mission is to address Connecticut's Agriscience funding inadequacy / inequity definitively and transparently
- The committee aims to work with the state and others to resolve the current funding situation
- Participants agreed the current out-of-district funding formula is substantially inadequate and has been for years

District proactive efforts update

- Brian Murphy met with Harold Mackin at the State, requesting collaboration to increase state funding
- The district is working with the Connecticut School Finance Project, a nonpartisan organization that assists districts with state funding
- Brian Murphy drafted letters to state legislators about funding issues
- The group plans to coordinate with other affected districts to build a stronger coalition
- A bill addressing Agriscience funding died in the legislature last year, but efforts continue
- Jamie and Karen will assemble a legislative history of Agriscience funding as foundational to our mission.
- Paul will reach out to CCM
- Barbara suggested that we reach out to selected sending towns, at the appropriate time.
- Quantitative and qualitative analysis will be conducted

Comparative cost analysis needs

- Jeff Ziplow will present an independent analysis of Agriscience funding and revenue at the next meeting
- The analysis will provide a clearer picture of costs and revenue than state-provided data
- Participants requested comparison data showing per-student costs across different districts

Public education and messaging strategy

- Participants emphasized the need to educate the public about the program's academic rigor, and college preparation

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III. <u>Adjournment</u>

The meeting adjourned at 5:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia Paige
Board Clerk

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Patricia Paige, Board Clerk
Minutes created with assistance of Circleback AI"

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