MINUTES
Special Meeting

Agriscience Funding Committee
Wednesday, November 12, 2025; 4:00 p.m.
Library Media Center
Nonnewaug High School

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

Absent:

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
Jamie Mclaughlin, Former State Representative/Senator
Ray Butkus, First Selectman Elect, Bethlehem
Lenoard Assard, Chair, Board of Finance, Bethlehem
Paul Zulpa, Chair, First Selectman Elect, Woodbury

I. Call to order

Jim Crocker called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

II. Review of Agriscience Funding/Expenditures

- Representatives from Clifton Larson Allen presented a cost analysis for Region 14 to identify all costs and revenues associated with Vocational Agriculture Program.
- Presentation included the Project Overview, Assumptions used in the Analysis, Cost per Student Analysis, VoAg Considerations, and Recommendations
    - Identified all expenses associated with the VoAg program including building costs, utilities, insurance, ongoing maintenance, etc.
    - Identified all revenues associated with the VoAg program including State and Federal monies, grants, etc.
    - Developed a cost per student model that confirms actual costs to have students participate in the VoAg Program.
    - Provided recommendations for enhancing and/or monitoring costs associated with the VoAg Program.

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- **Discussion Points**
    - Some members of the committee argued that capital costs directly attributable to AgriScience (horse barn, aquaculture facilities, green energy infrastructure) should be allocated to the program even if they are fixed expenses and be included as part of the cost per student equation
    - CLA representatives maintained their approach: costs existing whether VoAg students attend or not were excluded to isolate true incremental student costs

- **State Funding Shortfall and Fairness**
    - State funding formula for agriscience has not increased in over a decade, causing inflation erosion
    - Office of Legislative Research requested to provide history of statute and rationale for current funding levels

- **Advocacy strategy**
    - First Selectman Barbara Perkinson contacted CCM (Connecticut Conference of Municipalities) President Joe Delong
    - CCM Education Appropriations, Taxes, and Finance Committee added recommendation to increase foundation amount and weighted ECS funding for public schools of choice including agriscience schools
    - Joe Delong and Brian O'Connor (CCM policy chair) agreed to visit Region 14 for presentation early in 2026
    - Representative Karen Reddington-Hughes requested analysis to advocate for additional agriscience funding during special legislative session starting November 12, 2025
    - Meeting planned with Senator Berthel to present findings

III. Next Steps
- Representatives from CLA will share their analysis computation data with the committee members
- Members to examine the data and note their questions
- CLP Presentation scheduled for Monday, December 8th, Board of Education meeting

IV. The meeting adjourned at 6:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia Paige

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Board Clerk

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

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