

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held on Monday, December 19, 2011, in the Nonnewaug High School Library, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, Connecticut.

Present: Superintendent Jody Ian Goeler; Board members Sophieazane Bartlett, George Bauer, John Chapman, Charles Cosgriff, Gary Suslavich, John Swendsen, Maryanne Van Aken, and Pamela Zmek; Director of Finance/Operations James Reese; Director of Special Services Kimberly Culkin; and Board Clerk Debra Carlton
Audience members included: 2 members of the community and one member of the press

I. Call to Order

Mr. Cosgriff called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Presentation – Special Education

Ms. Culkin provided a thorough review of the charges, responsibilities, and procedures of her department. She outlined purposes of PPTs (Planning and Placement Teams) in the schools, as well as SCTs (Student Consultation Teams). She spoke of a new Step by Step program for early screening of very young children, explained her obligations regarding confidentiality and procedural safeguards, reviewed processes for evaluation and determining eligibility for services, and said that decision making for placements is meant to ensure the least restrictive environment for learning. She concluded by praising her staff for embracing the work, looking for challenge, willingness to do things differently, and working collaboratively.

After her presentation, Ms. Culkin answered several questions from board members.

III. Review of the Minutes

Mr. Suslavich entered a *motion to accept the minutes of the regular meeting of December 5, 2011 as written*. Seconded by Ms. Van Aken, the **motion carried 8-0**.

IV. Correspondence

None.

V. Report from the Chairman

Mr. Cosgriff wished everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, Season's Greetings, and wealth and health for the coming year.

VI. Report from the Superintendent

Mr. Goeler, in deference to Ms. Culkin and her presentation, had no report. He echoed Mr. Cosgriff's sentiments, adding Happy Hanukkah, and "Festivus for the rest of us!" (Seinfeld 12/18/97 episode)

VII. Privilege of the Floor

None.

VIII. Report from the Director of Finance/Operations

Mr. Reese's only item was the approval of the truck purchase, to be addressed during new business.

IX. Committee Reports

Mr. Chapman, reporting for Bylaws/Policy/Ethics, noted progress on the bullying policy to be discussed during new business.

Mr. Bauer noted that the Facilities Committee met on 12/12 and discussed a 5 year capital plan for improvements offered by Mr. Molzon, reviewed the Yankee Gas issue, and resolved to work with the towns on bus routes/safety.

Mr. Suslavich, for Finance, reported having met on 12/12 and reviewing budget to date, expenses over \$10,000, the idea of bidding for audit services, percentage of fundraising dollars going to students, storm related costs of Alfred, and the budget process.

For Public/Community Relations, Ms. Zmek noted the next meeting of that committee will be at 6:45 pm on 1/17/12.

Ms. Van Aken noted that the Planning Committee had not met, but had recently received educational specifications and would be speaking with Mr. Bauer regarding a combined meeting with the Building Committee.

X. Old Business

None.

XI. New Business

A. Bullying Policy

Mr. Chapman explained that this was to be a second read of the policy his committee has been tackling. Attorney Susan Scott crafted a new policy for the district to comply with new legislation. He recommended comparing and contrasting with the former version, with a goal to act on adopting it in late January or early February.

Mr. Goeler described the policy as legally tight. The policy is very prescriptive and must read as it does; only the format is left to us to choose.

Mr. Bauer brought up the financial obligation related to reporting instances of bullying.

Mr. Suslavich's concern was that the policy speaks only of student level bullying, although bullying can be by adults, bus drivers, etc. The old policy, he said, made more mention of staff, too.

Ms. Van Aken asked about racial or sexual harassment. Mr. Chapman indicated that these offences are covered under separate policy. There is overlap, and he will ensure that the two policies do not conflict. He said the differences in the new policy are largely around reporting – timing, when documents are filed, and committee involvement are key drivers.

Ms. Zmek expressed concern about bullying by students from outside the district and how we would handle that.

Mr. Bauer noted the generic "regional school district" in the language and asked that Region 14 be specifically identified.

Ms. Van Aken noted both written and oral reporting options, on pp 3-4, and asked for clarification on whether oral reporting would be acceptable. She was told that it would be.

Mr. Goeler noted that the policy would be adopted, not the administrative regulation, which could change over time.

Mr. Suslavich asked that the board be updated if/when the administrative regulation is changed in any way.

B. Approval of Vehicle Purchase

Mr. Suslavich entered the following motion: *Resolved, that the Board of Education of Regional School District 14 award the bid for a 2012 Ram 2500 pick-up truck to Modern Motors, Inc., as the lowest responsive and responsible bidder with a bid price of \$30,649.* Seconded by Ms. Van Aken, the **motion carried 8-0.**

Mr. Suslavich felt that take-home vehicles should be discussed at some point.

Ms. Bartlett asked about the insurance claim related to this event and was told that a claim was filed, and \$16,000 was received for the totaled truck.

Ms. Zmek knew nothing of the truck having been totaled by a fallen tree during the October storm. She urged improved communication in all board matters.

XII. Board Announcements

None.

XIII. Privilege of the Floor

None.

XIV. Executive Session

Mr. Bauer entered a *motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of attorney client privilege, and to include Attorney Rebecca Santiago, Ms. Culkin, Mr. Goeler and Mr. Reese*. Seconded by Mr. Swendsen, the **motion carried 8-0**. Time: 8:47 pm.

XV. Adjournment

Mr. Suslavich entered a *motion to adjourn*, seconded by Mr. Chapman. The **motion carried 8-0**. The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:00 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

John Chapman, Secretary
Regional School District #14 Board of Education

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Debra W. Carlton, Board Clerk, 12/21/11