

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held on Monday, May 3, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. in the Nonnewaug High School Library, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, Connecticut.

Present were Superintendent Robert D. Cronin, Ph.D.; Board Chair Monica Gati, Board members Scott Baider, Linda Bulvanoski, Deborah Corsico, Charles Cosgriff, Carla Juhas, Stephen Paluskas and Stephen Sordi; Director of Finance and Operations Jay Hubelbank; Dean of Students/Athletic Director Daniel Scavone; NHS student representative Lindsey Sieber; one member of the press and six community members.

(Ms. Bulvanoski left shortly after the start of the meeting and Mr. Paluskas arrived after it began; because of this, motions reflect seven members voting)

I. Call to Order

Ms. Gati called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Gati led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

III. Report from Student Representative

Ms. Sieber updated the Board on the packed Nonnewaug High School calendar for May: AP testing will be done from 5/4-5/11; talent show is on 5/14; spring concert/art show is on 5/19; awards ceremony on 5/20; Gladiators fund raiser is on 5/22; scholarship night is 5/26; FFA banquet is on 5/27; the prom is on 5/29. In June, finals will be given from 6/16-22 and graduation will be on 6/26. Ms. Sieber also noted students who had earned recognition for creative writing at the CT Young Writers Competition.

IV. Presentation

Mr. Scavone updated the Board on athletic programs at Nonnewaug High School. He noted that, although winning is not the primary measure of success of athletics, NHS has accomplished a state championship, 2 state runner-ups, 5 league championships and many individual awards including one All-American athlete. He reported on numbers of students participating on athletic teams; qualifications of coaches; his role as AD; improvements in organization; expectations for team captains; and proposals for assistant coaches, athletic trainer, and possible football game schedules. He spoke of facility/field needs as well as athletic supplies, addressed the solution to the parking situation behind NHS, and offered thanks to the booster club for their support with awards nights and banner replacement. He answered a number of questions asked by board members and Dr. Cronin.

V. Review of Minutes

1. Budget Hearing of April 5, 2010

Motion to approve: Ms. Bulvanoski Second: Ms. Corsico **Motion carried 7-0**

2. Regular Board Meeting of April 5, 2010

Motion to approve: Ms. Bulvanoski Second: Ms. Corsico **Motion carried 7-0**

3. Special Board Meeting of April 14, 2010

Motion to approve: Ms. Bulvanoski Second: Mr. Baider **Motion carried 6-0-1**

Not having been at that meeting, Mr. Sordi abstained.

4. Special Board Meeting of April 22, 2010

Motion to approve: Ms. Bulvanoski Second: Ms. Corsico **Motion carried 4-0-3**

Not having been at that meeting, Mr. Cosgriff, Mr. Sordi and Mr. Baider abstained.

May 3, 2010

VI. Correspondence

Ms. Gati noted two pieces of correspondence, a parent letter praising Ms. Arlene Campbell and her Odyssey of the Mind activity, and a letter explaining that Ms. Leeza Desjardins would be honored on 5/22 with an art education award.

VII. Report from Chairperson

Ms. Gati expressed interest in changing June Board meeting dates to 6/14 and 6/28 in order for the second June meeting to fall after the conclusion of the school year. She requested a *motion to hold Board of Education meetings on June 14, 2010 and June 28, 2010*. The motion was entered by Mr. Paluskas, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff, and the **motion carried 7-0**.

Ms. Gati also noted the CT Young Writers Competition semi-finalists and named them. They are: Molly Decker, Melissa Gillette, Alex Goosmann, Courtney Ireland, Will Lenard, Alexa Masi, and Emma Welty. The Board joined her in offering congratulations to all.

VIII. Report from Superintendent

Dr. Cronin reviewed the most recent report from the CT Center for School Change which outlines progress being made in Region 14 related to instructional improvement. The fifteen page report, entitled "Year Three Findings Related to the SIIP Partnership" includes theories underlying the work, research questions, observations, data sources, presentation of findings, a snapshot of the Region in January 2010, systems thinking and leadership development, instructional improvement, organizational learning, sustainability, CCSC support, and final observations about the next level of work. Dr. Cronin shared copies of the report with the Board.

IX. Privilege of the Floor

Tom Arras, Woodbury, feels the unavailability of NEAT TV to film Board meetings is a link to the community that has been lost. He also suggested that 7:30 pm meetings might increase attendance.

Susan Scherf, Bethlehem, commented that the force behind reconfiguration was equity in the elementary schools, but feels equity has been lost throughout the district and everyone is suffering. She believes buses are late and empty, time has been lost from the school day, and benefits of reconfiguration have not been proven. She said she comes to meetings to hold the Board accountable. She also informed the Board that students are smoking at the rock at the entrance to NHS and was told this situation, though difficult to monitor constantly, would be addressed.

Pam Gengenbach, Woodbury, (having spent time copying the district's legal bills), wondered if the Board condones or is aware of what she considers Dr. Cronin's and Ms. Gati's over-use of legal counsel. She particularly highlighted costs associated with the Region's defense of the lawsuit brought against it, discussions between Ms. Gati and counsel, a bill for counsel to write a letter to parents for Dr. Cronin about where children will attend school next year, and review of a letter to the editor penned by Mr. Sordi. She believes Dr. Cronin and Mr. Hubelbank overuse the lawyers to protect their jobs.

Dr. Cronin asked that it be reflected in the minutes that he wrote the letter Ms. Gengenbach referred to, and that counsel reviewed it at his request.

Ms. Corsico explained that it is appropriate for Ms. Gati to speak on behalf of the Board with its attorney. She reminded Ms. Gengenbach that the Board did not file the lawsuit. Additionally, and on a number of occasions, FOI requests are made and then withdrawn after considerable legal expense. In this litigious world, she said, it would be irresponsible of Dr. Cronin, Mr. Hubelbank and Ms. Gati not to consult counsel. She noted that they are responsible for a \$30 million dollar school system and, as its chief executive officers, it would be irresponsible of them not to attempt to minimize larger legal issues by seeking advice when needed.

Mr. Sordi asked if his letter was sent to counsel for review, referring to this as a "witch hunt." He was told that is was, as in his letter he identified himself as facilities chair and a member of the finance committee.

Mr. Baider suggested future discussion on the use of attorneys.

X. Report from Director of Finance and Operations

Mr. Hubelbank reported that the district's bond rating had been upgraded which will help with rates at bonding time. He also indicated that bus driver times have been collected again and that, despite earlier comments, they are very rarely late.

XI. Committee Reports

For the Finance Committee, Mr. Baider reported that they had met, reviewed the status of the budget to determine excesses and balance at year's end; also, steps to recover excess costs was discussed.

For the Facilities Committee, Mr. Sordi reported they had also met, reviewed the BES sidewalk project, discussed options with Antinozzi Associates, received scope of services by an engineering firm, as well as topographic and utilities. Mr. Hubelbank will have bid specs by next week and work is to be done over the summer. Upkeep and maintenance of fields was also discussed, there was follow up on bus safety and DMV inspections, reimbursement of funds by WTA, and project list was reviewed.

For the Policy Committee, Ms. Corsico reported that the Drug/Alcohol policy was revised and was ready to be approved. Her committee also discussed board policy on corporate sponsorships, which is permitted.

XII. Old Business

Ms. Corsico entered a *motion to approve the Drug/Alcohol Policy, # 5136.6*. Mr. Paluskas seconded the motion and the **motion carried 7-0**.

XIII. New Business

1. **Personnel – Acceptance of Retirement**

Alexander L. Thompson, Agriscience Teacher, Nonnewaug High School, effective June 30, 2010 and after thirty years of service

Dr. Cronin requested a *motion to accept Mr. Thomson's resignation*. With gratitude and regret, Mr. Paluskas entered the motion, seconded by Mr. Baider, and the **motion carried 7-0**.

2. **Textbook Approval**

Deters, *Chemistry: Discovering Chemistry You Need to Know*, Kendall/Hunt Publishers, Dubuque, Iowa, 2009, for use in Honors Chemistry, NHS

Dr. Cronin requested a *motion to approve the purchase of the above named text* (reviewed previously by the Planning Committee). The motion was entered by Mr. Paluskas, seconded by Mr. Baider, and the **motion carried 7-0**.

3. Field Trip Approval

NHS World Language trip to Rome and Florence, Italy, April 16-25, 2011 for fifteen students plus two chaperones, via air travel from New York's JFK Airport

Dr. Cronin requested a *motion to approve the above described trip* (previously reviewed by the Planning Committee). This motion was entered by Mr. Paluskas, and seconded by Mr. Baider, and the **motion carried 7-0**.

4. Board Policies 4080, 4090, 4140 for First Read

Dr. Cronin distributed copies of the next set of policies and asked the Board to review them for the next meeting.

XIV. Board Announcements

None.

XV. Executive Session

None.

XVI. Adjournment

Ms. Corsico entered a *motion to adjourn*, seconded by Mr. Paluskas. **Motion carried 7-0**.
The meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen Sordi, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer
Regional School District #14 Board of Education