

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held March 5, 2018 at the Board of Education Central Office, 67 Washington Avenue, Woodbury, CT, 06798.

Present: Janet Morgan, Maryanne Van Aken, Mike Devine, John Chapman, George Bauer, David Lampart called in via phone, Carol Ann Brown and Pam Zmek arrived at 7:14pm. Also in attendance were: Dr. Anna Cutaia, Kim Culkin, Chrissy Fensore, Mike Rafferty, BES Principal Susan Ruddock, WMS Assistant Principal Pam Sordi, NHS Principal Julie Luby, NHS student reps, Pamela Schork, Christopher Quirke, their parents, Wendy Yatsenick, Katie Asetline, Eric Birkenberger, Jess McKay, Pam Pagano, Brenda Williams, Leeza Desjardins, Jillian Roden, 8 art students and approximately 6 community members and BOE Clerk, Natascha Schwartz.

1. Call to Order

Ms. Morgan called the meeting to order at 7:04pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Morgan led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Student Rep Report – Pamela Schork & Christopher Quirke gave an update on what has been happening at NHS, which included their excitement to see the renovations currently in progress. They mentioned that incoming 8th grade students and their parents were welcomed to the high school for an informational night to get information about curriculum and student life. In athletics, both the boys and girls basketball teams have been doing well as they head in the State tournaments and spring sports will soon be starting up. In extracurricular activities, the National Honors Society held a blood drive, FFA held their spirit/ week, which included twin day, America day, tacky tourist day and decade day. FFA also had their underclassmen awards ceremony. The Latin American club is teaching students Spanish, and lastly students are working very hard to prepare for the spring production of Footloose the musical. Chris also mentioned that he along with other students are part of the young educators club directed by Ms. Yatsenick. This club is designed for students interested in pursuing a career in education, and gives them the opportunity to participate in supervised internships as a classroom assistant once weekly. It gives the students great hands on true world experience.

4. Ms. Morgan requested a motion to add an item the agenda.

Ms. Van Aken *moved* that the Region 14 Board of Education approve the response to a statement concern of a petition being circulated by a resident with a discussion and possible action), seconded by Mr. Bauer. Ms. Morgan asked that the statement be part of the approval of the special meeting minutes of February 12, 2018. The **motion carried unanimously 8-0-0.**

5. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Ms. Morgan requested a motion to approve the minutes of Regular Meeting of February 5, 2018, Ms. Van Aken *moved* and seconded by Mr. Bauer. The **motion carried 8-0-0.**

Ms. Morgan requested a motion to approve the minutes of Special Meeting of February 12, 2018, Ms. Van Aken *moved* and seconded by Mr. Bauer. The **motion carried 8-0-0.** Ms. Morgan then went on to read the prepared statement from the Board of Education. Please refer to last page of meeting minutes for full statement.

6. Superintendent's report

Region 14's Finest– Principal Luby nominated Pam Pagano, Eric Birkenberger, Brenda Williams, Katie Aseltine, Jess McKay as Region 14's finest for WMS for their outstanding contribution. Dr. Anna thanked all of the recipients for leading improvement efforts.

American Legion Award Recipient- Dr. Anna was delighted to introduce NHS Junior Jillian Roden who won the silver medal in the Sixth District American Legion Oratorical contest. This is a speech contest for High school students, which is focused on the U.S. Constitution. Contestants are required to deliver a 10 minute speech on some aspect of the Constitution, as well as give a 5 minute unprepared address on a topic that is assigned to them on the spot. The contest emphasizes the American Legion's role in promoting good citizenship and patriotism.

Scholastic Art Awards Recognition – Leeza Desjardins and Dr. Anna congratulated all of our talented artists who won awards at Scholastics this year. In attendance were: Courtney Klimak, Breanna Harding, Renee Clifford, Ashley Cole, Emily Hanson, Rebecca Levesque, Shanelle Pincus. Each student gave a brief explanation of one of his or her pieces of artwork.

2018-19 WMS Schedule– WMS Assistant Principal Pam Sordi presented the proposed new Middle School schedule which would add 10 mins more/class to give maximum instructional times with fewer transitions for staff and students and the x-block would be school-wide daily for a variety of opportunities for students to include enrichment, intervention, band/chorus, orchestra, and social emotional curriculum to name a few things.

The process was in depth research, which included administrators researching various types of schedules, a faculty survey was done. The administrators consulted with professionals with school scheduling experience to come up with the proposed new schedule.

Review Budget Calendar – Dr. Anna went over changes to the budget calendar and important dates where the community can come out to hear the budget presentation and ask questions. She asked that the Board of Education members look at the dates of the presentations and to come out to some of these events.

Superintendent's Corner- Dr. Anna advised that in light of the events in Parkland, FL and while the region's safety and security protocols are frequently reviewed with law enforcement, the leadership team held a meeting shortly after to once again go over our safety and security protocols. Resident State Trooper, Sgt. Roden is attending faculty meetings to be visible and answer questions the staff have. The region will increase the number of lockdown drills, and a community security forum is being planned to share practices, protocols, and prevention with the community along with a Q & A session. This will be happening in the coming weeks.

Dr. Anna also mentioned that we are working with the Business Office and John Chapman, chair of the Agriscience Building Committee to get those renovations started. The region finally received two grants, which have been a long time in the works.

The region held a professional learning day in February here the key focus was on math, algebraic progression, HS and element teachers working together. The math instructional leaders are working with all teachers and we also have a consultant who is working with the middle school teachers. We are making concerted efforts.

Dr. Anna thanked the FFA volunteers who help in interviewing skills and resume building.

Ms. Luby, Ms. Yatsenick, Mr. Rafferty, and Dr. Anna attended the College Board conference in hopes of getting to the front of the line for Pre AP work starting in the middle school the next year or two. Currently no schools are currently doing this and we are hopeful that we will be one of the 1st schools to be able to offer this incredible opportunity. We will keep everyone up to date on the progress.

Lastly, the region will be hosting a very impactful parent workshop called Hidden in Plain Sight, which is for adults only. It will reenact a teenager's bedroom and how to look for risk behaviors at home.

Board Committee Reports

Building Committee – Mr. Chapman reported that the High School project is on schedule and that the Guaranteed Max Price (GMP) will be ready to present to the building committee next week. He also mentioned that he is making inquiries into the possibility of having students wanting to pursue engineering the potential of shadowing a professional during renovation project. He is carefully navigating the opportunity as well as getting the Agriscience renovation kicked off.

Finance – Mr. Bauer advised that the committee met tonight and discussed YTD financials, the NHS renovation project financials, the BES property line concern, as well as the budget season calendar. He mentioned that the total revenue to date is at \$23M and expenditures are at \$19.9M with no significant deviations.

Safe Schools – Ms. Van Aken reported that the committee met on Feb 22, piggybacking on an administrator's meeting, reviewed the safety protocols. She advised that more staff training needed and that the committee is looking at implementing a new student plan initiative called See Something, Say Something. This initiative would have the students along with mentors develop a social media campaign to promote it. The committee also discussed mental health 1st aid training and Narcan training, which will be held March 29, 2018 at the Woodbury senior center.

7. Board Chair Comments – Ms. Morgan thanked everyone who worked on the curriculum. She also thanked Pam Sordi for her great presentation and also Julie Luby for the great job that was done during the NHS evacuation drill.
8. Public Comment - Paula Paolino, Woodbury resident asked the Board of Education several questions and voiced her concern over her denial to submit her citizens' petition when the petition had not yet been submitted.

Claire Bullock, Woodbury resident voiced her concern over an incident, which happened with her son.

Teresa Mieczkowski, Woodbury resident commented that she would like to see a parent committee to be able to work with the BOE in order to give parents a voice.

9. Old Business

Ms. Van Aken *moved* that the Region 14 Board of Education approve the Social Studies curriculum, as presented. Seconded by Mr. Bauer. **The motion carried 8-0-0.**

Mr. Bauer *moved* that the Region 14 Board of Education approve the Pearson Publishing Textbook for NHS, as presented. Seconded by Ms. Van Aken. **The motion carried 8-0-0.**

10. New Business -none

11. Adjournment

Ms. Van Aken *moved* to adjourn and seconded by Mr. Bauer. **The motion carried unanimously 8-0-0.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "N. Schwartz".

Natascha Schwartz, BOE Clerk

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Natascha Z. Schwartz, Board Clerk, 3/14/2018

Board of Education

5 Minortown Road ~ Woodbury, CT 06798

www.ctreg14.org

Mission: The Region 14 community ensures an engaging and positive learning environment where every student is valued as a respected contributing member of society, who graduates prepared to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

The Board is aware that a “petition” has been circulating seeking a hearing on issues relating to the Director of Human Resources position.

After seeking legal counsel, the Board has been informed that the law being cited for the petition applies only to local board of education (not regional boards of education). However, the Board has reviewed the matter previously (in light of prior claims about the position) and has looked at it **yet again** just recently. As Board of Education chairperson, I have been authorized to respond to again address concerns.

First, there has been no violation of Policy 2111 or Policy 2140. Policy 2111 deals with our obligation to combat discrimination (by offering “equal employment opportunities” regardless of race, or gender or the like). Our actions in creating (or filling) the HR position was in no way “discriminatory”. Second, the Superintendent was not in violation of Policy 2140. Policy 4010 specifically addresses the authority of the Superintendent of Schools in hiring decisions. The Superintendent is specifically given the option of filling an administrative opening with an in-house candidate before conducting an outside search. During the Superintendent’s budgeting process, Dr. Cutaia always looks for efficiencies in utilizing her staff. Finally, the Board was informed of the need for a full time HR position and that this position would be filled with an in-house candidate. The Board understood the rationale behind that position and fully supported the Superintendent’s decision. It is our opinion that the Superintendent properly exercised her authority in making her decision to hire in-house and this Board of Education unanimously stands by her decision and actions.

Claims have also been made that we have not been “transparent” in our operations and that somehow the District has provided information that lacks “accuracy” and “integrity”. We reviewed the information yet again, we see no basis for these claims, and we stand behind our prior decisions. We are also fully confident that the Superintendent has acted both ethically and appropriately, seeking to do the best by the School District. It is also important to note that the decision to create and fill the HR position was discussed at numerous public meetings, workshops, and hearings, and members of the public were provided with every opportunity to openly question the recommendation.

In closing, we have addressed these questions on multiple occasions and will not address it further. Making the same inaccurate accusations over and over again will not change the facts, nor unnecessarily divert Region 14’s Board of Education or District personnel from the professional obligations and responsibilities to attend to. We will no longer allow time and energy to be consumed addressing these baseless accusations, especially when they include personal insults and false attacks on someone’s character.

[Board of Education Members](#)

Janet Morgan, Chairman ~ Maryanne Van Aken, Vice Chairman ~ Carol Ann Brown, Secretary ~ George Bauer, Treasurer
John Chapman ~ Michael Devine ~ David Lampart ~ Pamela Zmek, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

Respectfully,

The Board of Education

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