

The regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held June 3, 2019 at the Central Office of the Board of Education, 67 Washington Avenue, Woodbury CT.

Present: Janet Morgan, David Lampart, Carol Ann Brown, Mike Devine, Maryanne Van Aken, George Bauer. Ms. Zmek arrived at 7:06pm. Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. Olzacki, Wayne McAllister, Mike Rafferty, Donna Marcinek, Kim Culkin, Julie Luby, Declan Curtin, SRO Chris O'Toole, approximately 30 community members, reporter from the Republican American newspaper, and BOE clerk, Natascha Schwartz.

Missing: John Chapman

### **Call to Order**

Ms. Morgan called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. with a pledge to the flag.

Ms. Van Aken motioned to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 20, 2019 and seconded by Mr. Bauer. The **motion carried 7-0-0.**

### **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Olzacki asked Officer O'Toole to come to the front of the room to be recognize for all he did to avoid a potentially dangerous situation at the high school. Principal Luby also said a few words to express her gratitude as well.

### **Board Committee Report(s)**

Finance/Facilities - Mr. Bauer advised that the committee met tonight with Mr. Bernabe once again to discuss financing of the high school renovation project. Mr. Bauer advised that the committee decided unanimously on one approach where we can take advantage of the \$1.3M that was saved and set aside over the past 5 years, which will alleviate the need to bond or borrow as much and by doing that we will actually be saving the district approximately \$2M in the end. He went on to state that next year's budget will be the peak borrowing for the project and after that the amounts will be reduced each year thereafter. The scenario which the committee chose takes advantage of the low rates. The premium on borrowing can be applied to the hit of approximately \$2M that we will be taking next year, but the premium will be used to mitigate the hit for next year's budget. Other things. Mr. Bauer also mentioned that the committee discussed the YTD general fund revenues and expenditures being on track. He advised that the committee also discussed the building project financials and that the next reimbursement from the State should be arriving mid-June.

Ms. Morgan thanked finance committee, Mr. McAllister, and Dr. O for their hard work crunching the numbers.

### **Board Chair's Comments**

Ms. Morgan was very pleased to share some exciting news for Mitchell Elementary School. She received a letter advising that MES would be receiving a very generous donation in memory of Dorothy Bessette-De Somma. Her sons Ben, Andrew, and Jean-Claude are donating \$200K to MES. Mrs. De Somma was a teacher in the school in the late 60's to the 70's, and then with her 3 sons, were still involved in the district. They would like to make this donation and are hoping that this generous gift will last 10 years. They will be donating \$95K this year, \$95K next year, and \$10K in 2021. The sons have asked the region to set up a request form from the school to the Board, the Superintendent, and the De Somma family. They would like to sure the money goes for the students and not for frivolous things and would like to have some input. The Board will work with Mr. McAllister to have this set up and hopefully with start some exceptional projects. Ms. Morgan wanted to recognize Mrs. De Somma and her family for this generous gesture.

Ms. Morgan requested that a motion be put on the floor to accept the donation.

Ms. Van Aken moved that the Region 14 Board of Education approve and accept the donation in the amount of \$200K, and was seconded by Mr. Bauer. **The motion carried unanimously 7-0-0.**

### **Privilege of the Floor**

Several Booster club parents as well as students advocated to give the NHS Football team a chance to play varsity Football and prove themselves. Each of them mentioned that it is so much more than just playing Football, but that it is a brotherhood/sisterhood where everyone is accepted by their peers, despite their differences. Each speaker asked the Board to weight all of their options to give the students a chance to play varsity.

Woodbury resident Tracy Blackman, stated that she has been a resident for 13 years and is very concerned with the turnover of staff and how it has impacted her daughter who is a 4<sup>th</sup> grader with an EP. She mentioned that she, has been happy with services thus far. She did mention that this year, the amount of disruption of her daughter's education due to staff turnover has been overwhelming. She asked the Board member what is going on in Region 14 that there is such a high turnover in staff this year and wanted to know what is going on in this region?

### **Old Business**

Discussion with Dean of Athletics regarding Region 14 and Coop Football Programs – Mr. Curtin & Mrs. Luby

Ms. Morgan asked Director of Athletics/Dean of Student, Mr. Declan Curtin to speak about the Football program.

- Earlier in the year, Coach Mihaly (former coach) met with Mr. Curtin and Mrs. Luby to share his thoughts about the future. There were three options on the table: continue as junior varsity, continue as a varsity program, or pursue co-op options.
- During this period that followed, Coach Mihaly, Mr. Curtin and Mrs. Luby reached out to Oxford, Litchfield, Waterbury Career Academy, Shepaug, Sacred Heart/Kaynor Tech, Litchfield and other local schools.
- We spoke to all of these schools with an emphasis on finding a program that would allow us to maintain a Nonnewaug High School presence. The NHS administration believed that having our own team is part of our school's culture and climate and is something worth fighting to maintain.
- In late winter, while Mr. Curtin was out on medical leave, Coach Mihaly and Mrs. Luby met with the Principal and Athletic Director at Sacred Heart. At that meeting, we agreed that we could co-op with them and Kaynor Tech and that we could play in our uniforms, have practices at Municipal Stadium and games at NHS. We were thrilled.
- A few days later they told us that their Board said no and that everything needed to be in their name on their fields. They were willing to hold junior varsity games at NHS. We counter offered and said that if the junior varsity games could be here, in our uniforms, we could live with giving them the varsity. They said no, everything in Sacred Heart's name and uniforms; essentially NHS football would cease to exist.
- Mr. Curtin has held two team meetings to provide players current information. Mrs. Luby and Mr. Curtin have met with the team's unofficial leaders twice as well. We have communicated with parents, albeit at the end of the process, due to the need to keep co-op conversations private until certain.
- At this point, it is our understanding from CIAC, that a co-op for the coming year is no longer an option. If we wish to pursue a co-op in the future, the board will want to look at our current hockey co-op to consider any equity implications such as whether the region pays for it or not, given that we do not pay for hockey currently.

### **History/Context**

- 2015-49 players
- 2016-50 players
- 2017-40 players
- 2018-24 players
- 2019 Signed Up/Interested
  - 8th grade- (Region 14 only) 5 players
  - 9th grade- 8 players
  - 10th grade-14 players
  - 11th grade-11 players
  - Total=38 interested players excluding 8th graders from Ag sending schools

\*source-FamilyID/Player meetings

### **Co-op guidelines from CIAC website**

- Each sport has a maximum determined limit of athletes for each sport. A school should NOT APPLY for a co-op team if their current projected numbers are over the limit
- Football: 32 players in grades 9-12 or 25 players in grades 10-12 (either number can qualify a team for a co-op)

### **Nonnewaug Coaching**

- Dr. Olzacki has accepted the resignations of the former coaching staff and has approved the appointment of Ed Roden as the next varsity head coach.
- Nonnewaug Varsity Head Coach- Ed Roden/Resume Highlights
  - Excellent interpersonal skills used to build partnerships
  - Strong sense of ownership and accountability for assigned goals
  - Committed to teamwork, performance excellence, and continuous improvement
  - Second Selectman-Town of Bethlehem
  - 2007-Present. Mr. Roden has coached high school boys' basketball, AAU boys' basketball, and Pop Warner tackle football (Pomperaug/Nonnewaug)
  - Connecticut Army National Guard, New York Air National Guard, Critical Care Nurse/ CRNA
  - Current rank of Major, section leader with secret security clearance.

\*Mr. Roden was unable to attend the meeting tonight due to a medical deployment. He will be back in Connecticut July 2<sup>nd</sup>. Mr. Curtin showed a short video which was prepared by Mr. Roden as he wanted to address the board/football community.

### **Scrimmages/Games**

- 8-26-8-29 (scrimmage vs Emmett O'Brien varsity away)
- 9/6- Hamden Hall varsity (away)
- 9/27 or 9/28- Trumbull junior varsity (home/depending on field readiness)
- 10/12- Amistad Academy varsity (home)
- 11/4- Wolcott Tech varsity/jv depending on their numbers (home)
- 11/14- Watertown jv (home/homecoming game)
- 11/21- Pomperaug jv night game (away)
- 11/27- Capital Prep varsity (home) Thanksgiving game on Wednesday evening/night
  - We currently have 8 games scheduled and will be looking for two additional games
  - Oxford- verbal agreement

- One of the open weeks has to be a bye based on CIAC rules
- Amistad Academy has requested to play a second varsity game

### Weight room

- We will be providing access to a weight room at Mitchell Elementary school from 6/24 to 8/17.

### Playing Facilities

- Mike Molzon and Kevin Rodgers will be setting up a practice football field at Mitchell Elementary for the fall of 2019. Storage and equipment will exist there.

### Summer Camps/Player Involvement

- Summer... we are restricted as school employees from promoting information as a school based on CIAC out-of-season guidelines. Mr. Curtin plans on meeting with the Booster Club this week to address guidelines and expectations for their involvement. They will be encouraged to take the lead with disseminating information as coaches/faculty could potentially get in trouble depending on what/how things are promoted. We don't want to be seen as promoting our own "captain's practices" or camps and need to respect CIAC guidelines.
- Nonnewaug currently has a great working relationship with the staff from Watertown (our softball coach is Watertown's head coach). We will work closely with their staff and our new staff to disseminate information to our players while also recognizing the parameters set forth by the CIAC with their out-of-season guidelines. It is common practice for local districts to work together to provide opportunities for athletes during out-of-season time periods

In closing Mr. Curtin said that he hopes that this information is helpful and demonstrates the enormity of effort and concern that has gone into this process.

Members of the BOE asked Mr. Curtin some questions such as what the future holds for NHS football moving forward, can we let students who are ready for varsity play for a co-op and keep the junior varsity players, what does a co-op look for in agreements/arrangements with our players, how many players does Kaynor/Sacred Heart currently have, what can we do to encourage enrollment with Pop Warner. Mr. Curtin addressed all questions that the Board asked.

Ms. Van Aken stated that the arbiter would be what the deadline is/was with CIAC and if going to a co-op, then the Board will need to vote on it.

Ms. Morgan advised that the full BOE needs to be involved and to gather all of the necessary information. There may need to be a special BOE meeting to have this settled. She went on to mention that the sub-committee will meet once the full information has been received by Mr. Curtin.

### New Business - none

Ms. Morgan requested a motion to adjourn.

Ms. Van Aken moved to adjourn and was seconded by Mr. Bauer. **The motion carried unanimously 7-0-0.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Natascha Schwartz, BOE Clerk

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Natascha Z. Schwartz, Board Clerk, 6/11/2019