

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held on Monday, March 16, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. in the Nonnewaug High School Library, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, Connecticut.

Present were Board Chairperson Linda Bulvanoski, and Board members Scott Baider, Deborah Corsico, Charles Cosgriff, Monica Gati, Carla Juhas, Stephen Paluskas and Stephen Sordi. Also present, Superintendent of Schools Robert Cronin; Director of Fiscal Services Jay Hubelbank; Principals Dawn Hochsprung, Alice Jones, and Melinda McKenna; Interim Principal Kimberly Gallo and Interim Vice Principal Eric Bergeron; Director of Special Services Christopher Quirk; K-8 Math Coach Anne Uberti; NHS Physics teacher Michael Murphy; student members of the robotics Team Beta along with their parents and mentors, Region 14 Music Foundation representative Marc Kroll, one newspaper reporter and about 5 members of the community.

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Bulvanoski called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

### **II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Ms. Bulvanoski led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

She requested *motions to add, under New Business, discussion of establishing a football co-op with Region 12; additionally, a motion to add a teacher reassignment under Executive Session.* Mr. Paluskas made the motion, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff, and the **motion carried 8-0.**

### **III. REPORT FROM STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE**

None.

### **IV. PRESENTATIONS**

#### **1. Region 14 Music Foundation Grant**

Mr. Kroll presented three grants, totaling \$2500, for music programs at Bethlehem Elementary and Woodbury Middle Schools. They were "Sounds of Africa," a percussion performance for WMS, a percussion performance by WCSU, and a strings awareness program. He presented the grant monies to Ms. McKenna and Ms. Jones, who accepted them gratefully.

#### **2. Nonnewaug High School Robotics Team**

Team Beta members spoke about their experiences with their school's first robotics team.

Those present were:

Bill Vornkahl – President, senior

Chris Keane – VP, sophomore

Carolyn Michener – secretary, sophomore

Tom DiSarro – treasurer, sophomore

James Whyte – public relations officer, sophomore

Michelle Cawley – gratitude officer/asst. treasurer, freshman

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#### **IV. PRESENTATIONS (CONT)**

Matt Ziff – safety captain, freshman

Sean Gorman – senior member

The team showed an explanatory video and slide show and spoke of their progress toward competition. They credited the team as valuable experience for students interested in science, technology and/or engineering; talked about outreach, skills learned, teamwork, pride in accomplishment, and ways that what they are learning and experiencing coordinates with their school's curriculum. They thanked Dr. Cronin, Mr. Hubelbank, and the Board for their support and also expressed gratitude to Ms. Jones for the often late night use of the middle school, their corporate sponsor, ebm-pabst, as well as local sponsors, their teachers, parents and mentors.

#### 3. Anne Uberti – Region 14 Mathematics Curriculum

Ms. Uberti gave an update on Region 14's K-8 math curriculum. She gave details related to three main goals: to create common pacing guides for instruction; to develop common post-assessments for each unit of study; and to develop benchmark assessments for grades K-8. With regard to the pacing guides, Ms. Corsico asked what a teacher would do if the class was not ready to move on. Ms. Uberti said that because teachers have already been teaching the material, they have had a sense of appropriate pacing; gauging the pacing has been a reflective process. She also explained that knowing of the common assessments beforehand guides teaching. Common grading rubrics were an idea that came about from grade level meetings, she said. Rubrics for grades 3-5 are more holistic and benchmarks are aligned with CMT and state standards to make them more useful than end-of-unit tests for measuring mastery. The data collection forms show individual performance as well as performance by strand. She also stressed that, although the math curriculum is evidence and concept based, there is also emphasis on computation and math facts and explores different ways to understand math concepts.

#### **V. REVIEW OF MINUTES**

1. Special Meeting of 1/20/09
2. Regular Meeting of 2/2/09
3. Special Meeting of 2/7/09
4. Special Meeting of 2/23/09

For each of the Board meetings listed above, Ms. Juhas *moved that the minutes be approved.*

Mr. Paluskas seconded each motion, and the **motions carried 8-0.**

#### **VI. CORRESPONDENCE**

Ms. Bulvanoski received an email regarding three middle school band students who recently qualified for and performed at the Northern Regionals. They are Eva Davidson, Hayley Strasburger and Vincent Pistrutto. She congratulated them on this accomplishment.

(Two choral students, Sophia Prasinos and Jonas Berry, also qualified and performed)

#### **VII. REPORT FROM THE CHAIRPERSON**

None.

### **VIII. REPORT FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT**

#### **Superintendent's Budget for the 2009-2010 School Year**

Dr. Cronin stated his focus on improving student achievement and the importance of evaluating curriculum used, having the right people working with students, and providing ongoing professional development and resources to teachers. His budget assumes a number of givens, among them the economy, efforts to maintain existing programs, contractual obligations, maintaining class sizes, sufficiently funding technology, teaching and learning as driving forces of the budget, and the continuous improvement of the region's facilities.

His priorities are to maintain current programs which support achievement; strengthen academic programs with the use of coordinators; fund professional development at the present level; purchase new textbooks; reintroduce a second guidance counselor at WMS; and fund capital improvements.

We have seen the value of the coordinator/coaching model with Ms. Uberti's work as math coach, and he will seek middle/high school coordinators to continue this progress. The only additional, though not new, position he proposes is a math specialist at the elementary level.

Mr. Hubelbank then presented a highly detailed presentation of the budget and reviewed page by page the budget, which can be viewed on the region's website.

Mr. Baider asked for clarification that stimulus funds are one-time, after which the region assumes costs of programs funded with stimulus money. Mr. Hubelbank and Dr. Cronin explained that use of stimulus money is defined and that it can support but not supplant programming.

Mr. Hubelbank noted a public meeting on the budget on May 4, 2009 with the vote the day following.

Ms. Bulvanoski requested a *motion to accept the 2009-2010 budget at a 0.95% increase*. The motion was made by Mr. Paluskas, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff, and **the motion carried 8-0**.

Additionally, Dr. Cronin distributed to Board members mid-year updates on both his own and the Board's goals in which he had recorded progress made on all.

He distributed summaries of responses to repeated questions raised by Ms. Scherf and Ms. Gengenbach regarding reconfiguration.

He gave a brief update on the preschool transitions, which is progressing. It will be housed at Mitchell Elementary and staff has visited that site to assess its use. Mr. Quirk asked parents to check the website for screening dates for typical peers, or to call Terry Springsteen at Nonnewaug High School with questions regarding the preschool screening process.

### **IX. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR**

Susan Scherf, Bethlehem, requested of Ms. Uberti a workshop on how parents can help their children with math homework, which she is having difficulty doing. She feels 2 hour snow delays, because of reconfiguration, create "logistical nightmares" and cause parents to call in sick because they can't work on those days; also, she feels dismissal at BES still takes too long and buses are virtually empty. She also reported that snow in the back parking lot causes "calamity" and is an accident waiting to happen. Para-professionals are parking on the side, SUVs can't fit through, and parent pick-up is "stressful" and a "nightmare."

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**IX. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR (CONT)**

Duncan McDougal, Woodbury, read a letter to the Board that he requested be attached to the minutes, as the letter is signed. It is attached hereto and will be available at central and town offices.

Jeanne Hawley, Woodbury, invited all to attend the NHS ASG's second annual "Mystery and Mayhem" night performance. She also noted that young parents with whom she interacts have only positive reports on their children's educational experience in Region 14. Their reading levels are strong, they are happy with both activities and administrators, and have made friends from the other town.

Maryanne VanAken, Woodbury, and chair of ASAP, announced a program with the WMS PTO on March 25, 2009 entitled "The secret lives of WMS students." She described it as a frank and open discussion of issues faced by middle school students and urged the public to attend.

**X. REPORT FROM DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS**

**Discussion and possible action on the completion of agriscience grant**

Mr. Hubelbank spoke of grant #214-0087, secured by Bill Davenport several years ago, which has been programmatically and financially beneficial to the Region. He requested a *motion to accept grant #214-0087 as a completed project*. Mr. Paluskas made the motion, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff and the motion carried 8-0.

**XI. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

For the Facilities Committee, Mr. Baider reported that this committee had met prior to the Board meeting and had discussed use of the sports fields.

There were no other committee reports.

**XII. OLD BUSINESS**

**Discussion and possible action on Region 14 Three Year School Calendar**

Ms. Bulvanoski acknowledged only one email about conference times and one about adding back a February break. She requested a *motion to accept the calendar as proposed*. Mr. Paluskas made the motion, seconded by Ms. Corsico, and the motion carried 8-0.

**XIII. NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Policy**

Bullying Policy – Dr. Cronin distributed a revised policy for a first read.

**1a. Discussion of establishing a football co-op with Region 12**

Dr. Cronin explained that there has been a request by Region 12 to include a small number of their students in our football program. Discussion followed about CIAC eligibility requirements, parent responsibility for their own players, costs, caps on numbers participating and reciprocal arrangements for Region 14 student athletes in other sports. It was concluded that more information was desired and no action was taken.

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### **XIII. NEW BUSINESS (CONT)**

#### **2. Personnel**

##### **A. Approval of Family Medical Leave**

Michelle Tscheppe, Grade 2 Teacher, BES, from approximately 5/11/09 and for 12 weeks following

Mr. Paluskas made a *motion to accept this leave*, seconded by Ms. Corsico, and the **motion carried 8-0.**

##### **B. Approval of Non-Renewal of Temporary One-Year Contract**

Sarah Bates, Grade 6 Teacher, Woodbury Middle School

Mr. Paluskas made a *motion to accept this non-renewal*, seconded by Ms. Corsico, and the **motion carried 8-0.**

##### **C. Approval of Appointments to Extra Duty**

i. Thomas Hahn, English SAT Prep Advisor, NHS

ii. Lucia Dressel, Spring Play Advisor, NHS

iii. Walter Culup, Spring Play Music Director, NHS

iv. Tammy Platt, Unified Sports Coach

v. John Oko, Varsity Football Coach, NHS

Mr. Paluskas made a *motion to approve the above five appointments*, seconded by Ms. Corsico, and the **motion carried 8-0.**

#### **3. Approval of Field Trips**

i. Woodbury Middle School Grade 8 Washington D.C. Field Trip, via chartered bus, May 13-15, 2009, including 18 chaperones for approx. 162 students

Mr. Paluskas made the *motion to approve this trip*, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff.

**The motion carried 8-0.**

ii. NHS Music Dept. Field Trip to Williamsburg, VA, via chartered bus, April 17-19, 2009 including 7 chaperones for approx. 65 students

Mr. Paluskas made the *motion to approve this trip*, seconded by Ms. Corsico.

**The motion carried 8-0.**

iii. NHS Senior Class Trip to Charlemont, MA, via chartered bus, May 22, 2009 and including 5 chaperones for approx. 150 students

Mr. Paluskas made the *motion to approve this trip*, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff.

**The motion carried 8-0.**

### **XIV. BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Bulvanoski reminded Board members of the CAFE workshop rescheduled for 3/28/09 from 8:30 am until 12:30 pm

Ms. Corsico noted that several NHS students were also selected for Northern Regionals.

### **XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Ms. Corsico made a *motion to move to Executive Session to discuss the teacher reassignment and the Retirement Incentive*, seconded by Ms. Gati. The **motion carried 8-0.**

The Board moved to Executive Session at 9:40 pm. Mr. Hubelbank was invited to join the session. The Board returned at 10:40 pm.

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**XVI. ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Gati made the *motion to adjourn*, seconded by Mr. Sordi. The **motion carried 8-0**. The meeting adjourned at 10:40 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

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Carla Juhas, Secretary  
Regional School District #14 Board of Education