

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held on Monday, November 9, 2009, 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; building principals Alice Jones, Melinda McKenna, and Dawn Hochsprung; Vice Principal Eric Bergeron; Math Specialist Anne Uberti; NHS student representative Jennie Schmalder; Energy Education representatives Lonnie Palmer and Chuck Fasnacht; two newspaper reporter and five members of the community.

I. Call to Order

Ms. Gati called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. She welcomed the return of the NEAT TV crew.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Gati led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

III. Report from Student Representatives

Ms. Schmalder reported to the Board on recent activities at Nonnewaug High School. She told of a successful and well attended Trick or Treat Street. Student groups sponsor different rooms and National Art Honors Society won first place for their room, the junior class took second and freshman class was third. She explained that 8th grade students were invited for orientation, which they enjoyed. Also, Ms. Schmalder told of a special Truth about Hate presentation, sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League and Peer Connection, at which freshman learned the damaging effects of different forms of hate in school. She thanked faculty sponsors Ms. Fernandez, Mr. Clemente, Ms. DePolo, as well as the three new guidance counselors, Mr. Maclean, Ms. Russo and Ms. Seligmann, for their assistance with the program.

IV. Presentations

Ms. Jones presented her improvement plan for Woodbury Middle School for the 2009-2010 school year. She reviewed guiding beliefs and explained goals in areas of reading, writing and math, as well a school climate goal. Each goal included plans for implementation and monitoring, as well as action steps to reach them. In reading, she emphasized efforts to improve students' ability to make reader/text connections and successes with a new academic lab. She reported on the development and use of common assessments as well as well as an innovative 45 day rotation for 7-8 grade students in reading. She spoke of the school culture goal of establishing WMS "as a learning community that supports young adolescent students intellectually, emotionally and socially for the purpose of continually moving all students toward high levels of achievement" which is supported through surveys, a school counseling curriculum, an advisory program, opportunities like Rachel's Challenge, extracurricular activities and focus groups.

V. Review of Minutes

Mr. Sordi entered a *motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of October 19, 2009*, seconded by Mr. Paluskas. **The motion carried 6-0-1**, as Ms. Bulvanoski had left and Ms. Corsico abstained.

Ms. Gati requested a *motion to add approval of the minutes of the Special Board meeting of 10/29/09 to the agenda*. Mr. Paluskas entered the motion, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff and **the motion carried 7-0**.

Mr. Paluskas entered a *motion to approve the special board meeting minutes of 10/29/09*, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff. **The motion carried 7-0**.

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VI. Correspondence

Ms. Gati noted having replied to the letter recently received from William Drakeley. Also, a parent letter had been received and a reply was mailed out today.

VII. Report from Chairperson

Mr. Palmer reviewed with the Board information on the Energy Education program that he previously presented to the Facilities Committee. It offers opportunities for the district to save money on energy by purchasing it less expensively, through the use of equipment, and by managing energy more efficiently. The program guarantees at least a 20-30% savings in a host of areas, including heating, hot water, ventilation and a/c, vending machines, parking lot lights, and boilers. Staff is trained and a coordinator from the district is put in place to monitor energy use. Mr. Palmer provided break outs of costs, projected savings and investment costs based on data provided by the district. It involves a 4 year contract, which has been reviewed by Region 14 counsel.

Mr. Cosgriff entered a *motion that the Board of Education give Mr. Hubelbank authority to enter into a contract with Energy Education*. Mr. Paluskas seconded the motion and **the motion carried 8-0**.

VIII. Report from Superintendent

Dr. Cronin explained his obligation to report to the Board on the Strategic School Profiles at the first Board meeting after they are received. He did so, explaining that Region 14 is part of DRG C, along with districts such as Regions 12 and 13, Canton and Oxford. DRGs are determined based on such criteria as economics, education level of parents, need and similar enrollment. Some details of the SSP include 151 students receiving free/reduced lunch, 11% receiving special education services, 95% of kindergarten students attended preschool, CMT scores (with the exception of grade 7 math) above the state average in grades 3-8, as were CAPT and SAT scores in all tests and all areas; additionally, Region 14 special education students outperformed the state average in writing, math and science.

IX. Privilege of the Floor

Pam Gengenbach again sought confirmation that the reportable subgroup of special education students at Mitchell Elementary was the reason for that school being cited as not making adequate yearly progress this year, because subgroups are reported per building and not for the district as a whole.

Dr. Cronin confirmed the accuracy of that statement, and added that MES is designated as being in "safe harbor" this year.

Caroline Maschio provided feedback on how reconfiguration has changed her life as a single mother, including an early rise in the morning. She is, however, pleased that her daughters have friends from both towns, which was not previously the case. She noted areas in which she does not consider the curriculum aligned: in grade three, some teachers required memorization of multiplication tables while others do not; in grade 4, cursive writing is used in some classrooms and not in others. She noted that math, an area where scores are lower, is studied at 2:30 pm, when the students are less fresh. She mentioned that the mile is run in the morning, with no showers following. She also feels the school temperature is too hot. There is no recycling bin in the café and she disapproves of the school lunch menus which include corn dogs and fries. She offered a magazine article about teaching children to eat well.

X. Report from Director of Finance and Operations

Mr. Hubelbank updated the Board that the wells are now clear.

He reported on the district's participation as part of a consortium for electrical generation fees, along with 5 other districts. He noted kilowatt/hour fee and recommended renegotiating with the current vendor, Constellation Energy, which involves no additional contract fees and is also the vendor used by the town of Woodbury. It is a 3 year contract.

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X. Report from Director of Finance and Operations (cont)

Ms. Corsico entered a *motion to authorize Mr. Hubelbank to contract with Constellation Energy for electrical generation fee*, seconded by Mr. Cosgriff. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Mr. Hubelbank also offered a budget planning timeline for 2010-2011, outlining budget development phases, workshops, meetings with boards of selectmen and finance, and public hearing and referendum dates.

He also reported state use of stimulus funds to offset cuts in ESC funding. He reported revenue paid to the region in the amounts of \$188,057 and \$124,977 for Bethlehem and Woodbury respectively to offset the approximate 14% shortfall from the state.

Mr. Hubelbank noted that the Board had previously approved transferring pension funds from Bank of America to Webster Bank. He explained that funds are paid out in December, so to change banks prior to that would create reporting complications. He requested a *motion to revise the date of the transfer of funds to Webster Bank to December 14, 2009*. Mr. Paluskas entered that motion, seconded by Mr. Baider. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Lastly, Mr. Hubelbank offered a list of all financial accounts to illustrate that the majority (93%) are contractual obligations. Many are both contractual and desired expenses, and others are areas where the district would like to expend some funds if able.

XI. Committee Reports

For the Planning Committee, Dr. Cronin reported that this committee had met and discussed a systemic approach to the use of the student consultation teams, as well as district-wide instructional coaching.

XII. Old Business

Mr. Hubelbank offered a handout showing a timeline for a fall 2010 NHS building project. He explained that he had worked backward from a referendum date of 10/19/2010 which showed proposed dates for public hearings, meetings with different key groups, review of project descriptions by counsel, and finalizing costs and scope.

XIII. Board Announcements

Ms. Corsico offered congratulations to NHS cross country team member Jackie Nicholas who placed first in the state – a first time ever for a Berkshire League runner. The Board and audience joined her in congratulating Jackie. They also noted the successes of both girls and boys soccer teams as they advance in post-season matches.

XIV. Adjournment

Ms. Corsico entered a *motion to adjourn*, seconded by Mr. Paluskas. **Motion carried 7-0.** The meeting adjourned at 8:52 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

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