

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held on Monday, January 11, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. in the Nonnewaug High School Library, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, Connecticut.

Present: Superintendent Robert D. Cronin, Ph.D.; Board members Scott Baider, Linda Bulvanoski, Deborah Corsico, Stephen Paluskas and Stephen Sordi; Director of Finance and Operations Jay Hubelbank; Director of School Counseling Carol Tomkalski; Agriscience Director William Davenport and a number of his students; Charles Heaven, CPA; and NHS student council representative Greg Bove.

Absent from the meeting: Board Chair Monica Gati and Board members Charles Cosgriff and Carla Juhas.

Audience members included WMS Principal Alice Jones; Language Arts Coordinator Stacey Calo; Bethlehem First Selectman Jeff Hamel; Woodbury First Selectman Jerry Stomski; three newspaper reporters and approximately 15 additional members of the community.

#### I. Call to Order

Ms. Bulvanoski called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

#### II. Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Bulvanoski led the Pledge of Allegiance

She noted the absence of three Board members and, therefore, requested a *motion to table motions related to agenda items IV (2), V, XII, and XIII*. Mr. Paluskas made the motion, seconded by Mr. Baider.

**The motion carried 5-0.**

She also noted the lack of televised coverage of the meeting, due to the absence of a NEAT TV crew.

#### III. Report from Student Representative

Mr. Bove reported on recent happenings at Nonnewaug High School. He told of 42 pints of blood collected at the National Honors Society blood drive and recognition of the 525 lives saved to date by this chapter. He announced that 31 NHS students were inducted into the National Honors Society this past Thursday evening, 29 juniors and 2 seniors. He noted that Team Beta, the school's robotics team, has begun its "building season" on a robot it will use to compete with. He told of the Tribe fan club which he initiated which is selling tee shirts and season passes to boost fan participation at NHS sports events. The fundraiser competition, "Mr. Nonnewaug," will take place on 1/15 and proceeds will benefit the Gladiators fundraiser. A new issue of the Chief Advocate newspaper is available and midterms are scheduled for 1/19-1/22. A guidance information seminar on applying for scholarships will be held on 1/28.

#### IV. Presentations

##### 1. **Nonnewaug Agriscience Students**

Stephanie Watko introduced members of various FFA teams who competed and earned recognition at the National FFA Convention. The team members explained their competitions and told of the level of awards they received:

Justine Leeper, Ashley Macknicz, Ryan Daddio and Rebecca DiFabbio earned gold and silver as a Floriculture Team. Kira Bartolotta, Jennifer Dressel, Sarah Liska, Felice Martin and Rachael Hunter earned gold, silver and bronze for Agricultural Communications. Drew Hambridge and Dave Bradt earned silver medals in Environmental Science competition. Jacqueline Thomas earned silver in Farm Business Management. Samantha Phillips earned bronze in Agriculture Mechanics. Justine Griesenauer, Jessica

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Meyers, Amy Pantaleo, Kat Pannill, Taylor Martin and Riva Martin scored gold in Parliamentary Procedure and treated the Board and audience to a sample of their skills in this area.

## **2. 2008-2009 Audit Report – Charles Heaven (Approval Tabled)**

Mr. Heaven reported on the process and outcome of the most recent audit. It begins with preliminary interviews with central office staff and proceeds with sample disbursements analysis. He noted that the staff cooperates fully and responds to all requests quickly and appropriately. He discussed GASB No. 45 and how this is an alternative and desirable government reporting method. He noted the significant liability resulting from retiree benefits; about \$400,000 of the \$678,000 in decreased assets comes from this area. He discussed fund statements, and concluded by stating that the opinion is unqualified and that no exceptions were noted in any financial statements. He asked Mr. Hubelbank if he cared to add anything. Mr. Hubelbank recognized the efforts of his office staff, particularly Don Marsh and Helen Stewart in accounting, Jackie Rinaldi in payroll, and Karen Victoria in accounts payable, and offered his appreciation for all the back-up they provide.

Mr. Baider noted that the Finance Committee heard a more detailed report from Mr. Heaven regarding the audit and said that, once approved, it will be available on the region's website in its entirety.

Ms. Bulvanoski urged the Board to review the document in advance of its approval at the next meeting.

## **3. School Guidance Improvement Plan**

Ms. Tomkalski presented her three year work plan for the grade 6-12 school counseling program and her goal of developing one that moves from a service to a competency based model. She will accomplish this by implementing a comprehensive program aligned with the CT Comprehensive School Counseling Program Guide and the American School Counseling Association's National Model. It will be proactive, developmental, with a team approach that is student centered, standards based and demands accountability. She spoke of changes already implemented at both WMS and NHS; gave details of the self study; and explained how focus areas for improvement will be addressed at both schools. She thanked the high school department chair, Pam Sordi, for her work on the plan as well as the new, informative high school counseling newsletter.

### **V. Review of Minutes**

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### **VI. Correspondence**

Ms. Bulvanoski noted receipt of copies of letters from parents of Agriscience students who are pleased with the program.

### **VII. Report from Chairperson**

None.

### **VIII. Report from Superintendent**

Dr. Cronin reported that the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program has replaced the state's BEST mentoring program. There are five professional growth modules: classroom environment, planning, instruction, assessment, and professional responsibility, and beginning teachers will work through them - two in their second year and three in their third. The role of the mentor will be defined and will involve 50

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hours over the two year commitment. Two Region 14 teachers will pilot the program. Eric Bergeron will be the district facilitator.

He also noted that CMT and CAPT testing start on March 2, 2010. There is a testing window of 3/2 – 3/27 with schedules set in each grade level. The writing assessment must be done on 3/3 statewide. Tests will be administered during the first two weeks of the window, and make-ups will be completed after that. CMT testing in grade 10 will occur from 3/3 – 3/5.

#### **IX. Privilege of the Floor**

Tom Arras of Woodbury would like the Board to drop the appeal of the court decision regarding the reconfiguration of the schools. He stated that if the Board has money to “throw around” they should spend it on teacher salaries. He hoped the Selectmen, present in the audience, could persuade them.

Pam Gengenbach of Woodbury read a prepared statement which included an explanation for the reasons the court’s earlier decision was reversed, including the new opinion that the change was not incidental to the original regional plan. She said the reasons Board members gave to appeal this latest decision had to do with perceived educational benefits and not the legal issue.

Susan Scherf of Bethlehem felt vindicated by the latest court decision. She believes reconfiguration will never work; does now because parents drive their kids to school; said the Board wants to be role models yet is not listening to the Supreme Court of CT; believes the change is a lot more than incidental; has followed bus #3 and feels the driver is endangering students; wants educational benefits to be proven; cited 90 days worth of education has been cut; feels there is no consistency because a K-5 program is what is consistent; and asked that taxpayer money stop being wasted.

Jeff Hamel of Bethlehem noted that elected officials get beat up on. He supplied copies of a letter he had hand delivered to Dr. Cronin on 12/21, read it, and expressed disappointment that it had not been shared with Board members prior to their meeting at which they voted to appeal the latest court ruling. He feels the Board’s duty is to act whole heartedly. He feels they have received poor legal advice and not received pertinent documents. He asked that they re-vote this because they owe it to the residents of Region 14.

#### **X. Report from Director of Finance and Operations**

Mr. Hubelbank reported on his work toward a draft budget for next year. A workshop with the Board is scheduled for 1/30 at which time details of how the budget is developed will be covered. He distributed a handout on state and federal mandates. Also, in an effort to keep the Board up to date on major projects, he will provide updated information at Board meetings. He gave an update on the proposed building project to assist in decisions regarding a possible referendum.

#### **XI. Committee Reports**

For Community Relations, Ms. Bulvanoski reported on last week’s parent coffee at MES which was attended by several parents of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students.

For Facilities, Mr. Sordi noted that his committee had met and discussed several items, but as a quorum was not present, it was a non-meeting.

For Finance, Mr. Baider reported that this committee had met at BES and reviewed budget spending and encumbrances. Also, reimbursement for excess costs of approximately \$300,000 denied by the state will still be sought. The committee also reviewed the audit.

XII. Old Business

Policies Tabled

XIII. New Business

Personnel - Approval of Resignations

1. Peg Sheehan, Spanish and French Teacher, Woodbury Middle School, effective January 22, 2010
2. Patricia Gage, Grade 4 Teacher, Mitchell Elementary School, retiring at the close of the 2009-2010 school year following 23 years of service

Tabled.

XIV. Board Announcements

Ms. Corsico noted the accomplishment of Connor Boyen of the boys' basketball team who scored his 1000<sup>th</sup> point recently. The team, she added, is currently undefeated.

XV. Executive Session

None.

XVI. Adjournment

Mr. Paluskas made a *motion to adjourn*, seconded by Ms. Corsico, and the **motion carried 5-0**. The meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Linda Bulvanoski, Secretary  
Regional School District #14 Board of Education