

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE May 03, 2018 MEETING  
REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 4 Board of Education**

A regular meeting of the Regional School District No. 4 Board of Education was held on Thursday, March 01, 2018 in the John Winthrop Middle School Library, with the following Board members in attendance:

Jennifer Clark, Jane Cavanaugh, Trisha Brookhart, Lori Ann Clymas (arrived at 7:05 p.m.), Rick Daniels, Kate Sandmann, Michelle Grow, Leigh Rankin as well as Senior Student Representatives Max Klin and Sydney Suedmeier

Also in attendance:

Administrators: Superintendent Dr. Ruth I. Levy,  
Assistant Superintendent, Kristina Martineau  
Business Manager Kim Allen;  
Valley Regional Principal Mike Barile;  
John Winthrop Principal William Duffy

Board Clerk: Jennifer Bryan

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Jennifer Clark called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 04, 2018 and the Accounts Payable Report

**AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS**

2 present. No comments were made

**OTHER ITEMS**

**Region 4 Student Representatives Report**

JWMS Middle School 8th grade students Sarah & Duncan reported on recent and upcoming events at John Winthrop Middle School including sports activities; the recent Math Counts competition; the upcoming CMEA performance; Project Oceanology trips, and the upcoming blood drive. They are also wrapping up spirit week with the annual pep rally tomorrow to compete for the spirit banner. James and the Giant Peach Musical rehearsals are in full swing and there is only one more month left in the third quarter.

Senior Student Representatives Max Klin and Sydney Suedmeier reported on recent and upcoming events at VR including the VRHS musical Cinderella which will be performed next weekend; an update on winter sports, and conditioning for spring sports. The Senior reception will be May 19th. Seniors are working to complete their Capstone project if they haven't already. Mr. Klin and Ms. Suedmeier mentioned their appreciation for the cooperation that allows many students to be able to work on their projects at one of our three elementary schools. There are also speech and debate events coming up. Both talked about their college decisions and they are excited for the rest of the year.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to move into Executive Session at 7:12 for negotiations - to review the key provisions in the Region 4 Secretaries and Nurses contract for 2017-2020.

The Board moved out of Executive Session at 7:20 p.m.

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to ratify the Agreement between the Region 4 Board of Education, and Local 1303-419 of Council No. 4 American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO (R4 Secretaries and Nurses) for July 1, 2017 through June 30 2020.

Barbara Nidzgorski and 2 VRHS students presented a request for approval of a student trip for the Spring Mock Trial Invitational at Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire on May 5 & 6, 2018. There was a brief discussion.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the student trip for the Spring Mock Trial Invitational at Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire on May 5 & 6, 2018 as presented.

Laura Hilton & Kevin Lam presented a request for approval of a student trip for the VRHS Music Program for approx. 110 students to attend the 2019 Festival in Chicago on April 24-29, 2019. There was a brief discussion.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the student trip for the VRHS Music Program attend the 2019 Festival in Chicago April 24-29, 2019 as presented.

Kate Wheaton presented a request for approval of a student trip for the French Class to Paris on April 12-20, 2019. No school will be missed. There was a brief discussion.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the student trip for the French Class to Paris on April 12-20, 2019 as presented.

Representatives from MahoneySabol presented the Region 4 2016-17 audit report.

There was a motion to approve the Superintendent's recommendation for the return of the Region 4 surplus funds from FYI 2016-17 as presented, with half going to the member towns based on 2016-17 contributions and the other half of the funds to be deposited into the Region 4 Capital Sinking Fund.

During discussion there was a suggestion that the Board instead return the entire surplus to the towns (putting none of it into the capital fund), and then adding extra money into the proposed Region 4 budget for 2018-19 to go towards capital projects. It was noted by some members that the line item in the budget for the capital fund is usually one of the first things cut when preparing budgets, and that in recent years, the Board has consciously cut that line item with the understanding that if any unexpended funds are left at the end of the year, it would be split equally between a return to the towns and placement in the capital fund.

During discussion it was determined that it would be helpful to hear from Region 4 Facilities Director, Bruce Glowac before taking a vote on the return of surplus funds. On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to move Region 4 Facilities Director, Bruce Glowac's presentation on the capital fund and the five year facilities plan to this point in the agenda. Mr. Glowac shared a brief history of the capital fund and its purpose which is to provide for maintaining the buildings and grounds at JW and VR, while trying to avoid expensive bond issues. He discussed what types of things capital funds are used for (e.g. repaving driveways and parking lots, renovation of the track, replacement of worn carpeting, replacement of the tennis courts, replacement of vehicles, etc...). He briefly shared his 5 year Capital Projects Plan for Region 4 noting that it has been 12 years since the renovations at JW and VR. He highlighted the biggest projects that will need to be addressed soon.

There was more discussion covering the history of capital funding requests; the propensity for capital funding being cut from past budgets; the advent of the practice of returning half of any unexpended funds to the towns and placing the other half into the capital fund; the preferred methods for funding capital expenses and avoiding bond issues; and

what would be the most transparent way to fund capital expenses. The Board determined that they would benefit from a lengthier discussion on this issue and a more detailed look at Mr. Glowac's 5 Year Capital Projects Plan, which is also scheduled for discussion on the upcoming agenda for their Region 4 BOE Budget Workshop on March 5<sup>th</sup>.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to table the vote to approve the Superintendent's recommendation for the return of the surplus funds from FY 2016-17 until their March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018 Budget Workshop.

On motion duly made and seconded the review of school property by Mr. Glowac was moved up to this point on the agenda. Mr. Glowac reported that in response to feedback from some citizens regarding the recent purchase of a piece of property adjacent to VRHS, Dr. Levy had asked him to review all of the property owned by the district to see if there were any parcels that don't hold as much value for the school that the Board may wish to consider selling. He discussed a parcel that meets that criteria, as it is non-contiguous with the rest of the school property. It is approximately 8 acres and could possibly be subdivided into 3 or 4 building lots. He said if the Board was to be interested in pursuing the sale of this property, the next step would be to get an appraisal of the parcel. There was a discussion.

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to approve that Mr. Glowac have an appraisal of the property completed. He will bring the appraisal information back before the Board, likely at their special meeting following the Public Hearing on April 2, 2018.

### **Principal Updates**

Valley Regional High School Principal, Mike Barile gave a general update on recent and upcoming activities at VRHS including notice that VRHS student, Kevin Baldwin has advanced as a finalist for a National Merit Scholarship. He also announced several other scholar, athlete and artist awards that students have been receiving. He will have the Board recognize the students at their May meeting. He also mentioned the number of students who have applied and have already been accepted to colleges.

John Winthrop Middle School Principal Duffy shared a general update on recent and upcoming activities at JWMS including NELMS awarding them continuing recognition as a Spotlight School. John Winthrop has already held several transition events for incoming 7<sup>th</sup> graders and/or their parents. High school counselors have been coming over to work with 8th graders on selecting their 9th grade courses. The school also welcomed the author of *Bystander* for their one book, one school initiative. Principal Duffy also encouraged everyone to sign up for the JW Blood Drive on March 21<sup>st</sup>. This is student run and is incorporated into their science unit. It's always one of the largest blood drives in the state every year. He also shared that JW student, Travis Finnerty, has made it into the national GeoBee competition.

## **REPORTS**

### **Financial Status Updates**

Business Manager Kim Allen reviewed the financial status update and the cafeteria account update. She highlighted the currently anticipated deficits and surpluses.

### **Committee Reports**

**Policy Committee** - next meeting is scheduled for March 19th

**Curriculum Committee** - next meeting is scheduled for Mar. 19th

**Finance Committee** - next meeting is scheduled for Mar. 27th

**Supervision District Committee Update** - All of the Boards have now voted to approve the proposed Supervision District budget for 2018-19.

The Joint BOE Ad Hoc Cafeteria Committee will present their report on April 5th at the Joint BOE meeting.

**Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Levy updated the Board on District activities including the following: VRHS is looking at a very high graduation rate based on the unofficial state numbers; JWMS continues as a NELMS Spotlight School. She talked briefly about security at the schools. She noted that all of the schools are currently doing a good job and our kids are safe, but the time has come to get an official safety audit done. She is currently researching companies and costs, and will be recommending a full security audit for all of the schools. She discussed the planned 17 minute national walkout on March 14<sup>th</sup> in honor of the students recently killed in Parkland, FL in a school shooting. She shared the Board's policy on walkouts and noted that the district will be receiving some direction and written recommendations for the best way to deal with that event. She did note that the administration is of the mindset to allow for it, with certain parameters and safeguards in place, and based on attorney guidance. A letter will be sent home to parents and shared with the Board prior to the event. There was a brief discussion. Members of the Board noted that they were happy to hear that administration is working with students.

**Assistant Superintendent's Report** Ms. Martineau gave a general update on activities within the districts including the following: there will be a full-day Professional Development day on March 9<sup>th</sup>. Work done on that date will inform the work of the committee meeting in April to refine the draft rubrics.

**AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS - 4 present**

Jim Carey of Essex said that he thinks the schools are safe, and that he understands privacy restrictions, however, he didn't feel from a parent's perspective that they got a lot of information from the school during recent events. He said he didn't like information being sent out on Channel 8 and felt that the district should use the communication tools they already have available and send e-mail and text updates within the community.

Bridget Quinn-Carey of Essex said in regards to the same issue that it feels like it was a missed opportunity, or maybe it can still be pursued. She said it is during these tough times that parents want to hear more communication from the schools. She also said that she appreciates the Board considering the future sale of unneeded district-owned property. She also wonders why land was previously purchased versus doing some of the capital projects discussed this evening. She noted that the more the Boards and schools can communicate the better to help the community understand the process of things.

Tracy LeMay of Essex shared her concerns regarding lock down drills and feels that the schools should publish the lock down procedures to allow parents to work with their children so that the students will know what to do during the drills. She noted that she believes many students are on their phones, or aren't paying attention when they are taught the procedures while at school, but the parents are willing and should be allowed to help.

Philip of Ivoryton said he echoed earlier thoughts shared by the other citizens. He also mentioned the earlier discussion that the Board had regarding capital funds and he believes the town should support keeping capital requests in future budgets. He also said that he wishes more people would come to these meetings and that he appreciated the transparency and sharing of information at this evening's meeting.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to move into Executive Session at 9:19 p.m. and invited Dr. Levy, Mike Barile and Kristina Martineau to stay to discuss the Superintendent's recommendation regarding staff non-renewals and a student matter.

The Board moved out of Executive Session at 9:52 p.m.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the Superintendent's recommendation regarding staff non-renewals.

## **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- Region 4 Budget Workshop – Additional Wkshp Added on March 05, 2018
- Region 4 Public Hearing April 02, 2018
- Next Joint BOE meeting is April 05, 2018
- Region 4 Annual Meeting is May 01, 2018
- Region 4 Budget Referendum is May 02, 2018
- Next Region 4 BOE meeting is May 03, 2018
- Evaluation of Superintendent (May)
- End of Year Data and Strategic Focus Presentation (May)

## **ADJOURNMENT**

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 9:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Leigh Rankin, Secretary  
Jennifer Bryan, Clerk