

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE Sept. 04, 2014 MEETING
REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 4 Board of Education**

May 01, 2014

A regular meeting of the Regional School District No. 4 Board of Education was held on Thursday, May 01, 2014 in the John Winthrop Middle School Library, with the following Board members in attendance:

Leigh Rankin, Jane Cavanaugh, Chris Riley, Elaine Fitzgibbons (arrived 7:10 p.m.), Laurie Ann Tomlinson (arrived 7:40 p.m.), Mario Gioco, Ann Monaghan, and Jennifer Clark, as well as Senior Student Representatives Phoebe Petrovic and Emily LeGrand, and Junior Student Representatives Elias Mueller and Jenna Taylor

Also in attendance:

Administrators: Superintendent Dr. Ruth I. Levy,
Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Joanne Beekley
Business Manager Garth Sawyer;
Valley Regional Principal Kristina Martineau;
Director of Facilities Bruce Glowac

Board Clerk: Jennifer Bryan

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Chris Riley called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Board requested that items in the consent agenda be voted on separately.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board VOTED (5 yes, 1 abstention Ann Monaghan – motion passed) to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of March 06, 2014

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board VOTED (5 yes, 1 abstention Mario Gioco – motion passed) to approve the minutes from the special meeting of April 07, 2014.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board VOTED (4 yes, 2 abstentions Jennifer Clark & Mario Gioco – Motion passed) to approve the minutes from the Public Hearing of April 07, 2014.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the accounts payable report.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

none present.

OTHER ITEMS

Board Chair Chris Riley recognized and thanked Senior Student BOE Representatives Phoebe Petrovic and Emily LeGrand for their 2 years of service on the Board and gave them a small token of the Board's appreciation.

Senior Student Representative Phoebe Petrovic reported that both AP testing and the Senior reception are coming up soon. She said that both she and student representative Emily LeGrand have really enjoyed serving on the board and being able to observe the process of civics in education.

Senior Student Representative Emily LeGrand reported that Valley's second annual day of community service is coming up soon.

Junior Student Representative Elias Mueller reported that Phoebe Petrovic and her debate partner recently won the State debate championship for the second year in a row. Additionally Phoebe won the Top Speaker award for the third year in a row. He also reported on Band Day at VRHS which gave 8th graders a chance to come to VRHS and play songs with Valley band members. The High school concert and art show will be held on May 14th.

Junior Student Representative Jenna Taylor reported the Junior prom was held last week at St. Clements Castle. Those who participated in the school musical are looking forward to the musical awards ceremony on May 27th. He also reported that the National Honor Society recently voted on officers for the upcoming year.

John Winthrop 8th grader Stephen Kurras reported on recent happenings at JWMS. He reported that all of the sports teams are doing well. There are over 50 kids participating in intramural coed indoor volleyball. Track and Field has also started with over 50 boys and girls participating. He noted that students have been taking SBAC tests on computers and iPads and are enjoying the new way of testing. JWMS Students will be going on the Lake Compounce Field Trip soon. The trip incorporates themes they've been studying in math and science and each student will have an educational packet of materials that they must complete during the trip. He also reported on the John Winthrop Morning Show which has been going all year, and is a great success. The talent show is coming up on May 22nd.

Director of Facilities Bruce Glowac updated the Board on the status of solar project proposals at John Winthrop Middle School and Valley Regional High School. He gave a brief history of the current project and stated that the John Winthrop system will be paid back through cost savings in less than 6 years, which is a shorter time than previously anticipated.

Based on this success as well as funding opportunities available, he and his clean energy team have designed a system for expansion of the current system at JWMS and a system for Valley's roof as well. He discussed the current State lottery process for Zero Emissions Renewable Energy Credits (ZREC's) and reported that Region 4 was lucky enough to receive a number that allows them to move forward with these projects. The projects would be financed 100% through the sale of awarded ZREC's and a Purchase Power Agreement (PPA) negotiated by the CT Clean Energy Finance and Investment Authority (CEFIA). The systems would be owned by a third party investor and the schools would purchase the power generated by the systems at an agreed upon total fixed rate of .085 cents per KWH. There would be no capital outlay. Each project would generate savings in year 1 of approximately \$6000 and then annual savings of approximately \$20,000. Projects would generate approximately \$500,000 in savings to the district over the project's anticipated 20 year lifespan, or \$1 million in savings for the 2 projects combined. The systems become the responsibility of their owner relative to insurance and operations and maintenance per the PPA. The educational and environmental benefits are beneficial to students and the community.

A lengthy discussion followed. The Board requested that the district's legal counsel review the contract prior to signing.

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to add a possible vote to the agenda on moving forward with the solar project proposals.

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to allow construction of Photovoltaic Solar Arrays on roof areas of John Winthrop Middle School and Valley Regional High School. Projects will be funded by a Purchase Power Agreement (PPA) arranged by Connecticut Clean Energy Finance Investment Authority, (CEFIA). Projects will be designed and managed by American Solar and Alternative Power.

Superintendent's Report

There were second readings and discussions regarding requests to approve a student trip to France in April 2015 and Costa Rica in 2015.

French teacher Kate Wheaton presented the proposed itinerary for a Paris trip to take place April 3 – April 11, 2015.

A discussion followed and questions were answered concerning insurance, student participation, and cost.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board VOTED (7 yes, 1 no Ann Monaghan – motion passed) to approve the student trip to France in April 2015 as presented.

Spanish teacher Desiree Fallavolita presented the proposed itinerary for a Costa Rica trip to take place April 3-10th, 2015.

A discussion followed and questions were answered regarding the home-stay component and trip cost.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board VOTED (7 yes, 1 no Ann Monaghan – motion passed) to approve the student trip to Costa Rica in April 2015 as presented.

There was a discussion regarding the proposed donation of equipment to the VRHS weight room. Principal Martineau noted that the equipment is commercial grade and better than what the school currently has.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to accept the donation of equipment (Power Rack \$500 / Weights \$150 / Weight Tray \$50 = total approximated value of \$700) from Jim Wyne to the VRHS weight room .

Informational - Dr. Levy discussed the scheduling of a half-day for VRHS, only, on June 11th. This will allow the staff to prepare for that evening's pre-set graduation ceremony. It will be a full day for all other schools, as they are in session until June 17th due to weather closings earlier in the year.

Dr. Levy told the Board that the Suspension and Expulsion Policy is being reviewed by legal counsel and will be fully updated and brought back to the Joint BOE Policy Committee.

She reminded the Board that the Annual meeting will be held Monday, May 5th, followed by the referendum on the budget on Tuesday, May 6th from noon – 8 pm at the town polling locations.

Dr. Levy reported that they have been busy with the search for new hires. Supervision District recently hired Sarah Smalley as the Director of Pupil Services effective July 1, 2014. Over 45 people participated in the process including administrators, staff, and parents. There will be a farewell reception for Tracy Johnston, the outgoing Director of Pupil Services, who has been with district 5 years.

Dr. Levy also noted that the search for a Deep River Elementary Principal will be wrapping up soon. The hiring process for both positions is the same and includes the following: application submittal, telephone interviews, round robin interviews, focus group interviews, a Central Office interview, individual interviews with Dr. Levy, comprehensive reference checks, a site visit, and finally the top candidate(s) are brought before the appropriate board for an interview and appointment, if so determined.

Dr. Levy reported that the breakfast programs at all 5 of our schools are off and running and have been a great success. They are helping to provide numerous children with breakfast, or food for their daily snacks, who otherwise would have gone without.

She also reported May 13th will be the first meeting of the Task Force on Declining Enrollment. Initial participants will be each Board Chair with one other member of their respective Board, as well as representation from each towns' Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance. Participation will expand as the time goes on.

REPORTS

Financial Status Updates

Business Manager Garth Sawyer reviewed the financial status report, as well as the cafeteria account report.

He discussed a few highlights and noted that the district will be receiving more in excess cost grant reimbursement than originally anticipated, due to the State setting the cap higher than anticipated. Therefore there is a decent surplus now anticipated. He noted that Dr. Levy and he will be discussing this with the First Selectmen at a meeting they have scheduled for May 21st .

He also reported that the cafeteria is on track for making their goals on revenue and expenditures, and he is not anticipating the need for any additional supplement beyond the \$10,000 already allocated.

Principals Update

Valley Regional Principal Kristina Martineau provided the Board with an update on the 2013-14 school year. She reported that SBAC testing is complete now, and went very well.

She noted that US News and World Report recently named VRHS as one of the top high schools in America by giving them a silver award for the 4th year in a row. She also noted that the achievements of the students at Valley are the result of a strong PK-12 system, which is in turn due to a complete effort at all levels.

Principal Martineau shared that 8th graders and their parents will visit Valley on May 27th. She also invited Board members to participate in the upcoming Valley Community Service Day on May 16th when over 600 students, as well as staff, will be volunteering at 40 community venues.

John Winthrop Middle School Principal, William Duffy was unable to attend the meeting.

Committee Reports

Region 4 Audit and Finance Committee - Garth Sawyer reported he will be scheduling a meeting of the Committee so that they may review the proposals received from auditors for the upcoming audit.

Ann Monaghan asked the Board to agree on a practice of putting legal and audit services out to bid every 5 years unless there is a reason to do it sooner. There was a general Board consensus that that would be a good practice.

Dr. Levy reported that the Joint BOE Policy Committee will meet again on May 20th. Committee Chair Jennifer Clark said anyone can contact her at any time regarding policy concerns so that she and the committee may address them.

Dr. Beekley reported that the Joint BOE Curriculum Committees will meet again on May 20th.

Elaine Fitzgibbons, the Region 4 Representative to the LEARN board gave an update on their activities including a recent review of how different districts conduct their Board of Education Meetings. Each representative submitted one of their agendas for review, and she reported that the one from Region 4 came out on top. She said she feels they have a very solid, well run Board, and that she is very proud of the district and the Board.

There was also a brief discussion regarding magnet schools, with which LEARN is very involved.

Supervision District Committee Update -

Assistant Superintendent's Report

Dr. Beekley gave a general update on activities within the districts. She reiterated that SBAC testing has gone incredibly well, and the schools' technology infrastructures were robust enough to handle it. She also reported that students have said they actually enjoyed the electronic means of testing over the old paper and pencil method. She stated that she was really proud of all the districts for their work on this, and that hard work has paid off.

Dr. Beekley also reported that work continues on the revision for the educator evaluation plan. The Board will see the submitted plan at the Joint BOE meeting in June and will be asked to adopt it that evening.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS –

None present

The Board moved into Executive Session at 8:35 p.m. for the Superintendent's Self Evaluation and the Board's Evaluation of the Superintendent.

The Board moved out of Executive Session at 10:05 p.m.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Referendum on Region 4 Budget for 2014-15 (May 6th, 2014 noon – 8:00 pm)
2. BOE Self-evaluation (TBD)

ADJOURNMENT

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Clark, Secretary

Jennifer Bryan, Clerk