

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE November 07, 2013 MEETING  
REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 4 Board of Education**

**September 03, 2013**

A regular meeting of the Regional School District No. 4 Board of Education was held on Thursday, September 03, 2013 in the John Winthrop Middle School Library, with the following Board members in attendance:

Linda Hall, Mary-Beth Harrigan, Chris Riley, Elaine Fitzgibbons, Laurie Ann Tomlinson, Mario Gioco, and Ann Monaghan

Also in attendance:

Administrators: Superintendent Dr. Ruth I. Levy,  
Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Joanne Beekley  
Business Manager Garth Sawyer;  
Director of Pupil Services, Tracy Johnston  
Supervisor of Pupil Services, Tyson Stoddard  
Valley Regional Principal Kristina Martineau;  
John Winthrop Principal William Duffy

Board Clerk: Jennifer Bryan

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Linda Hall called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the minutes of the May 02, 2013 regular meetings with revisions.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board VOTED (6 yes / 1 abstention – M. Gioco) to approve the minutes of the special meeting of May 06, 2013.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board VOTED (6 yes / 1 abstention – M. Gioco) to approve the minutes of the Annual Meeting of May 06, 2013.

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

**AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS**

3 citizens were present. No comments were made.

**OTHER ITEMS**

Valley Regional High School Principal Kristina Martineau introduced new certified staff hires for the 2013-14 school year.

No new certified staff hires were made at John Winthrop Middle School for 2013-14.

Student Representatives will begin sharing their reports at the November 7<sup>th</sup> regular meeting.

## **REPORTS**

### **Financial Status Updates**

Business Manager Garth Sawyer reviewed the financial status report, including the end-of-year for 2012-13 report, as well as the cafeteria account report. He reported that the district ended the year very well. Expenses were below budget and there is an anticipated surplus of \$170,000. The final numbers must be verified through the yearly audit and any surplus will be returned to towns after that process is complete. There were a few questions and a short discussion regarding some specific line items.

The cafeteria report shows a need for an additional \$4000 to be added to the subsidy estimate that had been made in April. Revenues stayed fairly steady from last year.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Region 4 Board of Education unanimously VOTED to receive the financial status report and the cafeteria account report.

### **Principals Update**

Valley Regional Principal Kristina Martineau provided the Board with an update on the opening of the 2013-14 school year. She reported that the ninth grade transition was completed in one day this year. It began at VRHS in the morning with near 100% participation from the class of 2017. It continued at Camp Hazen in the afternoon with slightly over 80% participation. The program is gaining momentum now that it is in its third year. Valley welcomed 616 students at the start of the 2013-14 school year.

Principal Martineau reported on the start of the second year of the Introduction to Manufacturing Program at Valley working in conjunction with Whelen Engineering. It is again being offered once each quarter, and just like last year, it is already at or near maximum capacity for all four quarters. Additionally, there are two returning students who will be participating in advanced individual programming this year. They are still working to interest more female students in participating. Two former students from last year's program were hired as full-time employees at Whelen following their graduation in June. During the second semester at John Winthrop Middle School, they will be piloting an exploratory program for 8<sup>th</sup> graders who may be interested in the Introduction to Manufacturing Program upon their arrival at VRHS.

Back to school night will be held Sept 11<sup>th</sup> at VRHS.

John Winthrop Middle School Principal William Duffy updated the Board on the opening of the 2013-14 school year, which saw them welcoming approximately 368 students through the doors.

They began the year on Aug 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> with summer orientation for 7<sup>th</sup> graders. Students were eager and ready to go. He was also able to share well wishes with the freshman class at their Camp Hazen transition program.

Back to school night will be held Sept. 18<sup>th</sup> at JWMS.

### **Committee Reports**

Region 4 Audit and Finance Committee - nothing to report.

The Joint BOE Finance Committee is scheduled to meet again on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

The Joint BOE Policy Committee is scheduled to meet again on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013 – Elaine Fitzgibbons

The Joint BOE Curriculum Committees is scheduled to meet again on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013 – Mary-Beth Harrigan

**Supervision District Committee Update** - nothing to report since last week's meeting.

**Assistant Superintendent's Report** – Dr. Beekley gave a general update on activities within the district including an update on CMT/CAPT testing. She reminded everyone that schools across the state are in a huge transition period moving from CMT/CAPT over to SBAC testing, which is geared to testing for the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The State has asked the federal government for a waiver to not administer CMT/CAPT in spring of 2014 due to this transition. That approval is still pending.

Dr. Levy reported that the Commissioner of Education recently held a discussion about depressed scores this year being seen in normally high-flying districts. This was not unexpected due to recent shifts in curriculum that have been made in preparation for the upcoming CCSS. There was discussion regarding scores and some disappointment at the results. Elaine Fitzgibbons asked if there were any resources that will be needed to help our students do better. Both Principal Martineau and Principal Duffy stated that they felt they are prepared to address the needs of all of the students. Ideally it is the student, family and school working together that will yield the best result. Chris Riley asked the Board to consider the whole picture, and noted that challenging numbers aside, they were just one small measure of the district as a whole. He said the district and students are in a good place and the students are receiving a comprehensive, well-rounded academic experience.

Principal Duffy reviewed the action plan for Grade 8 Science, in particular, sharing the 5 or 6 specific strategies that will be employed to address lower than desired scores in this area.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Levy and Director of Pupil Services Tracy Johnston discussed the need for hiring a 1.0 Special Education Teacher and an increase of 0.2 hours for the current 0.8 School Psychologist. These hires would eliminate the need for certain out-of-district placements. Dr. Levy reviewed the cost of this request and compared it to the savings that would be afforded by removing the need for the affected out-of-district placements. It was noted that the savings realized would more than pay for these hires, and the in-district placements will provide academic and social benefits for the students. Ms. Johnston noted that this arrangement would keep resources in our community, and future students also reap benefits that come about from connections made within the local community. Dr. Levy noted that it speaks to the quality of our programs when families are asking for their children to be brought back in to the district. A short discussion followed.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the hiring of a 1.0 Special Education Teacher and adding an additional 0.2 hours to the position of school psychologist (raising the current 0.8 psychologist to a full 1.0)

Dr. Levy read a letter to the Board from the Connecticut River Ticks Lacrosse Club regarding a donation they wished to make to the district, in the amount of \$500, in recognition of the support that Bruce Glowac, Region 4 Director of Facilities, has provided to their club.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to accept the donation of \$500 from the Connecticut River Ticks Lacrosse Club.

As was previously discussed at the Joint BOE meeting on August 22<sup>nd</sup> (where Region 4 BOE did not have a quorum present) Dr. Levy reviewed the submittal of a Technology Grant to the State. The grant requires Board approval to submit. It was submitted for the previous week's deadline, with a requirement to submit Board approval in order to continue in the grant evaluation process. Dr. Levy said that they would like to let the State know that they do have Board approval so that the grant can continue the evaluation process.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the submittal of the technology grant as presented.

Dr. Levy reviewed the information previously requested regarding the number of students who transfer out of Region 4 schools between JWMS and VRHS. She reviewed numbers for the class of 2017 as it moved from JW to VR last year. The transfers were in line with year-to-year expected numbers.

As was previously discussed at the Joint BOE meeting on August 22<sup>nd</sup> (where Region 4 BOE did not have a quorum present), Dr. Levy reviewed the key provisions of the cafeteria employees contract that had been previously reviewed by Attorney Anne Littlefield with the Joint BOE. There was a short discussion and per Board member request, Mr. Sawyer provided the cost of the contract specifically to Region 4 (nine of the seventeen cafeteria employees covered by the contract are Region 4 employees).

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to ratify the Agreement between the Chester Board of Education, Deep River Board of Education, Essex Board of Education, Regional School District No. 4 Board of Education, and Local 1303-098 of Council No. 4 (Cafeteria Employees) for July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2017.

As was previously discussed at the Joint BOE meeting on August 22<sup>nd</sup> (where Region 4 BOE did not have a quorum present) Dr. Levy reviewed the proposed work to be done to form a cooperative agreement using funds granted by the State for this purpose. She discussed the details of the conflicts waiver that would need to be signed to allow Shipman and Goodwin to work on the agreement, as well as outlining the general process that will be followed should the work move forward. Mario Gioco voiced his concerns with the waiver. A discussion followed.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board VOTED (6 yes / 1 no – Mario Gioco) to permit the Board Chair to execute a conflicts waiver to permit Shipman & Goodwin LLP to work jointly with the Chester, Deep River, Essex, Regional School District No. 4 Boards of Education and the Supervision District Committee for the formation and execution of a new cooperative agreement regarding a shared governance structure. *(The Chester, Deep River, and Essex Boards and the Supervision District Committee approved this motion at the August 22, 2013 Joint BOE meeting.)*

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to appoint the members of the Supervision District Committee to work jointly with representatives of the Chester, Deep River, Essex and Regional School District No. 4 Boards of Education for the formation and execution of a new cooperative agreement regarding a shared governance structure. *(The Chester, Deep River, and Essex Boards and the Supervision District Committee approved this motion at the August 22, 2013 Joint BOE meeting.)*

**AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS** – none present

There was a discussion regarding the need for the Board to hold its self evaluation that had been postponed throughout the 2012-13 school year. It was determined that Jennifer Bryan will e-mail members to determine a date during September when the Board will be able to gather for a non-meeting solely for the purposes of completing their 2012-13 self-evaluation.

#### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

1. Region 4 BOE Next Regular Meeting (Nov. 07, 2013)
2. Election of Board officers (Nov. or after seating of new members)
3. BOE and Community input for 2014-15 budget (on-going)
4. Presentation of Major Budget Drivers for 2014-15 (Nov.)
5. Profile of 2013 Graduation Class (Nov.)
6. BOE Self-evaluation (TBD)

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Bryan, Clerk