

***THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE Mar 02, 2017 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, January 05, 2017 in the John Winthrop Middle School Library, with the following Board members in attendance:

Chris Riley, Jane Cavanaugh, Elaine Fitzgibbons, Mario Gioco, Jennifer Clark, and Susan Hollister as well as Senior Student Representatives Maleena Frazier and Matthew O'Keefe

Also in attendance:

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

Board Clerk: Jennifer Bryan

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Chris Riley called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board VOTED (5 Yes, 0 No, 1 abstained = Elaine Fitzgibbons) to approve the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of Nov 03, 2016 and the Accounts Payable Report with the following modification to the minutes requested by Jennifer Clark: The last sentence of the paragraph regarding the discussion of payment for Supervision District Services stating "... a consensus was reached that no change was needed" be stricken.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

21 citizens were present.

OTHER ITEMS

Region 4 Student Representatives Report

JWMS Middle School students Alena Crosby and Addison Marchese gave an update on activities at JWMS including boys and girls basketball; winter sports club trips; upcoming Math Counts competition and mock trial competitions; recent success of students at CMEA auditions; fundraising to brighten the holidays for

local students, and rehearsals starting for the school's musical production of *Bye Bye Birdie*. They also happily reported that the students crushed the teachers in a recent student/faculty basketball game.

Senior Student Representative Maleena Frazier reported on a variety of recent happenings at VRHS including an update on winter sports, donations to local children in need, the arrival of early college acceptances for some students, and upcoming ski trips. She also talked in more detail about Student Advisory efforts to improve the cafeteria experience for students, including a sandwich of the day option available for preorder as a time saving option. They will keep looking to extend their efforts at making improvements for the lunch period.

Senior Student Representative Matthew O'Keefe also reported on Valley events. He shared that Valley T.V. has been recording volleyball, basketball games, and the winter chorus and band concerts. The National Honor Society supported a holiday toy drive and three large boxes of toys were donated to Hartford Hospital. NHS also hosted their annual Santa breakfast. Finals are scheduled for January 24th and 25th. Rehearsals for the spring musical *Aida* are under way.

Members of the VRHS Crew Boosters, crew coaches and crew members informed the Board of a generous opportunity they have been given, funded by C. Bart Gullong, to invest in building their own Crew program at Cedar Lake in Chester. Tracy LeMay spoke for the boosters and reported that the booster club has secured a partnership with Camp Hazen. The Boosters will own and maintain the boats kept on Cedar Lake. There will be no change for the school during the first year other than the fact that the kids will practice much closer to school, on new equipment, and will be able to compete more often and be more competitive. She also reported that the club had recently purchased rowing machines to aid in winter fitness for the rowers. The machines will be available to all athletes, as well.

The Board asked what may be required of them. It was discussed that there is a need for school support in the form of press releases and announcements to raise the teams' profile, as well as possibly the use of a truck for the transport of trailers with boats to future competitions.

An opportunity for the team to compete at the Saratoga regatta at the end of April was discussed. It is the second biggest high school race in the country, and a great opportunity to see the best of the rowing community and compete against them. However, it does require Board approval as it is an overnight field trip, out of State, requiring some school to be missed for travel and the students to spend 2 nights away from home. Mr. Riley asked for more specifics to be presented before the Board makes a decision. Principal Barile said that he supports the trip as it has been presented to him. It was decided that the boosters will present the additional information to the Board for a vote at their January 25th budget workshop.

Students and Crew Team members Emily Hutchinson and Tessa LeMay spoke to the Board about what crew means to them as both students and athletes.

Mr. Gullong spoke briefly about why he's loaning the funds to Valley's program, and his inspiration for doing so, Mr. Fred Emerson. Mr. Gullong said it is his hope that he is planting a seed in the community to help build up the existing program. A program that he hopes will continue to grow and bring even more

community pride into the tri-town community. Chairman Riley thanked Mr. Gullong for his generosity and called him a credit to the community.

Dr. Levy shared a short video presentation regarding the proposed International Baccalaureate (IB) program for the high school. Valley Principal Mike Barile briefly discussed the recent NEASC accreditation committee's visit. Valley faculty Don Perreault and Maria Ehrhardt along with Valley Associate Principal Carolyn Gbunblee presented the Board with information on the IB program, the NEASC visit, and the work done by the scheduling committee so far.

They spoke about an IB conference that the three of them recently attended. They briefly reviewed the process of becoming an IB school and how it would affect Valley students and teachers. They discussed how the teaching methods used for IB would permeate the entire school culture and would give students international mindedness and promote global thinking, as well as take students into the local community preparing them very well for success in college.

They explained that the IB curriculum requires continuity of learning and Valley would need to adjust their current schedule in order to become an IB school. They reported that there would also be an option for students to take some IB classes for experience without pursuing the IB diploma. Additionally, it does not replace AP, and that would still be an option for students, but IB does award college credit at a variety of colleges.

They also discussed the recent NEASC visit. They reported that it was very successful over all and had provided a very positive reflective process over the past 2 yrs for the staff. They reviewed preliminary commendations and recommendations. The recommendations made by the accreditation committee could be largely addressed through a change in the current scheduling structure and the use of the IB curriculum. A change to the schedule would align nicely with the IB initiative and work to accomplish the NEASC recommendations. The rationale for schedule modification, as seen so far, is that it could give students the best of both worlds. They discussed research on performance based on scheduling modifications, as well as their observations during recent visits to other high schools. The scheduling committee will continue looking into this issue and will be developing scheduling alternatives to be presented to the various stakeholders.

A general discussion on the presentation was held. Board members asked questions regarding IB, NEASC and scheduling possibilities. They commented on the potential impact and complexity of the IB program. Dr. Levy summarized how the IB program would support the many discussions that have been taking place over the last two years during faculty and staff preparations for the recent NEASC visit. It was noted that while IB is not for every student, it would be a wonderful part of a comprehensive high school. It was also noted that the IB program has a very lengthy, rigorous application process and starts with professional development for faculty.

Representatives from MahoneySabol presented the 2015-16 Region 4 Audit Report to the Board. The District received an unmodified, clean opinion, the highest rating of approval. No significant deficiencies or material weaknesses were found.

There was a brief discussion regarding the return of surplus funds for FY 2015-2016.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to transfer \$78,523 of the end of year surplus for FY 2015-16 to the Regional School District #4 Capital Sinking Funds with the remaining surplus to be returned to the participating Towns of Regional School District 4. The amount of the reimbursement to the Towns is for \$78,523 and the District shall return the appropriations as follows according to FY2015-16 ADM formula:

Town of Chester \$18,838
Town of Deep River \$24,876
Town of Essex \$34,809
For a total of \$78,523.

Principal Updates

Principal Barile shared a general update on happenings at Valley. He reiterated the NEASC visit results thus far, and mentioned that the NEASC Committee also noted that athletic fields need attention. As the accreditation process continues, the school will be required to report to NEASC how Valley is acting on all recommendations that have been made.

Principal Barile also reported that a high percentage of students have already applied to 4 yr universities. Additionally he discussed the recent Niche report which ranked Valley Regional High Schools as a top high school (#23) in the State and he reviewed the various components that are used to make the determinations.

John Winthrop Middle School Principal, Bill Duffy shared a general update on happenings at John Winthrop. He recognized and thanked the R4 Education Foundation for the many grants given to JWMS recently; including the funding for a maker space (electronics, simple machines, circuitry and other types of engineering projects to support STEAM initiative were purchased), and the purchase of equipment for use in the music rooms, and for school plays and choral concerts. JWMS will host a parents night next Wednesday for parents of incoming seventh grade students.

Financial Status Updates

Garth Sawyer reviewed the financial status report, as well as highlights of the cafeteria account report.

Committee Reports

Dr. Levy reported that the Joint BOE Policy Committee and the Joint BOE Curriculum Committee are scheduled to meet again on Jan. 23rd

Chair Riley reported that the second and final Supervision District Budget Workshop was completed last night with a proposed budget request showing an increase of less than half of one percent (.46 percent) There was a small .2 reduction in music and art due to declining enrollment. The Chester Board will be contemplating putting that back into their individual school budget for enrichment purposes.

Elaine Fitzgibbons, Region 4 Representative to the LEARN board gave an update on their activities including a recent presentation from the Waterford Superintendent, who mentioned that they provide pathways to career planning. This is something that Ms. Fitzgibbons believes might be worth considering at Valley. She also mentioned that if the State cuts back on their funding of magnet schools, then local schools, including Region 4, will be making up those differences through the tuition charges they pay for students who choose to attend those schools.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Levy noted that she has already updated the Board on most of the District issues through tonight's earlier presentations. She did speak briefly about upcoming budget challenges.

Dr. Levy reported that Jon Joslow had offered to donate a used sound mixing board for use at VRHS.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to accept the donation of a used sound mixing board from Jon Joslow.

Assistant Superintendent's Report

Ms. Martineau gave a general update on activities within the districts including Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) testing which begins in the spring of this year. She also reported that the professional development committee for the Tech Summit met today. The summit is really advancing as evidenced by the teachers' interest and requests, their abilities, and levels of complexity in the training they are requesting.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS - None present

The Board moved into Executive Session at 9:31 p.m. to discuss the following:

- **Student Matter**

The Board moved out of executive session at 9:40

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Region 4 Budget Workshops for 2017-18 budgets- Jan. 25th, Feb. 08th & Feb. 22nd, 2017 @ 6:00 p.m. @ CO
2. Next Joint BOE meeting is February 23, 2017
3. Next Region 4 BOE meeting is March 02, 2017
4. BOE and Community input for 2017-18 budget (on-going)
5. Discussion and possible VOTE on recommended Region 4 budget transfers for 2016-17 (Mar.)
6. BOE Self-evaluation (TBD)

ADJOURNMENT

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 9:41 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Clark, Board Secretary
(Jennifer Bryan, Clerk)