

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE May 07, 2015 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 Wednesday, March 11, 2015 (as a make-up for the regularly scheduled March 5th meeting that was cancelled due to inclement weather) in the John Winthrop Middle School Library, with the following Board members in attendance:

Leigh Rankin, Lauri Wichtowski, Jane Cavanaugh, Chris Riley, Elaine Fitzgibbons (arrived 7:06) , Jim Olson, Mario Gioco, Ann Monaghan, Jennifer Clark (arrived at 7:53 p.m.) as well as Senior Student Representatives Elias Mueller and Jenna Taylor, and Junior Student Representatives Acacia Bowden and Julia Hammond

Also in attendance:

Administrators: Superintendent Dr. Ruth I. Levy,
Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Joanne Beekley
Business Manager Garth Sawyer;
Valley Regional Principal Kristina Martineau;
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 unanimously VOTED to approve the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 08, 2015, and the Minutes from the Budget Workshops of February 5th and 19th, 2015.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

7 citizens were present – no comments were made

OTHER ITEMS

The Board recognized Kaitlin Sandmann for moving forward as a finalist in the National Merit Scholarship Program. Chair Chris Riley congratulated Ms. Sandmann for her hard work these past twelve years, and for taking full advantage of a wonderful educational system. Dr. Levy then shared a congratulatory letter sent to Kaitlin by a local resident. Ms. Sandman thanked the Board for their recognition and also thanked the Board and the Community for providing a wonderful school system.

Region No. 4 teacher, Bobbi Nidzgorski gave a brief presentation in recognition of Valley Regional High School Junior, Tina Mitchell, who is heading to the American Legion Oratory National Competition in Indianapolis April 10-12th . Principal Martineau commented that Ms. Mitchell is a wonderful role model for everyone in the community.

Ms. Mitchell shared that she is grateful that Valley has an amazing public speaking program led by a wonderful teacher, as it has allowed her to find, and now cultivate, her love of public speaking.

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to accept a donation of a grow light valued at approximately \$500 from the Essex Garden Club to JWMS. Principal Duffy shared that this light was offered by Elizabeth Bartlett in support of the JWMS Farm.

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to accept a donation of \$500 from the Essex Garden Club to JWMS to be used at the discretion of the administration. Principal Duffy shared that the Essex Garden Club has been very supportive of the JWMS farm from the beginning. Now these donated funds will be used to support new purchases for the ongoing farm effort, as well as to build it up, as there is a need for some rebuilding after winter storms caused some damage.

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to accept a donation of \$1300 to VRHS from the Chris Belfoure Memorial Fund to be used at the discretion of the administration. Principal Kristina Martineau shared that Mr. Belfoure was a former Valley student with a passion for traveling who passed away a few years ago. His parents created this memorial fund and are making this donation to support educational travel opportunities for Valley students.

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to accept a donation of \$500 to the VRHS Robotics Team from Dave Aikens to be used at the discretion of the administration. Principal Martineau shared that Mr. Aikens is a very supportive parent who wanted to help support this new club, which is not currently funded through the budget.

Region 4 Student Representatives Reports

Middle School Representatives (rotating)

John Winthrop Middle School Students Mike Ryan and Dan Hearn updated the Board on recent and upcoming activities at JWMS including the following: basketball season has ended and the team finished with a winning record; over 80 students are participating in intramural volleyball; successful competitions continue for mock trial and Math Counts teams; CMEA Music Festival was held recently with JWMS having the most middle school students participating; the JWMS Musical, "Once Upon a Mattress" will be held soon; and finally there is an upcoming blood drive on March 17th, at which JWMS hopes to maintain their status as the top collecting Middle School in New England.

Senior Student Representative Elias Mueller reported that CAPT testing starts tomorrow for sophomores, while freshman will be taking practice tests. Juniors and seniors will get to report later to school, but many juniors will be taking advantage of SAT prep classes being offered by the school at the same time. The school musical this year is *Band Geeks* and performances will be held this weekend - tickets still available. The French trip to Paris is coming up over spring recess, and the band and chorus trip to Annapolis is also coming up.

Senior Student Representative Jenna Taylor reported the boys basketball team was recently named shoreline champs and won the first round of States. They continue playing Morgan tomorrow @ 7 p.m. The newly formed robotics team did well at their first competition. Tina Mitchell recently won a state oratory competition, and Kaitlin Sandmann is a finalist as a National Merit Scholar. Tennis starts March 23rd. Ms. Taylor also spoke briefly about work on her Capstone project at the State legislative office on the MORE (municipal opportunities regional efficiencies) Commission.

Junior Student Representative Julia Hammond was introduced to the Board. She said she loves to be involved, particularly in student government, and she is excited to participate and be a voice for her peers.

Junior Student Representative Acacia Bowden was introduced to the Board, and reported that she is excited to be a student BOE representative and feels it is a great opportunity to represent her peers and to learn how the school system is run.

Principals Update

Valley Regional Principal Kristina Martineau provided the Board with an update on the 2014-15 school year. She introduced the first ever VRHS Robotics team. The four students noted that Whelen Engineering generously supported their first year costs (original kit and entry fee). The team was just formed in December. They recently competed, besting 13 veteran teams and winning the rookie top seed and rookie all star award. At this point the club is not in the school budget so they are thankful for all of the community support and Dr. Peano's many hours donated as well. Some Board members said they would like to have information on possibly funding this in future years. Chair Riley asked the students for an update in May.

John Winthrop Middle School Principal, William Duffy updated the Board on the 2014-15 school year. He reported that JWMS recently received a check for \$1900 from the school in Massachusetts who purchased the car from the JWMS musical production of Grease. Because so much help comes from the parents (Mr. Leffingwell and his whole crew), the funds will go right back into the program for future theatre productions. He also invited the Board to a memorial ceremony for former Deep River Constable, Paul Mozzochi, who attended all of the middle school dances in his capacity as a constable. The ceremony will be held in the foyer of JWMS on March 24th @ 2:30 p.m to honor Mr. Mazzochi, and unveil the memorial plaque, installed on a chair that will be located in the JWMS foyer.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Levy updated the Board on the following District activities: School is currently set to end on June 18th based on emergency make-up days, to date. Graduation is unchanged and will be held on June 17th. She said that administration has been deeply immersed in budgets and regionalization efforts to add PK-6 to Region 4. She noted that work continues by the Region 4 Board and the regionalization committee to draft a plan. She also noted that there are currently a lot of rumors, and misperceptions out there. However, the plan has not even been completed yet and she has been spending a lot of time working to dispel the inaccurate rumors. While the entire process is time consuming it is also exciting. She noted that anything worthwhile is not usually easy, but well worth the perseverance. There was a brief discussion and an agreement that Board members and administration need to educate the public on the issues and then let them make their decision. Dr. Levy noted that "it's the best thing for our children and that has been and continues to be the guiding light throughout the process".

There was a discussion regarding the following pending policies: #4132 Publication or Creation of Materials which was recommended for approval by the Joint BOE Policy Committee and is up for a second reading and vote at the April 16th Joint BOE meeting. Ms. Monaghan noted that she feels the current proposed language may not accomplish what the Policy Committee desired, i.e. the protection and assignment of intellectual property rights. She submitted her recommended revisions for consideration by the Joint BOE Policy Committee at their next meeting. It was also noted that the Health exam policy had been tabled at the last Joint BOE meeting and was sent back to the Policy Committee for further review and consideration of possibly requiring hiring to be contingent upon passing a drug test.

Mr. Sawyer shared the financial status update and the cafeteria report. He reported that the health insurance fund is doing very well and the fund total is now beyond reserve levels that are typically considered best practice. He noted that the District's insurance consultant has recommended providing a contribution "holiday" to reduce the reserve level

to more typical surplus levels. If the Joint Boards were to decide to provide a ½ month contribution holiday, the fund should end the year with roughly the same reserve level as last year. That would be a contribution holiday for both Boards and employees. It would equal approximately \$60,000 less that the Region 4 Board would have to contribute to the fund, due to the ½ month holiday, which would equal savings in the current year's budget. The Joint Board Finance Committee will discuss this option in more depth at their March 31st meeting and make a recommendation for possible Vote at the next Joint BOE meeting.

There was a discussion regarding recommended Region 4 budget transfers for 2014-15.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board VOTED (8 yes, 1 abstention – J. Clark – motion passed) to approve the following Region 4 budget transfers as presented:

Object 100 Salaries Budget Decrease of (\$60,093)
Object 200 Fringe Benefits Budget Decrease of (\$62,920)
Object 300 Purchased Services Budget Decrease of (\$814)
Object 400: Rentals and Repairs Budget Decrease of (\$1,500)
Object 500: Other Outside Serv. Budget Increase of \$225,811
Object 600: Supplies Budget Decrease of (\$39,636)
Object 800: Other Misc. Budget Increase of \$152
Object 900: Debt Service & Transfer Budget Decrease of (\$61,000)

Net Amount of Increases versus (Decreases) \$0

There was an extensive discussion regarding the possible transfer of \$71,000 of the RY 2013-14 surplus funds into a capital sinking fund, with the remainder of the surplus funds to be returned to the towns in accordance with 2013-14 ADM. All options were discussed in depth.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board VOTED (8 yes, 1 abstention – J. Clark - motion passed) to transfer \$71,000 of the end of year surplus for FYI 2013-14 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. Furthermore, the amount of the reimbursement to the Towns is for \$48,245 and shall be returned as follows according to FY 2013-14 ADM formula: Chester 11,738 Deep River 14,227 Essex 22,280 Total \$48,245.

REPORTS

Financial Status Updates

This was done earlier in the agenda

Committee Reports

Region 4 Audit and Finance Committee - the Committee has not met since the last meeting.

Mr. Sawyer reported that the Joint BOE Finance Committee will meet again on March 31st to continue their review of the proposed business procedures manual as well as other business.

Dr. Levy reported that the Joint BOE Policy Committee will meet again on March 24th as scheduled. She will be seeking legal counsel regarding the possibility of mandatory drug testing as has been requested by some Board members. The Joint BOE Policy Committee will consider input from counsel for future policy recommendations.

Dr. Beekley reported that the Joint BOE Curriculum Committees will meet again on March 24th as scheduled,

Elaine Fitzgibbons, Region 4 Representative to the LEARN board reported that the LEARN board will be meeting tomorrow.

Dr. Levy reminded the Board that the second workshop on writing the plan to add PK-6 will be held this Saturday, March 14th from 9:00 – noon in the JWMS library.

Supervision District Committee Update - none

Assistant Superintendent's Report

Dr. Beekley noted that because she just gave an update at the Joint Board meeting on February 26th, she had nothing further to report on at this time.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – None present

EXECUTIVE SESSION –PERSONNEL The Board moved into Executive Session at 8:46 p.m. to discuss a personnel matter.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 9:00 p.m.

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

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Region 4 Regular Meeting (May 07, 2015 @ 7:00 p.m.)
2. Region 4 Annual Meeting (May 04, 2015 @ 7:00 p.m.)
3. Referendum on Region 4 Budget for 2015-16 (May 5th 2015 Noon-8:00 p.m.)
4. Executive Session – Evaluation of Supt. (May)
5. BOE Self-evaluation (TBD)

ADJOURNMENT

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Clark, Secretary
Jennifer Bryan, Clerk