

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE September 03, 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 Thursday, May 07, 2015 in the John Winthrop Middle School Library, with the following Board members in attendance:

Leigh Rankin, Lauri Wichtowski, Jane Cavanaugh, Chris Riley, Elaine Fitzgibbons, Jim Olson, Ann Monaghan, Jennifer Clark as well as Senior Student Representatives Elias Mueller and Jenna Taylor, and Junior Student Representatives Acacia Bowden and Julia Hammond Absent: Mario Gioco,

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
Chester Principal Mike Barile
Substitute Board Clerk: Kelley Frazier

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Chris Riley called the meeting to order at 7:03 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 March 5, (reset to March 11, 2015), the Minutes from the Public Hearing of April 13, 2015 and the Accounts Payable Report.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

No Comment

OTHER ITEMS

Recognition of Student Achievements:

Ms. Martineau introduced Coach King who recognized the seniors on the football team and their very successful year winning the state championship. Mr. Riley congratulated Mr. King for having a wonderful program.

Ms. Martineau introduced Coach Woods and the successful basketball team senior members who were Shoreline champions and also competed in the state finals.

Ms. Martineau introduced Ingrid Walsh, Director of Valley Regional Musical Productions. Ms. Walsh asked the senior members from Band Geeks to stand and discuss their plans after high school. Dr. Levy thanked Ms. Walsh for her hard work in making our musicals professional productions.

Ms. Martineau introduced Ms. Hilton, Valley Regional Music Director. Valley was recognized for winning 14 out of 15 awards on their recent competition in Annapolis, MD. Dr. Levy thanked Ms. Hilton and Mr. Lam for their hard work.

Ms. Martineau introduced the Robotics Team who won the Rookie Top Seed award and Rookie All Star award at their recent competition. Patrick Meyers discussed the robot this team developed.

Ms. Martineau introduced Tina Mitchell who competed in the American Legion Oratory National Competition in Indianapolis.

Ms. Martineau introduced the top ten of the senior class. These students discussed where and what they will be studying after they graduate.

Recognition of Barbara Nidzgorski:

Dr. Levy introduced Ms. Nidzgorski and thanked her for her years of service. She has inspired so many students and demands the best of her students.

Recognition of Tim King:

Dr. Levy thanked Mr. King for his hard work and the positive impact he has on and off the field. He was recently awarded with the Connecticut Sports Writers Alliance Coach of the Year Award.

Recognition of Joe Kuzaro:

Mr. Glowac introduced Joe Kuzaro who has taken care of our athletic fields for the past 20 years. He works hard to meet the needs of our ever expanding athletics program. Mr. Kuzaro recently received the Fields of Excellence Award. Two \$500 scholarships will be given his name to two deserving seniors. Mr. Kuzaro also won the Pioneer Field of Excellence Award for a picture submitted of our field taken on Thanksgiving Day.

Meeting recessed for refreshments at 7:37 pm.

Meeting resumed at 8:02p.m.

Region 4 Student Representatives:

Mr. Duffy introduced Mia D'Agostino and Francesca Pisanzio. They discussed the events taking place at John Winthrop Middle School.

Mr. Duffy introduced Michael Ryan and Sophia Finkeldey who were awarded the Scholar Leaders award.

Mr. Duffy discussed the STEM and engineering conferences for middle school girls which John Winthrop students attended.

Senior Student Representative Elias Mueller
No Report

Senior Student Representative Jenna Taylor
No Report

Junior Student Representative Julia Hammond reported that next week is the spring concert. She participated in an event for International Law Day. Saturday is the Model UN conference. Junior Prom is May 16th at the Aqua Turf.

Junior Student Representative Acacia Bowden reported that the trip to France was amazing. Valley students will participate in their community service day. She noted that we are in the middle of AP testing. The National Honor Society induction is Friday, May 8, 2015.

Mr. Riley gave the Senior Representatives a gift for their years of service working with the Board of Education. He thanked them for being an important and formative part of what has been accomplished on the Board of Education.

Principals Update

Valley Regional High School – Kristina Martineau

Valley Regional Principal Kristina Martineau provided the Board with a brief update. She distributed a listing of colleges where senior students will be attending school after graduation.

Ms. Wheaton, Valley Regional French instructor, discussed the two possible trips for Valley Regional students for next school year. There are typically 10 – 15 students who will attend. There are reasonable measures in place to screen host families. Students would miss 2 school days. Ms. Monaghan discussed the need to increase insurance coverage for these trips. Ms. Wheaton was asked to check the State Sex Offender list when it comes time for French students to participate in an exchange here, and be placed with local host families.

First reading and possible VOTE on request to approve student exchange trip to France, November 20, 2015.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Region 4 Board of Education **VOTED** to approve the student exchange trip to France beginning on November 20, 2015. Ayes: Jennifer Clark, Lauri Wichtowski, Jim Olson, Elaine Fitzgibbons, Jane Cavanaugh and Leigh Rankin. Nays: Ann Monaghan

Ms. Wheaton discussed the trip to Quebec City. She is expecting 20 students to participate. Students will miss two days of school. Ms. Monaghan discussed her concerns regarding insurance coverage. Our insurance consultant makes sure that we are properly covered.

First reading and possible VOTE on request to approve student trip to Quebec City, February 2016.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Region 4 Board of Education **VOTED** to approve the student trip to Quebec City in February 2016. Ayes: Jennifer Clark, Lauri Wichtowski, Jim Olson, Elaine Fitzgibbons, Jane Cavanaugh and Leigh Rankin. Nays: Ann Monaghan

Mrs. Fallavollita discussed the exchange trip to Spain. This has inspired a group of students to start a language club. Students would attend school with the students they are living with. She is expecting approximately 16 to 18 students. The screening process is the same as the France trip. There are no background checks.

First reading and possible VOTE on request to approve student trip to Spain, April 2016.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Region 4 Board of Education **VOTED** (Ayes: Jennifer Clark, Lauri Wichtowski, Jim Olson, Elaine Fitzgibbons, Jane Cavanaugh and Leigh Rankin. Nays: Ann Monaghan = motion passed) to approve the student trip to Spain in April 2016

Mr. Riley requested that students come to a Board meeting to discuss their experiences after the trip.

John Winthrop Middle School - William Duffy

Mr. Duffy had nothing more to add.

Superintendent's Report

District Update

Beginning next week, Dr. Levy will complete senior exit interviews. She will share the results at an upcoming meeting.

Information and Communication

Discussion regarding topic of mandatory pre-employment drug testing.

Mr. Riley asked Board Members to comment on this policy. He would like to form a committee to work on this policy over the summer. He feels strongly that an applicant for employment should have testing done as part of the hiring process.

Ann Monaghan feels strongly that this should be done by an outside company. This is vitally important.

Jane Cavanaugh and Lauri Wichtowski feel that doing the testing is a statement that this is a drug free school.

Elaine Fitzgibbons would prefer to do more research before we come to a decision.

Leigh Rankin feels strongly that this should be done. It shows due diligence.

Jim Olson feels that this should be done. Private industry does this. It sets the proper tone for employment consideration.

Jennifer Clark researched pre-employment testing as well as random testing of employees. She is concerned of the cost for a potentially small group who may test positive. She is also concerned of false positive tests. She asks that those Board Members who feel strongly that drug testing should take place, do additional research. Ms. Monaghan will email members sites which will give information regarding this issue. Dr. Levy stated that we have many new hires a year.

Dr. Levy noted that the policies cover all schools. If there is an ad hoc committee formed, it should be under the advisement of the Joint Board of Education. Dr. Levy feels strongly that you can test people and still not get the proper answer. She noted that we have a process to deal with employees we suspect may be using drugs. Testing may deter very good teachers. The negatives outweigh the positives. There are no other districts in the state that do this. This will need to come back to the policy committee. Mr. Riley would like to have a larger discussion. He will reach out to Mr. Seidman to put this on the agenda for the June Joint Board of Education meeting. The majority of our committee would like to explore this further and to discuss at a Joint Board of Education meeting.

Discussion Regarding any pending policies(Nepotism, Homebound Instruction, Publication or Creation of Materials

No questions

REPORTS

Financial Status Updates

The Region 4 budget did pass.

Financial Status Report – Mr. Garth Sawyer

Mr. Sawyer gave a brief update of the financial status for John Winthrop Middle School and Valley Regional High School. With the approval of the additional appropriation Region 4 is projected to come within the

budgeted appropriation. We are continuing to look for savings and other ways to help mitigate the unanticipated costs. The Administration will keep the Board informed if the situation changes as we proceed through the year.

Cafeteria Report – Mr. Sawyer

Mr. Sawyer noted that we are doing well on our targets for revenue. Ms. Monaghan is concerned that we are subsidizing so much for the lunch program.

Discussion and possible VOTE to authorize the use of field repair sinking funds

Mr. Glowac noted that capital field repair projects have been completed during the year. We rebuilt the softball and baseball fields. We used much more clay than anticipated. We changed the Cross Country trail at John Winthrop so that participants do not have to cross the road. The high school had fence line issues. These were corrected. There was also site work done for the new dug outs. He is requesting \$40,000 from the athletic field sinking fund. There is \$113,000 in the account currently. Mr. Riley is comfortable with this expenditure. We will have to consider how to fund the new track which will be needed in the future.

Upon motion duly made and seconded the Region 4 Board of Education unanimously **VOTED** to authorize the transfer of \$40,000 from the field repair sinking fund.

Committee Reports

Region 4 Audit and Finance Committee - No Update

Joint BOE Finance Committee - No Update

Joint BOE Policy Committee - No Update

Joint BOE Curriculum Committees – No Update

Elaine Fitzgibbons attended the LEARN meeting. She is astonished at the growth of the magnet school system. She has admiration for the personnel involved in these schools. The Ledyard Superintendent gave a presentation at the last LEARN meeting. She noted that we are so much further ahead in our district than other districts. Ms. Fitzgibbons commended the staff and administration that have made our district such a great place.

Regionalization Committee

Dr. Levy said that this committee has been working to form the finalized version of our document. We are seeking the council of our community members from all three towns. Meetings are taking place in the morning and evening to reach all populations. We are hoping to make people understand why regionalization is important and to get their comments. Dr. Levy distributed the new wording for the agreement which will be discussed on the 12th. The changes in the document take into consideration the comments from the public. She read an email from a member of the Chester Board of Finance giving points of why we should not regionalize. She feels that we need to move forward. She wants to bring everyone together and to give the public time to digest this information. She would recommend to not move it forward unless the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen from all three towns will pass the Intermunicipal Agreement. People need to look at this plan realistically. We have more things to work through. It was suggested that the document include a date of circulation so that newer versions can be easily identified. Ms.

Fitzgibbons feels that the rollout was difficult. The version distributed tonight was what the public needed to see. We needed a clear process. She said that Mr. Meehan and the Chester Board of Finance concerns are valid. Dr. Levy said that there have been growing pains. We need to work hard to not fracture relationships.

Supervision District Committee Update

No Update

Assistant Superintendent's Report

Dr. Beekley briefly stated that we finished SBAC testing. It has gone well from a testing point of view. The formatting of the test may need to be addressed.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

No Comment

EXECUTIVE SESSION –PERSONNEL The Board moved into Executive Session at 10:00p.m. to discuss a personnel matter – BOE Evaluation of Superintendent.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 10:28 p.m.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Next Joint BOE Meeting June 4, 2015.
2. BOE Self Evaluation (TBD)

ADJOURNMENT

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 10:28 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Clark, Secretary
Kelley Frazier, Substitute Clerk