

***THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE Jan 07, 2016 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, November 05, 2015 in the John Winthrop Middle School Library, with the following Board members in attendance:

Leigh Rankin, Lori Ann Clymas, Susan Hollister, Jane Cavanaugh, Chris Riley, Elaine Fitzgibbons, Jim Olson, Mario Gioco, and Jennifer Clark- as well as Senior Student Representatives Acacia Bowden, Julia Hammond

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**

Superintendent Levy called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Superintendent Levy opened the floor for nominations for the position of Board Chair.

Leigh Rankin nominated Chris Riley for the position of Board Chair.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to elect Chris Riley to the position of Board Chair for a one year term.

Chairman Riley opened the floor for nominations for the offices of Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Chairman Riley nominated Jane Cavanaugh for the position of Vice-Chair.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to elect Jane Cavanaugh to the position of Board Vice-Chair for a one year term.

Vice-Chair Jane Cavanaugh nominated Jennifer Clark for the position of Board Secretary.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to elect Jennifer Clark to the position of Board Secretary for a one year term.

Jennifer Clark nominated Mario Gioco for the position of Board Treasurer.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to elect Mario Gioco to the position of Board Treasurer for a one year term.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board VOTED (8 Yes, 1 abstention-Leigh Rankin = motion passed) to approve the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of Sept. 03, 2015 and the Accounts Payable Report.

Newly elected Region 4 Board members, Susan Hollister and Lori Ann Clymas introduced themselves to the rest of the Board.

## **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS**

17 citizens were present. No comments were made.

## **OTHER ITEMS**

Barbara Nidzgorski presented Valley Senior, Julia Hammond with the Yale Bulldog Outstanding Attorney Award. Ms. Hammond was one of 6 students (out of approx. 144 students) who earned this award at the recent international mock trial contest held at Yale University.

### **Region 4 Student Representatives Report**

JWMS Middle School students Madden Riley and Elena Peterlik reported on recent events at JWMS including the middle school cross country invitational and updates on the girls' and boys' soccer teams. They also reported that students took their math tests in September, and are currently reviewing their results and setting goals for the rest of the year. They also shared that Student Leadership recently held a bake sale and raised money for the Susan G. Komen fund. Students also participated in a bully-free rally in Middletown, and held a well-attended Halloween dance.

Senior Student Representative Julia Hammond reported that the National Honor Society inducted 25 new members last night and recently held another successful blood drive. They are currently planning their annual holiday breakfast with Santa in December, and will soon be holding a drive to collect books, toys, and movies for the hospital. Also, auditions for the musical, *The Adams Family*, will be starting soon. The Model UN will be held on Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>.

Senior Student Representative Acacia Bowden reported that Spirit Week was held during the second week of October and it was fantastic, as always, and she was happy to share that the Seniors won this year. Spirit week culminated with the homecoming dance. Midterms were held recently and athletic teams have been having a great Fall season. She also reported that the first round of Capstone presentations were recently completed. Ms. Bowden briefly shared about her own Capstone experience, interning at Shoreline Medical Center in Westbrook. She said it has been a great experience for her. She also shared that the Interact Club is holding a successful school supply drive for children in South America and soon they will be making and delivering sandwiches to Saint Vincent De Paul and attending a local rotary dinner to update them on their club activities.

### **Student Presentation**

JWMS Student Sam Wollschleager shared his science presentation on Down Syndrome, entitled "My DNA number is 21", with the Board. He answered several questions after his presentation.

At 7:40 p.m., Chairman Riley gave the Board a 5 minute break. The Board moved back into session at 7:45 pm.

### **The NaFME presentation and field trip request was moved up to this point in the agenda**

Valley Regional High School Band Instructor, Kevin Lam, reported on the All National Music Ensemble (NAfME) recently held in Nashville and explained the rigorous process that Valley students Colton Kinney and Dilan Rojas had gone through in order to be invited to participate in this national ensemble of 650 students. He congratulated both Colton and Dilan for their professionalism and amazing accomplishments. Both young men discussed their experiences at the competition. They were both thrilled and honored to participate with their fellow musicians and the high caliber conductors. They stressed that they also learned so much from a cultural aspect, which rounded out the whole experience for them. Chair Riley thanked them for being such a wonderful reflection of their teacher, their school, and the entire school district. Mr. Olson noted how important it is to support the arts in our schools and commented how both Colton and Dilan are a wonderful example of the caliber of our Valley student representatives across the school population.

Mr. Lam also mentioned that the VRHS Madrigal group will be performing at Carnegie Hall with Sarah McLachlan and other headlining names. He noted that the trip couldn't be done without the help and support of the entire tri-town community.

Mr. Lam then presented a proposal to the Board for approval of a student trip to the New England Music Festival in Gilford, VT, March 17-19, 2016. He talked about the importance of students being able to interact with so many other

students who share their enthusiasm for music. There was a short discussion and Mr. Lam answered a few questions asked by Board members.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the student trip to the New England Music Festival in Gilford, VT March 17-19<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

### **Facilities Needs Presentation**

Director of Region 4 Facilities, Bruce Glowac, discussed the need to begin preliminary conversations regarding upcoming capital project needs. He noted that good budgeting requires planning a minimum of 5-10 years out from the present time. It is especially imperative at this time as both the middle school and high school are now ten years out from their wonderful renovations, making it time to look at capital needs for buildings and grounds to be addressed in the next 5-10 years. He discussed the following anticipated Region 4 Facilities capital needs:

- JW & VR - major paving and curbing issues at both
- JW - looking at the establishment of a separate lane for parent pick-up and drop-off
- JW – Updating window wall and new doors by tech lab and woodshop area
- VR - paving student parking lot - (last done in 80's and 90's)
- VR - track replacement - resurfacing done 10 yrs ago and that resurfacing was projected to last 5-10 years
- VR - athletic field irrigation (in absence of turf) would help to maximize their use
- VR - tennis courts – full rip out and replacement needed
- VR - science room renovations - they need updating
- VR- relocate tech ed building or build corridor connecting it to main building

He also discussed some upcoming needs for Central Office (owned by Supervision District)

- Central Office - back parking lot paving
- Central Office - back egress
- Central Office - roof issues - leaking - needs roof replacement
- Central Office - basement storage issues

He noted that the Board needs to start to talk about ways to fund these items, i.e., through a capital line item in the budget; or sinking funds to soften blow; or considering a bonding package. Once the Board has a better idea of the timing priorities of these issues, they can determine the best funding route. Mr. Glowac will prioritize these items and provide timelines of need for the Board to use during their upcoming budget planning.

Mr. Glowac also talked about the current sinking fund for vehicle replacement. He proposed buying a new tractor for the upcoming winter. The current one is 11 yrs old, and has over 10,000 hours of use, it is not expected to function much longer. He requested approval from the Board to use the vehicle replacement sinking funds to purchase a new tractor (with a snow blowing attachment) which can also be used for field maintenance in other seasons. He has a quote for \$37,269 and he feels it is an urgent issue requiring Board action. Dr. Levy noted that she fully supports the request.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the expenditure of funds from the vehicle/equipment replacement sinking fund for the purchase of the tractor as presented.

### **Principal Updates**

Principal Barile reviewed the profile of the 2014-15 Graduating Class. He highlighted several items of note for Board members. Chair Riley thanked Principal Barile for preparing the report and he noted that he finds the yearly report to be a very helpful point of reference for budget discussions.

Principal Barile also shared a short video on technology integration at Valley Regional High School. He noted that the high school teachers are seeking ways to maximize instruction through technology.

Principal Barile discussed a possible donation of Fitness equipment that is in “like new condition” and would be welcomed by both the P.E. and Athletic Departments.

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the Superintendent’s recommendation to accept a donation of Fitness Equipment to VRHS.

Principal Barile discussed a possible donation from the Soccer Booster Club to provide speakers for the P.A. system in the press box on the VRHS playing field. After a brief discussion the Board took action.

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to accept the Soccer Booster Club's gracious donation of speakers for the P.A. system in the press box on the VRHS playing field.

John Winthrop Middle School Principal, Bill Duffy reported on the following: it is the end of the first quarter and report cards will go home next week. After grades are received students will do another round of academic goal setting and they will also be setting social and development goals. The school musical will be Xanadu, and tryouts start next week. He reiterated his pride at watching the recent student presentations to the Board. He mentioned that Sam Wollschleager's presentation was a wonderful example of connecting curriculum from his science class with his life skills center program. Principal Duffy said he is very proud of the growth of the skills center at JW, noting that it has grown wonderfully. Additionally he mentioned that the school will be purchasing a banner to recognize the undefeated season of the girls' soccer team this year.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Levy discussed how nice the different presentations tonight represented the best of our comprehensive public schools and noted that the Board has provided the resources to support these types of presentations. The students are thriving in ways that will make them productive citizens beyond their schooling.

Dr. Levy discussed the Anti-bullying rally held recently at Empower Leadership in Middletown and sponsored by the Community Foundation of Middlesex County. She noted that the districts should be very proud of how students conduct themselves within their schools and out in the community. She also mentioned that Chester Elementary received special recognition from the Connecticut Association of Schools for their supportive student climate. Overall it was an excellent event.

Dr. Levy talked about the upcoming start of another 5 Year strategic plan. She mentioned that Jonathan Costa will be facilitating the effort to hone in on excellence and find a focus to help students to become college and career ready. Mr. Costa will be presenting a workshop to Board members in December. There will be a community dinner on February 8<sup>th</sup> to further discuss and advance the five year planning and development of strategic goals. He will help the Boards, Schools, and the Community to come up with a cohesive plan that is fully understood by all stakeholders.

Dr. Levy mentioned that she will be requesting that the Joint BOE Policy Committee review Policy 5118 which currently allows non-resident students to pay tuition to attend a Chester, Deep River, Essex or Region 4 School upon Board approval. She would like to clarify the policy and potentially move towards having Boards approve future requests to accept tuition students, as it may help to build enrollment capacity, especially in light of declining enrollment. The Policy committee will be carefully reviewing and vetting a CAFE model policy that covers and clarifies many pertinent issues not covered by the current policy.

In related news, Assistant Superintendent Martineau presented on the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme which, if the Board decides to pursue after careful consideration, would take Valley Regional High School into a globalized curriculum and make Valley students more competitive both nationally and internationally. She noted that across the country, this is what very high performing schools are doing. She briefly reviewed the program and the advantages to students in preparing them for successful college admission and successful completion of their college degrees.

Dr. Levy commented that just as capital projects need 5 year planning, so too, do we need to do long term planning for our students and their academic success. A discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons of the IB program as known at this time. Administration noted that they are still in the early exploration stage of this possibility, but they wanted to start discussing and exploring the possibility with the Board.

Mrs. Martineau also briefly discussed Administrative Professional Development facilitated through the State Department of Education.

Superintendent Levy reviewed the School Security and Safety Plans for JWMS and VRHS per P.A. 13-3, Section 86,87.

Dr. Levy presented the Major Region 4 and Supervision District Budget Drivers for 2016-17 and reviewed enrollment projections vs. actual numbers as well as the projected enrollment trends several years into the future.

Dr. Levy mentioned that Dick Blythe, former teacher, coach and Principal of Valley passed away recently, and his funeral was today. Our current competition field at Valley was named in his honor after his retirement.

Dr. Levy noted upcoming events that the Board may be interested in attending; including student performances, award ceremonies, and Board Workshops.

## **REPORTS**

### **Financial Status Updates**

Business Manager Garth Sawyer reviewed the financial status report, as well as the cafeteria account report. Current Problem areas include in-district services, out-of-district transportation costs, and cafeteria food costs due to a decrease in food commodities received from the Government. He discussed a recent grant applied for and received by Director of Food Services, Thomas Peterlik, that will allow selling milk and yogurt based smoothies for breakfast and then possibly at lunch as well. Mr. Peterlik is also analyzing what is selling best in the cafeterias and will be adjusting the menus accordingly. Chair Riley asked the administration to extend the Board's thanks to Mr. Peterlik for his effort and creativity in increasing revenues. A short discussion ensued regarding the continued need to increase the revenue of the cafeterias.

### **Committee Reports**

Chair Riley asked Board members to let him know their committee placement preferences, and he will then make committee assignments for the year.

Mr. Sawyer reported that the Joint BOE Finance Committee is scheduled to hold their first meeting of the year on November 17<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Levy reported that the Joint BOE Policy Committee will meet again on November 16<sup>th</sup> as scheduled.

Mrs. Martineau reported that the Joint BOE Curriculum Committees will meet again on November 16<sup>th</sup> as scheduled,

Elaine Fitzgibbons, Region 4 Representative to the LEARN board gave an update on their activities. She reported that the State Department and the Commissioner have formed focus groups to develop strategies for communication with the public; to hear from the public about their concerns, and to communicate with the public regarding those concerns. She stated that it gave her the optimistic feeling that new things are going to happen at the State level.

**Supervision District Committee Update** - nothing new to report since the last meeting.

### **Assistant Superintendent's Report**

Ms. Martineau gave a general update on activities within the districts including the following: on October 7<sup>th</sup> the State Board of Education met, and made statewide SAT testing official; the testing date for Juniors was set for March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016 - they only had 2 dates to choose from, but the State Board is currently negotiating for a later date for testing in future years. She also reported that the Next Generation Science Standards were recently adopted, but administration is still waiting for more information from the State regarding those.

**AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS** - none present

**EXECUTIVE SESSION –PERSONNEL** The Board moved into Executive Session to discuss a Personnel issue at 9:44 p.m. – The Board invited Superintendent Levy, Principal Barile and Assistant Superintendent Martineau to participate.

The Board moved out of Executive Session at 9:55 p.m.

#### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- Next Joint BOE meeting Dec. 03, 2015
- Next Region 4 BOE meeting Jan. 07, 2016
- BOE and Community input for 2016-17 budget (on-going)
- BOE Self-evaluation (TBD)

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 9:57 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Clark, Secretary  
(Jennifer Bryan, Clerk)