

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE Jan 05, 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, November 03, 2016 in the John Winthrop Middle School Library, with the following Board members in attendance:

Chris Riley, Jane Cavanaugh, Mario Gioco, Jennifer Clark, Susan Hollister, Leigh Rankin (arrived 7:06), and Jim Olson (arrived 7:10 p.m.), 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

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

Supt. Levy opened the floor for nominations for the office of Board Chair. Jennifer Clark moved to nominate Chris Riley. Jane Cavanaugh seconded the motion.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to appoint Chris Riley to the office of Board Chair for a term of 1 year.

Chairman Riley opened the floor for nominations for the following offices:

Vice-Chairman: Chris Riley moved to nominate Jane Cavanaugh. Susan Hollister seconded the motion.

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to appoint Jane Cavanaugh to the office of Board Vice-Chair for a term of 1 year.

Secretary: Chris Riley moved to nominate Jennifer Clark. Jane Cavanaugh seconded the motion.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to appoint Jennifer Clark to the office of Board Secretary for a term of 1 year.

Treasurer: Chris Riley moved to nominate Mario Gioco. Jennifer Clark seconded the motion.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to appoint Mario Gioco to the office of Treasurer for a term of 1 year.

CONSENT AGENDA

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board VOTED (5 Yes; 0 No; 2 Abstained - Mario Gioco and Jane Cavanaugh = motion passed) to approve the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of Sept. 01, 2016, and the Accounts Payable Report.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Thirteen citizens were present. No comments were made.

OTHER ITEMS

Region 4 Student Representatives Report

JWMS Middle School students Henry McPherson and Will Heher updated the Board on several happenings at JWMS including athletic results for soccer and cross country; upcoming basketball tryouts and Bye Bye Birdie auditions; Walk-a-Thon results; after school activities; upcoming Veterans Day activities; student attendance at a diversity conference and a recent flamingo fundraiser which raised over \$700 to donate to fighting childhood cancer. They also reported that the Chromebooks have already proven to be very useful, and gave an example of using them in band and chorus to make video presentations.

Senior Student Representative Maleena Frazier reported on a variety of happenings at VRHS including the recent hosting of French exchange students through Valley's exchange partner school; the upcoming NEASC accreditation visit; students have started applying for early decision; field hockey is competing in the finals tonight at Westbrook, musical auditions will be held soon, and she mentioned that the graduation gowns will all be the same color for the 2017 graduation, no longer using separate colors for male and female students.

Senior Student Representative Matthew O'Keefe reported on a variety of events at VRHS including the following: Spirit week was held through Oct 22nd with various dress up days and

color wars held at the pep rally with the seniors winning the most points and spirit week; Football won the homecoming game against Prince Tech with the dance held the following day; midterms begin tomorrow and PSATs were taken at Valley yesterday. Seniors who had already taken SATs could attend workshops on college essay, applications, and capstone projects. In addition the Unified Sports program is working to add bowling for the winter; NHS induction will be held next week and the Santa Breakfast will be held on Dec. 3rd.

Valley Principal Mike Barile introduced students Charlotte Boland, Maya Whitcomb, and Maleena Frazier who were recognized as commended students for exceptional academic progress by National Merit Scholars.

Principal Barile recognized Maggie Walsh and Mitch Conrad who will receive the MSSA/CAPSS Superintendent Award this year.

Valley students Emily Conrad and Monique Johnson reported that they recently joined Dr. Levy, Principal Barile, and Business Manager Garth Sawyer in visiting Daniel Hand High School in Madison to observe their cafeteria services. They reported on their recent visit noting there was a very positive school climate and students had a full 30 minute lunch period. They also noted the variety and high quality of the food. There were to-go options available, as well as dessert options. They noticed that the majority entering the cafeteria purchased a meal. Monique said they are currently working with administration at Valley to try to offer a pre-order option by developing an app that students can use to pre-order lunches to save time. She mentioned that the cafeteria is also looking at adding a third serving line to help students move more quickly through the line.

Mr. Sawyer noted that Madison does not participate in the National School Lunch Program and they have a much larger student population. Currently Madison is not making money, but they hope to be able to subsidize their cafeterias a little less, and provide more kids with a positive experience.

Chair Riley asked what the cost of the Madison lunches were. The students said it definitely cost more, but it still attracted students to purchase more. Our current lunch cost is \$2.75. The students were thanked for their time and effort by Chair Riley. Dr Levy thanked them for spearheading this and reported that she recently met with the entire student leadership group regarding possible changes to the cafeteria. They will continue meeting as a group to come up with alternatives.

Principal Duffy introduced David Pendergrast, currently a sophomore at Valley, who originally started working on the farm project while at John Winthrop. This year David made a major contribution to help the growth of the program. He designed, planned, built and installed an 8' x 12' storage shed for the JW farm. Principal Duffy commended David for his leadership and initiative in completing this as his culminating project for his Eagle Scout award. David said that as a middle school student, a JW teacher really engaged him in the program. Then he saw that it was struggling a bit, and so he wanted to give back and help to improve the program.

The VRHS Crew Booster presentation was moved to the January meeting. Principal Barile did note that the Crew Boosters had recently been declared a 503c and would like to be recognized as a sport by Valley. They are currently second-hand sharing with Lyme-Old Lyme, but they are also in the process of receiving a generous grant that would further the Valley program greatly. They will present more on this opportunity at the January meeting.

Principal Updates

Principal Barile presented the graduating class profile for 2015-16. He reviewed highlights of the profile for the Board. Susan Hollister wondered how many students complete their 4 yr college degree. Principal Barile replied that it is hard to sustain communication with students all the way through to the end of their academic careers.

He updated the board on the Chromebooks Initiative. He said reports are so far very positive from both students and teachers. Insurance has been handling any problems as they come up by either replacing or repairing. He shared teacher comments regarding the use of Chromebooks in the classroom including: "They have made a huge impact on making teaching more efficient and helping with differentiation within classroom; "The ability for teachable moments has increased"; "There has been a decrease in transitional time and an increase in instructional time"; "There has been a reduced amount of "lost" or forgotten assignments"; "Collaboration has increased greatly"; and "Organization has been noticeably enhanced by replacing paper binders with computer files". He reported that there have not really been any complaints to speak of, nor have there have been any issues with regards to seniors not being issued a Chromebook, as they already have their own devices.

Principal Barile reported that Valley was one of fifteen high schools recognized as a CAIC Michael's Cup Exemplary Program.

Principal Barile also discussed a change in robes for graduation this year. After conferring with the Senior Student Steering Committee and then with the seniors at a class meeting, they will be going with non-gender specific gown colors. All students will wear maroon robes this year. The State Department of Education has recommended that schools move in this direction and students and staff have reacted with positivity to the idea, and support this decision. Parents have already been informed. He has received no responses other than positive ones.

Lastly, Principal Barile reported that CPR training is still a State graduation requirement and will continue again this year for seniors.

John Winthrop Middle School Principal, Bill Duffy updated the Board on the following JW events: A Walk-a-Thon was held recently raising approximately \$13,000, the largest amount raised in a long time. They were able to donate over \$2000 to local charities, including the soup kitchen. The rest of the money goes towards student activities; Over 400 runners recently competed in a cross country meeting held at JW; JW recently hosted a technology night, which included a discussion about Chromebooks. About 15 parents were in attendance. The

administration received feedback on good things and things that need improvement. Principal Duffy concurred with Principal Barile's comments that the Chromebook initiative has had a smooth start. The offering of tech support and training for teachers a year prior to the rollout has allowed for a very easy transition. They will continue providing professional development for staff at all levels; Lastly, JW will be holding a breakfast and assembly for veterans on the upcoming Veterans Day Holiday.

REPORTS

Financial Status Updates

Business Manager Garth Sawyer reviewed the financial status report, as well as the cafeteria account report.

Committee Reports

The Joint BOE Policy Committee will meet on Nov. 14th.

The Joint BOE Curriculum Committee will meet on Nov. 14th.

The Joint BOE Finance Committee will meet on Nov 29th.

Supervision District Committee Update -

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Levy reported that she has been in communication with SPIRAL, the company that arranges for Chinese exchange students to come to the United States. Our attorneys are currently reviewing the proposed contract and Dr. Levy is hoping to be able to accept 2 or 3 students for the second semester if an agreement on the contract can be reached in time. The tuition rate will be part of the discussion and negotiations.

Dr. Levy noted that there will be a number of students entering Region 4 next year who will bring with them significant out of district costs that will greatly impact next year's budget. The administration is currently looking at perhaps developing a clinical day/alternative program to meet these needs for a lower cost. Sarah Smalley and Tyson Stoddard will present more in depth information to the Board in January.

Dr. Levy reviewed the proposed District Calendars for 2017-18 and 2018-19. The Supervision District Committee will discuss and vote on approval of these at their December meeting. She noted that because of mandatory adherence to the regional uniform calendar the district actually has very little say on most of the dates. Ms. Rankin stated that she had heard complaints about snow makeup days and ½ PD days especially at elementary level. Dr. Levy noted that she too

had heard parental input regarding those topics, and as a result had already made significant changes in past calendars by trying to keep ½ days connected to weekends and/or holidays. With regards to the built in snow make up days, they are necessary in order for the State to allow us to have a fixed graduation date.

As a follow up to the discussion started at the previous Supervision District Committee and Joint Board meetings, there was a discussion regarding the matter of payment for Supervision District Services. Dr. Levy shared materials showing different scenarios and formulas for discussion. She noted that this topic is really not a concern for Region 4, as it actually only impacts the elementary schools and their 3 way split of services, making this more of an academic conversation for the Region 4 Board. Dr. Levy thanked Jane Cavanaugh and Jennifer Clark for their hard work in providing fodder for this discussion. Ms. Cavanaugh said that she was bringing this up not to be divisive but to be clear and transparent for all towns and to be make sure things are equitable and consistent. Dr. Clark ran through a few scenarios, but said she doesn't think a lot of time should be spent discussing this, as there are more important things to focus on, however she feels that if a consensus could be reached, it would behoove them to be consistent across similar categories of personnel. She said they should focus on objective deliberations, and not which town benefits or not, but rather focus on what makes sense and what is consistent. There was a lengthy discussion looking at various aspects and scenarios for payment.

Dr. Levy presented a handout of the major budget drivers at the highest level of overview. Enrollment has been greatly declining and that trend sharply continues.

There was a discussion regarding the request of the Connecticut River Area Health District to use JWMS as a medication distribution site in the event of an emergency.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the Connecticut River Area Health District's request to use JWMS as a medication distribution site in the event of any emergency (and for some practice drills that would not impact the school day or learning process)

Assistant Superintendent's Report

Ms. Martineau gave a general update on activities within the districts including the following: The State Dept. has officially adopted national standards for the arts, a move the district anticipated and so we have already started this move several years ago.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS - none present

No comments made

Before adjourning, Jim Olson reported that he is part of a Deep River Town Committee for determining how best to honor the memory of former Deep River First Selectman Dick Smith.

Currently at the top of the running is having a scholarship in his name for graduating Deep River students, and renaming Town Hall and/or the new ball field after him.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Next Joint BOE meeting is December 01, 2016
- Next Region 4 BOE meeting is January 05, 2017
- BOE and Community input for 2017-18 budget (on-going)
- BOE Self-evaluation (TBD)

ADJOURNMENT

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Clark, BOE Secretary

Jennifer Bryan, BOE Clerk