

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE NEXT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER 4
March 3, 2011**

A regular meeting of the Regional School District No. 4 Board of Education was held on Thursday, March 3, 2011 in the John Winthrop Middle School Library, with the following Board members in attendance: Richard Strauss, Mary-Beth Harrigan, Elaine Fitzgibbons, Linda Hall, Pamela Christman, Jennifer Clark, Chris Riley, and Duane Gates as well as Senior Student Representatives Eve Lee and Patrick Campbell as well as Junior Student Representatives Karli Bahner and Alison Gates.

Administrators: Dr. Ruth Levy, Superintendent, Mr. Ian Neviasser, Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Garth Sawyer, Business Manager, Kristina Martineau, Interim Principal for Valley Regional High School and David Russell, John Winthrop Middle School, Principal.

Board Clerk: Kelley Frazier

Call To Order

Board Chairman Linda Hall called the meeting to order at 7:07pm.

Consent Agenda

On a motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of the minutes from the Regular Meeting of January 6, 2011, the Special Meeting on January 31, 2011, the Special Meeting on February 8, 2011 as well as the Accounts Payable Report.

Audience Of Citizens

No Comment

Ms. Hall requested a change in order of the agenda to have the Student Reports done first.

Student Reports

Mr. Russell introduced Mr. White and the Science Bowl Hydrogen Fuel Cell Car race team. Michael Kurras, Donnie Dione and Daniel Leffingwell who placed first in the State of Connecticut Science Bowl Hydrogen Fuel Cell Car. This team explained how they developed their car. Mr. Russell introduced Ms. Nidz and Mrs. Holmes who introduced the Mock Trial Team of Ethan Petroka, Claire Halloran, Joe diTomasso and Ryan Baldwin. This team presented the case they were given in the state competition. The team placed fourth overall. Ms. Nidz presented the trophy for Math Counts to Mr. Russell. Ms. Hall thanked Mr. Russell, the teachers and students for a job well done.

Ms. Martineau introduced the Valley Gymnastics team who won the state competition.

The Board welcomed the Junior and Senior Class Representatives. Shin-Yi Lee discussed the Anti Defamation League session the High School participated in after winter break. There is session being held for parents and the community next week. Mr. Campbell noted that Assistant Principal Smalley was instrumental in planning the ADL sessions. CAPT started this week. The Student Council is preparing an 8th grade night for students and parents. Parents will attend a session to learn more about the High School and the kids will be able to participate in open gym. A Comedy night is being organized. The proceeds will go to the Student Council activity fund. Mr. Campbell discussed changes made to the cafeterias in the district. All five schools will have a salad bar. They are looking at restructuring the sandwich bar with panini bread and new options. March has been designated Board of Education appreciation month. Mr. Campbell read a note from the State Board of Education thanking the Board for all of their hard work and he noted their work is appreciated at every level. Karli Bahner, Junior Class Representative, discussed the French trip which was taken over winter break. Twenty eight students participated. She also reported that Chitty Chitty Bang Bang had a successful fundraiser in February. The play will be presented March 25 – 27th. Ally Gates discussed the colleges that some of the seniors have been accepted to. She also gave an update of the sports programs. The winter sports teams have all had a successful season.

Other Items

To Consider and Act on the Resolution (Enclosure 5) Entitled:

Ms. Hall introduced and read the following resolution:

RESOLVED: That the resolution entitled: RESOLUTION WITH RESPECT TO THE AUTHORIZATION, ISSUANCE AND SALE OF NOT EXCEEDING \$5.8 MILLION REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 4 GENERAL OBLIGATION REFUNDING BONDS, AUTHORIZING COMBINING INTO ONE ISSUE AND MAKING DETERMINATIONS WITH THE REFUNDING BONDS ANY OTHER AUTHORIZED BUT UNISSUED BONDS OF THE DISTRICT, AUTHORIZING AGREEMENTS FOR THE INVESTMENT OF REFUNDING ESCROW AND ITS REINVESTMENT OVER ITS TERM” is hereby approved.

On a motion made by Ms. Christman and seconded by Mr. Gates, the Board unanimously VOTED to waive the reading of the entitled resolution, incorporating its full text into the minutes of this meeting.

On a motion made by Ms. Clark and seconded by Ms. Christman, the Board unanimously VOTED that the resolution be adopted as introduced. Ms. Hall declared the motion carried and the resolution adopted.

Discussion and Possible Vote on Region 4 2011-2012 Budget

Ms. Hall discussed the further reductions made in the budget. The total increase will be 1.98 percent. The Board feels that presenting a budget below 2% is important. There was a brief discussion regarding the elimination of .5 of a hall monitor and the safety concerns that this may present. Dr. Levy noted that the Administration will abide by the decisions made by the Board. Dr. Levy feels that eliminating this position can work, but

it will not be easy. Ms. Fitzgibbons asked how many monitors would be there during lunch. Ms. Martineau said that there would only be one and now there are currently two. She noted that Administration is also present, but it is an expensive use of their time. Ms. Clark asked if there is a number of paras per student ratio? Dr. Levy said that there is no such guideline. Mary Beth Harrigan feels that this could work and does not have a problem with the reduction. Ms. Clark voiced her concerns of cutting this position. She noted that the reason we have not had problems may be that we had adequate staffing. Mr. Riley feels that the Administration knows this issue the best and that it is important to keep the budget under 2 percent. It is a difficult decision to make, but it shows the town our willingness to reduce in tough economic times. Mr. Gates is putting trust in the Administration, but would prefer to keep this position in. Ms. Hall also voiced her concerns with this elimination, but she does feel that we need to listen to our community members. Ms. Christman said that one member of the community was very vocal about making reductions to the budget, but she wondered if we should base this decision on one vocal person. Dr. Levy noted that every account was reviewed and reduced as low as we could go without impairing services to the students.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the Region 4 Budget for school year 2011-12 in the amount of \$17,327,658 (seventeen million, three hundred and twenty-seven thousand, six hundred and fifty eight dollars). Ms. Hall, Mr. Gates, Ms. Harrigan, Ms. Christman, Ms. Clark, Mr. Riley and Ms. Fitzgibbons approved the motion. Mr. Strauss voted no. The motion passed.

Mr. Strauss noted that he did not support this budget because he would like additional information regarding the health insurance deficit. He feels that a meeting on March 17th may result in further review by Region 4 and Supervision District. He also would like information regarding the reporting of class sizes which he has previously requested. He feels it is important that there is exposure for all revenue and expenditures.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to move the Region 4 2011-2012 Budget to Public Hearing.

For the following vote, Mr. Strauss left the meeting room and abstained from voting.

On a motion duly made and seconded, Ms. Hall, Mr. Gates, Ms. Harrigan, Ms. Christman, Ms. Clark, Mr. Riley and Ms. Fitzgibbons VOTED to approve the statement supporting Superintendent Dr. Ruth Levy's performance:

The Region 4 Board of Education formally and publicly acknowledges the ongoing leadership and professionalism displayed by Superintendent Ruth Levy during the 2010-2011 academic year. Given the many challenges and distractions that have emerged during the school year, Dr. Levy has remained steadfast in her commitment to the education and well being of the students of Region 4. Dr. Ruth Levy has proven herself to be a very strong administrator, educator and leader and continues to work tirelessly to make Region 4 an even stronger district. Mr. Strauss recused himself from the vote. The motion was approved.

Ms. Hall thanked Mr. Riley for crafting this statement. Mr. Riley feels that the best reflection of Dr. Levy's commitment to our school district is what Dr. Levy and the Boards have accomplished in the past few months. Mr. Riley feels that the students who come and present their accomplishments to the Board of Education are a true testimony of the administration and staff of the schools.

Dr. Levy thanked the Boards and her Administrative colleagues for their support and for the growth the district has experienced from working together during this difficult time.

Review and Possible Vote on Region 4 Secretaries and Nurses Contract

Dr. Levy briefly explained the terms of the Nurses and Secretaries Contract. It was a difficult initial session but we came to a reasonable contract. It was amicably reached.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the Region 4 Secretaries and Nurses Contract.

Reports:

Financial Status Report

Business Manager Garth Sawyer discussed highlights of the current financial status report. Mr. Sawyer said that Region 4 schools are looking at a \$53,000 deficit. He is reviewing the numbers to see if any further reductions can be made.

Cafeteria Account Update

Currently the district will need to do a budget transfer of \$20,000 based on operations. This is less than what we needed last year. Mr. Sawyer noted that there is outstanding revenue for catering work that has not been received. Mr. Strauss asked if we are benchmarking and how we compare to other schools. Mr. Sawyer indicated that he will have this information soon.

Activity Account Update

There are athletic activities and facilities are still in this account. Mr. Sawyer will be working on cleaning up this account by the next reporting.

Grants Account Update

Mr. Sawyer reviewed activity on various grants as stated on his report.

Principal's Update

John Winthrop Middle School Update on 2010-2011 School Year

Mr. David Russell gave a brief update on the John Winthrop Middle School. He noted that CMT's are being taken by Junior High students. March 22nd is the Blood Drive. There will be a preview for students at Valley Regional High School of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang. The school has several award winners in Art. The table in the Library and the display case displays student works. He noted that ten students have been accepted into the Mystic Art Competition. CMEA Regionals will have several students participating this weekend. Mr. Russell read a letter about renewing our Spotlight school status for another three years. Ms. Hall congratulated Mr. Russell on this achievement.

Valley Regional High School Update on 2010-2011 School Year

Ms. Kristina Martineau, Interim Principal, gave a brief update on the VRHS school year. Gail Onofrio has received a grant for the entire 9th grade class to go to Camp Hazen for an overnight stay on August 29-30th. Dr. Levy recommends having two adults per cabin. This overnight is designed to enhance teamwork. Community members and administrators are asked to chaperone, as well as parents.

Committee Reports (BOE Chair)

Joint PK-12 Comm.–Policy :E. Fitzgibbons, Curriculum:MB Harrigan, Finance:R. Strauss
Policy and Curriculum has not met.

Finance Committee.
No Report

Assistant Superintendent's Report – I. Neviaser

Ian Neviaser said that the TEAM program is going well. All teachers have been successful and moving towards the next phase. It is CMT and CAPT time and this is going well. He thanked Mary Beth Harrigan for volunteering to be part of the Math Curriculum team.

Mr. Neviaser gave a brief update on the Suspension Rates for the last 3-5 years for Region 4. This information came from the state website where various reports are available. Suspensions last from 1-10 days depending on the severity. This report includes in school and out of school suspensions.

Mr. Strauss would like a more detailed report of what are the benchmarks of how we compare to other schools. He would like to know more details so that we can make changes to become a premier school. Mr. Riley feels that the Board would know if there were behavioral problems in the school. Mr. Gates feels that the numbers will be more meaningful when we have a consistent Principal. It was noted that there were more incidents of suspension when we had an interim principal. Ms. Hall asked Ms. Martineau to report on this in the future. The length of the suspension is policy driven. Dr. Levy said that the climate of this school district is that we educate the whole child. She hopes to develop a climate report for the Middle School and High School to see what we can actively work on to continually improve the climate of the schools.

Superintendent's Report – R. Levy

District Update

On March 22nd at 4:30 there will be an art show of student work. She invited everyone to attend. This event is open to the public.

Dr. Levy would like commend Mr. Russell and his entire team for receiving Spotlight School again.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No Comment

ADJOURNMENT

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to move into Executive Session at 9:06 pm to vote on staff non-renewals and a confidential student matter. The motion passed unanimously. All Administrators present were asked to attend the Executive Session.

The Board Moved out of Executive Session at 9:27 pm.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

8.1 Public hearing for Proposed Region 4 Budget for 2011-12 (April 4th at 7:00pm)

8.5 Region 4 Annual Meeting (May 2nd at 7:00pm)

8.6 Referendum on Region 4 Budget for 2011-12 (May 3rd noon-8:00pm)

8.7 Region 4 Regular BOE Meeting (May 5th at 7:00pm)

On a motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 9:28 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelley Frazier, Substitute Clerk