

Regional School District 12
Board of Education Business Meeting Minutes
Shepaug Valley Middle High School
May 5, 2014

The Board of Education Business Meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m., on Monday, May 5, 2014, by Chairman James Hirschfield. Present were Board members Valerie Andersen, Alan Brown, Gregory Cava, Michelle Gorra, Emily Hibbard, Jennifer Pote, Michael Sinatra, Susan Stumpf, and Peter Tagley. Also present were: Patricia Cosentino, Ed.D., Superintendent and Robert Giesen, Director of Finance and Operations. Kelly Lott arrived at 7:06 p.m. Tony Bedini arrived at 7:20 p.m.

Also in attendance were: Don O'Leary, Director of Facilities; Kim Gallo, Principal SVMHS; and Lori Ferreira, Assistant Principal, SVMHS.

MOTION: made by Valerie Andersen and seconded by Emily Hibbard to change agenda item 7.1, Public Comment to item 6.2 on the agenda.

VOTE: In Favor: Valerie Andersen, Greg Cava, Emily Hibbard, Kelly Lott, Jennifer Pote and Susan Stumpf.

Opposed: Alan Brown, Michelle Gorra, James Hirschfield, Michael Sinatra and Peter Tagley.

Motion Passed (6-5)

CONSENT AGENDA

Consent agenda items approved:

Approval of Minutes: Business Meeting, April 21, 2014

Field Trips: Storm King Sculpture Park, Mountainville, NY – May 14, 2014 (Grade 9)
Freedom Trail & Science Museum, Boston, MA – May 22, 2014 (Grade 8)

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Chairman Hirschfield remarked on the referendum and thanked Dr. Cosentino for her work and everyone who worked with her. She was asked to do a task and Mr. Hirschfield thanked her for doing so. Mr. Hirschfield also commented on a complaint that had been filed with the SEEC in regard to the mailings that were sent out for the referendum. The complaint was filed by Patrick S. Dwyer, Bridgewater.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Correspondence: Dr. Cosentino thanked her staff as this is Teacher Appreciation Week, each staff member as well as BOE members were acknowledged with a small gift of thanks and that tomorrow is School Nurse Appreciation Day. A letter sent by Mr. Sinatra's daughter was received with information about a walk on May 10 supporting the American Lyme Foundation. Letters from Mrs. Kennedy from Roxbury, a letter from the Roxbury PTO President with 25 signatures and a letter from New Preston resident Mark Lyon were mentioned. All were in regard to the referendum outcome.

Personnel: Dr. Cosentino informed the Board that Marcus Oates, Technology Teacher at SVMHS has turned in his resignation effective June 30, 2014. Leaves of absence were requested by Jody Schroeder, Special Education Teacher, SVMHS (May 15, 2014-June 30, 2014) and by Leslie Holst-Grubbe, World Language Teacher, SVMHS (May 9, 2014-June 30, 2014)

A Review of 2014-2015 enrollment including Washington Primary School was distributed by Dr. Cosentino. The request to include Washington Primary was made at the April 22, 2014 Board meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Communications: Mr. Brown stated that the Board newsletter will be going out soon and it is the “best yet”. There was a request to have microphones at the meetings so that people attending can hear what the Board is saying. Mr. Brown said that the request is being looked into.

Education: Mrs. Gorra. No Report. Next meeting is May 19.

Facilities: Mr. Cava. No Report. Next meeting is May 19. Mr. Cava shared that at his meetings, he uses Google docs to record the minutes and by the end of his meeting the minutes are ready to share.

Finance: Mrs. Andersen reported that her committee has gone through object codes and at this point in time everything is in the black but there are still two months to go before the books close. The Capital Reserve Fund was reviewed as was the Lease Fund. The committee has tabled looking at tuition rates until the policy committee has had time to look at the tuition policy.

Lease: Mr. Cava reported that he, Jennifer Pote, Mr. O’Leary, and the First Selectman of each town toured the school buildings. This could lead to proposed changes of items on the list.

Negotiations: Mr. Cava reported that the Nurses’ contract is coming up and meeting dates will try to be set before June 30.

Policies and Bylaws: Mrs. Gorra reported that the committee met on April 21. Mrs. DeBritto had reported at that meeting that per State Statute we are not required to have a policy for home schooling. The first reading of policy 0521 is on the agenda for tonight. This policy was part of the audit findings from CABA. The policy for tuition fees is on the May 19 agenda.

Long Range Planning: No Report

OLD BUSINESS

Referendum – What’s next?

MOTION: made by Valerie Andersen and seconded by Greg Cava to establish a Long Range Planning Committee to study options in view of the fact that our citizens want to keep their home town K-5 schools and that this committee be chaired by Michelle Gorra and Michael Sinatra and to consider what the repair needs are for Shepaug.

Greg Cava suggested leaving the Shepaug repairs off the motion and let the Facility Committee take a look at their next meeting and come back to the Board with recommendations. They will give one more look to see if all items on the list need to be done.

Amendment: made by Valerie Andersen and seconded by Greg Cava to exclude Shepaug renovations and let the Facility Committee handle it as Greg Cava suggested.

Tweek: to the amendment made by Greg Cava to add Mrs. Hibbard to the committee and let the committee look at.

Greg Cava had made a "friendly amendment" and stated that although it was also seconded by him, a vote on it was not necessary.

VOTE: on the amended motion:

In favor: Valerie Andersen, Tony Bedini, Greg Cava, Michelle Gorra, Emily Hibbard, James Hirschfield, Jennifer Pote and Peter Tagley.

Opposed: Alan Brown, Kelly Lott, Michael Sinatra and Susan Stumpf.

Motion Passed (8-4)

New discussion followed with concerns and thoughts about how to move on with the renovation funding for the Shepaug Valley Middle High School.

MOTION: made by Valerie Andersen and seconded by Greg Cava to address the urgent need of the renovation that was earlier proposed and defeated in the last referendum and that we charge the Facility Committee and the Superintendent to come up with a plan as soon as possible that leads to a referendum.

AMENDMENT: made by Greg Cava and seconded by Susan Stumpf to: replace Valerie's motion with "move to call the appropriate District Meeting to move forward on the Shepaug renovations as originally proposed with just that amount of money - \$8,281,989".

Discussion followed.

MOTION: made by Susan Stumpf and seconded by Peter Tagley to move the question.

Discussion followed.

VOTE ON THE AMENDMENT:

In favor: Valerie Andersen, Tony Bedini, Alan Brown, Greg Cava, Michelle Gorra, Emily Hibbard, James Hirschfield, Michael Sinatra, Jennifer Pote, Susan Stumpf and Peter Tagley.

Abstained: Kelly Lott.

Motion Passed (11-0-1)

VOTE ON THE AMENDMENT: Putting Valerie's motion with the amendment

In favor: Valerie Andersen, Tony Bedini, Alan Brown, Greg Cava, Michelle Gorra, Emily Hibbard, Jim Hirschfield, Michael Sinatra, Jennifer Pote, Susan Stumpf and Peter Tagley.

Abstained: Kelly Lott

Motion Passed (11-0-1)

There was discussion about what is next for the schools to make them more attractive. Maybe programs at Shepaug should be looked into? Mr. Brown suggested contacting Education Connection for a before and after school child care program. Dr. Cosentino said she is in favor of marketing the schools and that she would look into high school programs and the child care program. She would include a committee involving PTO's.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Elliott Woolrich, Bridgewater, applauded the BOE for their volunteerism and doing what is best for children. He spoke on the referendum process and the spending of monies. He asked that the Board of Education and the town Zoning Commissions together examine what is happening within the towns and try to come up with something creative.

Eilene Buchheit, Bridgewater, commented on her previous prediction in regard to the referendum vote. She also stated that we need to do something to make the educational system work.

Julie Stuart, Bridgewater, commented on merging grades and made reference to Dr. Prowda's projections. A waiting list for REACH students was mentioned. Ms. Stuart also said that she is in support of a pre/after school child care program.

Curtis Reid, Bridgewater, First Selectman handed out a chart to the Board members showing the referendum vote results by town, by number of votes and percentages. Mr. Reid also thanked Don O'Leary for the tour of the schools.

Mary Sprang, Roxbury, spoke on an after school program and that the BOE consider holding off on a discussion to combine Booth Free and Burnham students.

Brenda Crossley, Roxbury, said that many people in Roxbury are happy with their school. Mrs. Crossley commented on the idea of K-2, 3-5 schools for BF and B and that if that were to happen, many Roxbury parents would choose to send their children to WPS.

Frannie Caco, New Preston, thanked the BOE for their work. She said she is happy to hear that a referendum for repairs at SMHS is coming back. Mrs. Caco stated that she believes at the elementary level, each town should be responsible for their school building and at the middle/high school level a percentage should be used for cost sharing.

Larry O'Toole, Washington, spoke on the upcoming referendum and that caution should be used as to what the 8 million dollars represents.

Debbie Smeglio, Roxbury, asked that the BOE come together for what is best educationally for children. It seems the Board forms committees to form committees but she does appreciate all the work the BOE does. Mrs. Smeglio also commented on transitions and how it does affect children.

Paula Conway, Roxbury, spoke on the K-2, 3-5 idea for Booth Free and Burnham schools. Mrs. Conway also commented that the children in the region need to be the focus as we all work together.

Julie Stuart, Bridgewater, spoke as the leader of S.O.S. in regard to Paula Conway's statement.

NEW BUSINESS

First Reading - Policy 0521 – Nondiscrimination/Equity/Title IX:

MOTION: made by Greg Cava and seconded by Valerie Andersen to approve Policy 0521 – Nondiscrimination/Equity/Title IX as a first reading.

VOTE: Unanimous.

Motion Passed

EXECUTIVE SESSION

No executive session

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: made by Valerie Andersen and seconded by Greg Cava to adjourn.

VOTE: Unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:22 p.m.