

Regional School District 12  
Board of Education Business Meeting Minutes  
Shepaug Valley Middle/High School  
September 9, 2013

The Business Meeting of the Board of Education was called to order at 7:00 p.m., on Monday, September 9, 2013, by Chairman James Hirschfield. Present were Board members: Valerie Andersen, Tony Bedini, Gregory Cava, Michelle Gorra, Emily Hibbard, Jennifer Pote, Michael Sinatra and Peter Tagley. Also present were: Patricia E. Cosentino, Ed.D., Superintendent and Robert Giesen, Director of Finance and Operations. Kelly Lott arrived at 7:01 p.m. Alan Brown and Susan Stumpf arrived at 7:02 p.m.

Don O'Leary, Facilities Manager and Anthony Amato were also present.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Consent agenda items approved:

*Approval of Minutes:* Business Meeting – August 19, 2013.

**REPORT OF THE CHAIR**

Chairman Hirschfield made special note of the letter the district received from NEASC regarding the evaluation of Shepaug beginning March 22, 2015. Chairman Hirschfield also mentioned the list of the committees and he requested that if anyone would like to be on a committee to let him know. Tony Bedini has resigned as Chair of the Facilities Committee and Regional School Repairs Committee. A new Chair is being sought.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

*Correspondence:* Dr. Cosentino referenced the letter from NEASC and a thank you letter from JoAnne Torti of ASAP for the contribution of \$15,000. Dr. Cosentino spoke on the successful opening of the schools this year. She thanked the administration, the parents, the staff and the Board for the smooth opening.

*First Day of School (August 26, 2013) Enrollment/Attendance:* As of September 5<sup>th</sup>, Burnham has 64 students, Booth Free has 85, Washington Primary has 154 (27 are REACH), 200 students at the middle school and 294 at the high school for a total of 797 students. Next week, Mrs. O'Hara will report on the REACH enrollment.

*2013 CABE/CAPSS Conference:* Dr. Cosentino reminded the Board that they can still register for the CABE convention in November.

*Personnel:* Dr. Cosentino shared personnel information. Appointments: Anita LoPresti, Grade 5 Teacher at WPS; Sara Osborne, Educational Assistant (.5 fte) at SVMHS; Roger Parkhouse, Technology Teacher at SVMHS (until 9/20/2013); Diane Robbins, Math Teacher at SVMHS. Leave of Absence: Kelly White, Grade 3 Teacher at WPS (11/12/13 to 4/21/14).

*Real Estate Impact Study:* Dr. Cosentino shared the findings from Chris Kerin, Kerin & Fazio, LLC. Mr. Kerin analyzed two towns in Vermont; Winhall and Stratton. He concluded that these towns did not represent our situation. Mr. Kerin found seventeen towns in Vermont that did not have schools but were relatively small and felt that there were too few sales to compare. Mr. Kerin then researched Maine where he found 52 towns without elementary schools. Most of these towns are rural with significantly lower incomes and housing prices relative to our Region. Again, he felt there was a lack of significant sales data to draw any conclusions. Discussion followed. The Board requested that Kerin & Fazio supply a formal report of their research.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

*Communications:* No report.

*Education:* Mrs. Gorra reported that she will be working with Teresa DeBrito; the new Curriculum Director, who will oversee the agenda. The next meeting will be September 16 and they will be hearing from the administrators on the new initiatives which include the new middle high school schedule, PK, VHS, the TV studio, wireless network, Chromebooks. She requested that Board members let her know of anything they would like to hear about.

*Education Connection:* No report.

*Facilities:* No meeting.

*Finance:* Mrs. Andersen reported on their meeting earlier tonight. They reviewed the financial report for June 30 and the new fiscal year report for August 31. The fiscal year ended with a surplus of \$155,129 or .7%. A full 1% was transferred totaling \$213,560. The available balance in the 1% fund now is \$263,005. Mrs. Andersen spoke about a concern about the elementary capital non-recurring account. She also spoke about the audit done by Sterling and Sterling regarding ineligible dependents for health care.

*Region 12's Vision / Mission Strategic Plans:* Dr. Cosentino reported that work continues with staff and she plans to include it on the agenda for the Board Retreat for Board input.

*Negotiations:* No report.

*Policy:* Mrs. Gorra reported the committee will meet next Monday at 6:00 p.m. She is working with Teresa DeBrito who has received her login/password from CABE. The committee will work on four policies that are mandated but not currently in the policy manual as was found through the audit. They will also discuss what they want to work on throughout the year.

*Regional School Repairs:* No meeting.

*Long Range Plan – Goal 3:* Dr. Cosentino noted that they have items on the agenda under new business.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

No old business.

**NEW BUSINESS**

*Consider and if appropriate, establish graduation date for Shepaug Class of 2014 (June 14, 2014):* Dr. Cosentino requested that the Board set June 14, 2014 as the date of graduation for the Class of 2014.

**MOTION:** made by Valerie Andersen, seconded by Gregory Cava to set June 14, 2014 as the date of graduation for the Class of 2014.

**VOTE:** Unanimous.

*Consider and if appropriate, approve Educational Specifications:* Dr. Cosentino referred to the Ed Specs that were available on the Google drive. Dr. Cosentino gave background on how the specs were developed by a committee that included the two elementary principals; Cathy Colella and Emily Judd, Don O’Leary, Vic Vicenzi, Emily Hibbard and Michelle Gorra. They used the Ed Specs from 2007 as a guide. They went through revising them to directly align with the work that SLAM did for the Region. A project manager also looked at them and gave some information.

**MOTION:** made by Michelle Gorra, seconded by Emily Hibbard to approve the Educational Specs.

Discussion followed.

**VOTE:** In favor: Alan Brown, Tony Bedini, Gregory Cava, Michelle Gorra, Emily Hibbard, James Hirschfield, Jennifer Pote, Susan Stumpf and Peter Tagley.

Opposed: Kelly Lott and Michael Sinatra.

Abstained: Valerie Andersen.

Motion passed (9 – 2 – 1).

*Estimated costs of PK-5 project from Spring 2013:* On June 17, 2013 the Board approved a motion that read “*The Region 12 Board of Education shall prepare a report on a proposal to amend the Region 12 Regionalization Plan as approved by the State Board of Education dated August 16, 1967, including the question to be presented, to be filed with the Commissioner of Education, in accordance with Section 10-47c of the Connecticut general statutes. This proposed amendment to the Regionalization Plan to be contained in this report shall be Region 12 Long Range Planning Committee Option 2b, which includes the construction of a new Pre-K to Grade 5 building on the Shepaug campus at 159 South Street, Washington, CT, along with renovations to the existing Shepaug Middle High School and the discontinued use of the Burnham School in Bridgewater, the Booth Free School in Roxbury, and the Washington Primary School in Washington*”. Anthony Amato reviewed the costs on the PK-5 building. He made reference to information taken from version 3 of the presentation given in the spring. Mr. Amato spoke on the capital planning and the financial planning perspectives to isolate the PK-5 from Option 2b from the investment and repairs of Shepaug. The capital planning would net a \$30M return and the financial planning over the 30 year period would net approximately \$59M of net savings for the Region. Over the 30+ year period it would be a 5% average savings per year against the current budget. Mr. Amato talked about how the graph he provided showed the impact to the budget. Discussion followed.

*Discuss the work of SVMHS – Don O’Leary:* Don O’Leary spoke about three scenarios that could be considered when determining what repairs to do at the SVMHS school for an upcoming referendum. Chart 1: Repairs to SVS to get us through five years, plus the renovation of one science lab and improvements to the entrance - \$1,726,624; Chart 2: Repairs from Chart 1 along with a number of aesthetic inclusions and some ADA additions - \$1,959,936 for a total \$3,686,560; Chart 3: All repairs as suggested by Kaestle Boos plus site improvements, pool repairs and septic inclusion - \$16,713,966 for a total \$20,400,526. Discussion followed.

*Consider and if appropriate, approve November 5, 2013 referendum date for the Amendment of the Regionalization Plan as reviewed by council after submission of the motion of the Regionalization Revision Committee:*

**MOTION:** made by Peter Tagley, seconded by Tony Bedini that the ballot on November 5 only pertain to the regionalization plan question - shall the Regional Plan for Regional School District 12 be amended as follows: “Deletion of ‘Elementary grades K-5 to remain in their present home town schools’ on page 2, and deletion of ‘In the proposed plan, the lower elementary grades, K through 5, will remain in their respective home town schools’ on page 5; and replace with ‘Pre-K through 5 elementary school(s) shall be located on the Shepaug campus at 159 South Street, Washington, CT.’ on November 5, 2013.

Discussion followed.

**MOTION AMENDED:** made by Gregory Cava - that the ballot only pertain to the regionalization plan question- shall the Regional Plan for Regional School District 12 be amended as follows: “Deletion of ‘Elementary grades K-5 to remain in their present home town schools’ on page 2, and deletion of ‘In the proposed plan, the lower elementary grades, K through 5, will remain in their respective home town schools’ on page 5; and replace with ‘Pre-K through 5 elementary school(s) shall be located on the Shepaug campus at 159 South Street, Washington, CT.’ targeting a referendum date of November 5, 2013 subject to a public hearing.

Discussion followed. Motion and second withdrawn.

Alan Brown left the meeting at 9:28 p.m. and returned at 9:29 p.m.

Dr. Cosentino explained that the RFQ’s went out about two and a half weeks ago and are due tomorrow. A draft of the Ed Specs was sent to interested establishments knowing they were pending Board approval. Don will meet with the Building Committee to go through the submissions and choose 2-3 architects to bid out the project costs based on the approved Ed Specs. This information will not be available by November 5<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Cosentino explained the thought behind having a discussion regarding the amendment to the Regionalization Plan to take to referendum on November 5<sup>th</sup> was to give as many community members as possible an opportunity to amend the plan. If it fails, it could be voted on again if the Board wishes. If it passes, then there would be another referendum in the future with the costs.

*Consider and if appropriate, authorize RFP to hire a project manager:* Dr. Cosentino spoke about the role and need for a project manager. She explained the procedure beginning with an RFQ and following the regulations outlined by our attorney. The cost for a project manager would be between 1 – 1.5% of the total project. A project manager could be hired as a beginning phase for so much an hour until the referendum and if the referendum failed, then the project manager would not be needed any longer. Dr. Cosentino recommended the Board begin the process.

**MOTION:** made by Gregory Cava, seconded by Peter Tagley to call for a district meeting for Monday, September 23, 2013, to present at that meeting in accordance with law, a discussion of the issue, shall the Regionalization Plan for Regional School District 12 be amended as follows: “Deletion of ‘Elementary grades K-5 to remain in their present home town schools’ on page 2, and deletion of ‘In the proposed plan, the lower elementary grades, K through 5, will remain in their respective home town schools’ on page 5; and replace with ‘Pre-K through 5 elementary school(s) shall be located on the Shepaug campus at 159 South Street, Washington, CT.” at the targeted referendum on November 5.

Discussion followed regarding hiring a project manager and calling for a meeting on September 23.

**MOTION:** made by Valerie Andersen, seconded by Peter Tagley to call the question.

**VOTE:** In favor: Valerie Andersen, Tony Bedini, Alan Brown, Emily Hibbard, James Hirschfield, Michael Sinatra, Susan Stumpf and Peter Tagley.

Opposed: Gregory Cava, Michelle Gorra, Kelly Lott and Jennifer Pote.

Motion passed (8 – 4 – 0).

Chairman Hirschfield repeated the motion on the table - To call for a district meeting for Monday, September 23, 2013, to present at that meeting in accordance with law, a discussion of the issue, shall the Regionalization Plan for Regional School District 12 be amended as follows: “Deletion of ‘Elementary grades K-5 to remain in their present home town schools’ on page 2, and deletion of ‘In the proposed plan, the lower elementary grades, K through 5, will remain in their respective home town schools’ on page 5; and replace with ‘Pre-K through 5 elementary school(s) shall be located on the Shepaug campus at 159 South Street, Washington, CT.” at the targeted referendum on November 5.

**VOTE:** In favor: Tony Bedini, Gregory Cava, James Hirschfield, and Peter Tagley.

Opposed: Valerie Andersen, Alan Brown, Michelle Gorra, Emily Hibbard, Kelly Lott, Jennifer Pote, Michael Sinatra and Susan Stumpf.

Motion failed (4 – 8 – 0).

**MOTION:** made by Michelle Gorra, seconded by Tony Bedini to put together an RFP for a project manager.

**VOTE:** In favor: Tony Bedini, Gregory Cava, Michelle Gorra, Emily Hibbard, and James Hirschfield.

Opposed: Valerie Andersen, Alan Brown, Kelly Lott, Jennifer Pote, Susan Stumpf and Peter Tagley.

Abstained: Michael Sinatra

Motion failed (5 – 6 – 1).

Dr. Cosentino will invite the Town Leaders to be at the next meeting to talk about their reasons for choosing Option 2b.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Carolan Dwyer, Bridgewater, spoke about consolidation.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

No executive session.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** made by Alan Brown, seconded by Gregory Cava to adjourn the meeting.

**VOTE:** Unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:09 p.m.