

Regional School District 12
Board of Education
Education Committee Meeting Minutes
Shepaug Valley Middle/High School
September 16, 2013

The Education Committee Meeting of the Board of Education was called to order at 7:00 p.m., on Monday, September 16, 2013, by Chairman, James Hirschfield. Present were Board members: Valerie Andersen, Alan Brown, Gregory Cava, Michelle Gorra, Emily Hibbard, Kelly Lott (7:10), Jennifer Pote, Michael Sinatra, Susan Stumpf, and Peter Tagley. Patricia E. Cosentino, Ed.D., Superintendent was also present. Tony Bedini was absent.

Also present were: Cathy Colella, Principal, Booth Free and Burnham Schools; Teresa DeBrito, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Lori Ferreira, Assistant Principal, Shepaug Valley Middle High School; Karen Fildes, Instructional Technology Specialist; Kim Gallo, Principal, Shepaug Valley Middle High School; Emily Judd, Principal, Washington Primary School; Allyson O'Hara, Director of Pupil Personnel Services; and Don O'Leary, Facilities Manager.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Jim Hirschfield reminded Board members of the retreat on September 30th at 5 p.m. that will be held in the Shepaug library. Core Values will be discussed and a handout was given to each Board member.

EDUCATION

REACH Update: Allyson O'Hara reported that REACH currently has a total of 28 students and that the beginning of the school year went off well. Valerie Andersen asked about the tuitioning of the students and how parents are paying. It was also stated that a bus is dedicated to transporting only REACH students. Michael Sinatra asked about class size (5-6 students, larger than last year) and if a questionnaire could go out to the parents at the end of the school year. Jennifer Pote commented about all the energy she noticed at Washington Primary and that REACH students can now be included in programs at Washington Primary.

Summer School: Due to a full agenda the Summer School video was not played and was sent electronically to the Board members. Dr. Cosentino said there were three programs offered for Summer School in which 20 students were enrolled. This includes students from Sherman and Woodbury.

Grades 6-12 update including new schedule, VHS, wireless network, TV studio, Chromebooks: Kim Gallo and Karen Fildes updated the Board on the new schedule, the TV Studio and the Chromebooks. Mrs. Gallo said that the new scheduling started off better than was expected and that she would be sharing with faculty any student concerns. Mrs. Fildes reported that the TV Studio has moved into the previous REACH area. The week of October 12, the TV Studio should be moving in. The distribution of Chromebooks to students will begin Friday starting with grades 8, 9, and 10 and then to the lower grades.

Laptops to staff: Teachers were given their laptops and will be able to bring them to PLC meetings and trainings. Michael Sinatra asked about how students will be informed about Virtual High School and Mrs. Gallo said that the information would come through the High School Guidance Department.

Discussion on how to include community members in our school system - A discussion on how to include community members in the school system was requested by Peter Tagley to be on tonight's agenda. It was thought that there are valuable community resources that could be integrated into our schools. Michael Sinatra suggested a Speaker Bank website be set up. This program would need to be formalized.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Personnel: Dr. Cosentino shared information on two new staff; Marcus Oates, Technology Teacher at SVMHS and Kimberly Harrison, College and Career Coordinator at SVMHS.

Discussion with Town Leaders: Selectmen Mark Lyon, Washington; Barbara Henry, Roxbury; William Stuart, Bridgewater; along with the Finance Board Chairs from Washington and Bridgewater were present for open discussion with the Board of Education. Each of the Selectmen commented on the issue of the referendum, dollar amount for updating the current MHS and building a new PK-5 school. The Selectmen stressed that the voters need to have a dollar amount that will be true to the project be put to vote and find out what direction the voters want to go in. Mark Lyon said that looking at the Capital Needs report, there are issues that are not necessary; such as floor tiles and the roof. He also said that looking at the options, there are many variables and personally he doesn't think that the voters will want high school students tuitioned out. Barbara Henry questioned the dollar amount and to give the voters the actual dollar amount and not an amount for now with coming back later to request more money. At a Roxbury town information meeting last week, it was stressed that the voters need to vote. William Stuart agreed with Mrs. Henry that the voters need to vote. Mr. Stuart said he studied the chart and looked at the options. Mr. Stuart had questioned difference in dollar amounts and he asked about the chart showing the tuitioning out of middle and high school students and why wasn't the chart just high school? Mr. Stuart feels there is a need to hear from the voters, thus the vote needs to be put out and hopes it will be Option 2b as planned. Selectmen comments were followed with questions and answers between Board members and the Selectmen. A copy from an e-mail to Robert Geisen, Director of Finance, from Attorney Glenn G. Rybacki of Day Pitney (bond counsel) was given to each Board member. This gave the Board information about the bond issues.

DISCUSSION OF REPAIR WORK FOR SVMHS AND CONSIDER AND IF APPROPRIATE, APPROVE REPAIR WORK TO BE INCLUDED IN REFERENDUM

Greg Cava said that the committee was not prepared for this action tonight. This discussion will be rescheduled.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Leo Null, Bridgewater, commented on repairs at SVMHS.
Tom Seger, Bridgewater, commented on the costs.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: made by Greg Cava to adjourn

VOTE: Unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.