

Regional School District 12
Board of Education Business Meeting Minutes
Shepaug Valley School
October 6, 2014

The Business Meeting of the Board of Education was called to order at 7:00 p.m., on Monday, October 6, 2014, by Chairman James Hirschfield. Present were Board members: Valerie Andersen, Tony Bedini, Alan Brown, Michelle Gorra, Emily Hibbard, Kelly Lott, Jennifer Pote, Michael Sinatra, Susan Stumpf, and Peter Tagley. Teresa DeBrito, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment and Robert Giesen, Director of Finance and Operations were also present. Gregory Cava was absent. Dr. Patricia Cosentino, Superintendent was absent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Minutes: Business Meeting – September 8, 2014
Education Committee Meeting – September 15, 2014
Retreat – September 29, 2014

Approval of Field Trips: Mystic Aquarium, Mystic, CT on October 9, 2014 (Grade 9)

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Chairman Hirschfield thanked Dr. Cosentino and Mrs. DeBrito for hosting the Board Retreat and expressed that the Board was able to talk openly to work toward a cohesive Board.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Teresa DeBrito reported in Dr. Cosentino's absence.

Correspondence: Mrs. DeBrito shared the letter received from ASAP (After School Arts Program) expressing gratitude for the \$15,000 contribution toward the use of facilities and for allowing them to offer opportunities to the students in Region 12.

Personnel: Mrs. DeBrito reported on two new hires: Cassandra Morrow, Grade 5 Teacher at WPS and Caitlin Higa, Paraprofessional at BFS. She also reported that Colleen Serra, Paraprofessional at WPS resigned (effective 9/25/2014). Mrs. DeBrito shared that Amy Kivela will replace Keri Snowden as a student teacher at BFS.

Proposed Madrid, Spain trip – April 2015: Teachers Mike Nolan and Alicia Ignarra gave details on the Spain trip they are proposing for students to go on during the April break. The trip requires a minimum of 12 students; maximum 24. An itinerary was handed out. An informational meeting is scheduled for tomorrow night for parents and students. Cost for the trip is \$3560. Currently, more than 24 students have expressed an interest in going.

MOTION: made by Valerie Andersen, seconded by Emily Hibbard to approve the proposed trip to Madrid, Spain during the April 2015 break as outlined in the itinerary.

Discussion followed.

VOTE: Unanimous.

Proposed Quebec trip – February 2015: Heidi Edel passed out a brochure and spoke about details of the proposed trip to Quebec in February 2015 that will mirror last year's trip. An informational meeting has already been held (pending Board approval). There are three students that want to go again. The cost of the trip is approximately \$800. A minimum of 20 students is required. If there aren't 20 by end of October, then the trip will be postponed until next year.

MOTION: made by Valerie Andersen, seconded by Jennifer Pote to approve the proposed Quebec trip in February 2015.

Discussion followed.

VOTE: Unanimous.

Science Scores: Teresa DeBrito shared information on the results of the SBAC tests for Grades 5 and 8 administered in March 2014 and the results from the Grade 10 CAPT taken last year. A handout includes district and individual school results of the science spring 2014 Connecticut Mastery Test (Grades 5 and 8) and the 10th grade Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT). Longitudinal science data results of the 4th Generation CMT and 3rd Generation CAPT. Mrs. DeBrito spoke about how the block scheduling caused a disconnect in the sequence of science courses students would take prior to testing. Last year was the first year since the school returned to a schedule that required student to take biology, chemistry and physics sequentially. The overall scores for 2014: 5th grade 71.4% at or above goal, 8th grade 81.7% at or above goal and 10th grade 55.3% at or above goal. Discussion followed.

Presentations – Community Relations and Communication Services: Mrs. DeBrito opened the floor for the presentations.

Danosky Associates / Visual Impact – Sharon Danosky, President, spoke on how her firm would move the Region's strategic plan forward. Services include strategic planning, organizational assessments, board-building, governance, resource and philanthropic development, financial management systems and strategies, marketing, branding and public relations, and building leadership skills. William McCann and David Clark of Visual Impact spoke about how they would handle the production portion of the project. They would design the marketing materials and provide print and distribution services. A question and answer time from the Board to the Danosky Associates / Visual Impact team followed.

Baldwin Media Marketing – Ann Baldwin spoke about how her firm would provide outreach and branding services. Services include a needs assessment and communications plan development, custom media consultancy and assistance for specific and / or unplanned challenges or events for any needed crises communications assistance that may present itself. Ms. Baldwin proposed a public relations campaign that reaches out to the media, the public and other stakeholders focusing on key issues, community events, milestones and educational programs. Ms. Baldwin shared a segment that aired on NBC highlighting East Granby High students in a class connected to a local community college for course credit. A question and answer time from the Board to Ms. Baldwin followed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Education: Mrs. Gorra reported that the next meeting on October 20 will include a presentation on the NEASC preparations, current course offerings and enrollment, 2014 graduation class, and a technology update.

Education Connection: Mrs. Gorra reported that she was unable to attend the last meeting but read the packet of information and is amazed at all the professional development that Education Connection offers. Mrs. Gorra received information on state grants being offered to teachers for PD on the common core.

Facilities: No report.

Finance: Mrs. Andersen reported that the committee met earlier and went over the September 30th financials. She reported that flood insurance has gone up again to \$19,249. After reconciliation, the 1% reserve fund is now at \$502,000 and the unencumbered balance for the elementary non-recurring fund is \$247,000. Mr. Giesen reviewed submissions from an RFP for servicing the pension fund. The committee will recommend to the Board at a future meeting to approve Wells Fargo to handle the management of the pension. The electrical generation contract has not been determined yet. The committee reviewed life insurance carriers to replace Sun Life and will make a recommendation at a future meeting of either Cigna or Anthem.

Negotiations: Mr. Hirschfield reported the negotiations for administrators will begin this month.

Emily Hibbard left the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Policy: Mrs. Gorra reported the committee met September 15. Counsel responded to the questions the Board had on the policy for Non-resident Attendance and that the policy is fine for now. Two policies are on the agenda for later.

Long Range Plan: Mr. Brown reported that the committee met earlier. They discussed general strategies on short and long-term goals. 1. Investigate what other districts are doing that are dealing with the same demographic issues that we have. 2. Look at how to bolster administrative support of other academic institutions to add to our course offerings or support what we already have. 3. Look for a way to align the Board and the administration with safe-guarding our education while facing the declining enrollment issue in a way that doesn't change the configuration of the facilities.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

NEW BUSINESS

First Reading – Policy 3240 – Tuition Fees: Mrs. Gorra reviewed the policy and the changes the committee made.

MOTION: made by Michael Sinatra, seconded by Peter Tagley to approve Policy 3240 Tuition Fees for a first reading.

Discussion followed.

VOTE: Unanimous.

First Reading – Policy 5118 – Non-Resident/Non-Tuition: Mrs. Gorra reviewed the policy and the changes the committee recommended.

MOTION: made by Valeria Andersen, seconded by Peter Tagley to approve Policy 5118 Non-Resident/Non-Tuition for a first reading.

Discussion followed. Some felt the policy included too many details.

The motion and second were withdrawn. Discussion followed. Chairman Hirschfield suggested that the Policy Committee review the policy considering the feedback from the Board tonight and bring it back at a future meeting for a first reading.

To consider and if appropriate, hire a consultant/firm for Community Relations and Communication Services: Chairman Hirschfield asked if the Board would like to hear from the superintendent before selecting or hiring a firm. Discussion followed.

MOTION: made by Alan Brown, seconded by Valerie Andersen to hire Baldwin Media Marketing for Community Relations and Communication Services until terminated.

Discussion followed. Some liked that Baldwin would work with the press and get good things out to the public. Some felt that the facilities in Region 12 can't compete with other school systems; public or private. Some felt that Baldwin would be helpful in preparing for the referendum.

VOTE: In favor: Valerie Andersen, Alan Brown, James Hirschfield, Michael Sinatra and Susan Stumpf.

Opposed: Tony Bedini, Michelle Gorra, Kelly Lott, Jennifer Pote and Peter Tagley.

(5 – 5 – 0) Motion failed.

MOTION: made by Michelle Gorra, seconded by Kelly Lott to hire Danosky & Associates / Visual Impact as outlined in proposal (\$10,000 community assessment, \$3,000 key message development, \$5,000 communications audit, \$7,000 communications plan, \$8,000 brochure development, \$2,350 newsletter development) for approximately \$35,000.

Discussion followed. Some felt that some things proposed are not needed.

MOTION: made by Valerie Andersen, seconded by Susan Stumpf to table the motion to the next meeting.

Discussion followed. It was suggested that the Board wait to get the superintendent's input.

VOTE: Unanimous.

To consider and if appropriate, approve funds not to exceed \$6,000 from the Elementary Non-recurring Capital Lease fund to provide no more than 18 additional parking spots for staff in the rear of Booth Free School.

MOTION: made by Peter Tagley, seconded by Tony Bedini to approve funds not to exceed \$6,000 from the Elementary Non-recurring Capital Lease fund to provide no more than 18 additional parking spots for staff in the rear of Booth Free School.

Discussion followed. Chairman Hirschfield explained the reason for the additional spots. Staff park in the Senior Center and take spots away from Seniors. Don O'Leary gave additional details.

MOTION: made by Valerie Andersen, seconded by Susan Stumpf to table the motion.

Discussion followed.

VOTE: In favor: Valerie Andersen, Tony Bedini, Susan Stumpf and Peter Tagley.

Opposed: Alan Brown, Michelle Gorra, James Hirschfield, Kelly Lott, Jennifer Pote, and Michael Sinatra.

(4 – 6 – 0) motion failed.

Vote on motion to approve funds:

VOTE: In favor: Alan Brown, Tony Bedini, Michelle Gorra, James Hirschfield, Kelly Lott, Jennifer Pote, Michael Sinatra, and Peter Tagley.

Opposed: Susan Stumpf

Abstained: Valerie Andersen

(8 – 1 – 1) motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:12 p.m.