

Regional School District 12
Board of Education
Education Committee Meeting
Shepaug Valley School
March 23, 2015

The Education Committee Meeting of the Board of Education was called to order at 7:00 p.m., on Monday, March 23, 2015, by Chairman James Hirschfield. Present were Board members: Valerie Andersen, Tony Bedini, Alan Brown, Gregory Cava, Michelle Gorra, Emily Hibbard, Kelly Lott, Jennifer Pote, Michael Sinatra, Susan Stumpf, and Peter Tagley. Also present was Patricia Cosentino, Ed.D., Superintendent.

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 School; Karen Fildes, Instructional Technology Specialist, District wide; Kim Gallo, Principal, Shepaug Valley School; Sheila Gambino, Technology Education Teacher, Shepaug Valley School; Robert Giesen, Director of Finance and Operations; Allyson O'Hara, Director of Pupil Personnel Services; and Don O'Leary, Director of Facilities.

MULTI-GRADE CLASSROOM PRESENTATION

Teresa DeBrito, Director of Curriculum, introduced Principal Cathy Colella and elementary teacher Kristyn DeSousa. Mrs. Colella and Mrs. DeSousa reported on the K-1 multi-grade classroom. The PowerPoint presentation showed what the day of a One-dergarten student was like. Jacqui Collentine was acknowledged for her help with the making of the PowerPoint. Questions from the Board were taken.

RECOGNITION TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mrs. DeBrito brought to the attention of the Board members a gift placed at their seat. The gift was a thank you to each member acknowledging their time and efforts to our Region in recognition of Board Appreciation Month.

ART PRESENTATION GRADES K-12

Mrs. DeBrito, introduced Shepaug art teacher/coordinator, Donna Wright who gave a PowerPoint presentation outlining the Art Curriculum and showed samples of student artwork. Students in the audience whose artwork was on display were recognized. Discussion followed. The question was asked if student artwork followed with the student as a way to show their progression. Mrs. Wright stated that Digital Portfolios are currently being started. Student artwork throughout the Region was on display and it was noted that March is Youth Art Month.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of minutes: Special Meeting, March 9, 2015
Business Meeting, March 9, 2015

Approval of Field Trips: Senior Class Trip to Boston, MA on May 1-3, 2015

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lisa McQueen, School Nurse at Burnham School, spoke on the nursing cut in the proposed budget.

Edith Poidomani, School Nurse at Shepaug Valley School, spoke on the nursing cut in the proposed budget.

Erin Elovecky, Burnham PTO President, spoke on the nursing cut in the proposed budget.

Candice Schiesel, Washington, spoke in regards to the REACH program.

Ann Marie Lindblom, Bridgewater, spoke on the nursing cut in the proposed budget.

Mike Nolan, Teacher, Shepaug, spoke on the nursing cut in the proposed budget.

Nancy Hawley, Bridgewater, spoke on the nursing cut in the proposed budget, asked why WPS was having lockers replaced when Booth and Burnham don't even have lockers and asked for the administration to do a per student cost study comparison against other schools in the area.

Angela Macchiarulo, Bridgewater, spoke on the nursing cut in the proposed budget and asked what the legal liability would be by cutting a nurse in the region.

Carolyn Dwyer, Bridgewater, commented about the multi-grade class, the nursing cut in the proposed budget, the Interventionist cut and the REACH program.

Alan Brown left the meeting at 8:23 p.m. and returned at 8:25 p.m.

Dirk Feather, Bridgewater, spoke on the nursing cut in the proposed budget.

Linda Schneider, Roxbury, commented on the nursing cut in the proposed budget and on the elimination of a science teacher at Shepaug. She also referred to the March 9 Board meeting in regards to consolidation and how the public seems to be excited with the VoAg program coming to the region.

Paula Conway, Roxbury, spoke on the nursing cut in the proposed budget, the elimination of an Interventionist and about REACH.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Chairman Hirschfield complimented the Drama Department on their production of "Our Town". Chairman Hirschfield also made reference to a newspaper article that included Shepaug showing a bar chart of graduation credit requirements. Chairman Hirschfield mentioned the voting times for the upcoming budget vote. This would be reported on in the Superintendent's report. Also mentioned was the current NEASC visit and that the evaluation is currently in process at Shepaug. Chairman Hirschfield remarked on the nice turnout at Sunday's greeting and interview.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Cosentino updated the Board with a count of the upcoming kindergarten class sizes. WPS 15, Booth Free 10, Burnham School 6 for a total of 31 students.

On Wednesday, March 25, Dr. Cosentino will attend CABA Day on the Hill along with Michelle Gorra and two Shepaug students.

Dr. Cosentino thanked and congratulated Kim Gallo, Lori Ferreira and the Shepaug staff on the work and preparation in regard to the visit by NEASC.

Dr. Cosentino asked the Board to please check their emails as she had forwarded additional letters from Burnham parents to them. Also forwarded were letters from First Selectmen Lyon from Washington, and Reed from Bridgewater, asking that the hours for voting on the school budget be set between the hours of 12 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Dr. Cosentino reported that the application for Agriscience is at the State level.

Dr. Cosentino noted that Amy Thayer, science teacher at Shepaug and Betsy O'Neill, special education teacher at Shepaug have requested leaves of absence.

Dr. Cosentino noted that March is Board Appreciation Month and thanked the Board for their service.

APPROVE 2015-2016 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

MOTION: made by Valerie Andersen, seconded by Alan Brown to approve the 2015-2016 Board Meeting Schedule.

VOTE: unanimous.

DISCUSS THE PROPOSED 2015-2016 BUDGET

Valerie Andersen began the budget discussion by going through the Superintendent's proposed budget by account numbers beginning with the 100's. The proposed budget is a decrease of .46%. Peter Tagley requested going through the budget at a meeting set only for budget review. Michelle Gorra reminded the members that there had been a setback with the presentation/discussion due to prior meetings being canceled for bad weather conditions. It was agreed that this meeting would be best because there were issues that needed to be voted on during this evening's meeting which were related to the budget numbers and need to be discussed before going into executive session.

Dr. Cosentino left the meeting at 8:42 p.m. and returned at 8:50 p.m.
Tony Bedini left the meeting at 8:50 p.m. and returned at 8:55 p.m.

Discussion focused around items in the 700's account.

MOTION: made by Valerie Andersen, seconded by Greg Cava to transfer funds (\$145,080.00) from object code 734 - Capital facilities, the following items to the Capital Reserve Fund and amend the Superintendent's budget for 2015/2016 (SVS: Replace pool pump motors, pool filter laterals, heat in TV Studio, replace classroom door knobs, fire panel upgrade. WPS: Replace circulator pumps).

VOTE: Unanimous.

Budget discussion continued.

MOTION: made by Michelle Gorra, seconded by Jennifer Pote to put nurses' hours at Booth Free School and Burnham School back into the budget.

Discussion followed which included adding a third REACH program located at WPS in the amount of \$146,148.91 which would include transportation.

MOTION: made by Greg Cava, seconded by Michael Sinatra to amend Michelle's motion to include adding a third REACH program to the dollar amount of \$146,148.91 at Washington Primary School

Discussion on the matter continued. Some Board members felt that before taking action they would like to hear more on the topic. There was also concern about adding REACH to the previous motion and that the nurses and REACH should be voted on as separate items.

MOTION: made by Valerie Andersen, seconded by Peter Tagley to continue the consideration of the motion at the next Board meeting so that more research into the REACH matter could be presented.

VOTE: In favor: Valerie Andersen, Alan Brown, Kelly Lott, Peter Tagley and Susan Stumpf.

Opposed: Tony Bedini, Greg Cava, Michelle Gorra, James Hirschfield, Jennifer Pote and Michael Sinatra.

Abstained: Emily Hibbard.

Motion failed (5 – 6 – 1)

Vote on motion made by Greg Cava, linking REACH to original motion:

VOTE: In favor: Tony Bedini, Greg Cava and Michael Sinatra.

Opposed: Valerie Andersen, Alan Brown, Michelle Gorra, Emily Hibbard, James Hirschfield, Kelly Lott, Jennifer Pote, Susan Stumpf and Peter Tagley.

Motion failed (3 – 9)

Vote on motion made by Michelle Gorra to add nurses back into budget:

VOTE: In favor: Valerie Andersen, Tony Bedini, Alan Brown, Michelle Gorra, Emily Hibbard, Kelly Lott, Jennifer Pote, Michael Sinatra, Susan Stumpf and Peter Tagley.

Opposed: Greg Cava.

Abstained: James Hirschfield.

Motion passed (10 – 1 – 1)

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It was decided there would be discussion on the Interventionist position and the elimination of the science teacher position at Shepaug before going into executive session.

It was agreed that a Special Budget meeting would be held on Monday, March 30, 2015. Tuesday, March 31, 2015 is already scheduled for the Board Retreat.

Dr. Cosentino spoke on the elimination of the Math Interventionist position at BS and BFS and the reason behind her decision. Dr. Cosentino stated that she would not support bringing back the position. Dr. Cosentino also spoke of the elimination of a science teacher at Shepaug due to the reduction of students; the position could not support a full time teacher. Dr. Cosentino assured the Board that the students or course selections would not be affected.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: made by Alan Brown, seconded by Valerie Andersen to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing negotiations, personnel matters and the continuation of the Superintendent's mid-year evaluation at 10:45 p.m.

VOTE: unanimous.

Chairman Hirschfield gave a 5 minute recess before going into Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board returned to regular session at 11:15 p.m. The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 p.m.