

Regional School District 12
Board of Education
Business Meeting Minutes
Shepaug Valley School
August 31, 2015

The Business Meeting of the Board of Education was called to order at 7:04 p.m., on Monday, August 31, 2015, by Chairman Hirschfield. Present were Board members: Anthony Amato, Valerie Andersen, Alan Brown, Rebecca Devine, Michelle Gorra, Emily Hibbard, Michael Sinatra and Peter Tagley. Gregory Cava was absent. Jennifer Pote arrived at 7:10.

Chairman Hirschfield informed the Board of Rose Krantz's resignation from the Board due to a conflict.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ed Wainwright, Bridgewater – asked questions on bonding, business plan proposal and requirements for the referendum.

John Cook, Washington – asked questions in regard to the procedure in hiring an architect and construction manager for the agriscience project. Also inquired on the cost for the preliminary work.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Minutes: Special Meeting, July 13, 2015
Business Meeting, July 15, 2015
Retreat, August 17, 2015
Special Meeting, August 17, 2015

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Chairman Hirschfield recognized and thanked Representative Arthur O'Neill with a gift for his efforts in getting the Agriscience bill in the legislative sessions. Representative O'Neill expressed thanks for the gift. He explained the process and credited the efforts of many legislators who supported this initiative.

Chairman Hirschfield asked for Board members to sign up on the agriscience schedule being passed to promote the agriscience program at the upcoming community events. Chairman Hirschfield mentioned that the front page of the newest edition of the CABE newspaper had an article about Region 12 using Chromebooks in Grades 3-12 and best practices. He also noted that the sign for Shepaug Valley School by the road has been replaced and looks good.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Cosentino reported on the first three days of the new school year. Things went smoothly for staff and students.

Enrollment update: Current enrollment: 53 BS, 77 BFS, 159 WPS, 439 SVS for a total of 728 students in the Region. There were questions on the enrollment in relation to the number of Sherman students, out-of-district and staff enrollments. The information will be emailed to Board members the next day.

Dr. Cosentino shared results from the SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium) that had been given in the spring. Teresa DeBrito will give a detailed report at the September 28th Education Committee Meeting. Dr. Cosentino shared that students in Grades 5, 7, and 11 did outstanding and Shepaug did unbelievably well. Dr. Cosentino praised the staff, administrators and those who rewrote the curriculum as well as the commitment of the students who took the test as part of the core values and guiding beliefs of the curriculum and answering a call to citizenship. Dr. Cosentino reported that 85.7% of students in the eleventh grade at Shepaug exceeded or met the state standard in English Language Arts.

Personnel: Dr. Cosentino reported appointments of Jennifer Rotunda as the Literacy Tutor at WPS, Ashely Kirk as the Music Teacher at all elementary schools, Amanda Farren as a Paraprofessional at BFS (part-time), Karin Olsen as Secretary at SVS and John Spear as Business Teacher at SVS. Dr. Cosentino reported three resignations: Robin DeCaro, Paraprofessional at BS; Sydney Santiago, Front Entrance Security at SVS; and Korin Santovasi, Business Teacher at SVS (effective 8/7/15). Dr. Cosentino also reported that Doug Winkel, English Teacher at SVS is on a leave of absence (8/24/2015 – TBD).

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Agriscience Steering: Mr. Amato reported that the committee has already met twice. They have covered a lot of ground. The committee defined what work needs to be done and the messaging. Demographics of the catchment area and application statistics from Nonnewaug were shared and the minutes from the meetings are online. The committee is prioritizing the business plan, the staffing plan and the bonding profile. Chairman Hirschfield addressed the question from the public comment on the hiring of Kaestle Boos. Mr. Giesen explained that currently the project is in a conceptual state. After two or three firms were interviewed, Kaestle Boos was chosen for the conceptual phase. Once the referendum passes, the Board will choose an architect for the final phase.

Education: Mrs. Gorra reported the next meeting will be held on September 28th with an in-depth presentation on the analysis of the SBAC scores. The meeting may include beginning of the year updates.

Education Connection: No report.

Facilities: In the absence of Mr. Cava, Ms. Devine reported that she will give details on item 9.2.

Finance: No report.

Long Range Plan: No report.

Negotiations: No report.

Policy: Mrs. Gorra reported that she worked with Mrs. DeBrito over the summer on a number of policies and there is one on the agenda for a second reading tonight.

OLD BUSINESS

Second Reading – Policy 3323 Soliciting Prices: Mrs. Gorra explained that at the last meeting when the Board approved the policy for a first reading, they were looking at the regulation which mirrors the policy. The regulation had more language but the policy reads the same. Mrs. Gorra recommended that the reading be approved as a second reading even though it was the regulation. Chairman Hirschfield advised that the reading be a first reading.

MOTION: made by Valerie Andersen, seconded by Rebecca Devine to accept Policy 3323 Soliciting Prices for a first reading.

VOTE: unanimous.

NEW BUSINESS

Superintendent's Goals for 2015-2016: Dr. Cosentino reviewed her goals for the 2015-2016 school year. She mentioned that one of her goals for next year; 2016-2017, will be updating the current Strategic Plan that goes through the end of 2017.

Agriscience Update: Dr. Cosentino referred to the hand-out included in the packets and referred to Ms. Devine to explain what was discussed at the Facilities Committee this past week. Ms. Devine gave details on the hand-out showing the reduction in the original estimate along with explanations. Items included athletic fields that will not need to be built out; reducing the size of the equine facility without jeopardizing the program, soft costs, contingency and escalation bringing it down over \$6M or to \$39,491,387. Discussion and questions followed.

MOTION: made by Michelle Gorra, seconded by Anthony Amato to accept the final estimate of the conceptual design of \$39,491,387 as the project to move forward with.

Discussion followed.

AMENDED

MOTION: made by Valerie Andersen, seconded Michelle Gorra, to accept the recommendation of the Facilities Committee to approve the conceptual design and estimate for the scope of work of the agriscience and science labs renovation project (\$39,491,387).

Chairman Hirschfield began discussion on forming a building committee before or after referendum. Discussion followed.

VOTE: unanimous.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: made by Peter Tagley, seconded by Anthony Amato to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing the Superintendent's evaluation at 8:17 p.m.

VOTE: unanimous.

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Chairman Hirschfield allowed a break before executive session. The Board reconvened in executive session at 8:24 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.