

Regional School District 12
Board of Education
Education Meeting Minutes
Shepaug Valley School
March 21, 2016

The Education Meeting of the Board of Education was called to order at 7:00 p.m., on Monday, March 21, 2016, by Chairman James Hirschfield. Present were Board members: Anthony Amato, Alan Brown, Gregory Cava, Rebecca Devine, Michelle Gorra, Emily Hibbard, Jennifer Pote, Michael Sinatra, and Peter Tagley. Valerie Andersen and Sydney Worbel were absent. Also present were: Patricia Cosentino, Ed.D., Superintendent and Robert Giesen, Director of Finance and Operations.

Also present were: Cathy Colella, Principal, Booth Free and Burnham Schools; Teresa DeBrito, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Lori Ferreira, Associate Principal, Shepaug Valley School; Karen Fildes, Director of Technology, Communications & Community Outreach; Kim Gallo, Principal, Shepaug Valley School; Emily Judd, Principal, Washington Primary School; Allyson O'Hara, Director of Pupil Services; and Don O'Leary, Director of Facilities.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of minutes: Education Meeting, February 22, 2016
Special Meeting, March 7, 2016
Business Meeting, March 7, 2016

Field Trip: Liberty State Park, Ellis, NJ on May 23, 2016 (Grade 5, BS, BFS, WPS)

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

No report.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Correspondence: Dr. Cosentino mentioned that she met with the First Selectmen from the three towns in regard to a meeting that she had with the BOE Finance Committee and there had been discussion in regard to returning unused money from the budget.

Board Appreciation: Dr. Cosentino introduced REACH teachers Ann Wescott and Anthony Weymouth who presented each Board member with a plant. Each plant was in a wooden container made and decorated by the REACH students.

Personnel: Dr. Cosentino announced the resignations of Caren Carpenter and Christopher Sutton, both teachers at SVS effective June 30, 2016.

Dr. Cosentino congratulated Mr. Dennis and students for hosting the World Affairs Forum this past Saturday and expressed that it was a wonderful event for the Shepaug Valley School community. Dr. Cosentino acknowledged that Ambassador Wallace was also present.

HOMEWORK DISCUSSION

Mrs. DeBrito began her presentation by giving each member of the Board a copy of the current Region 12 Homework Policy. A brief discussion followed and Mrs. DeBrito shared a few statements she received from parents in regard to homework. Most of the comments/questions from the Board were concerns when homework is given over vacations, holiday weekends and religious holidays when that is time students spend with their families. Chairman Hirschfield requested the Policy Committee review the current policy. It was also suggested that Region 12 compare homework policies of other school districts in the area.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Mrs. DeBrito updated the Board on course sequences in Mathematics at Shepaug Valley School. A handout was given out from the Education Committee. Discussion followed. Questions pertaining to the courses with their corresponding grade were asked.

POLICIES

Second Reading – Policy 3542.22– Food Service - Code of Conduct. Michelle Gorra reviewed the policy. Mrs. Gorra stated this is a second reading and that nothing has changed since the first reading. Mrs. Gorra also remarked that this is a new policy and is mandated by the State.

MOTION: made by Greg Cava, seconded by Anthony Amato, to approve Policy 3542.22 – Food Service - Code of Conduct, as a second reading.

VOTE: unanimous.

Second Reading – Policy 4117.4– Certified Non-Renewal/Suspension. Michelle Gorra reviewed the policy. Mrs. Gorra stated this is a second reading and that nothing has changed since the first reading. Mrs. Gorra said that the changes in the policy were minor and were made only to calendar dates as to reflect budget dates.

MOTION: made by Greg Cava, seconded by Anthony Amato, to approve Policy 4117.4 – Certified Non-Renewal-Suspension, as a second reading.

VOTE: unanimous.

Second Reading – Policy 5113.2 – Truancy. Michelle Gorra reviewed the policy. Mrs. Gorra stated this is a second reading and that nothing has changed since the first reading. Mrs. Gorra also stated that the reason for this revision is due to updates with state law. Mrs. Gorra made note to the highlighted areas in the policy where the wordage added was mandated by the State. Mrs. Gorra also stated that “18 inclusive” is wordage in the law. Discussion followed explaining the definition of an enrolled “child” who is of the age of 18.

MOTION: made by Anthony Amato, seconded by Jennifer Pote, to approve Policy 5113.2 – Truancy, as a second reading.

VOTE: In Favor: Anthony Amato, Alan Brown, Rebecca Devine, Michelle Gorra, James Hirschfield, Emily Hibbard, Jennifer Pote, Michael Sinatra, and Peter Tagley.

Opposed: Greg Cava.

Motion passed (9 – 1).

BUDGET DISCUSSION

Mr. Giesen spoke in regard to the presented budget that is currently at \$21,615,337.00 or a .25% increase. Discussion on the budget followed. Michelle Gorra spoke on the possibility of eliminating the .5 FTE interventionist for Booth Free / Burnham Schools. Mrs. Gorra had shared data in regard to student/teacher ratios. Mrs. Gorra also remarked that the STEM program could be re-evaluated next school year.

MOTION: made by Michelle Gorra, seconded by Peter Tagley, to reduce a .5 FTE Interventionist position from the proposed 2016-2017 school budget.

VOTE: unanimous.

Mr. Giesen reported that this reduction now brings the budget down to \$21,579,337.00 which is a .08% increase. An additional reduction of \$17,000, would bring the budget to 0% increase. Dr. Cosentino offered a list of five items that could be eliminated from the budget to bring the number down to \$21,561,448.00. Mr. Giesen confirmed this as the same dollar amount as last year's budget and would keep the budget at a 0% increase.

MOTION: made by Michelle Gorra, seconded by Anthony Amato, to accept the recommended budget cuts offered by the Superintendent to bring the 2016-2017 proposed budget to \$21,561,448.00 for a 0% increase.

VOTE: In Favor: Anthony Amato, Rebecca Devine, Michelle Gorra, James Hirschfield, Emily Hibbard, Jennifer Pote, Michael Sinatra, and Peter Tagley,

Opposed: Greg Cava.

Abstained: Alan Brown.

Motion passed (8 – 1 – 1).

To consider and if appropriate, adopt the 2016-2017 budget as recommended for presentation at the District Budget Hearing on April 4, 2016:

MOTION: made by Greg Cava, seconded by Anthony Amato, to adopt the 2016-2017 budget at \$21,561,448.00 as recommended for presentation at the District Budget Hearing on April 4, 2016.

There was a brief discussion in regard to making sure the community is educated on cuts in the budget before the April 4, 2016 vote. Karen Fildes, who handles the Region's communications with the public, will oversee press releases.

VOTE: unanimous.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: made by Peter Tagley, seconded by Greg Cava, to go into Executive Session at 8:25 p.m., for the purpose of discussing the Superintendent's Goals.

VOTE: unanimous.

Chairman Hirschfield called a five (5) minute recess. Board reconvened in Executive Session at 8:35 p.m. after relocating to a different room.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board returned to regular session at 9:28 p.m.

MOTION: made by Jennifer Pote, seconded by Michelle Gorra, to adjourn at 9:28 p.m.

VOTE: unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:28 pm.