

Regional School District 12
Board of Education
Education Meeting Minutes
Shepaug Valley School
June 13, 2016

The Education Meeting of the Board of Education was called to order at 7:00 p.m., on Monday, June 13, 2016, by James Hirschfield, Chairman of the Board. Present were Board members: Anthony Amato, Valerie Andersen (7:02), Alan Brown, Gregory Cava, Rebecca Devine, Michelle Gorra, Jennifer Pote, Michael Sinatra, Peter Tagley and Sydney Worobel. One Roxbury seat vacant. Patricia Cosentino, Ed.D., Superintendent and Robert Giesen, Director of Finance and Operations.

Also present were: Cathy Colella, Principal, BS/BFS; Teresa DeBrito, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Heidi Edel, French Teacher, SVS; Lori Ferreira, Associate Principal, SVS; Karen Fildes, Director of Technology and Communication; Kim Gallo, Principal, SVS; Emily Judd, Principal, WPS; Allyson O'Hara, Director of Pupil Services; Don O'Leary, Director of Facilities.

RECOGNITION OF VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS

Students recognized were Arantza Artieda, Superintendent's Award and Oscar Cespedes, Superintendent's Award. Receiving an award as one of Shepaug's Top Five Academic Seniors was Daniel Laranetto. Daniel was not able to attend. Daniel's mother Mrs. Laranetto, received the award for him. Receiving the CABE Student Leadership award was Jayden Cornwall; Sienna Moore, also receiving this award was not available.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lorraine Laranetto, Bridgewater – read an essay her son Daniel wrote. The essay had been written for a PTO scholarship application.

Carolann Dwyer, Bridgewater – commented on student enrollment and the sign erected in front of Burnham School relating to incentives.

Ed Wainwright, Bridgewater – questioned the vote on the sign in front of Burnham School at the June 6, 2016 Board meeting because it was not an item on the posted agenda.

Chairman Hirschfield explained the motion and the vote on the sign during the June 6, 2016 Board meeting.

Tim Laughlin, Washington – spoke in support of AgSTEM.

John Buonaiuto, Washington – spoke in regard to agenda items #7 and #8, and on the AgSTEM information and enrollment numbers.

Paula Conway, Roxbury – spoke in support of AgSTEM.

Samantha Steinis, Roxbury – spoke in support of AgSTEM.

Jessica Granger, Danbury – stated that she and her family were moving into Roxbury and that she is in support of AgSTEM. Mrs. Granger stated that she has friends currently living in Danbury that she would like to show homes to that are located in Bridgewater.

Ken Schultz, Washington – spoke in support of AgSTEM.

Scott Fisco, Washington – spoke in support of AgSTEM.

Ed Wainwright, Bridgewater – commented on agenda item #7 and on the 1% fund.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Chairman Hirschfield commented on the letter from CAFE and the two information booklets that had been handed out to each Board member. Chairman Hirschfield brought attention to certain pages in the booklets and to the self-evaluation in the booklet.

Chairman Hirschfield also commented on how nice both the Eighth Grade Promotion and the Shepaug Valley School Graduation was and that he was honored to attend both.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Correspondence – Dr. Cosentino also stated how beautiful both Eighth Grade Promotion and Shepaug Valley School Graduation had been. Dr. Cosentino remarked on the Region's student achievements, the Aloha Days at the elementary schools and the traditional parade of busses in the circle at Washington Primary School. Dr. Cosentino visited each elementary school on the last day.

Dr. Cosentino briefly remarked on the loss of a parent at Burnham School. As she thanked the staff she spoke about how proud she was on how they had all come together in crisis mode for the Burnham School community.

Dr. Cosentino remarked on the swell of letters she has been receiving from the community to be 'shovel ready' for the AgSTEM project at Shepaug.

Personnel: Dr. Cosentino reported on the appointments of new staff which included: Mallory Calabrese and Jennifer Rotunda as elementary teachers at WPS, Amanda Farren, Educational Assistant at WPS and Andrew St.Jean, Custodian at WPS. Dr. Cosentino reported on the resignations of Jennifer Rotunda, Literacy Tutor at WPS, Andrew St. Jean, Front Entrance Security at SVS and Heather Traulson-Rohrman, Paraprofessional at WPS. Dr. Cosentino reported on the retirement of Frank Grgach, Math Teacher at SVS (effective 6/30/16). Dr. Cosentino reported on the transfers: MaryAnn Zoeller, Grade 4 teacher at WPS to TAG/STEM teacher and William Murphy, custodian at WPS to custodian at SVS.

Rebecca Devine left the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

MOTION: made by Valerie Andersen, seconded by Michelle Gorra, to accept the retirement of Frank Grgach, to thank him for 41 years of service and to wish him well.

VOTE: unanimous.

Sydney Worobel shared the impact Mr. Grgach had on her as a student which led her to pursue a career in engineering. Ms. Worobel described Mr. Grgach as "epic".

Rebeca Devine returned to the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

EDUCATION

France Trip: French Teacher Heidi Edel presented an overview on a trip proposal to France for students in April of 2017. A handout explaining the itinerary and expenses was given to each Board member. Mrs. Edel stated that a survey on the trip was sent to parents via Google Forms. She is hopeful that the Shepaug Student Foundation will help with the funding. Discussion followed.

MOTION: made by Gregory Cava, seconded by Alan Brown, to approve the April 8-14, 2017 trip to France which would include students in Grades 8 – 12.

VOTE: unanimous.

State of the Schools: Presentations on each school were given by principals: Cathy Colella, Emily Judd and Kim Gallo.

Cathy Colella began by thanking her colleagues for supporting Burnham School and that she was very impressed by the support given to Bridgewater from Roxbury and the community to help support the school families during this hard time. Ms. Colella proceeded with a slideshow presentation showing what she called the Six C's. Critical Thinking, Creativity, Communication, Collaboration, Character and Citizenship. The slideshow was a peek into Burnham and Booth Free Schools. Ms. Colella credited teachers Jacqui Collentine and Amy Kivela for their assistance in putting together the slideshow. Comments and questions followed.

Principal Emily Judd, Washington Primary School, highlighted her presentation with a slideshow by focusing on enhanced climate and acts of kindness. Acts of kindness mentioned were: The Ben's Bells Project, The H2O for Life Walk, Matthews's Hearts of Hope stuffing 200 Hug-A-Heart Pillows, and kindness notes which were placed throughout the school building. Mrs. Judd thanked Leah Principe who had put the Washington Primary School slideshow together. Comments and questions followed.

Shepaug Valley School Principal Kim Gallo began her presentation with a PowerPoint titled Challenging Academics at Shepaug". Mrs. Gallo explained that the presentation will be on what they are doing and what they continue to do. Mrs. Gallo gave summaries on AP courses, VHS courses and ECE courses. Enrollment numbers were shown later in the PowerPoint. Mrs. Gallo shared information on the SAT preparation and the use of Khan Academy. Mrs. Gallo spoke on Expanded Electives and Accelerated Coursework for Grades 7, 8 and 9. As part of Mrs. Gallo's presentation, the video "The World I Want to Live In" was shown. This film was put together by middle school students and had been submitted to The White House Student Film Festival. Mrs. Gallo concluded her presentation with acknowledgment and thanks to the Shepaug Valley School staff. Discussion and questions followed. Mrs. Gallo suggested that during the September Board meeting, if testing results are in, those results could be shared at that time.

Superintendents Goals: Dr. Cosentino reviewed the list of her goals for 2015-2016. Dr. Cosentino briefly remarked on each of her 12 goals. Discussion on goals would be made later in the evening during Executive Session.

TO CONSIDER AND IF APPROPRIATE, ENCUMBER ANY REMAINING 2015/16 APPROPRIATIONS TO PARTIALLY OFFSET ANY POTENTIAL BORROWING OF THE AGRISCIENCE STEM AND SHEPAUG SCIENCE LAB PROJECTS WHEN THE BOARD OF EDUCATION DECIDES TO MOVE PAST THE DESIGN PHASE.

Dr. Cosentino summarized the request to encumber approximately \$127,000.00 in order to become 'shovel ready'. Questions were asked of Mr. Giesen as to the process of being able to encumber the money and uses of said money. Valerie Andersen reported on conversations she had with community members and elected officials in regard to encumbering the money for the AgSTEM project. Mr. Giesen also shared information on encumbering the money. Mr. Giesen stated that typically a decision on any encumbered money needs to be made by June 30. There was discussion as to whether the money should be encumbered for the AgSTEM project or if the money should be used for current projects that need to be taken care of. Michael Sinatra asked if it would be best to wait until the July meeting to further discuss encumbering the money, based on a possible decision by the State. Gregory Cava shared discussion that was made during the Facilities Committee meeting in which projects that needed to be completed were in need of funding. Mr. Cava summarized some of those projects. Concerns were voiced in regard to spending money to become 'shovel ready'. There were also comments made in regard to waiting for a letter from the State or DAS to give some sort of confirmation of State funding.

Peter Tagley moved the motion – no second

Discussion continued which also made reference to the list of items that still need to be done.

MOTION: made by Valerie Andersen, seconded by Jennifer Pote, to encumber the remaining 2015/16 appropriations at approximately \$127,000.00 to partially offset any potential borrowing of the Agriscience STEM and Shepaug science lab projects if and when the Board of Education decides to move past the design phase.

VOTE: In favor: Valerie Andersen, James Hirschfield and Jennifer Pote.

Opposed: Anthony Amato, Alan Brown, Gregory Cava, Rebecca Devine, Michelle Gorra, Michael Sinatra, Peter Tagley, Sydney Worobel

Motion failed (3 – 8).

Gregory Cava asked to move an item to the agenda. It was being researched with Robert's Rules to see if this was proper procedure. In the meantime, the meeting moved on to item 8 of the agenda.

DISCUSSION – BURNHAM SCHOOL SIGN / POSSIBLE ACTION

MOTION: made by Peter Tagley, to ask the Board's council to give a legal opinion on how the Board should address the issue of the sign. No second to the motion.

Discussion followed. A picture of the sign was shown on the screen for reference. Mr. Cava consulted with Don O'Leary about any sightline or maintenance issues with the sign and Mr. O'Leary felt there would not be any. Discussion included concern over the telephone number on the sign and wordage that may be misleading as to where the scholarships and incentives were coming from since funding was not being sponsored by the Board of Education.

MOTION: made by Valerie Andersen, seconded by Anthony Amato, to leave the sign just as it is certainly through the summer months and if in the future the Board wants to develop a policy for signs, we prepare that policy and make sure all members and all parties are aware of it.

Discussion followed.

VOTE: In favor: Anthony Amato, Valerie Andersen, Alan Brown, Gregory Cava, Rebecca Devine, Michelle Gorra, Jennifer Pote, Michael Sinatra, and Sydney Worobel.

Opposed: James Hirschfield and Peter Tagley.

Motion passed (9 – 2).

Both Mr. Brown and Chairman Hirschfield found that Robert's Rules does allow an agenda to be amended with a two thirds majority vote at any time during the meeting.

MOTION: made by Gregory Cava, seconded by Anthony Amato, to amend the agenda and add item 7A to the agenda to encumber any remaining 2015/16 appropriations to encumber them in favor of a series of projects related to Shepaug Valley School which he will detail.

Discussion followed.

MOTION: made by Alan Brown, seconded by Michelle Gorra, to amend the agenda.

AMENDED MOTION: Gregory Cava accepted a friendly amendment to his original motion. The amended motion stated by Mr. Cava – to amend his motion to add discussion and action on encumbering the remaining 2015/16 appropriations to pay for the cost of certain projects at Shepaug Valley School which will be detailed in discussion. Alan Brown agreed to the amendment. Anthony Amato accepted the amendment to Mr. Cava's amended motion.

VOTE: In favor: Anthony Amato, Alan Brown, Gregory Cava, Rebecca Devine, Michelle Gorra, James Hirschfield, Jennifer Pote, Michael Sinatra, Peter Tagley and Sydney Worobel.

Opposed: Valerie Andersen

Motion passed (10 – 1).

Mr. Cava reported on the facility needs at Shepaug. The items were reported in priority of need. Discussion followed.

MOTION: made by Anthony Amato, seconded by Michelle Gorra, to encumber funds to do the gym floor, the hallways and the cafeteria lighting upgrade.

Discussion followed. It was asked if any of this could be handled through the 1% funding account and if there are any restrictions on any of the funding accounts.

VOTE: In favor: Anthony Amato, Alan Brown, Gregory Cava, Rebecca Devine, Michelle Gorra, Jennifer Pote, Michael Sinatra, Peter Tagley, and Sydney Worobel.

Opposed: James Hirschfield.

Abstained: Valerie Andersen.

Motion passed (9 – 1 – 1).

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: made by Gregory Cava, seconded by Alan Brown, at 10:04 p.m., to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the Superintendent's Year End Evaluation and to review Non-Certified Staff 2016/17 Salaries.

VOTE: unanimous.

At 10:04 p.m., Chairman Hirschfield gave a brief recess before going into Executive Session.

Executive Session reconvened at 10:11 p.m.

ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS

No action on taken.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: made by Gregory Cava, seconded by Anthony Amato, to adjourn at 12:10 a.m.

VOTE: unanimous.