

Regional School District 12
Board of Education
Special Meeting Minutes
Shepaug Valley School
March 14, 2016

The Business Meeting of the Board of Education was called to order at 7:01 p.m., on Monday, March 14, 2016, by Chairman James Hirschfield. Present were Board members: Anthony Amato, Rebecca Devine, Emily Hibbard, Jennifer Pote, Peter Tagley and Sydney Worobel. Valerie Andersen was absent. Also present were: Dr. Patricia Cosentino, Superintendent and Robert Giesen, Director of Finance and Operations. Alan Brown and Michael Sinatra arrived at 7:02 p.m. Michelle Gorra arrived at 7:19 p.m. Gregory Cava arrived at 9:35 p.m.

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

ADMINISTRATIVE PRESENTATION ON SUPERINTENDENT'S BUDGET

Curriculum Director Teresa DeBrito began a presentation on the aspects of the budget proposed by the superintendent. She spoke about the process of putting the budget together which included meetings with administrators, community and town leaders, weighing the needs of the District and enrollment projections. The budget is then presented to the Board and becomes public. Mrs. DeBrito shared changes that have been made to the Superintendent's proposed budget since her presentation on March 7. Spanish will be offered to Grades K-5 but instructional time will be reduced. The multi-grade 2/3 class at Burnham School was proposed for the social emotional well-being of students. To address class sizes, a letter was sent home today to remind all parents of incoming K-5 students of the flexible enrollment option available for their student to attend an elementary school not in their hometown as long as they can provide transportation and is approved by the Superintendent. Mrs. DeBrito spoke about the curriculum and training for the multiage class and that Dr. Cosentino has invited teachers, administrators and other guests to attend a workshop next month being presented by Dr. Sandra Stone on multiage classrooms. Burnham and Booth Free Schools' Principal Cathy Colella spoke next in regard to a sample schedule for a multi-grade class. Washington Primary School Principal Emily Judd spoke about the Enrichment STEM teacher for students in Grades 3-8. Shepaug Valley School Principal Kim Gallo clarified the need to renovate the teachers' workspace at SVS and gave a breakdown of the costs.

Dr. Cosentino thanked the administrators and let the Board know that the PowerPoint presentation they just received has been emailed to them. She is confident that the budget meets the needs of the children and the schools in an efficient and effective way while being fiscally responsible. The administrative team will do what the Board decides to do regarding the 2016-17 budget.

Chairman Hirschfield reiterated the steps in the budget process which includes a review of the budget line by line by Michelle Gorra. The Board has the option to adopt a budget tonight or next week and then a budget hearing will be held on April 4. He requested that those giving public comment not be lengthy as the three-minute limit will not be imposed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ann Lowe, Washington – Thanked the Region for very successful education her children are receiving. Also spoke about the TAG STEM Enrichment teacher, advocate raising budget to support the Spanish position.

Krista Tendler, Washington – Thanked the Board for keeping Spanish for K-5 but not in favor of cutting instruction time. Spoke about reasons to keep Spanish instruction.

Brigid Buchheit-Carney, Bridgewater – Spoke about the budget and the risks in merging classes and cutting Spanish.

Kelly Massey, Bridgewater – Spoke about the multi-grade class and studies on multiage classes.

Erin Elovecky, Bridgewater – Spoke about the multi-grade class.

Diana Kelly, Bridgewater – Spoke about the multi-grade class.

Angela Macchiarula, Bridgewater – Spoke about the multi-grade class and the teachers' workspace renovations at SVS.

Evan Woerner, Bridgewater – Spoke about the multi-grade class.

Angelica Jacob, Bridgewater – Spoke about the multi-grade class and studies on multiage classes.

Steven Jacob, Bridgewater – Spoke about the multi-grade class.

Mark Lyon, Washington – First Selectman. Commended the Board on budget at .08% increase. Spoke about equity in the budget and the mil rate increase for Washington.

Mike Croft, Washington – Thanked teachers and Board volunteers for their hard work. Spoke about increase in program for a few and decrease for many.

Jeremy Tendler, Washington – Spoke about the multi-grade class and spoke about the renovations for the teachers' workspace.

Maureen Bialack, Bridgewater – Spoke about the multi-grade class.

Tammy Hogan-Maynard, Washington – Two children in Burnham School. Spoke about the multi-grade class and spoke about the renovations for the teachers' workspace.

Amanda Telford, Bridgewater – Spoke about the multi-grade class.

Julie Stuart, Bridgewater – Spoke about the multi-grade class.

Sue Ann Sibbitt, Bridgewater – Spoke about the multi-grade class.

John Buonaiuto, Washington – Spoke about enrollment, renovations to the teachers' workspace, bussing for Sherman students, tutors, and AgSTEM advisor stipend.

Barbara Henry, Roxbury – First Selectman. Commended the Board and Superintendent on the proposed budget. Spoke about the TAG teacher, multi-grade class, teachers' workspace and litigation threats.

Susan Stumpf, Bridgewater – Spoke about multi-grade class and teachers' workspace.

Jessica Granger, Danbury – Spoke about multi-grade class, teachers' workspace, and Spanish teacher. .

Norina Denning, Bridgewater – Spoke about the proposed multi-grade class.

Curtis Read, Bridgewater – First Selectman. Spoke about multi-grade class, working on bringing families into the Region, possible legal action.

Bernd Woerner, Bridgewater – Spoke about the proposed multi-grade class.

Paula Conway, Roxbury – Spoke about the failed consolidation and the multi-grade class and supports the proposed budget as efficient and fiscally responsible.

Ken Shultz, Washington – Spoke about the proposed multi-grade class.

Deidre Daly, Roxbury – Spoke about the proposed multiage class, the teachers' workspace, the Spanish teacher, and bussing from Booth Free to Burnham.

Lanie Flanagan, Bridgewater – Spoke about the ACE program.

Chairman Hirschfield dismissed for a break at 9:27 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 9:35 p.m.

DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED 2016-2017 BUDGET

Michelle Gorra began the budget discussion by going through the Superintendent's proposed budget beginning with Section 100. The proposed budget is .08% increase over last year.

Items that drew discussion were the renovations for the teachers' workspace, the AgSTEM advisor, bussing for Sherman students, the TAG and STEM Enrichment teacher, and the 2/3 multi-grade class at Burnham School.

Don O'Leary gave detailed information on the renovation plans for the teachers' workspace. Dr. Cosentino explained the TAG and STEM Enrichment program that would start out small but as it continues it will grow. Dr. Cosentino explained the difference between multiage and multi-grade.

MOTION: made by Alan Brown, seconded by Rebecca Devine, to add \$35,000 to cover salary for .5 FTE math interventionist while maintaining second and third grade at Burnham School.

Discussion followed. Dr. Cosentino clarified that she had included the math interventionist in her budget presentation.

AMENDED MOTION: made by Alan Brown, seconded by Rebecca Devine, to add \$36,000 to cover salary for .5 FTE to maintain full-time second and third grade teachers at Burnham School.

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

Opposed: Gregory Cava, James Hirschfield, and Peter Tagley.

Motion passed (7 – 3).

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: made by Peter Tagley, seconded by Michelle Gorra, to adjourn the meeting at 12:00 Midnight.

VOTE: unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 Midnight.

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