

Regional School District 12  
Board of Education  
Business Meeting Minutes  
Shepaug Valley School  
July 25, 2016

The Board of Education Business Meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m., on Monday, July 25, 2016, by Patricia Cosentino, Ed.D. Superintendent. Present were Board members Anthony Amato, Gregory Cava, Rebecca Devine, Michelle Gorra, James Hirschfield, Jennifer Pote, Michael Sinatra, Peter Tagley and Sydney Worobel. One Roxbury seat vacant. Robert Giesen, Director of Finance and Operations was also present. Valerie Andersen and Alan Brown were absent.

## **BOARD REORGANIZATION**

### **Election of Officers**

Dr. Cosentino welcomed everyone, took attendance and opened the floor for nominations for Board Chair.

**MOTION:** made by Peter Tagley, seconded by Michael Sinatra, to nominate Michelle Gorra as Chair.

made by Jennifer Pote, seconded by Sydney Worobel, to nominate James Hirschfield as Chair.

Dr. Cosentino closed nominations seeing there were no others. Ballots were handed out. Dr. Cosentino asked members to cast their written vote for the Chair.

**RESULTS:** Michelle Gorra – In favor: three (3) votes  
James Hirschfield – In favor: six (6) votes  
Two (2) absent ballots, one (1) vacant seat

Dr. Cosentino announced Mr. Hirschfield as the Chair and turned the meeting over to Chairman Hirschfield.

Chairman Hirschfield thanked those who voted for him and also for the time they give to serve on the Board. The Chairman opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair.

**MOTION:** made by Rebecca Devine, seconded by Anthony Amato, to nominate Alan Brown as Vice Chair.

made by Jennifer Pote, seconded by Gregory Cava, to nominate Michelle Gorra as Vice Chair.

**RESULTS:** Alan Brown – In favor: two (2) votes  
Michelle Gorra – In favor: seven (7) votes  
Two (2) absent ballots, one (1) vacant seat

Chairman Hirschfield announced Michelle Gorra as Vice Chair and opened the floor for nominations for Secretary.

**MOTION:** made by Jennifer Pote, seconded by Michelle Gorra, to nominate Rebecca Devine as Secretary.

Chairman Hirschfield closed nominations seeing there were no others and asked members to cast their written vote for Secretary.

**RESULTS:** Rebecca Devine – In favor: nine (9) votes  
Two (2) absent ballots, one (1) vacant seat

Chairman Hirschfield announced Rebecca Devine as Secretary and opened the floor for nominations for Treasurer.

**MOTION:** made by Michelle Gorra, seconded by Michael Sinatra, to nominate Valerie Andersen as Treasurer.

Chairman Hirschfield closed nominations seeing there were no others and asked members to cast their written vote for Treasurer.

**RESULTS:** Valerie Andersen – In favor: nine (9) votes  
Two (2) absent ballots, one (1) vacant seat

Chairman Hirschfield announced Valerie Andersen as Treasurer and congratulated everyone.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Catherine Vikstrom, Bridgewater – spoke on the Ag STEM program.

Lars Vikstrom, Bridgewater, SVS student, senior, Class of 2017- spoke about science courses at SVS.

Catherine Vikstrom, Bridgewater - spoke on science classes.

Teresa Southard, Bridgewater - spoke on science classes.

Tim Laughlin, Washington – thanked the Board for their time and dedication. Mr. Laughlin spoke in support of Ag STEM.

Samantha Steinis, Roxbury – spoke in support of Ag STEM.

Christy Harty, Bridgewater – spoke in support of Ag STEM.

Nancy Hagan, Roxbury – spoke about math and science courses and college preparedness.

Jaye Stuart, Washington – spoke on behalf of Shepaug Alumni in support of the Ag STEM program.

Marie Sprong, Roxbury, Booth Free 5<sup>th</sup> grade – spoke in support of Ag STEM.

Mary Sprong, Roxbury – spoke in support of Ag STEM.

Ken Schultz, Washington, WPS PTO President – spoke in support of Ag STEM.

Jim McDonough, Washington – spoke in support of Ag STEM.

Reported by Dr. Cosentino - Paula Conway had sent an email to Dr. Cosentino stating her support for AgSTEM.

Chairman Hirschfield stated a committee will be meeting early in the month of August in regards to AgSTEM and the Board will address the issues and that a decision will be made by the end of September. Chairman Hirschfield added that a lengthy letter had been sent to the State Department of Education and is now waiting for a response.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

*Approval of Minutes:* Business Meeting, June 6, 2016  
Education Committee Meeting, June 13, 2016  
Special Meeting, July 12, 2016

### **REPORT OF THE CHAIR**

Chairman Hirschfield thanked everyone for their support in electing him as Chairman of the Board. Chairman Hirschfield stated that the Region was saddened to hear of the passing of Robyn Calsetta, who was a bus driver in Washington for 18 years. Also of the passing of Leo Null, a Selectman in the town of Bridgewater.

Chairman Hirschfield passed around the committee sign-up sheet and asked Board members to please sign up for the committee(s) they would like to be on. Chairman Hirschfield stated that the Education Committee will now be the Education and Curriculum Committee. Mr. Hirschfield said he would notify Board members by email of the committees.

Greg Cava left the meeting at 7:43 p.m.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

*Correspondence* – Dr. Cosentino reported that she had joined a contingent from Connecticut along with other superintendents from around the country for the AASA Governing Board from July 12-14, in Washington, D.C. The conference gave superintendents the opportunity to advocate for laws that support students and schools. Dr. Cosentino summarized the Connecticut Agenda and also reported on laws that were being revised such as Child Nutrition Laws and IEP Laws. Dr. Cosentino also explained the re-authorization of ESSA and the Perkins Act.

Dr. Cosentino spoke about an email that Chairman Hirschfield shared with her regarding questions that were also made during public comment. Dr. Cosentino said she would like to be able to meet with the Education Committee, subcommittee. Dr. Cosentino acknowledged the staff for their efforts at trying to give students the best schedule that they can. Information put together by Lori Ferreira showing data on Shepaug Valley School's enrollment, course title and number of students in those courses was given to each Board member. Dr. Cosentino summarized each section. VHS courses were discussed. Questions and discussion followed.

Greg Cava returned to the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

Dr. Cosentino explained the difficulties in hiring a physics/chemistry teacher and that she has stopped looking for a physics teacher for this school year. Dr. Cosentino stated that a plan for this school year has been put into place for students. Dr. Cosentino shared that ironically she had received an email from WPS Principal, Emily Judd with concerns about this year's fourth grade class having 23 students with one teacher. Dr. Cosentino said she would be willing to have more discussion on the matter of the chemistry teacher once Lori Ferreira and Kim Gallo were both available. Many concerns were stated in regards to not offering an onsite physics class and not having a physics teacher. There was discussion in regards to the hiring of an additional science teacher. Dr. Cosentino spoke of options for students such as offering a science course outside of the normal school day and gave the Board ideas that could possibly be put in place. Chairman Hirschfield asked that the Superintendent look into the issue and report back to the Board. Dr. Cosentino stated that she would send out an email to Board members with possible solutions.

*Appointments* were announced for SVS: Elisabeth Blum, Math Teacher; Jennifer Carignan, English Teacher; Samantha Dobrowolski, Math Teacher; Linda Kanuch, Art Teacher. For WPS: Sara Feola and Kylie Hefford are elementary teachers, and Kristin Moser is a Literacy Tutor.

*Resignations* announced were: Mallory Calabrese, teacher at WPS, Aimee Reutzler, paraprofessional at BS, and Michael Rivera, teacher at SVS. Jennifer Pote acknowledged the loss of Art Teacher, Michael Rivera and what a wonderful teacher he was.

*Leave of Absence* for Kim Laughlin, guidance counselor at SVS (effective October 24, 2016 - March 3, 2017).

Dr. Cosentino reminded everyone that the CAFE/CAPSS Convention will be November 18-19, 2016.

There was a brief discussion in regard to staff resignations and leaves of absence. Dr. Cosentino explained that as of late some were due to maternity leave and others were due to the husband had been transferred, thus a move out of state.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

*Building:* Greg. Cava – no report.

*Education:* Michelle Gorra – no report.

*Education Connection:* Michelle Gorra – stated that Education Connection is in the process of changing their name because of a conflict of names regarding an online school.

*Facilities:* Greg Cava – no report.

*Finance:* Valerie Andersen – no report.

*Long Range Planning:* Dr. Cosentino reported that Karen Fildes has purchased Panarama and she is working with them. She hopes to have an update at the first meeting in August to set up the surveys.

*Negotiations:* Mr. Cava – no report.

*Policy:* Michelle Gorra – reported on the upcoming convention in November and asked the Board to think about any resolutions they may like to submit.

**NEW BUSINESS**

*To consider and if appropriate, approve request from Housatonic Valley Association to use Washington Primary School for their 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Auction to Benefit the Environment on Sunday, November 6, 2016 waiving policy prohibiting alcohol beverages.*

**MOTION:** made by Gregory Cava, seconded by Michael Sinatra, to approve request from Housatonic Valley Association to use Washington Primary School for their 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Auction to Benefit the Environment on Sunday, November 6, 2016 waiving policy prohibiting alcohol beverages, subject to the usual insurance and other procedural requirements.

**VOTE:** unanimous.

*Discuss and possible action on employee grievances:*

*\*Motion to deny grievance by Ann Rivera concerning written warning.*

*\*Motion to deny grievance by Ann Rivera concerning three-day suspension.*

Chairman Hirschfield briefly spoke about the grievances by Ann Rivera and shared advice given by legal counsel.

**MOTION:** made by Michael Sinatra, seconded by Jennifer Pote, to deny both grievances by Ann Rivera concerning a written warning and a three-day suspension.

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

**Opposed:** None.

**Abstain:** Sydney Worobel.

Motion passes (8 – 0 – 1)

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.