

Regional School District 12
Business Meeting Minutes
Shepaug Valley School
January 9, 2017

The Business Meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. on Monday, January 9, 2017, by Chairman James Hirschfield. Present were Board members: Anthony Amato, Alan Brown, Gregory Cava, Rebecca Devine, Michelle Gorra, Stephanie Kolnick, Jennifer Pote, Michael Sinatra and Peter Tagley. Patricia E. Cosentino, Ed.D., Superintendent, and Robert Giesen, Director of Finance and Operations were also present. Valerie Andersen was absent. Lisa Roush arrived at 7:02 p.m.

Also present was Kim Gallo, Principal at Shepaug Valley School.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Minutes: Education Meeting – December 19, 2016

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Chairman Hirschfield explained that the forecast is calling for inclement weather which may cause the AgSTEM Community Forum to be rescheduled to January 18th. An Announcement will be made via email, TV and website.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Correspondence: Dr. Cosentino spoke about the FOI requests and the extraordinary amount of time and effort that is required to complete them. Confidentiality concerns were expressed by the board and discussion followed.

Chairman Hirschfield spoke about presenting the list of requests to the public and that he appreciates the burden on the central office.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Building – Mr. Cava reported the committee has not met since the last meeting. He will report more later under Item 9.2.

Education/Curriculum – Mrs. Gorra reported that at the next meeting, Karen Fildes will present on the Technology Plan and Mr. Spear may present on the investment class.

EdAdvance – Mrs. Gorra reported that EdAdvance provides continuing education programs for our communities. She also spoke about the professional development that our teachers attended through EdAdvance.

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Facilities – Mr. Cava reported on a crack in the wall of the pool. Mr. O’Leary brought in a structural engineer with expertise in pool construction. He determined the crack was a cosmetic crack and not a structural crack. An issue with the heat exchanger has caused the pool heater to fail (again). The gym floor logo is done and matching mats are not here yet. The school water tank located near the boiler room and runs \$105,000 needs to be replaced.

Finance – Mrs. Gorra reported the committee met earlier. Everything is on track. Audit should be completed by the end of January. The checks to the towns will total \$167,959. A large part of revenue came from tuition from Sherman students. The State-wide ECS grant cuts totaled \$20M. A total of \$96,350 were cut from our towns. The money being returned to the towns will be more than the ECS cut.

Long Range Planning – Mr. Brown reported that the committee met last Wednesday in which Teresa DeBrito presented on the International Baccalaureate program. The presentation will be given to the Board soon. The committee also discussed hiring a facilitator to help with the strategic planning process. The committee will conduct interviews sometime in the next couple weeks. Surveys went out to teachers and families and the committee approved the template for community surveys.

Negotiations – Mr. Cava reported that our counsel is waiting for input from the teachers’ negotiations.

Policies & Bylaws – Mrs. Gorra reported that there is one policy on the agenda. Mrs. Gorra is on the Government Relations Committee through CABC and spoke about how they represent school boards and put together priorities for CABC to lobby at the state (Day on the Hill). Sheila McKay and Patrice McCarthy know the legislators and are touch with the Education Committee. She offered to look into having Ms. McKay or Ms. McCarthy come and speak to the Board at their next next Retreat about how the process works.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Approve 2017-2018 Board Meeting Schedule: Dr. Cosentino explained the requirement for the schedule to be approved by the Board.

MOTION: made by Peter Tagley, seconded by Gregory Cava, to approve the 2017-2018 Board Meeting Schedule.

VOTE: unanimous.

ACTION ITEMS

Follow-up on Legal Opinion on Policy 4152.6 Personal Leaves: Chairman Hirschfield explained that at a prior meeting, Policy 4152.6 had been approved pending attorney consult. Mrs. Gorra shared and explained Attorney Brochu’s comments and suggestions. The policy is not in conflict with current bargaining provisions. The Board requested that the Policy Committee look at the policy to keep it generic enough to be in compliance with the law without needing to update it every time there is a change.

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Authorize funds owed to Kaestle Boos (\$86,000) and O&G Industries (\$49,000) for work performed for the Building Committee to prepare the projects for inclusion in the State's Priority List dated December 15, 2016. Mr. Cava explained the sequence of events where DAS requested changes to the project to get it under \$30M.

MOTION: made by Gregory Cava, seconded by Michelle Gorra, to authorize funds owed to Kaestle Boos (\$86,000) and O&G Industries (\$49,000) for work performed for the Building Committee to prepare the projects for inclusion in the State's Priority List dated December 15, 2016 after Building Committee reviews and authorizes to pay, and that no further approvals can be made without the Building Committee approval including that the Board must get authorization from the Building Committee for any work.

Discussion followed. Mrs. Gorra spoke about the abnormal circumstances with the State in the process. Dr. Cosentino clarified that changes needed to be made to get the project on the December 15 priority list. Kaestle Boos and O&G Industries were needed to do work with DAS for that purpose. Mr. Cava spoke about the urgency from DAS to get the project rightsized. He stressed that in the future, he would ensure that all contractors must come to the Building Committee before expending money.

VOTE: unanimous.

Michelle Gorra left the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

Discussion followed on managing payment for work going forward specifically for both Kaestle Boos and O&G to be at the AgSTEM Community Forum and the meeting on the 23rd. Dr. Cosentino explained the next steps at the State with the project. DAS will meet with the School Construction Subcommittee in February. Next it will go to the Education Committee and the Finance Committee. Next it goes to the legislature and then to the Governor to sign and then to the Bond Commission. Chairman Hirschfield suggested inviting Arthur O'Neill to come and speak to the Board on the schedule. Dr. Cosentino will contact him.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: made by Peter Tagley to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Debby Bliven