

Regional School District 12
Board of Education
Business Meeting Minutes
Shepaug Valley School
August 28, 2017

The Business Meeting of the Board of Education was called to order at 7:01 p.m., on Monday, August 28, 2017, by Chairman Anthony Amato. Present were Board members: Alan Brown, John Buonaiuto, Gregory Cava, Michelle Gorra, James Hirschfield, Stephanie Kolnick, Lisa Roush, Michael Sinatra, Julie Stuart and Peter Tagley. Jennifer Pote was absent. Dr. Cosentino, Superintendent, and Robert Giesen, Director of Finance and Operations were also present.

Also present were: Teresa DeBrito, Director CIA; Lori Ferreira, Associate Principal at SVS; Kim Gallo, Principal at SVS; and Don O’Leary, Director of Facilities.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ed Wainwright, Bridgewater – spoke about the fiscal condition of the state, and the AgSTEM and science lab projects.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Minutes: Business Meeting, July 17, 2017

REPORTS AND RECOGNITION

Board Chair’s Report: Chairman Amato shared his thoughts on the year ahead for the district as it awaits to hear from the state. He emphasized embrace being small.

Superintendent’s Report:

Personnel – Dr. Cosentino reported the appointments of: Jacob Bartfield as General/Instrumental Music Teacher (.4 FTE) at BFS; Laurie Del Torto as Paraprofessional at WPS; Diana Dighton as Front Entrance Door Monitor at SVS; Jennifer Doiron as General/Instrumental Teacher at BS and WPS; Sarah Foreman as Paraprofessional at WPS; Stephen MacKessy as the Literacy Tutor at BS; Christine Scott as English Teacher (.6 FTE) at SVS. Dr. Cosentino reported the resignations of: Amanda Farren, Literacy Tutor at BS (effective July 17, 2017); Autumn Jensen, Paraprofessional at WPS (effective July 24, 2017); Ashley Kirk, Music Teacher at WPS / BS (effective August 11, 2017); and Adam Nanavaty, Music Teacher at BFS (effective August 1, 2017). Dr. Cosentino reported that Lorinda DeSantis, Library Clerk at BS retired (effective August 17, 2017) and Dorothy Smith, Educational Assistant at BFS retired (effective August 14, 2017).

First Day of School – Dr. Cosentino reported that today was the first day of the new school year for staff and students and it went really well. She thanked the custodians for their hard work in getting the schools ready and looking great. She also thanked the administrators, teachers and all staff for how they always come together in the best interest of the students. She spoke on the convocation last Thursday. The message focused on unity, what is right for kids, continuous improvement, and thinking outside the box. Kelly White, Teacher of the Year, made a wonderful presentation at the convocation focused on being gritty and to foster that in students. Professional development was on Friday, Project Lead the Way in K-4 and Grade 5 spent time planning for curriculum for science, technology, engineering and math. Dr. Cosentino reported on the work that Don O’Leary accomplished at Burnham School and the new automated substitute system that Karen Fildes implemented over the summer. She spoke about the district PTO meeting last week and encouraged everyone to attend ice cream socials coming up.

Julie Stuart asked about the correspondence from the library staff regarding the library clerk at Burnham School. Chairman Amato explained that it may be an item on the agenda at the next meeting. Dr. Cosentino explained reasons why the position is not posted after the retirement of Lorinda DeSantis.

Committee Reports:

Building – no report.

Facilities – Mr. Cava reported all the work done at all of the schools over the summer.

Education/Curriculum – Mr. Sinatra reported that he met with Teresa DeBrito over the summer and earlier tonight to schedule topics for the year. The meeting on the 25th will be on the data from the CMT and CAPT tests.

EdAdvance – Mrs. Gorra reported that EdAdvance will have their first open annual meeting on October 5 from 4-6 p.m. All board of education members and superintendents are invited.

Finance – Mrs. Gorra reported that the September 11 meeting will be moved to the 18th. Time will be determined.

Chairman Amato announced that the Board Retreat scheduled for September 18 will be cancelled.

Long Range Planning – Mr. Brown reported that the last meeting in the spring was cancelled. Teresa DeBrito will be answering questions on IB at the next meeting. The committee is waiting for AgSTEM to be finalized before moving forward.

Negotiations – Mr. Cava reported that the ratification of the Nurses’ contract is on the agenda tonight.

Policies and Bylaws – Mrs. Gorra reported that the committee did not meet over the summer. There are two policies on the agenda tonight for second readings.

NEW BUSINESS AND UPDATES

Update: Enrollment – Dr. Cosentino gave a handout showing enrollment as of today. The reduction in tuition has brought in many students. Currently: 47 BS, 70 BFS, 146 WPS, 421 SVS for a total of 684 students in the region. The handout shows the breakdown of resident students, staff students, tuition (non-resident) students. Questions and comments followed.

Update: School Business Manager Search – Mrs. Gorra reported that the position has been posted on CTREAP, CEA, CASBO, Monster, ZipRecruiter, and LinkedIn as well as on our Region 12 website. Several applications have been received and are being reviewed.

Review and Discuss: Agriscience STEM

Project Status – Dr. Cosentino reported that the project is at the design and development phase. The consultant is working with the administration and the architects to ensure the design meets the curriculum pathway requirements. The consultant, KBA and O&G will share the design revisions with the Building Committee for their approval at the September 11 meeting. The septic and traffic studies are in process with the state agencies and contracted engineers. Mr. Cava added that the construction document phase is next after approval of the design development. The project is slightly behind.

Financial Status – Dr. Cosentino reported that as of August 8 the Board has approved \$1,756,439.44 for the AgSTEM project and approved payment totaling \$706,679.44, leaving a balance of \$1,049,760. Dr. Cosentino explained the numbers on the handouts presented on February 6, 2017 and July 8, 2017. In July, the handout total was \$1,811,789 and included design development for KBA and design development for O&G but did not include AcuMark Utility. In February, the handout total was \$1,317,000 and did not include the pre-referendum costs, consultants, land surveyor fees, AcuMark Utility, schematic design, design development, construction documents and approval bidding. These variances bring the balance to \$1,756,439.44 on both spreadsheets. Each spreadsheet was developed for different purposes dependent on what was needed at the time. Questions and answers followed.

Program Status – Dr. Cosentino spoke about the position of the Director of AgSTEM. This person would teach part-time and administer part-time. This position would be in the 2018-19 budget and would begin the year before the program opens. Teresa DeBrito spoke about the four agriscience curriculum pathways: Plant System – The Study of Plant Life, Animal Systems – The Study of Animal Life, Food Products and Processing Systems – The Study of Food Safety & Sanitation, and Power, Structural and Technical Systems – The Study of Agricultural Equipment & Power Systems. Mrs. DeBrito spoke on how the AgSTEM curriculum will include Next Generation Science Standards, Engineering by Design and Engineering Habits of Mind in addition to the pathway standards. Questions and answers followed.

ACTION ITEMS

Review and Approve: Funding to re-survey SVS property – Mr. Cava explained the reasons needed for additional surveying work on the Shepaug property. The survey we have is partial and not at the level needed to move forward for the project. Discussion followed.

MOTION: made by James Hirschfield, seconded by Michelle Gorra, to authorize the Building Committee to expend funds not to exceed \$15,000 for surveying the SVS property.

Discussion followed.

VOTE: In favor: Anthony Amato, Alan Brown, Gregory Cava, Michelle Gorra, James Hirschfield, Stephanie Kolnick, Lisa Roush, Michael Sinatra, Julie Stuart and Peter Tagley.

Opposed: John Buonaiuto.

Motion passed (10 – 1 – 0)

Review and Approve: Second Reading – Policy 4111/4211 Recruitment and Selection – Mrs. Gorra explained that the first reading was approved back in June and Mr. Cava had it reviewed by our counsel to be sure there are no conflicts with our contracts.

MOTION: made by James Hirschfield, seconded by Michael Sinatra, to accept Policy 4111/4211 Recruitment and Selection for a second reading.

VOTE: unanimous.

Review and Approve: Second Reading – Policy 5118.1 Homeless Students – Mrs. Gorra explained that it was updated to meet federal laws. Nothing changed since the first reading.

MOTION: made by James Hirschfield, seconded by Michael Sinatra, to accept Policy 5118.1 Homeless Students for a second reading.

Discussion followed.

VOTE: unanimous.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: made by James Hirschfield, seconded by Alan Brown, to enter into executive session at 8:15 p.m. for the purpose of discussing negotiations strategies and consideration of potential settlement for the 2017-10 Nurses' contract and to discuss the Administrators' contract.

VOTE: unanimous.

ACTION ITEMS FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board returned to public session at 9:40 p.m.

MOTION: made by James Hirschfield, seconded by Michelle Gorra, to accept ratification of nurses' contract as negotiated.

VOTE: unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:42 p.m.