

WILLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2013
(Unofficial Until Board Approval)

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Erika Wiecenski at the Town Office Building.

PRESENT: Erika Wiecenski, Herb Arico, Mark Jones, Leo Mercado, Michelle Cunningham, Ann Grosjean (arrived at 7:12pm), Barry Wallett (arrived at 7:18 pm), Superintendent David Harding

ABSENT:
None

COMMUNICATIONS:
None

PRESENT TO SPEAK:
None

SUPERINTENDENT REPORTS:

Superintendent Harding reported on the security grant suggesting the money that is reimbursed could be used for additional security items such as a panic button at Hall School and adding cameras and lights.

He reported on the technology grant stating that the letter detailing the specifics of the award has not yet been received but wanted the Board to consider replacing the student iPads at the end of the year. The current iPads are two years old and have a 3 year warranty on them but have 2 accounts already used on each and some have 3 accounts. The limit per iPad is 3 accounts to back up the data. Superintendent Harding expressed he has contacted Apple to work on this but has not received any results. This could present an issue next year that needs to be considered. He suggested selling the current grade 8 iPads at the end of the year to offset the cost of getting new ones for the incoming grade 7 students.

Board discussed the details and class sizes. Superintendent Harding said the iPad data is anecdotal, overall they have been successful and the kids are using and enjoy the new technology with some teachers liking it more than others.

Superintendent Harding informed the Board that he has a consultant coming in to do a walk-through of the facilities with First Selectman, Christina Mailhos to assess technology and give recommendations about the future. He believes it would be helpful to have someone give this assessment to be able to have future discussions once the technology grant parameters are known.

Mark Jones asked about Google Docs with Superintendent replying in the beginning it was planned to use that with the Cloud but instead we purchased E-backpack and different management tools to make it easier for the teachers to make the transitions.

Superintendent Harding discussed the CIP project of the roof at Center School. A company did an assessment of the leaks and found standing water between two layers of the roof requiring replacement of the roof. The cost is approximately \$95,000 but the scope of the work comes under school facilities and the cost can be reimbursed at about 63% from the State through a

grant. This method requires the town to make resolutions to authorize the Board to apply for the grant, and other resolutions to authorize the funding. Superintendent Harding attended the CIP meeting and spoke about the details and there is a meeting on January 16, 2014 to make the resolutions needed to go forward with the project.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance Committee met and reviewed the bills.

Herb Arico, Liaison for EastConn reported met in November but will not meet in December.

Herb Arico reported he attended the CABE delegate assembly on November 14 to establish guidelines for CABE with legislation and vote on the issues. He spoke out for the small schools in Eastern Connecticut. He distributed some CABE flyers to the Board with information on new officers and workshops. The meeting was well attended with board members and superintendents from all over Connecticut. The Ashford School Jazz Band performed on Friday morning as well.

Michelle Cunningham stated she also attended on Saturday in her day job capacity to present with the Bloomfield Board of Ed and district staff on after school and summer programs.

NEW BUSINESS:

Board welcomed Ann Grosjean to the table stating all new and reelected members have been previously sworn in by the town.

Superintendent Harding asked for nominations for Board Chairperson.

MOTION: by Michelle Cunningham, seconded by Leo Mercado to nominate Erika Wiecenski for Board Chairperson.

VOTE: All in Favor
Motion Passed

Herb Arico nominated Michelle Cunningham for Chairperson. Michelle Cunningham recused the nomination and said she would be happy to be Vice Chairperson.

MOTION: by Mark Jones to nominate Michelle Cunningham for Board Vice Chairperson.

VOTE: Yes: Herb Arico, Erika Wiecenski, Michelle Cunningham,
Ann Grosjean
No: Mark Jones, Barry Wallett, Leo Mercado
Motion Passed

MOTION: by Barry Wallett to nominate Leo Mercado for Vice Chairperson.

VOTE: Yes: Mark Jones, Barry Wallett, Leo Mercado
No: Herb Arico, Erika Wiecenski, Michelle Cunningham,
Ann Grosjean
Motion Failed

MOTION: by Herb Arico to nominate Mark Jones for Board Secretary.

VOTE: Yes: Herb Arico, Erika Wiecenski, Michelle Cunningham,
 Ann Grosjean, Barry Wallett, Leo Mercado
 Abstain: Mark Jones

Motion Passed

Board discussed and determined Board of Education sub-committee members and chairs.

Superintendent Harding reviewed the budget process stating he will present to the Board on January 14, 2014 at the regular meeting and at this time it is around \$146,000 less than last year but he is still working on the exact numbers.

Board scheduled budget workshops for January 21, 2014, January 28, 2014 and February 4, 2014.

Board discussed the meeting calendar for the 2014 calendar year.

MOTION: by Michelle Cunningham, seconded by Herb Arico to approve the Board of Education meeting calendar for 2014 as presented.

VOTE: Yes: Herb Arico, Barry Wallett, Mark Jones, Erika Wiecenski,
 Michelle Cunningham, Ann Grosjean
 Abstain: Leo Mercado

Motion Passed

MOTION: by Herb Arico, seconded by Erika Wiecenski, to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2013 Board meeting.

VOTE: Yes: Herb Arico, Mark Jones, Erika Wiecenski, Barry Wallett,
 Leo Mercado
 Abstain: Ann Grosjean, Michelle Cunningham

Motion Passed

Board discussed the capital improvement projects with Superintendent Harding stating he met with the CIP Committee yesterday. He presented a grid of items listing the year projected to do the work, priority and costs to the Board. This list he refers to and reviews periodically with Head Custodian, Ron Strong, to keep advised of all the necessary projects and he gives a copy to the CIP committee as well. He reviewed the projects listed of paving and step work at Center, chip sealing lots, roof replacement at Center, and the HMS roof section repairs needed.

He explained that historically there were technology funds and \$10,000 for paint and carpet included in the CIP but those items came out and were put in the regular BOE budget and this will be the second year for those line items now. Therefore items needed such as carpet, windows, water fountain, and doors at CES will be covered from the regular budget and not CIP so when sit with the committee the list will show that only the more legitimate capital projects are for CIP. He also explained the Board only approves to send the listed items to CIP then CIP approves and prioritizes the projects.

Superintendent discussed the Siemens work is mostly complete with a walk through to take place still. He explained there is \$54,000 in money for the boilers and Ron Strong is requesting a new boiler for CES because there is not a backup. He stated he can save 40% and would need an additional \$20,000. Superintendent spoke with First Selectman, Christina Mailhos and to Siemens, Siemens said if you can save 40% then it would be worthwhile. The project should be contained under Siemens and not as a CIP project. It would be a town item and needs approval from the First Selectman, then if ok to the Board. We would want a guarantee from Siemens that it would not change the costs or the parameters of the agreement in place.

MOTION: by Erika Wiecenski, seconded by Herb Arico to approve the four CIP projects as presented.

VOTE: All in Favor
Motion Passed

OLD BUSINESS:

Wilmington Public Schools Enrollment Projection topic was discussed. Superintendent Harding gave the proposed estimation breakdown in savings on consolidation of the two schools. Consolidation would eliminate one nurse, two secretaries, two custodial staff, one .6 certified unified arts position, one certified support teacher, one administrator, one bus, would reduce the costs of electrical, heat, water, disposal services, dumpsters and possibly liability insurance and other staffing. Total estimation is approximately \$600,000 to \$700,000 and possibly more depending on programs, class sizes and remediation etc.

Board discussed whether \$700,000 is enough of a savings to warrant the change. They discussed that the per-pupil expenditure would still not be greatly reduced. Superintendent Harding mentioned that if you tuition out all students and close both schools then you could save approximately four million dollars.

Barry Wallett stated there is a constant threat for regionalization if we do not remain prudent as we have been in the past.

Superintendent stated it is good to explore all the options and then when it is budget time and the community and town boards ask questions the Board is able to answer them and state that we could save about three quarter of a million dollars by consolidating.

Mark Jones stated that as we go along the per-pupil cost goes up if you don't do the consolidation.

Board discussed how long it would take to complete the consolidation, retro of one school to accommodate all students and costs to do that.

Superintendent discussed that some of the savings will occur whether the consolidation takes place or not such as the positions that have retired that will not be renewed and other changes that will occur over the next few years due to the smaller enrollment numbers. He explained the potential of the per-pupil expenditure to increase even if the budget decreases and the dilemma faced if more students enroll then the budget increases as well.

Barry Wallett stated the Board needs to think about the competition and that if the State decides we are not efficient enough, would the community support and speak out to say we like it this way and it is efficient?

Board discussed the layout of Hall School, how many classrooms, the ability to have all students in that one building, how many years needed to be able to consolidate, the amount of homerooms per grade in the next few years, and unused building reverting to the town. Mentioned being cognizant of when people retire in the future to not replace the positions when possible so that people are not as affected when changes are needed for a consolidation. Spoke about the empty rooms as a potential opportunity for a revenue generating program to be explored.

Board requested a proposed layout of the classrooms if the schools were consolidated at HMS. Superintendent Harding will assemble the information for the Board.

PRESENT TO SPEAK:

None

BOARD COMMENTS:

Barry Wallett commented that he was disappointed in the Board members choice to appoint all the officers of the same party affiliation (Democrat). He stated it has never been that way in the past and it should be split up.

Leo Mercado commented that he echoes Barry's statement and is not happy with the members commandeering the positions.

Mark Jones commented that the selection was not done intentionally and that the Board has always operated in a non-partisan way. He believes it was not done as a party thing and apologized for not paying attention to who it was in the past.

Board welcomed Ann Grosjean who stated she was sorry she was late and was glad to be there and also thanked the Board for sending her to the CAFE training today stating the new perspectives she gained on the Common Core were different to hear and lots of the reasons she left the classroom for are coming back around.

Herb Arico questioned the use of the new parking lot at Center with Superintendent Harding explaining it was for parents not for the buses and that it is being utilized quite well as intended.

Erika Wicinski informed the Board of the passing of a longtime teacher in Willington, Maureen Jendrucek.

Board commented that they are looking forward to the budget season, the Shakespeare play at HMS was great, the sound quality was better with the new speakers and informed of the upcoming band and chorus concerts this Wednesday and Thursday at HMS.

Meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Nichole Page
Recording Secretary