

WILLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2014
(Unofficial Until Board Approval)

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Vice Chairman Michelle Cunningham at the Town Office Building.

PRESENT: Michelle Cunningham, Ann Grosjean, Mark Jones, Barry Wallett
Herb Arico, Leo Mercado, Superintendent David Harding

ABSENT: Erika Wiecenski

MOTION: by Herb Arico, seconded by Leo Mercado, to move Presentation Item 5 before Communications Item 2 on the Agenda.

VOTE: All in Favor
Motion Passed

PRESENTATION:

Superintendent Harding introduced Joe Townsley from the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) to speak about his experiences with other districts in addressing the issue of declining enrollment. Joe gave the Board a copy of his resume and listed some of the many districts he has worked with over the years to open new schools, consolidate multiple schools, to close schools and to work with regional districts to open joint schools. Joe discussed different ideas with the Board including legislation surrounding building a new school or combining two schools into one existing building. He made recommendations on items and a list of questions the Board should ask as they research the options available. He discussed the issues the community will consider along with the emotions of it, marketing the schools to the community and others to draw people to the town. Partnering with other towns for shared resources, exploring and questioning the data sources and projection numbers and the per pupil costs and strategic school profiles.

The Board members asked questions and discussed with Joe topics regarding MBR, per pupil costs, marketing the school and other districts with similar situations.

The Board thanked Joe for coming to the meeting and giving his advice and information.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Superintendent Harding reviewed the report from Milliman regarding the unfunded liabilities. He has some questions and does not agree with all the assumptions in the report and would like for the company to come in and do a presentation to the Board to explain it fully. The report shows the liability went from \$2,300,000 to \$1,075,000 just from the change due to the teachers changing to the HSA. Superintendent would also like the BOF and BOS to attend the presentation and would like for the meeting to be held before the budget process begins. He will send copies of the report to the Board members for review before the presentation.

BOE Chairman Erika Wiecenski communicated with Superintendent Harding prior to the meeting to mention the April 2015 meeting falls during the school vacation and could possibly need a date change.

PRESENT TO SPEAK:

None

SUPERINTENDENT REPORTS:

Superintendent Harding stated all his items are on the agenda already.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance Committee met and reviewed the bills.

Herb Arico, Liaison for EastConn stated they met on October 28, 2014 and discussed the magnet school assistance program held at Quinnipiac College stating it has been fairly successful with 155 students in the program. The program is for special needs students that don't function in the regular high school setting. Most students adjust well and are only accepted if expected to succeed. They also discussed the evaluation process of staff with 2% developing which have difficulty and receive help, 92% proficient and a small percent of exemplary.

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Herb Arico, seconded by Ann Grosjean, to approve the minutes of the October 14, 2014 Board meeting.

VOTE: All in Favor
Motion Passed

Superintendent Harding requested a single transfer to cover an ongoing legal issue. He would like to transfer \$25,000 from the regular transportation account (which is a reduction of the half bus) to the BOE purchased services, legal account.

MOTION: by Mark Jones, seconded by Barry Wallett, to transfer \$25,000 from the transportation account to BOE purchase services account as requested.

VOTE: All in Favor
Motion Passed

Board discussed the proposed calendar of meetings for 2015-16 deciding to wait to make any changes to the April meeting date until it is closer to that time.

MOTION: by Ann Grosjean, seconded by Michelle Cunningham, to approve the Willington Board of Education 2015-16 Calendar of Meetings.

VOTE: All in Favor
Motion Passed

Superintendent Harding asked for members to serve on the committee for Willington Educational Support Staff contract negotiations. The negotiations need to be completed by 7/1/15. He informed the Board that Nichole Page and Darren Duchaineau are the new Co-Presidents of the WESS union. He explained the process and members Ann Grosjean, Mark Jones and Herb Arico volunteered to serve on the committee.

Superintendent Harding explained he had received the report from CREC on our facilities and needs to be reviewed by the facilities committee to discuss the options. The committee will bring any proposals or recommendations to the Board in December. Superintendent will have Brenda Weber contact the committee members to set a date for the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

Superintendent Harding asked for feedback on the Edgenuity information stating Holly McCarthy said the courses were a little dry and the presentation was unexciting. She stated the courses could meet the needs for a small percentage of the population that might be homeschooled or tutored. Phil Stevens agreed it would serve a small percentage of the population. Member Mark Jones agreed there was a dry part, lecture covered standards for math but not the practices at all. Common Core is something that is important but he would be bored to take the course.

Superintendent stated this year would be tough financially to enroll in the courses. It could be a possibility to purchase a few seats in a couple years. Members made suggestions and Superintendent stated it is an item that could be used to market the schools as well.

PRESENT TO SPEAK:

None

BOARD COMMENTS:

Board thanked Superintendent for having the CREC presentation stating it was an excellent presentation that will give guidance to the Board.

Members asked if Joe could return in the future if the Board has other points to discuss with him. Superintendent responded yes, Joe is available and can return. He explained that he has been working on the presentation from the retreat but there is so much information that is available and you cannot have an Infinite number of slides.

Board stated they are looking forward to the Milliman presentation and the UConn presentation and encourage members from the BOF and BOS to attend both. Superintendent stated he will invite the other boards to the presentations and include the Economic Development Committee to attend the UConn one. He stated the meetings may be held at Hall School Library.

Board stated the Hall School Shakespeare play performance is on November 21 at 7pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Nichole Page
Recording Secretary