

WILLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 13, 2014
(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, Leo Mercado, Michelle Cunningham, Ann Grosjean, Barry Wallett, Herb Arico, Superintendent David Harding, Mark Jones (arrived at 7:04)

ABSENT: None

MOTION: by Erika Wiecenski, seconded by Michelle Cunningham, to move agenda item C. CES Boiler Update under Old Business to after Present to Speak.

VOTE: All in Favor
Motion Passed

MOTION: by Erika Wiecenski, seconded by Michelle Cunningham, to add agenda item E. Roof Final Plans and Cost Approval under New Business.

VOTE: All in Favor
Motion Passed

COMMUNICATIONS:

Superintendent mentioned the letter received by Chairman Wiecenski from CABA about the annual membership renewal and the cost.

PRESENT TO SPEAK:

None

OLD BUSINESS:

Superintendent Harding recounted the issue of the request to replace the boiler at Center School instead of refurbishing. Head Custodian, Ron Strong was present to answer questions and informed the Board that the \$19,000 per boiler was to replace gaskets and burners for the upgrade and that there had already been 18 steam traps installed at CES. Originally it was thought that we could go from steam to hot water to save on oil.

The boiler at CES has 3 sections leaking. It is very old and would cost about \$26 - \$27,000 to rebuild the furnace. Mr. Strong received three quotes with the lowest at \$40,000 for a new boiler including removal of the old one. He noted currently it operates on a constant temperature but the new system would operate on demand, with zones, which should save money.

Siemens has approved doing either a refurbish or replacement of the boiler with the money that has been allocated for the project already. There is \$53,000 in the account for the boiler project if we replace the one at CES there would be \$13,000 left for any repairs or refurbishing needed for the boilers at HMS. A refurbish is about \$19,000 for one of the HMS boilers. Superintendent Harding confirmed with First Selectman, Christina Mailhos, who was also present at the meeting that the funds for the project can be used in this manner.

Board members reviewed and asked questions regarding the quotes for the replacement boiler. Discussed age of pipes being 50 years old and risk of bursting if went with hot water, all companies agree on same set up proposed, discussed warranty being firmed up prior to acceptance, removal and disposal of old boiler included in quote, same boiler model quoted, and have until November to complete.

MOTION: by Michelle Cunningham, seconded by Erika Wiczenski, to change the plan from refurbishing three boilers to replacing one boiler at Center School.

VOTE: All in Favor
Motion Passed

SUPERINTENDENT REPORTS:

Superintendent Harding informed the Board that he was in the process of trying to get the curriculum on the school website by looking to put a link to our server as opposed to creating PDF's out of all the documents. Once he has the technical cooperation needed to complete this, it will be done. Superintendent will notify the Board once it is completed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance Committee met and reviewed the bills.

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Herb Arico, seconded by Michelle Cunningham, to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2014 Special Board meeting.

VOTE: All in Favor
Motion Passed

MOTION: by Erika Wiczenski, seconded by Ann Grosjean, to approve the minutes of the May 5, 2014 Special Board meeting.

VOTE: All in Favor
Motion Passed

Superintendent Harding informed the Board that he received two additional retirements since the last meeting from the seventh grade language arts teacher, Marianne O'Connell and special education teacher, Sue Wright. Both teachers have been with Willington for a long time and have done a great job. They both will need to be replaced. A reception for all the retiring staff will be held immediately before the June meeting.

The Board wishes the teachers good luck and thanks them for their service.

Superintendent explained the transfer requests proposed to enable payment for the two out of district placements that arose after budget season.

The first transfer is for different items to be prepaid out of this year's budget to free up \$95,000 of the funds in next year's budget.

The total needed is \$155,000. With the two new retirements that came in there should also be a savings when hiring a new teacher of about \$35,000 each.

There will be a savings in the health insurance because it was estimated at 9% but came in at 5.5% for a savings of \$36,000.

The next transfer request is from salaries for unpaid salary time such as sick time for extended maternity leave and for the grade K teacher that was not hired but was budgeted for. These funds will be transferred to CIP to cover the cost of the non-reimbursement amount for the Center School roof project for \$42,000.00.

Another transfer is within the Special Education Departments Budget for the out of district placements. Money was saved on transportation and moved to tuition along with the excess cost money to pay for the out of district placement amounts of \$19,000 for this year.

The final transfer the Superintendent is hoping to find the money to help with the incredible difficulties with the Information Technology technical support and infrastructure for all three buildings (Town Office Building, Hall Memorial School and Center Elementary School). The email issues; agendas not getting posted, messages not going through, are among other issues that the departments are experiencing. When these issues arise the work stops. Superintendent reviewed the issues regarding the system growing to a point where not all of it is working properly now. Servers need to be partitioned, switches are needed and climate control rooms for servers. The system needs to be built in a proper way to get things working. First Selectman, Christina Mailhos, spoke about previously hiring someone for 4 hours a week that was highly recommended, this person did what he could but there was too much for him to do and issues arose with him and the IT person not seeing eye to eye on things.

Superintendent Harding stated he hired a company in December to do network assessment on the strengths and weaknesses. The report given stated the Willington Information Technology department was understaffed, and lacking support causing some inefficiencies. EastConn came out and the tech team met and contracted a person for 5 days to help with hardware and software issues. He also had a company from Rhode Island come in to evaluate the system this week. Superintendent spoke about not hiring another person but instead contracting for network support service. The advantages would be not having a single point of failure with only one person having the knowledge of all the systems, passwords and information to provide service. This way if you have a problem with the network the network person would come out, if you have a software issue then the software person helps. You would have experts in each area to assist as needed. He would like to try this for one year and at the end of the year evaluate if it is a good way to go or if it is better to hire someone.

Board discussed the payment of this contracted service and if the town would put in part of the funding. First Selectman Mailhos stated she has about \$3,-4,000.00 built up toward this to contribute and would be willing if needed to go to the Board of Finance for additional funding. Superintendent stated the original \$21,000 that was being considered for the boilers could go toward the beginnings of a contract and he would look in to funding the rest once he finds out pricing from the company. He would like to look in to getting a quote for a purchased service agreement either for an annual amount or a block of hours.

Member Barry Wallett mentioned a company out of Hartford called TAB Computers that he recommended the Superintendent to contact for additional quotes. Superintendent stated he has three companies and is in the process of getting the numbers and will look into the TAB Company as well. Members agreed that it is important not to have a single point of failure, to have the money to help solve the current problems and to look toward future plans.

Superintendent Harding discussed the issue of the iPads in the upper grades mentioning the type of usage at Center School versus Hall School with the iPads. At Center School, the iPads are a school product without games, not brought home, but used in innovative ways, for differentiated instruction and small groups. We need to consider if we should rethink the 1-1 or if we should convert to ThinkPads or Chromebooks. This is a bigger conversation that is needed. The

administration has been discussing this and some possible policy changes regarding the freedom of allowing games and other items to be utilized on the iPads.

Superintendent stated the issues of needing testing online, state reporting online, email, etc. are all still issues that do not negate the need for technical support but while these repairs are made and the companies available we need to engage in conversations about what should happen and what is needed.

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

VOTE: All in Favor
Motion Passed

Superintendent informed the Board of the progress of the Center School roof repair project. The project is moving forward as planned but it cannot go out to bid until the State gives the green light. Need to submit copies of the book and the ED042 sign off sheet saying that the Board of education, the school committee, the building committee, fire marshal and local 504 all approved with signatures. The date of the approval cannot be prior to the date of the book.

He stated that First Selectman, Christina Mailhos, has partnered with CROG which is a CREC service organization with 41 towns. This service offers bid prices with state vendors that have set prices by square feet for projects, and once approved by the State we can participate with CROG to get prices by approved contractors. If those prices are not agreeable then still have option to go out to bid. He explained that CROG gets good pricing because of the volume of contracting and purchasing power.

MOTION: by Erika Wiecenski, seconded by Herb Arico to approve the final plans and cost Estimates for the Center School Roof Project.

VOTE: All in Favor
Motion Passed

Board thanked Aaron Krueger and Superintendent Harding for all their work on the project.

OLD BUSINESS:

Superintendent Harding reported that the Kindergarten enrollment is now down to 36.

Superintendent mentioned the pilot breakfast program will take place over the next two weeks. The survey went out to see how many would participate but only received 55 responses to the survey and only about half of those stated they would participate. It is a small sample. The administration will monitor and report on the data and give feedback to the Board.

Superintendent will send members the information before the meeting so they have a chance to review the data.

Superintendent updated on the iPad initiative stating the insurance company said they will need the serial number and name of owner once the parents buy the current grade 8 iPads. A date needs to be set to have the parents come in to sign the forms and pay for the iPads. This needs to be done so that it is not a last minute item. Members asked to be sure the serial numbers are verified and rechecked along with the paperwork signed so that there are not any questions as to who owns the iPad and paperwork is set for future auditing.

PRESENT TO SPEAK:

None

BOARD COMMENTS:

Members commented on the telephone notification system being used to notify parents of the Internet Safety Concepts presentation last week wanting to be sure that is an appropriate use of the system. Superintendent and other members responded that with the short notice of the presentation wanted to ensure parents knew about this opportunity especially since there had been some recent issues relating to the topics that were to be discussed by the presenter. The feedback on the presentation was very positive with about 30 parents in attendance and happy to have the opportunity for the presentation. The administration would like to hold the presentation again in the fall so even more parents could attend.

Members commented that it is great the Superintendent is looking ahead with the technology and that he has always been in the forefront with regards to technology.

Board reminded that the FOI meeting for all of the boards is on May 28, 2014 at the library at 6:30pm, stated the SBAC testing seems to have gone off without any major issues and the baseball and softball season is in full swing.

MOTION: by Erika Wiczenski, seconded by Michelle Cunningham to enter executive session at 8:29 p.m. to discuss the Superintendent's evaluation and to invite Superintendent Harding to join.

VOTE: All in Favor
Motion Passed

Board Exited Executive Session at 8:45 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Nichole Page
Recording Secretary