

Board of Education

Regional District 13

March 23, 2011

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, March 23, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. in the library at Strong School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Currllin, Mrs. Flanagan, Ms. Gara, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochtterski, and Ms. Parsons. Also present: Mrs. Viccaro and Mr. Melnik.

Mr. Hennick called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

Public Comment: Jeremy Renninghoff, of Middlefield accused the Board of fear mongering when the Board stated at the last meeting that 40 teachers could potentially be laid off. Mr. Renninghoff said it was just a ploy to get parents out to vote and save the teachers. Mr. Hennick responded by saying he thought it was inappropriate of Mr. Renninghoff to accuse the Board of using scare tactics. He also stated that the Board was following the law by issuing norenewal notices when they are unsure of what the budget bottom line figure will be.

Teresa Opalacz of Durham stated that for as many years as she has been trying to influence parents to get out and vote, she has not had much luck. Ms. Opalacz also said she was in favor of bus scheduling changes and Pay to Play but that she did not support an increase in class size.

Melissa Lesniak of Durham said she was against teacher cuts but in favor of the bus scheduling changes.

Jennifer Wells DiPentima of Durham said she was against the bus scheduling changes. She also said that the 40 layoff notices concerned her. Mrs. Wells DiPentima asked if the District was planning to go out to bid on insurance. Mr. Melnik responded by saying that the District has gone out to bid the last 3 years and did not this year. The increase this year was actually minimal considering 5% was structural.

Scott Wheeler of Middlefield said that he was for the budget and against teacher downsizing. He asked why the water system at Brewster hasn't been completed. Mr. Melnik responded by saying the project was unfortunately delayed but that the work will begin tomorrow.

Next Board Meeting: The next meeting of the Board of Education will be held on April 6, 2011 at Cuginchaug Regional High School. Board of Education Meeting will begin at 7:30 pm in the Library and the Public Hearing on 2011-12 Education Budget will begin at 8:00 pm in the auditorium.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second by Mr. Currllin, the agenda was unanimously approved.

On a motion by Mrs. Flanagan, second by Mrs. Golschneider, the minutes to the meeting of March 16, 2011 was unanimously approved.

Communications: Mrs. Flanagan said she received an article regarding the Merit Pay for Teachers program that was passed in Florida.

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Viccaro read a letter from CL&P regarding the Live Green – Win Green contest that Cuginchaug Regional High School entered. The Live Green – Win Green contest encourages students to consider projects to make their schools more environmentally friendly. She said contest winners will receive a \$20,000.00 grant from CL&P and that Cuginchaug was currently in 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Mrs. Viccaro encouraged everyone to vote at [www.clpenvironments.com/LiveGreenWinGreen.php](http://www.clpenvironments.com/LiveGreenWinGreen.php).

Mrs. Viccaro said that the documentary "Race to Nowhere" will be shown at Cuginchaug on April 25, 2011. The documentary focuses on the pressures on today's students. Tickets will be \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door.

Mrs. Viccaro congratulated 6<sup>th</sup> grader Matt Malek for having his review of "World's End" by Jake Halpern added to the book review page by the author.

Mrs. Viccaro said that CAPT and CMT's were completed last week and now only make ups were taking place.

Mrs. Viccaro asked everyone to attend the Memorial Middle School Ensemble Night at Coginchaug on March 29<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm.

Mrs. Viccaro invited everyone to attend the John Lyman Elementary Production of Willy Wonka, Jr. at Coginchaug on April 1st at 7:00 pm and April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 2 pm and 6 pm.

Mrs. Viccaro clarified that 15 not 40 teachers received non renewal notices. As she stated last week after she consulted with legal counsel, it was determined that teachers in shortage areas would not receive non renewal notices. Mrs. Viccaro said that the District was required by law to issue non renewal notices by April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Business Manager's Report: Mr. Melnik discussed the 3 year electric contract with Constellation Energy that is due to expire in December of 2012. He said that the District is part of a 15 town consortium and that Constellation Energy has asked to extend our contract for another 2 years to December of 2014. The rate would be decreased from \$.9735 to \$.8579 beginning in January 2013 and would save the District \$37,346.00. Mr. Melnik said he would need to let them know by next Tuesday if the District was interested in the extension. Mrs. Golschneider asked about the solar panels at Memorial and if the District would have the ability to sell back any unused energy. Mr. Melnik said that Shipman & Goodwin was working on language that will be worked into the contract with regards to the solar energy sell back.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second by Mrs. Golschneider, the Board of Education unanimously approved to extended the electrical contract to December, 2014.

2011-2012 Regional School District 13 Budget: Mrs. Viccaro said they were able to come up with an additional \$190,917.00 in cuts bringing the budget expense line to .75% with a net budget increase of 3.98%. The following changes were made:

- \$30,000 increase in revenue from Middlesex Transition Academy
- \$27,185 decrease in Health Insurance rate
- \$12,000 headcount decrease in Health Insurance
- \$46,659 Salary reduction of 1 nurse
- \$18,000 Salary reduction of 1 support staff
- \$5,000 Reduction of overtime
- \$7,000 Salary benefit reduction
- \$32,073 Supplies reduction
- \$13,000 decrease of Special Education expense

Mrs. Viccaro spoke about the MTA program at Wesleyan and how it has continued to grow over the years. She said that MTA, a continuing education program for special education students 18-21, currently has 11 students but is likely to have 18 students next year. Several Board members asked for MTA to do a presentation next year so they can have a better understanding of how the program works.

Mr. Hauser, Mr. Nicol and Mrs. Sinder spoke about the impact of sharing a nurse between the 3 schools and said that they will make it work. Mrs. Viccaro said the principals can administer medication.

On a Motion by Mr. Hicks, second by Mrs. Golschneider the Board of Education unanimously moved to go to the Public Hearing on the 2011-12 education budget on April 6, 2011 with a total gross Regional District 13 budget of \$ 34,952,565.00.

On a Motion by Mr. Hicks, second by Mr. Currlin the Board of Education unanimously moved to hold a referendum on May 3, 2011 on the proposed 2011-12 Regional District 13 education budget to be preceded by a District Meeting to be held on May 2, 2011.

Committee Reports:

Long Range Planning Committee: Mrs. Flanagan said that the Long Range Planning Committee met tonight and that their presentation will be ready for the Budget Hearing.

Communications Committee: Mrs. Boyle shared the results of the school budget survey that was put on the District web site last week. 407 people took the survey. 215 responders felt the budget should not be cut; 18 felt that an additional \$100,000.00 should be cut from the budget; 58 felt that an additional \$330,000.00 should be cut from the budget and 58 felt that an additional \$500,000.00 should be cut from the budget. She said 129 responders left their comments and that the committee will be reviewing them. Mrs. Boyle was very happy by the amount of people who took the time to take the survey.

On a motion by Mrs. Adams, second Mrs. Golschneider the Board of Education moved into Executive Session to discuss Teacher Non-renewals.

They moved back into regular session.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Golschneider the Board of Education unanimously moved that the contract of employment of Angela Dominello, Steven Fitzgerald, Amy Jacques-Purdy, Michelle McClintick, Douglas Frasier, Courtney Driesch, Jeffrey Bernabeo, Maura Caramanello, Matthew Thompson, Rachel Mann, Nathan Fisher, Cassandra Montepara, Jo Ann Pantalena, Kirsten Beers and Jessica Biancardi not be renewed for the following year upon its expiration at the end of the 2010-2011 school year, and that the Superintendent of Schools is directed to advise such person(s) in writing of this action.

On a motion by Mr. Currin, second Mrs. Golschneider the Board of Education unanimously approved to adjourn at 9:05 pm.

*Virginia Antonelli*