

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, May 11, 2011 in the cafeteria at John Lyman School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Flanagan, Ms. Gara, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons. Member absent: Mr. Currilin. Also present: Mr. Melnik, Mrs. Viccaro.

Mr. Hennick called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

Mr. Hennick commented that the Board was thrown two "curveballs" this week. First with the failure of the budget that the Board thought was very reasonable and then with the failure to reelect two sitting Board members. Mr. Hennick congratulated Mr. Fulton and Mr. Renninghoff for their election to the Board of Education and said the Board will sadly miss the contributions of Mr. Currilin and Mrs. Golschneider.

Public Comment: Al Palmieri of Middlefield shared a chart of the salaries of principals pay rates across Connecticut. He highlighted the school districts where principals salaries are less than in District 13. He feels the salaries can be cut.

Donia Viola of Durham congratulated the newly elected members to the Board of Education. She hopes that the Board is able to find substantial cuts in the budget before returning it to another vote. Mrs. Viola asked for an explanation of the \$500,000 in the capital fund for culvert work on Pickett Lane. Mr. Melnik explained that the culvert between Allyn Brook Park and Strong School is being repaired with money from a grant received by the Town of Durham but the other culvert near Korn School is going to need to be replaced in the near future. The \$500,000 is an estimate from an engineering firm for that work.

Jennifer DiPentima, a Lyman parent asked that the Board not reduce the budget by a lot. She does not feel that a loss by 80 votes signifies that people want to see major cuts.

Karen Meiman, a CRHS parent has heard that the math curriculum may be changed with reductions at the high school. She is concerned that there will not be enough electives for students to select if a course is eliminated. Mrs. Viccaro said this possible reduction will be discussed later in the meeting and more information will be given then.

Next Board Meeting: The next meeting of the Board of Education will be a Special Meeting and will be held on May 23, 2011 at Memorial Middle School. The District Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 25, 2011, followed by the referendum on May 26, 2011.

Approval of Agenda: Mr. Hennick suggested eliminating the discussion of the Strategic Plan Updates and the 2011-2012 District Goals until the next meeting.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Golschneider, the Board of Education unanimously approved the agenda as amended.

Mr. Hicks made a motion, second Mrs. Golschnider to approve the minutes to the meeting of April 27, 2011 as amended. Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Flanagan, Mr. Hennick, Ms. Gara, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons voted yes. Mrs. Adams abstained.

Communications: Mrs. Flanagan heard from a parent whose child's teacher received a notice of non-renewal. It was clear to her that the teacher was talking to the Memorial School age students about the notice. She wants it to be clear that the Board does not support this information being communicated to the students.

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Viccaro said the District has the opportunity to keep the "Race to Nowhere" film for a while longer. The students would like to show it to the student body and have the Board of Education act as the panel. Board members were willing and a tentative date is scheduled for June 8th (mid-morning). Ninth thru eleventh graders will view the film.

Mrs. Boyle suggested that 8th graders be allowed to come up to the high school to view the film. Dr. Nicols said he will look at the date and talk about the possibility with his staff.

Mrs. Viccaro said Brewster School hosted the author, Darryl Cobb and he created a book called Do Pirates Go To Brewster School? Mrs. Heckler said the author spent two days at the school conducting writing workshops. The students were highly involved in the activity.

Mrs. Viccaro received a memo today from Robert Lucco, of the State Bureau of Student Assessment, regarding CAPT and CMT testing becoming computer based by 2014-15. Our District does not have enough computers for all students to take the tests on-line. A pilot program is being conducted on a math portion of the exams this spring.

Mrs. Viccaro met with three students from the high school last week regarding the planning of the first "Cog Fest". Cog Fest will be a combination field day and talent show. The students were very organized and the plans are very detailed. They have the support of the high school administration and the staff. The date has been set for June 2, 2011.

Mrs. Golschneider is concerned that because of the number of snow days there will not be enough instructional time at the end of the year and now there will be one less instructional day. Mr. Hauser said teachers will be asked to address this concern. Mrs. Golschneider asked if having the event on a Saturday was considered. Mrs. Viccaro said teachers have offered to help with the event and that would not happen if it is on a Saturday. Mrs. Boyle said the seniors are anxious to be able to use the new track facility before they graduate.

Mrs. Viccaro attended the Teacher of the Year Reception for Phil Moriarty at John Lyman School yesterday. It was a very well attended and a nicely done event.

Mrs. Viccaro attended the CRHS Instrumental Night this week. Mr. Coutsouridis played a tape of the senior class as a freshman band and then they performed the same song. It was amazing to see their progress.

Mrs. Viccaro acknowledged National School Nurses' Day. She appreciates the efforts of all of our school nurses.

Mrs. Viccaro said there is a grade 5-12 art exhibit currently on display at the Durham Public Library.

Mrs. Viccaro attended a meeting with Frank Sumptner, Director of the Middletown YMCA. The YMCA would like to do more outreach to the communities outside of Middletown. They are looking at ways to provide more services to our towns and asked what our areas of need may be.

Sharon Berndt's Second Grade Overnight Camp-out: On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Boyle, the Board of Education unanimously approved the request for Sharon Berndt's second grade to camp out at John Lyman School on June 17, 2011.

2011-2012 Budget: A handout was distributed to the Board members on potential additional reductions that were developed by the administrative team when they met this week. Mrs. Viccaro said an estimated \$15,000 in electricity savings is being estimated due to the installation of solar panels and other energy saving measures at the schools. The art teacher

at the high school has asked that her position be reduced to a .6 position. By granting this and hiring someone for the remaining portion of the position at a Step 1 Bachelor's level they will be able to save \$12,500.

Mrs. Viccaro discussed the plan to not fill the math position vacated this year. They are looking to reduce Algebra 1 from a 1 ½ credit course to a 1 credit course. Two teachers would have to pick up a one class overage for this plan to work. The \$63,303 reduction takes the current salary, benefits and the overages into account. Mrs. Viccaro said she has discussed this plan with Mr. Hauser and the high school math department chair and they think they can make it work. We are currently the only school in the shoreline that has 1 ½ credits for Algebra 1.

The remainder of the Capital Fund for next year, \$92,000, has been eliminated. Athletic supplies at CRHS have been reduced by \$4,000, general supplies at CRHS by \$6,750 and they are proposing an increase in the fee for student parking from \$25.00 to \$50.00.

Mrs. Golschneider asked about the math position. She is concerned about the impact on test scores and if the students will have enough math credits to meet the graduation requirements. Mr. Hauser said students need 3 credits of math to graduate and they usually have 3 ½ or more. She also asked if the cuts to the high school will effect the NEASC evaluation. Mrs. Viccaro said she focused at the high school because she did not want to reduce staffing at the elementary level.

Mr. Hennick asked if reducing the Algebra requirement has been on the table or if it is just being discussed because of the budget. He also asked why our curriculum looks different than everyone else on the shoreline. Mrs. Viccaro said some of the curriculum still has to come out. They will spend time this summer reviewing the curriculum and comparing ours to the area schools with 1 credit.

Mrs. Golschneider is concerned about the cut because she remembers that the ½ credit was added because we could not cover the curriculum in one year.

Mrs. Luckenbach explained that the decision to go to 1 ½ credits was made when block scheduling began. At the time they were using the Math Connections curriculum that was very reading intensive. They are using a very different math book now. She does have some concerns about what will be cut from the curriculum. The State just released course expectations and if everything goes through there will be an exit test for the course. She said they will look at the course expectations side-by-side with the curriculum when determining what to eliminate.

Mr. Hauser said there are some electives that students will be able to select but they may have to open up the enrollment numbers to accommodate more students. Mrs. Golschneider does not want students to end up in additional study halls.

Mrs. Flanagan does not like the proposal. They do not have enough information to know the impact and algebra is too important. She supports looking at it for next year.

Dr. Ochterski disagrees, we would be matching the standard and if we don't move now we will be looking at a lay-off next year.

Mrs. Flanagan questioned the amount budgeted for stipends. With the teachers contact being flat (0% and no step increases) she does not understand why there is any increase in the budget for stipends. Mr. Melnik said there was no discussion about the stipends during negotiations. Mrs. Flanagan also questioned the increase in the amount for WISE mentors. Mr. Hauser said this year there were more students participating in WISE than ever before (18)

and they increased the budget to reflect the interest. Mrs. Flanagan asked if it is possible to limit the number of students participating in WISE. Mr. Melnik feels that he needs to get an answer regarding the stipend issue before making the cut.

Ms. Gara asked if the other shoreline schools have block scheduling or if the students have algebra every day. She also asked if we could hold off hiring the new IT person. She would rather cut that than algebra. Mr. Hennick said we would have to go back to using subcontractors and that is more expensive.

Mrs. Flanagan questioned the \$41.00 per hour paid for tech support. She feels it can be done for a lot less per hour.

Mrs. Adams asked if anything can be saved from the professional development account. Mrs. Viccaro said only \$30,000 is spent across the District on professional development.

Mrs. Adams asked if we can save money by eliminating a bus. Mr. Melnik said the busses are part of a lease so it wouldn't be the actual bus but the savings would be in the driver and the fuel. He estimated that it would be about \$40,000 but it will be a "leap of faith" that the District can make this happen as the study has not been finalized. It is dangerous to put a final figure to it until complete.

Mrs. Flanagan questioned how they can be willing to make a cut to algebra and not be willing to do this. It will have much less impact on education and it was supported in the survey.

Mr. Melnik said it can be done but it will require some changes in service. He said a lot of work has gone into this and he expects to have some answers within a couple of weeks. He is convinced there will be savings.

Mrs. Golschneider asked if there could be savings from shutting down a couple of schools in the evenings. As most all of the schools are very well used by schools functions and community groups this does not seem possible.

Mrs. Boyle asked if the summer custodial help is still in the budget. Mrs. Viccaro said it is because there is a lot that has to be done during the summer.

Mr. Hicks asked why the nursing position is not back on the table as a proposed cut. Mrs. Viccaro said she did not propose it based on the unanimous vote by the Board after the last discussion. Dr. Ochterski agreed with Mr. Hicks that it should be looked at again.

Ms. Gara said the Board did not have significant information when the initial plan was presented. There is not a plan in place to safeguard the students. Mrs. Boyle and Mrs. Flanagan agreed that there is too much risk.

Mrs. Adams asked if there are any savings in the cafeterias. Mr. Melnik said the cafeteria has a zero based budget.

Mr. Hicks asked why the 6th grade contemporary classes have not been considered for a staffing cut. They would still be below the class size policy even if a class was cut. Mrs. Luckenbach explained that 6th grade contemporary is departmentalized. The teachers are certified in specific areas. It would become a certification issue if we cut a section at this level. Mr. Brough said instruction would be impacted, they teach on a subject model and if they remove a section a subject would be impacted. Mr. Hicks feels that this should be investigated further to see what certification the teachers hold and to see if they can receive cross-certification if necessary. If people are moved around he feels it can be achieved.

Dr. Ochterski is concerned that through fear they are throwing out the administrative recommendations such as the nursing cut and the change to algebra.

Mrs. Flanagan said she is not throwing them aside; her job is to bring a different perspective to the Board. It does not diminish their ideas.

Mrs. Flanagan asked if there was any savings in the salary account where the budget still has a high salary for the teachers that are retiring. Mr. Melnik said the account was reduced to a place holder of \$55,000 for a new teacher.

Ms. Gara asked if any reductions can be made in technology hardware, currently budgeted at \$45,000. Mrs. Viccaro said cuts have already been made in this area and they can't go any deeper.

Mr. Hennick asked Mrs. Flanagan her opinion about the \$92,000 in cuts to the capital fund. Mrs. Flanagan said it consists of \$50,000 for building maintenance, wireless upgrades \$12,000 and gym mats for Memorial School \$30,000. She is not happy with eliminating the entire account for the year but she understands that it needs to be done.

Mr. Hauser explained the proposed cuts to the athletic supplies and the general supplies budget at Cuginchaug. He said he is going to be able to pre-buy some textbooks with money from this year and he is taking a small amount out of the 610 accounts across all departments.

Mrs. Boyle asked about the need for volleyball warm-ups for \$3,000. Mr. Hauser said they are the only team that does not have warm-ups and they often do not have a locker room available when they play at other schools.

The student parking fee is being raised for the first time since it was instituted.

Ms. Gara asked if there are any savings in hiring the new principal for Strong School. Mrs. Viccaro said there may be some but it is hard to know until the candidate pool is known. Dr. Nicol said the spread over the four step increase is about \$10,000.

The WISE stipends were discussed again and it was decided that they would cap the number of students participating at twelve. The cost per stipend is \$655.

It was agreed that the stipend budget should not have been increased if the contract with the teachers was a zero increase. This will amount to \$25,000 in savings.

Mrs. Golschneider suggested holding off on all instrument purchases for a savings of \$4,000.

The volleyball warm-ups were cut for a savings of \$3,000.

\$12,000 was cut from tech support with the suggestion to seek out a lower rate.

Dr. Ochterski wanted to be clear that he is against any cuts to 4th grade band. It took a long time to get it back when it was cut before and he does not want that to happen again.

Ms. Parsons suggested cutting \$10,000 for the Strong School Principal. She is willing to take the risk.

The following is a list of the proposed cuts agreed to by the Board of Education: Electricity \$15,000, Art Teacher reduction \$12,500, capital fund \$92,000, CRHS Athletic Supplies \$4,000, CRHS Supplies \$6750, Volleyball Warm-up Suits \$3,000, Musical Instruments \$4,000,

IT support \$12,000, Coaching, activity and AD stipends \$25,000, Transportation \$40,000, Strong Principal \$10,000, and increase for the parking fees \$3,750, totaling \$228,000.

Mr. Melnik said this is a gross budget of \$34,786,974 with an increase of .27%.

Mr. Hicks made a motion, second Ms. Gara to go to the District Meeting on May 25, 2011 with a \$34,786,974 gross Regional School 13 education budget for school year 2011-12 followed by a referendum on May 26, 2011. Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Flanagan, Ms. Gara, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Ms. Parsons voted yes. Dr. Ochterski abstained.

Policy Committee: Mr. Hicks said the Policy Committee has been meeting weekly. They have been discussing model policies from our attorney. Yesterday they met and had a presentation from Mr. Hauser regarding the use of personal electronic devices at the high school. Mr. Hicks asked Mr. Hauser to share the information with the Board.

Mr. Hauser explained that most policies regarding personal electronic devices come from a time before the electronics were seen as useful tools to education. Many schools are piloting educational programs using devices such as SMARTphones, iPads and Kindles. He asked for the freedom to pilot a program at the high school and to be able to start using them.

Mr. Hicks made a motion, second Mrs. Golschneider, to suspend the section of the Technology Acceptable Use Policy (4132) regarding the use of personal electronic devices until June 30, 2011.

Mr. Hicks amended the motion, second Mrs. Golschneider, to include "with the school managing the use appropriate for administration".

The Board of Education unanimously approved the motion to suspend the section of the Technology Acceptable Use Policy (4132) regarding the use of personal electronic devices; with the school managing the use appropriate for administration, until June 30, 2011. The Committee will re-evaluate the policy in the fall.

Finance Committee: Ms. Parsons said the committee met with BASREP this evening. They will be meeting again. Receipts are tracking close to projections. Expenses are still showing approximately a \$300,000 fund balance at the end of the year.

The Board made the decision to put off discussion of the Superintendent's Contract due to the late hour.

On a motion by Mrs. Adams, second Mrs. Golschneider the Board of Education moved into Executive Session to discuss a pending legal matter involving a student.

The Board moved back into regular session.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Golschneider, the Board of Education unanimously approved to adjourn.