

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, February 25, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. in the library at Strong Middle School, 191 Main St., Durham, CT. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Buckheit, Mrs. Flanagan, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Fulton, Dr. Onofreo, and Mr. Renninghoff. Absent: Mrs. Fronc, Mr. Hicks. Also present: Dr. Veronesi, Superintendent of Schools and Mr. Melnik, Business Manager.

Chairperson Mrs. Flanagan called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. after it was determined that a quorum was present.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Mrs. Flanagan led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Comment**

Kristen Prout of Durham inquired about the continuation of the BASREP program when Korn School is closed. Mrs. Flanagan stated that the goal of the Board was to maintain the program.

**Next Board Meeting**

March 4, 2015 at Strong School.

**Approval of Agenda**

Mrs. Boyle moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Fulton seconded.

In favor of approving the agenda: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Buckheit, Mrs. Flanagan, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Fulton, Dr. Onofreo, and Mr. Renninghoff. Motion passed.

**Approval of Minutes of February 11, 2015**

Dr. Onofreo moved to approve the minutes of February 11, 2015. Mrs. Boyle seconded.

In favor of the minutes: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Buckheit, Mrs. Flanagan, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Fulton, Dr. Onofreo, and Mr. Renninghoff. Motion passed.

**Communications**

Mrs. Boyle read aloud an email that was sent to all Board members from a parent, Maya Liss opposing the hiring of a SRO proposed in the 2015-2016 school budget. Mrs. Liss is presently happy with the security at Lyman School and recommended the District hire an additional counselor to handle mental health issues. She also stated that hiring a police officer may criminalize student behavior.

Mrs. Flanagan stated she also received a call regarding the hiring of a Student Resource Officer.

Mrs. Flanagan provided the Board members with a handout from CABA on tips for effective lobbying. Mrs. Flanagan plans to attend A Day on the Hill and encouraged other Board members to join her. Board members were requested to contact Mrs. Flanagan by email if they are interested in attending.

Mrs. Adams announced that the Board has a team for the CVEF Trivia Bee on March 6, 2015. She also stated that the team is being sponsored by Torrison Stone and Garden.

**CRHS Student Report**

Coginchaug Seniors Jeremy Cannon and Naomi Rinaldo updated the Board on events taking place at CRHS including a recent pancake dinner fundraiser, an upcoming concert, new course selections, and a parent forum hosted by Mr. Falcone. A sports update was also given commending the indoor track teams for their successful season. They also commended Mrs.

Germond for being named Coach of the Year for indoor track.

### **Business Manager's Report**

Mr. Melnik reported that based on the Governor's proposed budget funding for the Healthy Food Certification program may be terminated.

Mr. Melnik also advised the Board that a safety program officer from the worker's compensation commission stopped by Central Office this week to review minutes from the Safety and Health Committee meetings and all went well.

Specs are being sent out for the solar roof at Brewster and a posting for the senior accountant position has gone out.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Veronesi provided the Board with an update on monthly safety drills taking place across District schools. This week schools are doing a practice lockdown drill. Dr. Veronesi will send out the grid of drills to Board members.

### **New Business:**

Mackenzie Rulnick a senior at CRHS provided the Board with information on the DECA field trip. The Board commended Mackenzie on her informative presentation.

Mr. Fulton moved to approve the DECA field trip request. Mrs. Boyle seconded.

In favor of approving the field trip: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Buckheit, Mrs. Flanagan, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Fulton, Dr. Onofreo, and Mr. Renninghoff. Motion passed.

### **2015-16 Budget Discussion**

Dr. Veronesi stated that the PowerPoint presentation would address follow-up questions from the February 11, 2015 BOE meeting.

Mrs. Buckheit asked if the governor's proposed budget would include transportation money. Mr. Melnik responded by stating that the town number would remain the same.

Mr. Melnik received the latest quote for health insurance. The increase will be 9%. The budget summary shows a decrease in the net increase from 2.96% to 2.61%.

Mr. Melnik provided the Board with costs associated with the MTA program. Mrs. Boyle stated that she would like to see a budgeted line item for technology. Discussion took place regarding the cost per student and how it relates to the cost of outplacing these students.

Mrs. Adams questioned declining enrollment and Dr. Veronesi stated that she was not projecting a change in the program. The Board requested a projection of our students for next year.

Discussion moved to the proposal to hire a School Resource Officer. Dr. Veronesi stated that it is important to her to have a safe and secure learning environment for our students. Dr. Veronesi reviewed the security upgrades that have taken place over the past three years.

Dr. Veronesi discussed the option of hiring a Constable versus a SRO and the purpose of having a SRO. The focus would be on environmental safety and security, collaboration with the District's administration team, providing education to students and families, and working with community service organizations.

Mrs. Adams stated she was unsure of the role of the school and felt it should be the town's responsibility. She would like more time to research the topic.

Mrs. Buckheit stated she is not convinced the District can afford the costs related to hiring an

SRO in this budget.

Dr. Friedrich cited two concerns raised by Ms. Liss in her email that the District may be better off investing in consultants rather than a SRO and that the presence of a SRO would diminish administrators' authority.

Dr. Veronesi stated that it would not diminish administrators at all. They would work as a team.

Mr. Fulton stated it is a natural impulse to invoke law enforcement because of Sandy Hook however he is reluctant at this time to hire a SRO.

Mrs. Flanagan asked if any other Board member would like to make a comment.

Mr. Renninghoff stated that he strongly disagreed on hiring a SRO. He stated that in his opinion Durham was looking for another police officer.

Mrs. Boyle stated she respects Mr. Renninghoff's opinion, but it is not necessarily the opinion of the Board. Mrs. Boyle is for the idea of hiring a SRO but feels the District cannot afford it this year.

Dr. Onofreo supports the idea of hiring a SRO but is not sure that hiring a SRO is the solution.

Mrs. Flanagan asked Dr. Veronesi to forward the presentation to Board members.

Mr. Melnik asked the Board to email questions they may have on the budget to him prior to the March 4, 2015 meeting.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Educational Resource Committee**

Mr. Fulton discussed the Brewster School roof replacement project.

Mr. Fulton moved to approve the resolution for the roof replacement project. Dr. Onofreo seconded.

### **Resolution for the roof replacement project**

Resolved, that the Board of Education of Regional School District 13 hereby establishes the Educational Resources Committee of the Board as the building committee with regard to the proposed roof replacement project at Brewster Elementary School.

Further Resolved, that the Superintendent of Regional School District 13, the Chairman and the Secretary of the Board, and the Chairman of the Educational Resources Committee are each authorized on behalf of the District to execute one or more applications to the State of Connecticut Commissioner of Education for State grants in aid of the project and to accept or reject such grants on behalf of the District, and to execute any and all necessary agreements and other documents in connection therewith.

Further Resolved, that the Board of Education authorizes the preparation of preliminary design and bid specifications for the project including, without limitation, the preparation of schematic drawings and outline specifications.

In favor of approving the resolution for the roof replacement project: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Buckheit, Mrs. Flanagan, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Fulton, Dr. Onofreo, and Mr. Renninghoff.  
Motion passed.

Mr. Fulton moved to approve the resolution for the solar panel installation project. Dr. Onofreo seconded.

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Further Resolved, that the Board of Education authorizes the preparation of preliminary design and bid specifications for the project including, without limitation, the preparation of schematic drawings and outline specifications.

In favor of approving the resolution for the solar panel installation project: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Buckheit, Mrs. Flanagan, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Fulton, Dr. Onofreo, and Mr. Renninghoff. Motion passed.

### **Utilization Committee Update**

Dave Lenihan has been hired to work on isolating the cost of Korn School. Further updates to follow.

### **Public Comment**

Kurt Peterson of Durham commented on a Board member being unprofessional and commended Dr. Veronesi on how she handled the situation. Mr. Peterson is not in favor of hiring a School Resource Officer and questioned if it would take away the integrity of the administration. He also stated that the cost per student is extremely high. Mr. Peterson had reviewed the audit reports for the last four years and asked for an explanation of a line item.

### **Follow Up**

- Dr. Veronesi to send Grid of Safety Drills to Board members
- Dr. Veronesi to send SRO presentation to Board members
- Board members to email budget questions to Dr. Veronesi or Mr. Melnik prior to next board meeting
- Dr. Veronesi to provide 2015-16 projection of MTA students

### **Adjournment**

Dr. Friedrich moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:28 p.m. Mrs. Adams seconded.

In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Buckheit, Mrs. Flanagan, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Fulton, Dr. Onofreo, and Mr. Renninghoff. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

*Maureen Johnson*