

Regional School District 13 Board of Education
Minutes of the Educational Resources Committee
September 17, 2014

The Regional District 13 Board of Education Educational Resources Committee met in special session on Wednesday, September 17, 2014, at 5:30 p.m. in the music room at Korn Elementary School, 144 Pickett Lane, Durham, Connecticut.

Committee members present: Mrs. Flanagan, Mr. Fulton, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Onofreo, Mr. Renninghoff

Administrators present: Ron Melnik, Business Manager, Kathy Veronesi, Superintendent of Schools

Chairman Fulton called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. after it was determined that a quorum was present.

1. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2. Approval of Agenda

As this was a special meeting, the agenda was declared approved.

3. Approval of Minutes of August 27, 2014

Mr. Fulton moved to approve the minutes of August 27, 2014. Dr. Onofreo seconded the motion.

In favor of the motion: Mrs. Flanagan, Mr. Fulton, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Onofreo, Mr. Renninghoff

Opposed to the motion: None
Abstained from voting: None

Motion passed.

4. Preliminary Budget Discussion

Mr. Melnik began the discussion of preliminary budget for next year. Dr. Veronesi spoke about the message we are trying to get across to the public. Mrs. Flanagan added that we have made significant progress not having the large book and that it is not information so much as it is data. She spoke of staff development that some Board members attended and the dialog that South Windsor provided that was well received by their community. There is an opportunity to improve our communication to the public and we need to provide more language around the budget process and the objectives of the Board. A goal of the Board should be enhancing communication. Mr. Melnik continued saying that there is a fine line between too much data and not enough data. Perhaps it is time to expand the mailing to the public at the point it was several years ago. Mr. Melnik will provide the committee with documentation from other districts.

Mr. Fulton further mentioned the budget process and wanted feedback from the group and how we can make it better. Dr. Veronesi said that we are working toward a district-wide communication plan and that the budget is one of the largest things that we communicate to the community. By talking about district goals and student achievement this can be used positively to communicate the budget. However, the building of a communication plan takes time. Development of the budget document will be concurrent with the formation of the budget with this committee playing a valuable role. Mr. Melnik mentioned that District 13 has the distinction of going out to referendum where the entire community votes on the budget rather than a town council. Dr. Onofreo stated that the public does not typically attend public meetings so the word needs to get out via another mechanism. We also need to gain the support of the boards of finance of the two towns. Mrs. Flanagan mentioned that once we decide the number to go to referendum, we need to supply the public with two

mailers. There was continued discussion regarding how this would be handled and the amount of information that would be included. Dr. Veronesi said that we don't want to publish anything that we cannot stand behind. We have two processes being internal and external and we need a timeline regarding the internal and external budget documents. This might be accomplished at the next ERC meeting.

There was considerable discussion about what has happened in the past and how we will proceed in the future. Dr. Veronesi said that administrators are already working on their budgets and what will it take to make our schools great.

5. Defined Benefit Plan Asset Management

Mr. Melnik mentioned that Merrill Lynch is going out of the pension business so there is still some question as to whether they will still cut checks. Our next steps are to go out for an RFQ (request for qualification). This does not fall under our purchasing policy as there are no public funds involved so the Board has the ability to select another company. Mr. Fulton stated that we need to interview firms while Mr. Melnik pointed out exactly what we will need in selecting a firm. Different firms can handle different tasks with respect to the pension fund. Mr. Melnik continued by discussing the timeline for the events with the withdrawal of the Merrill Lynch participation. Mr. Fulton stated that the committee would like to get this process completed by January 14 with a recommendation to the full board regarding a fund manager. Mr. Renninghoff asked if the pension fund will fund the cost associated with finding a new fund manager.

6. School Location Cost Analysis

Mr. Fulton stated that the district needs to isolate the operating costs of each of the buildings and what the cost impact will be by closing a particular school. Mr. Melnik continued that someone could be hired (perhaps a retired school business manager) to do this work who has a

knowledge and understanding of what needs to be done and what alternative uses for buildings might arise. This project needs to move forward in a timely fashion.

7. Adjournment

Mrs. Flanagan moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:19 p.m. Mr. Renninghoff seconded the motion.

In favor of the motion: Mrs. Flanagan, Mr. Fulton, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Onofreo, Mr. Renninghoff

Opposed to the motion: None

Abstained from voting: None

Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Norm Hicks

Norman Hicks