

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, April 11, 2018 at 7:30 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, 135 Pickett Lane, Durham, Connecticut.

Board members present: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle (arrived late), Dr. Friedrich (arrived late), Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino.

Board members absent: None

Administration present: Dr. Veronesi, Superintendent of Schools and Mrs. Neubig, Business Manager.

Mr. Moore called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### **Approval of Agenda**

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Taylor, to approve the agenda, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed.*

### **Public Comment**

None.

### **Approval of Minutes - Board of Education special session meeting - March 26, 2018**

*Dr. Taylor made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Geraci, to approve the minutes from the special meeting of March 26, 2018, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the minutes of March 26, 2018, as presented: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed.*

### **District Meeting - May 7, 2018 at 8:00 PM in the Auditorium at Coginchaug Regional High School**

### **Next Board Meeting - May 16, 2018 in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School**

### **Teacher Non-Renewals**

Mr. Hicks reviewed that non-renewals are done in case budgets don't work out as expected. Typically, the most recent hires are the ones that are not renewed but they also usually get rehired again once the budget passes.

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Mr. Augur, that the contract for employment for Kristin Allen, Emily Archer, Lindsey Callahan, Kristen Ciccone, Lisa Conant, Craig Emmons, Julie French, Lindsay Galpin, Sarina Garofalo, Noreen Grenier, Kendra Havens-McColgan, Danielle Hay, Kory Kevorkian, Carrie Kosienski, Nancy Kozlik, Kelley Lehman, Melissa Lonsdale, Amy MacKay, Dana Markovitz, Lisa Mishriky, Brenda Parness, Tara Salvadori, Erin Schilling, Michelle Schwartz, Nilani Shankar, Benjamin Shoudy and JoAnna Silverstein not be renewed for the following year upon its expiration at the end of the*

*2017-2018 school year and that the Superintendent of Schools is directed to advise such persons in writing of this action.*

*In favor of not renewing the contracts for employment, as listed above: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed.*

### **Committee Reports**

#### **A. Utilization Committee Meeting - April 5, 2018**

Mr. Augur explained that there is a document in everyone's packets showing the flip charts that were reviewed at the Utilization Committee meeting regarding safety and security. The goal is to come up with short-, medium- and longer-term initiatives that the Board can pursue. He emphasized that this is just the beginning and the list is nowhere near complete. Mr. Augur also commented that there had been a good public turnout and he hopes that will continue. They also spent some time discussing the Information Session. Mr. Augur and Dr. Taylor will put together a PowerPoint presentation and hope to have another meeting again soon.

Dr. Veronesi added that she had emailed the Board about the tabletop activities that were held last week where they also talked about the process of prioritization in this area. There is a modified vulnerability survey that was suggested as a good starting place for the District. She also mentioned that Kate Cummings, an SRO, is available on April 24<sup>th</sup> and will come out to do an information session on the SRO program. There is a Strategic Visioning meeting on that day from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the library and Ms. Cummings will be here from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Parents are also welcome to attend. She also explained that they are still waiting for the MOU from Sergeant Burns.

### **Communications**

Mr. Moore and Dr. Taylor attended the Brewster PTO meeting and received a lot of input. In addition, Mr. Moore has received two letters from Kate Farnsworth and others from Kate Spina, Missy Booth, two from Susan Oakley, Kimberly Johansen, Megan Kavanaugh (an AP statistics teacher at CRHS whose class did an analysis of the number of students in a classroom and the relationship to their SAT scores), Christina Dreyfus-Bates, Kathleen DeBrum, Jen Zettergren, Ash McCarthy, Maygan Morello, Maureen Hamilton, Ellen Smith-Ahern, Jessica Babbitt, Laura Samperi, Theresa Weimann, Alison Palo, Jenna Palo, Beth Bianca, Alana Marino, Cortney Costa and Nick Faiella. Mr. Moore has answered 138 letters since February 20, 2018 and has 12 left.

Mrs. Petrella received an email from Cathy Hinsch talking about Project Graduation.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Veronesi reported that the high school musical, Back to the 80s, was absolutely fantastic. She also mentioned that the sound system made an incredible difference. The skill, talent, creativity and bonds of friendship were so evident throughout the show and after. She also acknowledged Erin Schilling and Tim Fisher, as the pit band was outstanding as well.

Dr. Veronesi wanted to follow up on the racially-charged incident involving one of the District's students in Middletown. At that time, the District made a commitment to understand race, diversity and equity. Mrs. Manning has gathered a team and there will be community conversations around the topic of race. She invited the Board members to be a part of the team, with the first meeting being some time during the summer.

Dr. Veronesi also reported that people from the State of Connecticut will attend the April 27<sup>th</sup> full-day Administrative Council meeting to address the responses to the tabletop exercises. She believes that one of the most important things the District can do is to support the teachers and staff in responding to various situations. Mr. Augur also mentioned pulling a key person out of the tabletop exercises.

Mr. Moore called for a brief recess, before moving to the auditorium for the public hearing.

Following the public hearing, the Board reconvened.

### **2018-2019 Budget**

#### **A. Discussion on Public Hearing**

Mr. Yamartino stated that there were four comments against the SRO, three in favor. In terms of music, there were six folks speaking in favor of restoring the music position and two people were in support of the cut. There were at least four people who negatively discussed the security funding set up without being itemized. One person said they could go either way with that. Five people spoke against armed guards and two did not like the fact that the SRO was armed. There was some discussion on capital and possibly allocating additional funds from surplus towards this year's budget.

#### **B. Finalize Budget for District Meeting**

Mr. Moore reminded the Board members that once they vote on the budget and the referendum is set, they are not allowed to advocate for or oppose the budget publicly.

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Mr. Augur, to go to District meeting on May 7, 2018, followed by a referendum on May 8, 2018, with the 2018-2019 Regional District 13 gross education budget of \$36,819,319.*

Mrs. Geraci asked to discuss the music program a bit more. While she has faith in the administration, she also felt they have an obligation to listen to parents. Mr. Augur thinks about metal working, woodworking, shop and other things and takes Dr. Veronesi's recommendation and is not in favor of reinstating the music position. Mrs. Petrella would have no problem putting the music position back in. She does believe a lot of people are very passionate about it. Dr. Friedrich loves music, but reiterated that as enrollment and budgets decline, there has to be at least reorganization and a reduction in the amount of money spent on a lot of things besides classroom teachers. He sees this as the painful beginning of a process that needs to go on and on, so he is in favor of accepting the budget as Dr. Veronesi submitted. Mr. Hicks agreed with Dr. Friedrich and has faith in the administration. He was concerned about a comment about degrading the music experience if it is not added back in. He also suggested that any motion to add this back in would be out of order as it has already been voted on.

Mrs. Boyle felt that the budget can be amended tonight if the Board chooses. Mr. Hicks offered to have Mrs. Boyle challenge that, but he felt that the attorneys might consider any motion out of order. Mrs. Boyle felt they could put the music back in, but reduce somewhere else. Mr. Moore recalled that the motion was to put the .5 FTE back in the music department and it failed, but music could be addressed in a different way by restoring additional money without adding the FTE. Mr. Hicks felt that that would be trying to get something in the back door that doesn't fit through the front. Mr. Yamartino then asked if someone could rescind that motion and Mr. Moore stated that that would have to be noticed before a vote could be taken.

Mr. Yamartino is in favor of restoring the music position, but without an increase to the budget. His view is that, with all of the discussions about restructuring and strategic visioning, there will be a lot of changes coming up and this will come out in the wash. He'd hate to see people vote down the budget because of this issue.

Mrs. Petrella heard the support for the music position, but also heard Dr. Veronesi stated that the cut is not going to impact the music program. She heard most about the individual instrument lessons and the size of the classes. Mrs. Petrella felt that Dr. Veronesi would not burden the teachers with additional time by cutting this position, so she is in favor of leaving it as it is.

Mr. Roraback heard the feedback and did feel that it is difficult for a teacher in a room with 12 different instruments. He felt that a parent can make a decision to get private lessons, should they desire for their student to excel in that instrument. He felt that the District should be fair to all students and that not everyone can afford to rent an instrument. He was not advocating for the District to do it, but he felt that music should be fully embraced. Mr. Roraback felt there are a lot of priorities and difficult decisions have to be made, so he agrees with Dr. Veronesi's judgment that it will not affect the program.

Dr. Taylor is in favor of restoring the music position, but does agree with Mr. Hicks on his interpretation of the motion and vote that was previously taken. He does not feel it is something that the Board can do at this point, but reiterated that he is fully supportive of the music program. Dr. Taylor felt that, when the Board considers things like music, they have got to set priorities so that programs are not nickel and dimed until they're nonexistent. He has never liked looking at individual components of a program and trying to make decisions in that way. He would like the Board to take a straightforward approach and identify what they think are the priorities and move forward.

Mr. Moore and Dr. Veronesi looked at all the schedules of the music teachers and he feels there will be plenty of coverage. Most of the people speaking in favor of the music position are involved in the program and are passionate about it. He did feel that it might help to actually show what the total music program is. Dr. Veronesi also explained that the high school had enough staffing capacity to offer new classes next year. She felt that making a cut isn't synonymous with the program not being a priority. Dr. Veronesi agrees that music is so important in this District and she does not see this as the beginning of further cuts. She did explain that the cut could have gone to .8, with a reduction at the high school, but instead the teachers are adding more and different offerings for students. There will be a class called Back Stage for students who aren't performers and a guitar class.

Mr. Yamartino then asked about stipulating that the \$400,000 for security cannot be used for armed guards.

*Mr. Yamartino made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Boyle, that the \$400,000 allocated to security will not be used for armed guards in any of our schools, excepting perhaps an SRO.*

Mr. Augur felt that was unnecessary, but no one seconded the motion. Mr. Moore stated that there had been a motion at the March 26, 2018 meeting to amend Dr. Friedrich's motion to be a School Resource Officer for the District designated to manage an armed presence at each building and remove the security monitor position. That motion to amend passed, but the original motion was tabled. Dr. Taylor suggested that the first motion be brought up and voted on. Mr. Augur explained that they are talking about the options at Utilization and, so far, it has been clear that having armed guards is not coming up as a priority.

There was then discussion about the original motion that had been made about the School Resource Officer and the amendment that was proposed. The amendment passed unanimously, but the amended motion was tabled. It was agreed that no vote was taken on tabling the amended motion and Dr. Friedrich suggested they vote on the amended motion tonight. Mr. Hicks felt that it is a dead issue because it was neither tabled nor postponed at that meeting.

Dr. Veronesi asked if some of these things could be handled by Board consensus rather than motions. She felt that there seems to be a clear consensus against the presence of armed security. Mr. Yamartino felt that the public wouldn't be fully confident in that and they have heard a number of people who are against having unspecified funds in the budget as well as those who are specifically upset about the armed guard potential.

Mr. Hicks asked if an SRO would be allowed and Mr. Yamartino stated that he would specifically allow an SRO. Mr. Augur did not feel this was necessary and all options should be talked about at Utilization, but Mrs. Boyle disagreed because she felt that the public was paying attention and the Board needed to be transparent. Dr. Friedrich would not be in favor of armed guards unless he knows something about who they are, but he is also not in favor of precluding them for that same reason. Mrs. Petrella thought that the message from the public was pretty loud and clear about armed guards. She would be comfortable putting the restriction on how the money is spent now because changes could be made in a future budget. Mr. Augur agreed that they have heard from people against armed guards, but also felt that there were people who would be in favor of that. They had agreed at Utilization that they were not ready to make any decisions yet as they were trying to evaluate and create a plan.

Mr. Moore reminded everyone that armed guards would be the area of \$500,000 and this motion would limit how the \$400,000 is spent and would not limit the Board from going back and putting this item in the budget in the future.

*In favor of restricting the \$400,000 allocated to security to not be used for armed guards in any of our schools, excepting perhaps an SRO: Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mr. Yamartino. In opposition: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks and Dr. Taylor. Motion passed.*

*Mr. Yamartino made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hicks, to call the question on the motion to move the budget to referendum.*

*In favor of calling the question on the motion to go to District meeting on May 7, 2018, followed by a referendum on May 8, 2018, with the 2018-2019 Regional District 13 gross education budget of*

*\$36,819,319: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino.*

*In favor of going to District meeting on May 7, 2018, followed by a referendum on May 8, 2018, with the 2018-2019 Regional District 13 gross education budget of \$36,819,319 with the amendment that the \$400,000 not be used to hire armed guards, excepting perhaps an SRO: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino.*

**Public Comment**

None.

**Adjournment**

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Geraci, to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Education.*

*In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed.*

Meeting was adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz  
Alwaz First