

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE May 01, 2014 MEETING  
REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 4 Board of Education**

**March 06, 2014**

A regular meeting of the Regional School District No. 4 Board of Education was held on Thursday, March 06, 2014 in the John Winthrop Middle School Library, with the following Board members in attendance:

Leigh Rankin, Lauri Wichtowski, Jane Cavanaugh, Chris Riley, Elaine Fitzgibbons (7:07 p.m. arrival), Mario Gioco, as well as Senior Student Representative Phoebe Petrovic, and Junior Student Representatives Elias Mueller and Jenna Taylor

Also in attendance:

Administrators: Superintendent Dr. Ruth I. Levy,  
Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Joanne Beekley  
Business Manager Garth Sawyer;  
Valley Regional Principal Kristina Martineau;  
John Winthrop Principal William Duffy

Board Clerk: Jennifer Bryan

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Chris Riley called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the consent agenda consisting of the minutes from the regular meeting of January 06, 2014.

**AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS** was moved up to this point in the agenda.

15 citizens were present. Non comments were made.

JWMS 8<sup>th</sup> graders Sam Paulson and Max Kane reported on a variety of activities at JWMS including the following: sports, fundraisers, preparation for science CMTs, a very successful Valentine's Day dance, and planning for spirit week in April. They also reported on a recent presentation by a visiting author/speaker who really grabbed the students' attention while speaking about drugs, alcohol, and bullying.

**OTHER ITEMS**

Chair Riley congratulated Senior representative Phoebe Petrovic on her recent accomplishment of winning a State oratory competition, and competing in the upcoming national competition at the beginning of April.

Senior Student Representative Phoebe Petrovic reported on the upcoming VRHS musical *The Secret Garden* which premieres soon, and is almost sold out. She also updated the Board on Valley sporting accomplishments.

Senior Student Representative Emily LeGrand was unable to attend.

Newly appointed Junior Student Representative Elias Mueller introduced himself to the Board.

Newly appointed Junior Student Representative Jenna Taylor introduced herself to the Board.

Valley students Zach Robertson and Sam Jones, who attended the French class trip to Paris last year gave a brief presentation on their trip.

Sam reported that he had been on many trips with Madame Wheaton's class, while Zach reported that this was his inaugural trip. They reported on the great cultural and educational opportunities they were exposed to every day, in addition to being able to also share American culture with French students. They attended school on most mornings, and in the afternoon took fieldtrips around the local area. Both students have continued communications with students in France upon their return.

The Board asked if either student had any concerns over personal safety during any time of the trip. Both reported that they felt completely safe with their host family, and during all times of travel. Neither had any concerns to share.

The Board asked if the students had any ideas on how to expand or change things to improve for future trips. The students said they could not think of anything lacking, and over all they felt it was just such a great experience, and one that has helped them to feel much more prepared for their AP exam.

Representatives, John Bauer, Jen Hawkins, Pete Bihuniak from Mahoney Sabol & Company, LLP presented the 2012-13 Region 4 Audit Report. They gave a high level overview and answered questions. They reported that the district received an *unmodified clean opinion* based on the audit review. There was only one significant deficiency regarding separation of duties due to the small size of the staff at the district business office. They reported that this was not uncommon with staff of such small size, but it was not found to constitute a material weakness, due to a mitigation of risk through procedures carried out by the business office. Mr. Bauer stated that it was important to communicate and stress that the audit found no concerns and this deficiency is not uncommon. He stated that the "work product is very good", and that "the business office is just operating lean and mean".

Any comments or questions regarding the report should be submitted to the business office by next Wednesday.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to accept the audit report as presented.

Based on the finalized audit report, the verified end-of-year surplus for FY2012-13 may be returned to the towns.

Chair Riley stated that the District's return of funds to the towns was a reflection of the Board's and District's commitment to serving students well and efficiently.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to return to the participating Towns of Regional School District 4 the end of year surplus for FY2012-13. The amount of the reimbursement is for \$221,242.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to return the appropriations as follows according to FY2012-2013 ADM formula as follows:

Chester \$60,023  
Deep River \$62,523  
Essex \$ 98,696

### **Financial Status Updates**

Business Manager Garth Sawyer reviewed the financial status report, as well as the cafeteria account report. Not much has changed since January. Region 4 is still currently looking at a small surplus. There were some unanticipated "in and out-of-district special education costs", but those are currently able to be covered by savings in other areas of the budget.

Mario Gioco asked how the district was able to stay on budget with heating oil given the extremely cold temperatures this winter. Mr. Sawyer noted that the district was able to lock in at a lower fixed rate for heating oil than they had budgeted for, so that item is doing well, even given the extremely cold weather.

Mr. Sawyer reported that the cafeterias expect to meet their sales goals for this year.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Region 4 Board of Education unanimously VOTED to receive the financial status report and the cafeteria account report.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the following budget transfers for 2013-14 based on current budget status as presented:

Object 100:	Salaries	Budget Decrease of	(\$15,300)
Object 200:	Fringe Benefits	Budget Decrease of	(\$64,968)
Object 300:	Purchased Services	Budget Increase of	\$31,702
Object 400:	Rentals & Repairs	Budget Decrease of	(\$ 3,756)
Object 500:	Other Outside Serv.	Budget Increase of	\$57,704
Object 600:	Supplies	Budget Decrease of	(\$10,600)
Object 700:	Equipment	Budget Increase of	\$ 824
Object 800:	Other Miscellaneous	Budget Decrease of	(\$ 6,331)
Object 900:	Debt Service & Transf.	Budget Increase of	<u>\$10,725</u>

Net Amount of Increases versus (Decreases) \$ 0

### **Principals Update**

Valley Regional Principal Kristina Martineau provided the Board with an update on the 2013-14 school year.

Principal Martineau reviewed last year's SAT results as previously requested by a Board member. She noted that the Board should be very pleased with how Valley compared within Valley's own DRG. Comparisons among DRGs of much higher socioeconomic groups showed Valley did not fare as well, as would be expected, and hence the reasoning behind why the State groups schools into DRGs.

Principal Martineau discussed the Capstone requirement that will affect Seniors next year. She spoke about ongoing efforts to work with Juniors to make sure they're aware of the correct guidelines and requirements. She and the school faculty have been clearing up lots of misconceptions through this process. Capstone is designed to be flexible and individualized to help enhance and move students forward in their academic careers. Community resources will be a big piece of this, through the use of internships, shadowing, etc. Parent letters will go out sometime during March. The school will definitely need community involvement to roll this out successfully.

Valley Teachers Mike Bono and Tom Taber gave a presentation on the Tech Ed program at Valley. They shared a video of activities made by students in the Graphic Arts Dept. at Valley. They also discussed upcoming new projects that will include the use of new 3D printers purchased through two different grants the department received. Mr. Bono also discussed Career Pathways and how Valley helps students align choices for pursuing careers and/or secondary education in a variety of fields and STEM careers.

Valley student Cole Magee gave a presentation on his recent internship/work study with the Whelen engineering department. This was the result of an independent course of study designed for him. He presented a brief walk through of his work study in Applied Engineering guided by Whelen engineer mentors Peter and Kevin. Both men were present and noted that it is very much a pleasure to deal with Valley staff, and that the staff really look out for their (Valley's) students.

Cole's Father thanked Valley and Whelen for this opportunity for his son.

Dr. Levy reiterated the district's connection to Whelen and thanked them for providing the wonderful opportunities in manufacturing and engineering for Valley students. She also mentioned a new 2 week exploratory program for 8<sup>th</sup> graders that will be offered this year to help middle school students learn about their opportunities in Tech Ed at Valley.

John Winthrop Middle School Principal, William Duffy updated the Board on the 2013-14 school year. He discussed numerous academic accomplishments as well as those by students in the arts. The JW musical this year is Grease and has over 100 students participating in the March 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> performances. They will hold a blood drive on March 18<sup>th</sup> which will complement their recent study of the circulatory system as well as provide the students with a community service opportunity. CMTs in science are coming up on March 20<sup>th</sup>.

John Winthrop teacher John Voitovich made a brief presentation on “The Farm at JW”. This project has already received a grant from the R4 Foundation and an additional grant from other source as well. Both Mr. Voitovich and Mark Gostkewiz, also a JW teacher, are eager to share their expertise in local, organic farming with JW students. The long term goal of the Farm project is to have a student run vegetable/working farm on the premises - providing social, environmental, and permacultural learning opportunities, as well as perhaps providing fresh produce to students through incorporation into the cafeteria menu. This opportunity is currently being offered to students during activity period twice a week during school, where they have been discussing planting once the weather cooperates. They envision three phases; Phase One, currently they are planning location, purchasing supplies, etc. Phase Two will evolve into an after school activity and celebrate learning program offering. They will plant raised beds and will be able to harvest produce all year long. This program will provide a nice career exploration opportunity and provide connections with the community through garden clubs and other organizations. Phase Three envisions using cafeteria food scraps for composting.

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to move up the presentations of student trips to this point in the agenda.

Valley teacher Kate Wheaton presented her proposal for the 2015 French Trip to Paris and Versailles over April break of 2015. It proposes following almost the same itinerary as the trip in 2013. She anticipates around 20-24 students if approved. It will be funded by students and fundraisers, including some alleviation of cost for those unable to pay without assistance.

There will be a second reading of the proposal and a VOTE at the next Region 4 meeting in May.

Teacher Meagan Sirimongkhoun presented her proposal for an 8 day trip over Spring Break April 2015 to Costa Rica. The trip proposed is very similar to the one taken last year including and would include stays with host families, visits to natural reserves, community service/outreach at an orphanage. The main difference this time would be switching out the ziplining activity for a cultural cooking activity.

There will be a second reading of the proposal and a VOTE at the next Region 4 BOE meeting in May.

### **Committee Reports**

Region 4 Audit and Finance Committee - No report

Garth Sawyer reported that the Joint BOE Finance Committee will meet again on March 25<sup>th</sup> to continue their review of the proposed business procedures manual.

Dr. Levy reported that the Joint BOE Policy Committee will meet again on March 17<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Beekley reported that the Joint BOE Curriculum Committees will meet again on March 17<sup>th</sup>.

### **Supervision District Committee Update -**

The budget was approved at the recent Joint BOE meeting and now will be incorporated into individual budgets for final approval..

### **Assistant Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Beekley had nothing new to report since last meeting with the Board last Thursday.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Levy updated the Board on the following district activities: She shared a letter regarding a recent JWMS student donation to the Shoreline Soup Kitchen & Pantries.

She also discussed several donations made to John Winthrop Middle School recently. The following votes on those donations were taken:

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to accept a donation of a Yamaha trombone from Doug Paul to JWMS valued at \$245.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to accept a donation of a Yamaha Alto Saxophone and music stand from Doug Paul to JWMS valued at \$605.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to accept a donation of a Tower Garden from Phil Miller to JWMS.

**AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS** – None present

The Board moved into Executive Session at 8:55 p.m. to discuss the Superintendent's recommendation regarding staff non-renewals.

The Board moved out of Executive Session at 9:05 p.m.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the Superintendent's recommendation regarding staff non-renewals.

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

1. Region 4 BOE Public Hearing on 2014-15 Proposed budget (April 7, 2014 @ 7:00 p.m.)
2. Region 4 BOE Next Regular Meeting (May 01, 2014 @ 7:00 p.m.)
3. Region 4 Annual Meeting (May 05, 2014 @ 7:00 p.m.)
4. Referendum on Region 4 Budget for 2014-15 (May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014 noon- 8:00 p.m.)
5. Executive Session – Evaluation of Superintendent (May)
6. BOE Self-evaluation (TBD)

### **ADJOURNMENT**

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jennifer Clark, BOE Secretary  
Jennifer Bryan, Clerk