

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE Nov 4<sup>th</sup> , 2010 MEETING  
REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 4 Board of Education**

**September 02, 2010**

A regular meeting of the Regional School District No. 4 Board of Education was held on Thursday September 02, 2010, in the John Winthrop Middle School Library, with the following Board members in attendance:

Linda Hall, Richard Strauss, Mary-Beth Harrigan, Duane Gates, Chris Riley, Elaine Fitzgibbons, Laurie Ann Tomlinson, Pamela Christman, Jennifer Clark as well as Senior Student Representatives Patrick Campbell & Shin-Yi Lee.

Also in attendance:

Administrators: Superintendent Dr. Ruth I. Levy; Assistant Superintendent Ian Neviasser; Business Manager Garth Sawyer; Valley Regional Principal Eric Rice, Valley Regional Associate Principal, Kristina Martineau; John Winthrop Middle School Principal David Russell, John Winthrop Middle School Assistant Associate Principal Peter Foxen; Director of Facilities, Bruce Glowac; Region 4 social worker Brad Pitman

Teachers: VRHS: Deborah Montenegro, Christopher Allegretti, Maryann Donagher, John Harris

JWMS: Kathryn Ryan, John Voitovich, Cara Rothman, Matt Mestite

Board Clerk: Jennifer Bryan

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Linda Hall called the meeting to order at 7:10 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 May 06<sup>th</sup>, 2010, minutes from the special meeting of July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010, minutes from the special meeting of August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010, and the Accounts Payable Report with the following changes made to the minutes from the special meeting of July 13<sup>th</sup>:

*Addition of "moved into executive session for a personnel matter – to interview and discuss the candidates."*

**OTHER ITEMS**

Principals David Russell and Eric Rice introduced their new teacher hires to the Board. The Board welcomed the teachers who were all present.

Region 4 Social Worker Brad Pitman gave the Board an update on Social Services in Region 4. Social services provide assistance to students in dealing with social and emotional issues to aid their academic performance and school success, which includes assisting students who have Individual Education Plans or IEPs. He reported that for the 2009-10 school year, the social services department conducted 1151 student sessions with approximately 30% of the student body. This year he will be spending 2 mornings a week at JWMS mostly as a special education resource and also providing crisis management as needs may arise. The rest of his time will be spent at VRHS. In addition he and the counselors conduct periphery work with tri-town youth services on a peer advocacy program to equip students with coping/communication skills and the youth advisory council to help promote healthy teen living and prevent substance abuse by students.

Board member Riley asked how the Board can help him to better meet needs or do even more. Dr. Levy discussed the collaborative process at JWMS and VRHS, where there is a coordinated effort and a lot of shared responsibility with school counselors in order to provide the wide range of services. However, if needs or challenges increase, the program may require more resources, which is why administration is constantly monitoring the program. Linda Hall asked the Board to consider re-visiting the issue prior to budget preparation to examine the anticipated level of need.

## **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS**

8 teachers were present. They were recognized at the beginning of the agenda.

## **REPORTS**

### **Student Representatives**

Senior Student Representative Shin-Yi Lee reported on the first few days of schools. As well as some of the goals the student body will be working on this year; improvement in high school performance; bridging the transition from JWMS to VRHR in order to learn more from VRHS and share with JWMS; and to work on bringing the school into the community. She also welcomed Principal Rice who recently started his duties.

Senior Student Representative Patrick Campbell praised Mr. Pitman for everything he does for all of the students noting that Mr. Pitman is a huge help to students.

Mr. Campbell then reported that Freshman orientation went very well, and helped for a smooth transition into high school for the 9<sup>th</sup> graders. He gave a brief summary on the goals discussed at orientation including becoming a premier high school in CT, encouraging students to become involved in order to help students reach their full potential, reaching your potential and truly applying yourself. Students were also able to locate their classrooms and then attended a club fair to learn more about student clubs and sign up for those they found interesting

He said they hope to have applicants ready to fill the Junior Student representative slots for the November Region 4 BOE meeting.

Chair Linda Hall congratulated him on his recent appointment to the State Board of Education as one of two student representatives. Patrick reported that he recently met with Supt. Levy and Asst. Supt. Neviasser regarding bringing State BOE issues back to the Joint Board of Education meetings.

### **Financial Status Update**

Business Manager Garth Sawyer reviewed the end-of-year financial status report for 2009-10, noting a small surplus. Once the audit has been completed any surplus will be returned to the towns according to Board policy.

Mr. Sawyer reviewed the 2009-10 cafeteria financial status report. He noted that a greater subsidy was needed than originally estimated. This means that the Region 4 anticipated pre-audit surplus was reduced to approximately \$6000. Future cafeteria reports will provide more comparative data as well. Ms. Hall asked the student representatives if they would consider surveying students as to why students are, or are not, buying certain items. Dr. Levy reported that the new Director of Food Services Thomas Peterlik would like to work with the student reps and the student council to gather this information.

Next, Mr. Sawyer reviewed the student activity accounts report which is a running list of JW and VR student activities costs for the previous year. Some of the larger accounts were discussed. Revenue comes in from facility use fees and are put back into facility improvement. Other revenue may come in from donation programs, such as those at Stop and Shop where parents select a school that receives a percentage of all of their transactions. Money from programs like those are used as a discretionary fund for things such as aiding students to participate in activities who would otherwise be unable to afford to participate. The student activity accounts also functions as a school bank, in other words, it may be holding money in escrow for future use such as field trip fees that have been submitted by students, but not paid out to vendors yet.

Mr. Sawyer briefly reviewed the grant funding report to provide information to the BOE regarding grant funding received outside of the board budget, which includes some funding for some staff members.

Lastly, Mr. Sawyer reviewed the 2010-11 financial status, noting that it the school year is just beginning. He reported that he had made updates to the salary matrix as well as required changes in the contribution to MERF, for non-certified municipal employee pension fund.

On motion duly made and seconded the Region 4 Board of Education unanimously VOTED to receive the financial status reports as presented.

### **Principals Update**

VRHS – Principal Rice reported that the CIAC recently recognized VRHS with second place in the Michael Scope award program for exemplary athletic programs. Criteria included participation, academics, equitable opportunities, trained personnel, and a clear sense of sportsmanship, among others. He stated that it is a very nice recognition that speaks to the well balanced athletic program offered at VRHS. The awards ceremony will be held September 19<sup>th</sup>.

Principal Rice reported that 96% of incoming freshman attended freshman orientation helping to create a great opening of school. He also discussed the recent addition of a sculpture walk behind the school, computers in the library media center, and a new Mac lab. Teachers are utilizing performance plus software and he is receiving positive feedback from staff on the utility of the software. Board member Fitzgibbons asked that the administration consider giving recognition to the local concrete company for their donated contribution to the sculpture walk

JWMS - Principal Russell reported on an excellent school opening thanks to all the teachers, students, and staff. He noted that BOE members were given a copy of the JWMS handbook. The math tutorial classroom was completed earlier in the day. Upcoming calendar highlights include Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> back to school night and two programs this fall, that he is particularly proud of his staff's efforts in putting together. On Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> "Rachel's Challenge" is coming to JW. It is an anti-bullying and self-esteem improvement program that grew out of the events at Columbine. The program will be held for students throughout the day and for parents in the evening. JWMS is also hosting internet safety courses for students (grade 5 – high school) and their parents.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Region 4 Audit and Finance Committee -**

Richard asked if facility projects budgeted for this year were able to be accomplished – such as driveway resurfacing. Mr. Glowac reported that resurfacing on the far side of VR is on schedule for this fall and the planned classroom renovations were completed.

#### **Joint BOE Committees**

The Joint PK-12 Policy, Finance, and Curriculum Committees are scheduled to meet later in September.

#### **Region 4 Photovoltaic Solar Building Committee Update**

Mr. Glowac gave a quick update on the continued progress on the solar project at JWMS. Superintendent Levy recently signed a grant agreement with the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund, locking in the necessary funding to make the project feasible. The administration recently pursued a waiver through the Commissioner of Education's office to waive space standards requirements in order to provide more funding for the project. The Commissioner denied this request, but the administration and Committee will still pursue a waiver through the Bureau of School facilities. The funds are not necessary for the project to move forward, but would provide additional offset funding if received.

Superintendent Levy met with Senator Eileen Daily regarding the possibility of legislative help in acquiring this waiver and subsequent additional funding.

The Committee's next step is plan approval and once that occurs, it is anticipated to take approximately 3-4 weeks to complete the bidding process and begin construction. The Committee is still hopeful that construction will be completed this Fall.

### **Supervision District Committee Update**

There was nothing new to report at this time

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

Assistant Superintendent reminded everyone that the first and foremost purpose of the schools is to provide a rigorous and relevant instructional core for students. He then reviewed CMT and CAPT scores in details, as well as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) results, which was met at both JW and VR.

Principal Russell discussed the JWMS plan of action for CMT subject focus and intervention in math, language arts and science.

Dr. Levy added that faculty and administration is looking at curriculum and pacing all the way back to Kindergarten in order to help provide seamless transitioning between grades, subjects, and the timing of when topics and/or entire subjects are taught in relation to when students are tested on those items. They have already made some adjustments and will continue to do so to help bring rankings up within the DRG.

Assistant Superintendent Neviasser reviewed CAPT (10<sup>th</sup> grade) scores for VRHS which showed a dramatic increases in math. Reading scores remained excellent and VRHS made the top 5 within its DRG across the categories for percentage at advanced, at/above goal, and proficient. There was a significant jump in goal and an increase in proficient for writing scores. Science showed improvement as well.

Principal Rice discussed the VRHS plan of action for increasing CAPT scores.

Assistant Superintendent Neviasser also discussed support systems currently being used such as SRBI (scientific research based interventions) Performance Plus software, and ongoing technology support/training during monthly meetings.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Levy discussed her meeting with Eileen Daily regarding regionalization issues and the possibility of legislative help in maintaining a similar financial structure if Chester, Deep River and Essex PK-12 were to join Region 4. Dr. Levy reported that Senator Daily was receptive, understands the issues and will likely bring something forward to the Legislature this winter. In conjunction with that effort, Dr. Levy noted the need to get the "regionalization" study groups back up and running, The Finance group in particular will need to meet up again in the near future. However, she is still waiting for appointments from some selectmen for town official representation on these committees.

She informed the Board that early dismissal has been called for tomorrow due to the expected arrival of Hurricane Earl early tomorrow afternoon. This action was taken in accordance with virtually all other schools in the vicinity. In addition she reported that the Deep River Fire Chief had urged her to consider an early dismissal as well in order to get cars and buses off of the roads as early as possible.

She informed the Board of a generous offer from former student BOE representative Richard Gilliland to donate his partial Chinese studies scholarship to an interested VRHS student.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Region 4 BOE unanimously VOTED to approve the donation of the Chinese Studies scholarship, RMB credit and beginner's level course book from former VRHS student Richard Gilliland.

### **Audience of Citizens**

No comments were made

## **Executive Session –**

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to move into executive session at 8:55 p.m. to discuss a confidential personnel matter and conduct their self evaluation.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to move out of executive session at 10:00 p.m.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the request to roll over five vacation days into 2010-11 for David Russell.

## **Future Agenda Items**

1. Election of BOE officers (Nov.)
2. Supt. presents major budget drivers for 2011-12 (Nov.)
3. BOE/Community input on 2011-12 budget (Nov.)
4. Profile of Graduating Class – (Nov.)
5. Presentation on cafeteria initiatives for increased revenues – *T. Peterlik* (Nov.)
6. Review social development budgetary needs (TBD)
7. Budget update on cafeteria and comparison of anticipated subsidy to \$30,000 subsidy budgeted (Jan.)

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 10:01 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Pamela Christman, Secretary  
Jennifer Bryan, Clerk