

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE March 07, 2013 MEETING  
REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 4 Board of Education**

**January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013**

A regular meeting of the Regional School District No. 4 Board of Education was held on Thursday January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013 in the John Winthrop Middle School Library, with the following Board members in attendance:

Linda Hall, Mary-Beth Harrigan, Duane Gates, Chris Riley, Elaine Fitzgibbons, Laurie Ann Tomlinson, Jennifer Clark, Mario Gioco (arrived 7:08 p.m.), Ann Monaghan (arrived 7:11 p.m.), as well as Senior Student Representatives Alex Belval and Sarah Burzin

Also in attendance:

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

Board Clerk: Jennifer Bryan

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Linda Hall called the meeting to order 7:05 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 November 29, 2012 and the Accounts Payable report.

**AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS**

1 citizen was present. – no comments

**OTHER ITEMS**

**Student Representatives**

John Winthrop Middle School students Lila Kozlick and Melina Roise reported on recent and upcoming happenings at JWMS. Including the following: On Jan. 10<sup>th</sup> a group of students will be going to the Leadership Conference at Wesleyan University; JWMS students recently sold special passes to students and raised \$418 which was donated to families in need for the holidays; On December 21<sup>st</sup>, JWMS held their annual Student/Faculty basketball game with the 8<sup>th</sup> grade chorus performing the National anthem and the jazz band playing throughout the game. They were happy to report that the students won the game.

Senior Student Representative Alex Belval reported on a student contest to determine a motivational symbol for students of Valley. The symbol will serve as something to help all students feel like a part of the Valley, and symbolize what it means to be a Valley Warrior, and what is expected of them as a Valley Warrior.

Senior Student Representative Sarah Burzin reported that the French trip is coming up in about a month. There are about 35 students participating. The group will be hosting a fundraiser dinner on Jan. 26<sup>th</sup> in Deep River to raise money towards trip costs.

Director of Pupil Services Tracy Johnston updated the Board on the Region 4 Life Skills Center housed in John Winthrop in the space that used to be rented to LEARN. The administration anticipated the need for this space last year and it has been fully utilized this year. Students in the center are working on independent, functional living skills. She explained that it is really an apartment within a classroom with 2 bathrooms and a kitchenette. Students are

working on life skills in addition to academic skills. The center also contains a smaller room that houses an entertainment center with foosball, Wii and other games which serves as a social hub for all students.

The design for the center was based on multiple visitations to other sites. During the school day it functions as a typical resource center and life skills center and has allowed students to return back into the district from outplacements. Mrs. Johnston noted that it provides a connection to their community and school rather than being outplaced at a considerable distance away from the community. Recently the students hosted a Thanksgiving feast using many of their new skills.

The program participation fluctuates but serves approx. 6-8 full time students, and up to 12-15 students when at its busiest. Chris Riley asked Mrs. Johnston to consider quantifying the amount of time these students are now not spending looking out a bus window while being transported out of district. He also asked for feedback or anecdotes directly from parents for the Board to consider. The Board asked her to quantify by end of year, the cost savings to the district that this life skills center has provided.

Mrs. Johnston thanked the Board for their support in this endeavor.

## **REPORTS**

### **Financial Status Updates**

Business Manager Garth Sawyer reviewed the financial status report and the cafeteria account report. He reported no major changes since the last report. He discussed some changes to the substitute teacher line and reported that things are currently in line to project a small surplus barring unexpected costs coming up.

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, as presented.

### **Principals Update**

In Valley Regional Principal Kristina Martineau's absence Dr. Levy provided the Board with an update on the 2012-13 school year and the Capstone Experience requirement for students that will be a requirement of graduation. She handed out a presentation prepared by Principal Martineau. Principal Martineau will speak about the project in more depth as soon as she is able to attend a future Board meeting. Mr. Riley asked for possible presentations of some of these Capstone projects at an appropriate time.

John Winthrop Middle School Principal, William Duffy updated the Board on the 2012-13 school year. He said that he did not have too much new since his last report. He echoed Mrs. Johnston's report on the life skills center and said that it's very positive, very fluid, and involves many students. He noted that one of his first tasks upon his arrival at JWMS was to help get the life skills center up and running and it's been wonderful to see it develop so quickly and it is running extremely well.

He reported that since the last Board meeting, he did shadow a typical student's schedule to get a feel for what it's like to be a student here. He wondered, is it active and engaged or long and trying? He was very pleased at what he found, and he shared some of his observations as follows: Every single classroom was using technology integration; The students were being challenged in appropriate ways; Students are allowed to take ownership of their learning while being very engaged in the work. He also observed effective teaching strategies including differentiation, cooperative and collaborative learning groups, use of graphic organizers, whole group, small group, pairs and individual instruction as well as team teaching.

Parent information night will be held next week for 6<sup>th</sup> grade parents to start exploring JWMS for next year. Parents of 8<sup>th</sup> graders will get scheduling info soon. Regional Mock trial will be held at JWMS soon. The school Chorus and Bands will be visiting elementary schools soon, along with the high school, in order to promote their music programs at JWMS.

## **Committee Reports**

Region 4 Audit and Finance Committee - will meet at end of the month.

The Joint BOE Finance Committee is scheduled to meet again on January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013

The Joint BOE Policy Committee is scheduled to meet again on January 16<sup>th</sup> – Elaine Fitzgibbons

The Joint BOE Curriculum Committees is scheduled to meet again on January 16<sup>th</sup> – Mary-Beth Harrigan

**Supervision District Committee Update** - Linda Hall reported that Supervision District held their first budget workshop before Christmas. They are looking at a few important positions to possibly add, as well as funds for programs related to the new SEED evaluation as required by the State. They will be holding their second workshop next week.

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

Dr. Beekley gave a general update on activities within the districts including the following: all schools and administration are already in the thick of CMT and CAPT preparations and they have prepared a draft of the testing schedule. Administration from all buildings will be attending training on it in a few weeks. The Curriculum Committees are continuing their work.

There will be an encore presentation on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) on January 14<sup>th</sup> by all of the administrators. It is important for parents to have some understanding of the shifts that will be happening in learning expectations. The administration will continue working to determine what else they need provide to help parents understand this shift to CCSS.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Levy updated the Board on the VRHS Manufacturing Program and the upcoming January 29<sup>th</sup> event where the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce Manufacturers' Council will visit Whelen Engineering to observe the program in action. Other educational dignitaries have also been invited. She invited Board members and asked them to RSVP to her for planning purposes.

Dr. Levy spoke about the impact of the Newtown school tragedy on all of us in the educational world and as parents. She discussed how the administrators and schools counselors had held a parent information night 2 nights after the events, and had over 125 parents attend. All schools have re-looked at security since then and she will be forming a District Security Oversight Committee for further investigation.

Every school's Crisis Team has already met and reviewed their plans. Dr. Levy has contacted all First Selectmen, and there has been an increased police presence around all of the schools. There are plans to do a security audit of all of the schools to identify any areas that may benefit from heightened security features. Dr. Levy said she will also have input from administration and law enforcement who are meeting on Jan 14<sup>th</sup>. She said she will be coming back with recommendations if needed, which could carry budgetary implications. She did note that she is pleased with the level of security that has been present in all of our buildings for several years. And the schools have already made small changes to shave precious seconds off of emergency response times. The schools will be doing lock-down drills in February or thereabout, and all schools will pre-notify parents to alleviate concerns. In addition she, Garth Sawyer, Pam Murphy, Bruce Glowac and possibly some board members will be attending a Security Symposium being hosted by CABA, CASBO, and other school organizations soon. She wants to avoid knee jerk reactions and have well thought out, well planned actions that are right for our districts. Chris Riley noted that all of the hard work after Newtown went unnoticed by kids, but not by parents, who very much appreciated it. He reported that his kids had a normal day back at school following the tragedy. Elaine Fitzgibbons noted that she was very happy with how Dr. Levy and the rest of the administration had handled the situation.

Dr. Levy presented a helicopter view for the 2013-14 proposed Region 4 draft budget. She reviewed actual and projected enrollment numbers through 2018/19. She reviewed some of the major considerations for the proposed Supervision District budget, including some new positions and contractual increases, fuel, health insurance and continuation of the technology lease. She then reviewed Region 4 specific major considerations for the 2013-14

proposed budget including teacher contract, special education unanticipated placements and capital projects as well as some recommended new positions costs. To conclude she reviewed the Average Daily Membership for the 2013-14 budget. The Board will review a draft budget in detail at their first budget workshop planned for January 29<sup>th</sup>.

**AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS** – no comment

## **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Review of 2011-12 Strategic School Profile (when available)  
Region 4 Budget Workshops (January 29<sup>th</sup>, Feb 05<sup>th</sup>, Feb 27<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 6:00 p.m.)  
Regular BOE meeting March 07<sup>th</sup>, 2013  
Possible Vote to move 2013-14 Region 4 proposed budget to Public Hearing (Mar.)  
Vote on Staff Non-Renewals – (Mar.)  
Region 4 Public Hearing on 2013-14 Region 4 Proposed Budget (April 1, 2013 @ 7:00 p.m.)  
Regular BOE meeting May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013 @ 7:00 p.m.  
BOE self-evaluation (May)  
Region 4 Annual Meeting (May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013 @ 7:00 p.m.)  
Referendum on Region 4 Budget for 2013-14 (May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013 noon – 8:00 pm)

## **ADJOURNMENT**

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary-Beth Harrigan, Secretary  
Jennifer Bryan, Clerk