

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR WOODBRIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Monday, April 24, 2017
Stella Library Media Center

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Hamilton, Chair called the Public Session to order (7:06 PM).

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Margaret Hamilton, Chair; Dr. Steve Fleischman, Vice Chair; Ms. Lisa Connor, Secretary; Ms. Karen Kravetz (7:10 PM); Mr. Garrett Luciani, Ms. Nancy Maasbach (7:20 PM), Ms. Keri Matthews, Ms. Emily Melnick and Ms. Lynn Piascyk.

STAFF: Mr. Robert Gilbert, Superintendent; Al Pullo, Director of Business Services/Operations; Gina Prisco, Principal; Analisa Sherman, Assistant Principal; Clare Kennedy, Special Services Director and Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Aimee Meacham, PTO; Maria Kayne, BOS Liaison; Teresa Nakouzi and Lori Patrick, BRS Staff; Tony Anastasio, Jessica Artemchuk, Monica Cavallaro, Daniel Esposito, Pua Ford, Maegan Genovese, Jeff Hughes, Michelle Wachsmann, Johannes Vultee, community.

CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Connor requested extraction of the March 20, 2017 regular meeting minutes.

MOTION #1 – CONSENT AGENDA

Move that we approve the consent agenda as amended.

Dr. Fleischman

Second by Ms. Matthews

UNANIMOUS

Ms. Connor requested revision to the “class size guideline” discussion with a lead-in explanation outlining the Board’s review of various perspectives related to the possibility of modifying/increasing the current class size guidelines.

MOTION #2 – MEETING MINUTES

Move approval of the meeting minutes as revised.

Dr. Fleischman

Second by Ms. Connor

UNANIMOUS

CORRESPONDENCE – None

Ms. Kravetz arrived (7:10 PM).

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

REPORTS

PTO Update – Ms. Meacham apprised the Board of recent gifts made to teachers in the amount of \$2,700 as a result of the successful Book Fair; the Book Swap will occur the week of May 15; the upcoming BRS Quassy Nite on June 1 and that planning has begun for various end-of-year 6th grade activities.

Superintendent’s Report – Superintendent Gilbert noted that just prior to the Board meeting, the Town Board of Finance restored funding in the 2017/18 budget for the SRO position. The Board of Education will have the responsibility for funding this position in all future budgets. The Town 2017/18 Budget will be voted on at the Annual Town meeting on May 15.

Ms. Maasbach arrived (7:20 PM)

Superintendent Gilbert highlighted the continual rise in the PreK population, the upcoming MAG Lottery, the mastery testing of Grade 5 students in Science, the Tri-State visit on March 27, the CARES and BKind Assemblies, the Drama Club production of the *Jungle Book*, the Amity production of *Fiddler on the Roof* and the BRS Graduation on June 15.

BRS Update – Ms. Prisco noted the reading buddy project with Grade 6 and Kindergarten, the Beginning Band Concert, Swim for Heart, Swim Olympics, the Salmon River project in the intermediate grades, and various culminating activity dates for Grade 6 that will be shared with parents.

Vision/Mission Statement Update – Superintendent Gilbert apprised the Board on the formation of a sub group that will be revising the current Vision/Mission Statement. Ms. Hamilton will serve as the liaison to the Board on that committee. The statement developed will be concise, relevant and simplistic enough that it will be easily understood by students, staff and community. It was noted that collaboration with students may generate a very different statement than that crafted by adults. There was general agreement that the statement be centered towards “future thinking and learning”. Board members were asked to identify specific words, concepts or phrases they believed essential for inclusion. Themes expressed included:

- Consideration for development of strategic objectives in support of the vision/mission – how do we get there, what are the concrete ways to reach the mission/vision, are we aligned with the vision/mission on a daily basis, what direction are we choosing to proceed in;
- BRS is an innovative and dynamic place that understands the complexity of the world we live in, think aspirationally, children will live in a world with technological advances beyond our current understanding;
- Everything will change, focus on creating an environment that energizes around the theme of curiosity and creativity;
- Instilling love and joy for learning and inquisitiveness for wanting to learn more;
- Engaged and excited for where they are;
- Make it relevant to all constituents;
- Ideas should be concise enough for children to understand.

Individual words to be considered for inclusion - growth, achievement, “whole-child” caring, creative, active learners, differentiation, global citizens/awareness and life-long learners.

Faculty Support Update – Superintendent Gilbert informed the Board of the range of support offered to faculty in sharing with students current events and challenging news topics that continue to emerge daily. Staff receives year round training and professional development to maneuver around subjects, focusing on providing age appropriate facts and resources without judgement. While there is no scientific or magic formula for handling difficult conversations, current events create unique learning opportunities that link curriculum to enthusiastic student discussions and learning. Students and staff are provided clear expectations and tools on how to communicate and being respectful for what and how things are said. Students are provided numerous opportunities to develop strategies to make sense of the information obtained, to find answers to their questions and to determine if the information is fact or opinion based on their findings. It was suggested that, given the current political climate shift, more updated and relevant staff training and resources be explored. Children are hearing and reacting to current events, and given the broad difference of opinions that exist, it is important that staff facilitate respectful conversations.

Facilities Committee – No Report. Ms. Kravetz noted this committee did not meet. The next meeting will be May 16.

Finance Committee –The Committee met on April 17 to review the monthly financials approved under the Consent Agenda.

CABE Liaison – No Report.

Upcoming Meeting Presentations

Strategic Plan – Superintendent Gilbert will present an update on the Strategic Plan presented in January. It was suggested that the update include detailed specifics, inclusive of timelines, for where we are, what has been accomplished, whether additional resources are required, and if so, what they are as well as the direction we are proceeding in.

TriState Update – an update will be presented on the March 27 follow-up visit of six educators regarding progress made in Math. It was requested that in addition to the update, specifics be provided for what services, resources, professional development etc. will not occur as a result of the recent budget reduction in the 2017/18 school year.

NEW BUSINESS

Certified Staff Leave of Absence – Superintendent Gilbert informed the Board of the request received from Danielle Ulacco to take a child-rearing leave of absence for the 2017/18 school year.

MOTION #3 – CERTIFIED STAFF LEAVE OF ABSENCE (ULACCO)

Move that we grant a child-rearing leave of absence for the 2017/18 school year to Danielle Ulacco.

Dr. Fleischman

Second by Ms. Matthews

UNANIMOUS

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

MOTION TO ADJOURN: (8:20 PM)

Dr. Fleischman

Second by Ms. Matthews

UNANIMOUS

Recorded by Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board