

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL WOODBRIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Thursday, January 24, 2019

Stella Library Media Center

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Hamilton, Chair called the meeting to order (7:00 PM).

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Margaret Hamilton, Chair; Ms. Maegan Genovese, Secretary; Ms. Claire Coleman (via telephone), Mr. Garrett Luciani; Ms. Lynn Piascyk, and Ms. Joyce Shavers (7:05 PM).

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

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Stephanie Goldberg, Emily Jacober, Debra Sokol, Cathy Zdrowski, Teachers.

CORRESPONDENCE – Ms. Genovese noted receipt of two parent letters praising the same teacher.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Hamilton requested extraction of the monthly financial reports.

MOTION #1 – CONSENT AGENDA

Move that we approve the consent agenda as presented.

Ms. Piascyk

Second by Mr. Luciani

UNANIMOUS

Ms. Hamilton presented the monthly financials for review. A deficit remains in both Special Education as well as regular education funding. Discussions will continue regarding funding the humidity clean-up as well as the pool.

MOTION #2 – MONTHLY FINANCIALS

Move that we approve the monthly financial statements as presented.

Ms. Piascyk

Second by Mr. Luciani

UNANIMOUS

It was agreed that discussion on Board process would be deferred to the February meeting as Mr. Jokl had requested clarification on process and was not present.

REPORTS

PTO Update – No report

Superintendent Report – Superintendent Gilbert highlighted the BRS News program, the presentation of the 2019/20 budget to the joint Boards of Selectmen and Finance on January 29, his attendance at the CABE Legislative Breakfast on January 17, the upcoming meeting of the BOWA Chairs and Superintendents on space utilization, the ADL presentation on January 8 to parents, the retirement of Beth Cohen as the BOWA Transportation Coordinator and his attendance at the recent PTO Executive Board meeting. It was noted that implementation and funding of the findings identified in the final Van Zelm report was still awaiting approval by the Boards of Selectmen and Finance.

BRS Report – Ms. Sherman noted the nine (9) student ADL sessions for Grades 5 and 6 held the prior week, staff professional development activities at Columbia Teachers College, commencement of the universal STAR screening, mid-year evaluations for certified staff, the upcoming 100th day of school the first week in February and the change of the Read Across America celebration to Empathy Across America in March.

School Capacity Review – Ms. Hamilton apprised the Board on the limited program options for delivery of curriculum in light of adding additional staff and the lack of available of classroom space. The 2019/20 budget includes the addition of 1.5 resource teachers, a .5 psychologist and a classroom teacher. Over the next 7-8 years enrollment is projected to increase by approximately 125 students. Configuration and utilization of space is a complicated process and the impact on delivery of curriculum will change significantly in some areas. The Board recognizes that there is a need to identify an array of multiple-interim options and that some solutions could have long-term implications. Possible scenarios could include:

- Building a new school.
- Coordination with other districts on leasing space.
- Exploration of shared service opportunities.
- Increasing school capacity beyond current desirability, i.e., class sizes.
- Moving Grade 6 to the Middle School, which would impact the current regional system, as it is presently structured for Grades 7-12, as well as renovation of both Middle Schools for Grades 6-8.
- Relocation of the PK program to the Center building, which presents nursing, security, staffing and transportation challenges.
- Resurrection of portable classrooms which could prove detrimental to safety and security.
- Leasing space in the Bethany Community School, which has declining enrollment, for relocation of primary grade levels.

The BOWA Superintendent and Board Chairs will begin to explore possible scenarios in their initial meeting on January 28th and Amity has formed a group to explore shared services as well. The Board is cognizant that delivery of instruction on a cart is not ideal or preferable and recognizes there will be a loss of instruction time and programming will be impacted. There was general consensus that the optimal option would be to relocate Grade 6 students to the Middle School. This would garner the most significant classroom space. It is important that the community be aware that the school is configured very differently than when student enrollment exceeded 1,000 and according the CSDE it is the number of classrooms that determines maximization of space.

Upcoming Meeting Presentations –

Accountability Report – should follow past formats with a focus on achievement gaps or lack thereof, assessments and testing differences. ADL – what else should we be doing, presentation did not specifically address bias or tolerance, what other resources do we have available to address those topics, how are these topics woven into the curriculum and is additional funding necessary and/or included in the budget. Summer Programs – the coordination of multiple programs Enrichment/Extended Day and Recreation in one building. Facilities Committee Overview – what has been done, upcoming goals and what direction are we headed.

Facilities Committee – Ms. Coleman noted this committee met on January 18 and received the final report from Jim Saia on facilities and ground projects, an update on the painting and flooring repairs completed during the December break and standardizing maintenance procedures/energy efficiencies.

Finance Committee – No Report

Curriculum Committee – Ms. Piascyk noted the Curriculum, Committee met on January 17 with a presentation on STEAM. Both the February 14 and March 14 meetings will have a presentation on Technology.

Policy Committee – Ms. Genovese reviewed the committee membership. Originally, the committee was comprised of Ms. Genovese, Ms. Piascyk and Ms. Coleman. Since Ms. Coleman is now chairing both the Ad Hoc Sustainability and Facilities, time commitments are becoming a challenge. Both Mr. Jokl and Ms. Shavers requested to be placed on Policy. The Committee will now be comprised of Ms. Genovese, Ms. Shavers and Mr. Jokl and Ms. Hamilton as ex-officio.

CABE Liaison – Ms. Genovese extended an invitation to Board members to attend the CABE Day on the Hill on March 20. Ms. Coleman indicated she may be able to represent the Board as it is likely she may be in Hartford for another event. Ms. Shavers noted she will be attending the Annual Leadership Institute.

NEW BUSINESS

Certified Staff Retirements – Superintendent Gilbert presented three certified staff retirements as a result of the Voluntary Early Retirement Incentive – Ms. Sokol, Speech/Language Pathologist; Ms. Giaquinto, Reading/Language Arts Consultant/English Learner and Mr. Burness, MAG Grade 2 teacher. The Board extended its gratitude to each member.

MOTION #3 – CERTIFIED STAFF RETIREMENTS

Move that we accept the retirements of Rich Burness, Joanne Giaquinto and Debra Sokol effective June 30, 2019 with deep regret.

Ms. Piascyk
Second by Mr. Luciani
UNANIMOUS

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

The Board entered Executive session to receive an update on safety and security, discuss a collective bargaining proposal pertaining to non-union staff members, an early retirement incentive for teacher assistants and conduct the mid-year evaluation of the Superintendent.

MOTION #4 – EXECUTIVE SESSION

Move that we enter Executive Session (8:38 PM).

Ms. Piascyk
Second by Ms. Genovese
UNANIMOUS

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Hamilton, Chair called the meeting to order (8:43 PM).

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Margaret Hamilton, Chair; Ms. Maegan Genovese, Secretary; Ms. Claire Coleman (via telephone), Mr. Garrett Luciani; Ms. Lynn Piascyk, and Ms. Joyce Shavers.

STAFF: Mr. Robert Gilbert, Superintendent and Al Pullo, Director of Business Services/Operations.

The Board received an update on safety and security and discussed a collective bargaining proposal pertaining to non-union staff members and an early retirement incentive for teacher assistants.

Ms. Coleman left the meeting (9:56 PM)

MOTION #5 – RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

Move that we return to Public Session (10:16 PM).

Ms. Piascyk
Second by Ms. Genovese
UNANIMOUS

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Hamilton, Chair called the public session back to order (10:16 PM).

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Margaret Hamilton, Chair; Ms. Maegan Genovese, Secretary; Mr. Garrett Luciani; Ms. Lynn Piascyk, and Ms. Joyce Shavers.

STAFF: Mr. Robert Gilbert, Superintendent and Al Pullo, Director of Business Services/Operations.

MOTION #6 – VOLUNTARY EARLY RETIREMENT PLAN - TEACHER ASSISTANTS

Move that we authorize the Superintendent to offer the 2018/19 voluntary early retirement plan to teacher assistants as presented.

Ms. Shavers
Second by Ms. Genovese
UNANIMOUS

MOTION #7 – AMEND PERSONNEL POLICIES FOR UNAFFILIATED POSITIONS

Move to amend the Personnel Policies and agreements for the unaffiliated positions of Secretarial / Clerical and Supervisory to include the following benefit:

If a full-time employee, hired on or before January 24, 2019, dies while in the employ of the Woodbridge School District, or if the employee retires, such employee or his or her estate, as appropriate, shall, in addition to all other benefits due, shall be paid for a maximum of fifteen (15) unused sick days, provided that at the time of retirement the employee has accumulated sick leave days of at least one hundred twenty (120) days. The payment shall be calculated by using the employee per-diem rate at time of retirement.

Ms. Shavers

Second by Ms. Genovese

IN FAVOR: Ms. Hamilton, Ms. Genovese, Ms. Piascyk and Ms. Shavers

AGAINST: Mr. Luciani

MOTION PASSES 4-1-0

The Board deferred the mid-year evaluation of the Superintendent to the February 25, 2019 regular meeting.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: (10:21 PM)
Mr. Luciani
Second by Ms. Piascyk
UNANIMOUS

Recorded by Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board