

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR WOODBRIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Monday, March 16, 2020

Stella Library Media Center and through WebEx Video

CALL TO ORDER: Dr. Fleischman, Chair called the meeting to order (7:02 PM).

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Steven Fleischman, Chair (via video); Mr. Dan Cowan (via video), Ms. Maegan Genovese, Secretary (via video); Ms. Lynn Piascyk, Vice Chair; Dr. David Ross (via video), Dr. Michael Strambler (via video) and Dr. Jeffrey Townsend (via video).

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

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: James Crawford, Kristin DeManche (via video), Kim Franklin (via video), Nancy Smerekanicz (via video) and Cathy Zdrowski (via video), Teachers.

CORRESPONDENCE – Ms. Genovese noted that an email had been received from a parent regarding proposed state legislation pertaining to religious exceptions for vaccines.

CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION #1 – CONSENT AGENDA

Move that we approve the consent agenda as presented.

Ms. Piascyk

Second by Ms. Genovese

Chair Fleischman requested extraction of the monthly Financial Summary report, since the Finance Committee did not meet.

The Board reviewed the monthly Financial Summary Report. Presently, a surplus exists although it is unknown what the impact of the current health crisis will be.

MOTION #2 – FINANCIAL SUMMARY REPORT

Move that we approve the monthly Financial Report, F1, as presented.

Mr. Cowan

Second by Ms. Genovese

UNANIMOUS

REPORTS

Superintendent Report – Superintendent Gilbert apprised the Board on current developments given the corona virus, which has 41 confirmed cases in the State of Connecticut. As everyone is aware, Beecher was closed on Friday, March 13 after consultation with the Quinnipiac Valley Health District (QVHD). Supplemental learning materials were distributed to students on Thursday, March 12 prior to dismissal. BOWA is working collaboratively with Human Services in the coordination of meals for those families affected by the closure.

Implementation of Distance Learning is currently under exploration by the CSDE, CAPSS and various districts across the state. The Governor has committed to providing free on-line modules to all districts in the imminent future, although a definitive timeline has not been shared. In addition, the mandated 180 student day requirement has been waived. Distance Learning creates several challenges in compliance with implementation of IEP's and 504 accommodations and how those needs are met, equitable access to technology and resources as well as providing devices for all students/families. Once guidelines are received from the CSDE, and a determination is made for what direction is in the best interest of children, information will be shared with families. Contact has been made with each of the four unions to develop a memorandum of understanding as we continue to move forward in uncharted territory. In addition, options are being investigated for what training staff would require to provide learning through remote instruction via zoom, webex, google classroom, etc.

Everyone is committed to do whatever is possible and in the best interest of children within the boundaries of these uncertain, interesting and challenging times.

Questions were raised regarding the impact on SBAC / STAR testing, number of families without technology access and what options would be available for providing special education services. We have determined that approximately 10 Beecher families do not have access to technology. We are working on identifying hot spots to ensure students have access. The CSDE has not rendered a final decision on whether SBAC testing will occur as it is unknown when classes resume and it is possible that a one year waiver will be given. As STAR is an internal assessment given three times a year, depending on the actual return date of students, that last segment may or may not occur. The BOWA districts are in varying phases of planning. Each will continue to keep families and Boards informed of developments as they unfold.

Upcoming Meeting Presentation – The April regular meeting will be the final opportunity to administer any last minute changes to the annual survey. The communications update will be similar to prior presentations. It was agreed there would be no WBOE Self-Evaluation meeting on April 27 as the Board just held a retreat in February.

NEW BUSINESS

Transportation Contract – The contract was developed in concert with Bethany and Amity in an attempt to align all districts with common language, rate structure and clear expectations for owner/operator responsibilities as well as district. It is a five-year contract, with a built-in two year extension clause. Owner/Operators are shared among the BOWA districts. While there was agreement for all BOWA districts to negotiate a unified contract, Orange chose to ignore the agreed plan and executed a separate four-year contract with their Owner/Operators. An addition to the contract is the district incurring the cost of repair/replacement of bus radios. It was questioned whether consideration was given to the inclusion of cameras. As we have a shared regional transportation system and not all buses fall under this contract, it would require agreement from all BOWA districts. However, a pilot program will be conducted with one of the Woodbridge Owner / Operator’s buses to ascertain the long-term feasibility of this initiative. In the effort of regionalization, it was suggested that the contract be four years instead of five. It was noted that Orange could again decide to do something different and it is possible that Orange could extend its current contract for one year to match the other three districts.

MOTION #3 – TRANSPORTATION CONTRACT

Move that we approve the transportation contract as presented.

Ms. Piascyk
Second by Ms. Genovese
UNANIMOUS

MOTION TO ADJOURN: (7:58PM)

Ms. Piascyk
Second by Mr. Cowan
UNANIMOUS

Recorded by Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board