

Board of Education

Regional District 13

March 19, 2008

The Regional District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, March 19, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. in the library at Coginchaug Regional High School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mr. Currlin, Mrs. Flanagan, Ms. Gara, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons, Dr. Shoemaker. Member absent: Mrs. Golschneider. Also present: Mrs. Viccaro, Mr. Melnik.

Mr. Hennick called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

Public Comment: Donia Viola said the building project for the athletic fields, and roofs and wells was too excessive. She said the 1.3 million surplus in the budget should be used for the repairs. She said the communities would also like to hear the mil rate impact from the budget.

Melissa Frey, teacher at the high school, has concerns about the .4 English teacher cut at the high school. She said this would be detrimental to the English curriculum and the department would not be able to meet the needs of all the students.

Leanne Meiman, student at the high school, said students have enjoyed the creative writing class at the high school and she would not like to see that taken away. She has made creative writing her WISE project and it was very well received by the students she has taught. They are looking forward to having creative writing at the high school.

Teresa Opalacz has several questions concerning the budget: she would like to know what else was cut, she did not know about the English position; she would like to have another option for the students who are brought back to the schools if no one is home, she felt that there was too much money in the budget for this coverage; she would like to know what other contracts are going out to bid; what is the switch from the guidance counselor to a psychologist; who are the three increased regular education staff; why is the I.T. coordinator being taken out; she would like to hear more about the savings with having interns instead of substitutes; and how differentiated instruction is benefitting the students.

Next Board Meeting: The next Board of Education meeting is March 26, 2008 at Strong School.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Adams, the Board of Education unanimously approved the agenda.

Dr. Shoemaker made a motion, second Ms. Gara, to approve the minutes to the March 12, 2008 Board of Education meeting. Dr. Shoemaker, Ms. Gara, Ms. Parsons, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Hennick, Mrs. Adams, Dr. Ochterski, Mr. Currlin voted yes. Mrs. Flanagan abstained.

Communications: Mrs. Flanagan received a call about the bond proposal. She was asked why a couple of proposals for the athletic fields were not given to the public and why that proposal was included with the wells and roofs.

Mr. Hennick stated he also received a communication stating that economic times are hard and maybe the athletic fields should be put off until a later time.

Mrs. Viccaro stated the District put the two together not to go out to bonding twice. The athletic fields have been in disrepair for years and really need to be improved.

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Viccaro reported that next month she and Mrs. Emory will be meeting with the Department of Children and Families to discuss issues school districts experience and the need for more communication between the department and the school districts.

The Board received a survey done by Search Institute that questions students in grades 7-12 on many issues. The Middlefield Youth and Family Services and the Local Prevention Council will be holding a series of community meetings to discuss the results of the survey.

Forty students from Strong and the high school attended the Diversity Conference at Wesleyan with seven other area schools.

The Board is invited to attend Strong School Reads happening next week.

Mrs. Viccaro and Mr. Melnik are holding meetings for the community to attend if they have questions regarding the budget. They are on March 24 at 6:00pm and April 2 at 7:00pm. Both meetings are at the Superintendent's Office.

Mrs. Viccaro attended the Memorial Ensemble night. She said the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade jazz band was outstanding. Tim Fisher, the teacher, did a great job.

The District is still looking into having an exploratory world language course at Memorial School in all three languages that are offered in the District. This will not cost the District anything because it will be replacing the computer course at Memorial.

Next Thursday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, the Local Prevention Council and Regional District 13 are presenting the program "The Stranger You Know". This program is for parents only.

The Odyssey of the Mind state finals were held at the high school this past weekend. The supporters of the new track provided the food. They raised over \$5,000 that will be put towards purchasing new track uniforms.

2008-09 Budget: Mrs. Viccaro stated in response to a question from the Board, there are 11 students who take the late bus from Memorial School to attend BASREP.

The Budget booklet that is mailed to every postal patron in both communities cost the District \$5,000. Mrs. Viccaro and Mr. Melnik suggested that the booklet be posted on the District website instead of mailing it to everyone. There will also be copies available at the libraries, Central Office, the town halls and the schools for people to review. A request can also be made to have a copy mailed. The Board will consider this recommendation.

Mrs. Viccaro stated by cutting the .4 English Teacher position there will be two less English classes at the high school. She made her decision after reviewing the class sizes of all areas at the high school. The class sizes in English range from 5-23 students in a class; four have 10 students or less and 14 have 15 students or less.

The schools are sending more information through emails to parents to cut down on mailing costs. The percentage of parents receiving emails are: Brewster-60%, Korn-75-80%, Lyman-47%, Memorial-89%, Strong-98% and CRHS-40%.

In response to a question regarding newspaper subscriptions Mrs. Viccaro reported the schools receive the following: Brewster-Hartford Courant, Korn-Middletown Press, Town Times, Lyman-Education Week, Memorial-Hartford Courant, Middletown Press, Strong-Hartford Courant, Middletown Press, CRHS-Hartford Courant, Middletown Press and Central Office-Hartford Courant, Middletown Press, Education Week.

Mrs. Viccaro also read the list of memberships and dues for each school and the clubs for students at each building.

The Board requested information on the Strong School athletic transportation budget, more clarity on the purchase services account, and the savings in the substitute account by using interns.

Ms. Parsons questioned the cost of toners and ink cartridges in the budget. She said it is more cost efficient to have documents sent to the copier instead of individual printers. Mr. Melnik stated most of the individual printers are in the elementary classrooms where it is hard for a teacher to leave the classroom.

Mrs. Viccaro had given the Board a list of cuts recommended by the administrative staff for the \$100,000, \$200,000, \$300,000 budget reductions request made by the Board. In reviewing this list, several Board members would prefer not to cut the Reading Consultant position that was listed. It has been cut from the budget several times and they would like to keep it in this time. The Board reviewed the reductions and will make decisions on the budget at their meeting next week.

Mr. Hennick also asked the Board to think about the amount they would like to see for the capital fund. They need to include this number as a line item in the budget.

Mrs. Flanagan said she was asked why there were not two proposals given to the public regarding the athletic fields. Mr. Hennick stated the Building Committee had narrowed down the scope of the project and presented their best recommendation. By putting the athletic fields in with the roofs and wells saves the District money. Doing things such as putting in a foundation now cuts down on future costs. Mrs. Viccaro stated people can get answers to many of their questions by going on the District website. Information about the project, and a question and answer section are there.

Vote to Approve Referendum on Appropriation and Bond for Building Projects

On a motion by Mrs. Adams, second Dr. Shoemaker, the Board of Education unanimously approved to discuss appropriating funds for the building project.

This will have almost no impact on the budget. The District will still need support from the public.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mr. Currin, the Board of Education unanimously approved a resolution to appropriate \$6,325,000 for the design and construction of various athletic facilities, building water systems and replacement roofs and to authorize the issue of bonds, notes or temporary notes in an amount not to exceed \$4,995,000 to finance a portion of said appropriation.

On a motion by Mrs. Adams, second Mr. Currin the Board of Education unanimously approved to go to referendum on the building project.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mr. Currin, the Board of Education unanimously approved a resolution to submit to referendum the resolution to appropriate \$6,325,000 for the design and construction of various athletic facilities, building water systems and replacement roofs and to authorize the issue of bonds, notes or temporary notes in an amount not to exceed \$4,995,000 to finance a portion of said appropriation.

Finance Committee: Ms. Parsons reported the committee discussed the current year's budget and the 2008-09 budget proposal.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mr. Currin, the Board of Education unanimously approved to go into executive session to discuss teacher non-renewals.

The Board moved into open session.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mr. Currin, the Board of Education unanimously approved that the contracts of employment of Allison Klein, Kimberly Buckley, and Carole Sibiskie not be renewed for the following year upon their expiration at the end of the 2007-08 school year, and that the Superintendent of Schools is directed to advise such persons in writing of this action.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Adams, the Board of Education unanimously approved to adjourn.