

Regional School District 13  
Board of Education Educational Resources Committee  
May 7, 2015

Members Present: Kerrie Flanagan, Robert Fulton, Norm Hicks, Anthony Onofreo, Jeremy Renninghoff

Others Present: Nancy Boyle, Eileen Buckheit

Administrators Present: Kathryn Veronesi, Ronald Melnik

Chairman Fulton called the meeting to order at 6:42pm after it was determined there was a quorum.

**Approval of Agenda:** Mrs. Flanagan made a motion to approve the agenda. Dr. Onofreo second the motion.

Opposed to the motion: None

Abstained from voting: None

Motion passed.

**Approval of Minutes April 29, 2015:** Mrs. Flanagan made a motion to approve the minutes of April 29, 2015. Mr. Renninghoff second the motion.

Opposed to the motion: None

Abstained from voting: Mr. Hicks

Motion passed.

**Discussion of the revision to the 2015-16 Budget:** Mr. Fulton made opening remarks. Mrs. Flanagan stated she had real concerns and a genuine problem with the budget vote. The overriding issue is that the cost per student has reached a level that is untenable to people in the community. Mrs. Flanagan also mentioned the district has the highest cost per student in towns that are contiguous to Durham and Middlefield. She feels the board needs to make a significant reduction in the budget. We need to respond to the people who voted.

Dr. Onofreo mentioned that he spoke to people who supported the budget and resubmission should be considered. He was not sure a great communication to the public was done including the facts of the Brewster roof project that passed by a narrow margin. Mrs. Boyle remarked that we need to discuss the history of the Lyman and Memorial solar projects and why the district is paying for the Brewster solar and not the others. Mr. Renninghoff read a summary of an email that was received by Bob Yamartino from Middlefield. It included suggestions regarding areas that might be considered for reductions. Mr. Renninghoff stated the board has extended invitations to area committees and commissions to attend board meetings and they have chosen not to attend. The Board needs to ensure that there is a good working relationship with both boards of finance.

Mr. Hicks mentioned that he is also opposed to submitting the same budget a second time. In addition, he expressed curiosity regarding the defeat of the solar project as well as the budget and if there was a connection between the opposition of solar that is pervasive in the town. Mrs. Flanagan

asked if we could consult with the administration regarding cuts. They could then come back to the table and the BOE can make recommendations for a new budget. She asked that this evening's meeting not deal with specific items in the budget. Dr. Veronesi asked for a target reduction in percentage. She will work on a new budget with the intent to bring it back to the BOE at their next meeting. Mrs. Flanagan stated some of the cuts should be responsive to the voice of the community. Mr. Fulton is comfortable with this committee sending a message to the administration.

There was discussion regarding the dollar amount that should be cut. Mr. Fulton suggested that the budget should be cut by a percentage point. Committee members agreed but the public needs to be aware of what the consequences might be. It was mentioned that we should take a hard look at the capital reserve account including the track. Mr. Hicks mentioned that funds that are gleaned from the closure of Korn School should not be used to play catch-up with money that might be realized. Capital reserve and class size should be examined. Dr. Veronesi said that she and Mr. Melnik will take a close look at items that might be changed. This is a task that will fall on the central office rather than the entire administrative team. It will not be easy and there is a perception. Dr. Onofreo felt that 1 point is too much. There was significant discussion regarding the fund balance of the district. Mrs. Buckheit mentioned that we should examine things that are new. Mrs. Flanagan felt that there is room for a \$350,000 reduction in the budget and most of the committee members agreed that this is the target. We also need to examine reduction in areas that community members have mentioned and be responsive to the community.

**Adjournment:** Mr. Renninghoff made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Onofreo second the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:17pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Norman Hicks