

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, March 21, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. in the library at Strong Middle School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Flanagan, Mr. Fulton, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons, Mr. Renninghoff. Member absent: Ms. Gara. Also present: Mrs. Mangini, Mrs. Viccaro.

Mr. Hennick called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Public Comment: Christina Dryfuss is a stay at home Mom with two young children. She supports all day kindergarten. The half day program is not enough.

Mark Sally is a parent of three children. Two are in school already and one will be coming into kindergarten. He has sent his first two children to all day kindergarten outside the District at his own expense and he feels they were much better prepared for first grade. He feels all day k will be great for the town and it will also help to boost test scores.

Christine Montgomery hopes that the all day k proposal will stay in the budget. She felt the presentation was very thorough. She wants her child to have the opportunity to make friends and to be able to play in kindergarten as well as learning the curriculum and the longer day will allow for that.

Lisa Florio of Durham has two sons. Her son that will be coming into kindergarten has been in an all day preschool program. He will be taking a step back and getting much less time in school when he comes to kindergarten.

Next Board Meeting: The next meeting of the Board of Education will be held on March 28, 2012.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Dr. Ochterski, the agenda was unanimously amended to include a motion regarding the District copier lease.

On a motion by Ms. Parsons, second Mr. Renninghoff, the Board of Education unanimously approved the minutes to the meeting of March 14, 2012 as amended.

Communications: Mrs. Flanagan received two communications regarding the budget being too high.

Mr. Renninghoff received an anonymous letter. The writer was concerned about enrollment projections not matching actual enrollment figures. Attached were the two enrollment handouts from this year and last that supported the claim.

Mrs. Boyle attended the girls' basketball game at Mohegan Sun and was proud to watch the team become the first in Coganchoaug's history to win the State Championship. She said the turn out and support of the community was great. She asked if the Board ever recognized championship teams or if they might consider doing it.

Mrs. Boyle said she has neighbors who are concerned about the drop in ranking of our towns in Connecticut Magazine in the small town ranking. Durham dropped from number 9 to number 16. Education is one of the aspects that was measured.

Mrs. Boyle also has a neighbor who supports all day kindergarten.

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Viccaro reported that the administrative team has been exploring a student success plan mini-grant. The grants range from \$7,000 to \$10,000. They are working on their proposal and will be applying soon.

Mrs. Viccaro said Mark Ranelli of Shipman & Goodwin is representing the District this evening at the Planning & Zoning meeting in Durham. He will be requesting an extension of the requirement to build the support building within eighteen months of site plan approval. The District will be asking for a two year extension to allow time for fundraising. A public hearing is required and will be scheduled soon.

Mrs. Viccaro said the annual Coginchaug Scholarship Ball is being held this weekend.

Mrs. Viccaro said the high school musical, Legally Blonde, is being held on March 29, 30 and 31. She hopes everyone will attend.

Mrs. Viccaro said the District has received a \$500 grant for the concussion program. She is working with Dr. Jubelirer on new policies and procedures. She hopes to pilot the program with a few students this spring and to be ready for fall.

Mrs. Viccaro said she is still working with the State regarding the questions on the Strategic School Profiles. The person she needs to talk to has been on vacation and will be back next week. She should have more data to report at the next meeting.

District Copier Lease: Mrs. Mangini said they have been able to work with our current copier company to renegotiate the copier lease. Five older copiers are being replaced. We will have lower monthly payments and lower maintenance costs. The projected savings with the new agreement are \$432.00 per month.

On a motion by Mrs. Flanagan, second Mrs. Boyle, the Board of Education unanimously approved the new copier lease as presented.

2012-13 Budget Discussion: Mrs. Viccaro said the administrative team met last week and came up with cuts that total \$134,000.

Mrs. Mangini distributed handouts and reviewed the proposed cuts made by central office. They include a reduction of \$6,600 for shipping and handling, \$5,000 for the revision to the copier contract, \$8,550 in various reductions based on Mr. Renninghoff's suggestions from last week, \$12,000 in savings from a fuel oil bid opened today, reductions to the technology lease of \$4,554, a cut in athletic supplies of \$4,631, a cut to athletic purchased services of \$6,604 and a reduction of \$4,300 in the Central Office PD account. It is suggested that the professional development account be used to offset membership in CABA for Board members at \$4,300. There is also a \$2,000 cut to Central Office of postage and supplies, \$8,000 in various Buildings & Grounds accounts, a reduction of \$35,000 for a .5 art position and corresponding medical benefits and an increase of \$39,200 for reading support.

Board members expressed concern about cutting professional development money for staff with the current curriculum changes happening in favor of the CABA membership for Board members.

Each of the administrators were asked to review the specific cuts made in their buildings.

At the high school a significant cut is to eliminate a teaching overage for one teacher at a savings of \$4,500. Most of the schools have been able to cut their postage line item due to using more email with parents. Other cuts are spread across all areas so that no one department or subject is being effected too greatly. The most significant cut at the school level is at Lyman with the elimination of 3/4 math text it was determined are not needed and by renegotiating with the salesman for better pricing to the texts they are purchasing. Potential cuts at the school level total \$40,343.

Mrs. Emory reviewed the Pupil Personnel Department cuts totaling \$30,500. The largest cut is for out of district tuition; \$17,000 but she cautioned members that she never really knows what the needs will be from one year to the next.

There was concern that our cost per pupil continues to rise each year while our support and supplies budgets continue to decline. We are now in the upper third of our DRG for cost per pupil. Money is being shifted to fund one side of the budget at the expense of the other. Mrs. Flanagan questioned whether the cut to instructional supplies may be having an effect on test scores.

Mrs. Emory said the Pupil Personnel Department services students at all levels in the District and encompasses many services beyond special education. They do not function in isolation.

Mrs. Viccaro distributed a handout on staffing proposals for adding more reading services. The administrative team is suggesting adding back literacy tutors next year instead of a reading consultant.

The schools had very positive results with the tutors who were hired with ARRA funding two years ago. They are proposing adding four tutors next year, one at each elementary school and one at Memorial School. In the following year they would like to add one at Strong and one at Coginchaug. The cost for the four part-time tutors will be \$39,200.

The elementary administrators said they were very fortunate to find very qualified people to fill the part-time positions and are hopeful to be able to do so again.

Mr. Fulton questioned whether adding K-2 math tutors now would also be a benefit. Dr. Berry said the priority for now is reading; math can be added later. Mrs. Brimecombe suggested that a mid year addition of math tutors might also be considered. It would save money in the budget and give the schools time to assess the needs after working more with the common core.

Ted Lombardo, Athletic Director at Coginchaug, distributed a handout showing account activity in the high school athletic activity account. He explained that money is transferred into the account from the general fund to pay for referees and tournament fees. Gate receipts offset some of the additional expenses that are paid each year from the activity fund for things such as Red Cross training, plaques and banners, field repairs etc.

Mrs. Flanagan questioned the increase in the stipend budget of \$33,000. She did not understand why it is increasing by 12.4%. She challenged the Board to eliminate the increase in the stipend budget.

Mrs. Boyle asked Mr. Lombardo if he would provide the Board with a schedule of uniform purchases. Mr. Lombardo did that a couple of years ago but will provide the Board with an update.

Regarding the potential stipend cut, Mr. Hennick explained that some of the increases are contractual. The only way to reduce it may be to cut programs or clubs. He would want to see participation rates before they start to do that.

Mr. Hauser said if we have a substantial cut in programming we would need to file a report to the NEASC accreditation committee.

Mrs. Viccaro explained that \$25,000 was cut from the stipend budget last year. It was added back because contractually it was owed.

Mrs. Flanagan said the Board needs feedback on where budget adjustments are applied. They are comparing figures from year to year and need the information. She would like to know where the \$25,000 came from because the budget balanced. For the next meeting Mrs. Flanagan would like to see a report on stipends spent in 10-11, projected in 11-12 and proposed for 12-13.

Mr. Hicks pointed out that the high school does not have a drama production next year so there should not be any stipend money to support it. He was told that was an oversight and it will be corrected.

Mr. Renninghoff asked that the requested report be emailed to members ahead of the meeting so they will have a chance to review it.

Mr. Hicks feels a 7th grade teacher can be cut at Strong School. He would like it to be reviewed further and a report made next week.

Mr. Renninghoff questioned the increase of \$7,052 in electricity at Coginchaug for lighting a field that has no lights. He does not expect that the field will have lights on it by next year so he thinks it should not be budgeted for. The high school usage will also be reviewed before the next meeting.

Mrs. Flanagan questioned the increase in the communication account for two-way radios. She also asked if legal services could be cut further, now that the high school project is complete.

Mr. Renninghoff would like to see a list of who has cell phones and what plans they have.

Ms. Parsons suggested that cutting two teachers at Strong makes as much sense as cutting one. She would like to have that reviewed as well.

The following items will be reviewed at the next meeting: stipends, staffing, CRHS electrical, two-way radios, athletics.

Mrs. Flanagan suggested that the percentage cut needs to be down a full percent from the Superintendent's proposed budget.

On a motion from Mr. Hicks, second Mr. Renninghoff, the Board of Education unanimously approved to adjourn at 11:05 p.m.

Susan Gaudreau