

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, March 27, 2019 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, Durham, Connecticut.

Board members present: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino (arrived late).

Board members absent: Mrs. Geraci

Administration present: Dr. Veronesi, Superintendent of Schools and Mrs. Neubig, Business Manager.

Mr. Moore called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### **Approval of Agenda**

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to approve the agenda, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Dr. Taylor. Motion passed unanimously.*

### **Public Comment**

Annika Liss, sixth grade student, explained that she was planning on taking Latin next year and would be very disappointed if they were not given that option.

### **Next Board Meeting - April 3, 2019 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School**

Mr. Moore explained that they will also talk about a public hearing that will be necessary on the bonding proposal at the April 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting as well. It will be a public hearing just on the bond issue, not on the whole budget.

### **2019-2020 Budget Discussion**

Dr. Veronesi explained that she will be sharing her final proposal tonight in a way that's as easily understandable as possible. The budget that had been proposed on February 13<sup>th</sup> was an overall net budget increase of .06 percent and a gross budget increase of 2.44 percent, the amount the community would be voting on. In that budget, there was a staffing increase of 4.7. Through the budget discussions, there have really been two topics raised, staffing in general and in particular the discussion about Latin and ABA. The first proposal was for a reduction in Latin of .5 at the middle school and a reduction of .4 at the high school, with the plan for a gradual elimination of the Latin program over the course of 3 years. At the board's last meeting, that proposal was modified to say that the reduction will be implemented after next year with Latin being eliminated at the middle school, but maintain Latin at the high school without plans for elimination.

The other discussion regarding staffing had to do with the proposed changes in the ABA schedule as well as ABA compensation. At last week's meeting, Dr. Veronesi stated that she would meet with the ABA staff to see if the alignment of staffing schedule with student needs and the alignment of staffing schedule

with other people in the district could be accomplished. They have made the decision to maintain the ABA schedule and compensation as it currently exists.

There had also been a request by the board to reduce the budget by \$708,000, which includes the amount of \$114,000 for the TRB responsibility and the \$596,000 of proposed ECS cuts to the towns. Dr. Veronesi had also been asked to maintain level staffing as closely as possible.

Dr. Veronesi reviewed that they had received very favorable and unexpected insurance bid. The request to maintain staffing levels meant that there needed to be changes to the original proposal. The math coach at Strong has been removed and they have decreased the math interventionist at Coginchaug by .4. The special education coach has been removed from the proposal as well as the special education teacher at Lyman. Since last week, two additional cuts have been added, one is a .5 cut in the Director of Organizational Development position and a .5 Central Office non-union cut in the Business Office.

Dr. Veronesi had talked at the last board meeting about removing the library media specialist at the elementary school, but they believe that is a position that should be maintained. The .2 special education increase at the pre-K for the three-year-olds, the 1.0 math interventionist at Memorial, .5 Spanish at Strong and the .1 increase in Social Studies at Coginchaug all remain. An addition is maintaining the current ABA structure as it exists.

Tonight, Dr. Veronesi maintains the suggested reductions of the .4 Latin at Coginchaug, the .5 Latin at Strong, the grade 6 at Memorial and the .2 decrease at Coginchaug. Total staffing change is a .3 increase from this year to next, with a salary impact of a reduction funded at 98 percent of \$304,902.

The other request Dr. Veronesi had been asked was to reduce initial expenditures which had been an increase of \$899,855 and to reduce further by \$708,594. In removing the staffing reductions from that \$708,000, \$403,692 remained to be cut. They worked to do that with the least impact on students. There had been an insurance meeting on Monday afternoon with the broker and received the good news that the insurance renewal proposal was going to be a decrease of \$500,000 but, after further discussions, that actually came in at a \$618,000 savings.

With the insurance savings and staffing cuts, the decrease was \$99,000 more than requested in meeting the requested decrease and the level staffing. Dr. Veronesi recommended that the \$99,000 be allocated to capital reserve for the track and the turf which has been historically under-funded. The net budget is now proposed at \$34, 793,467 million with a gross change of a .52 increase and a net change of -1.93. With this new proposal, the district is \$93,573 below the MBR.

Dr. Veronesi is aware that the board has received quite a few emails about the proposed cut in Latin and that the Board would like to have some discussion about that.

Mrs. Neubig then reviewed the impact on the towns and explained that, applying the enrollment percentages to each town and the Governor's proposed ECS grant cuts, Durham would see an increase of \$227,000 over last year. Middlefield, because of a large enrollment swing, will see a decrease of \$320,000 over last year. She reminded everyone that the proposed ECS grant cuts may, in fact, change and the overall picture could improve.

Mr. Moore felt that this is very responsible as far as the impact on the communities and shows that the district has steadily reduced the budget over the last five years with only a very minor increase over the last five or six years. There are proposed reductions in administrative overhead as well as other positions.

He did state that the budget did not meet what he would like and he would like to offer more, but felt that it did assume the loss of funding to the towns.

Mr. Yamartino felt that this was really good news in terms of approaching the MBR and he was happy to see the ABA continue to be funded as it is. He was also happy to see some of the interventionists being maintained, particularly in math. He also mentioned the library media specialist and was happy to see that included as well. Mr. Yamartino was not sure how Latin will play out and does feel that the district needs to continue to offer it. He was also pleased to see cuts made at Central Office and was happy to see the SRO maintained. Overall, Mr. Yamartino is very pleased but mentioned that he had requested cutting the capital, not increasing it. He had hoped to either delay some of the capital or shift it to the bonding issue so that when there is significant savings next year with closing a school, we would be able to claim more of the savings. He was not advocating a permanent decline in capital as he felt that it could be more heavily funded in the coming years.

Mr. Moore mentioned that the Governor's budget is only estimated at this point and the towns could be put in a penalty situation if they go much below that. Mr. Augur stated that they would have 30 days to cure that and could put the money back into capital at that time.

Dr. Veronesi explained that there had been a .5 decrease in the Central Office business office from last year to this year and this current proposal results in a 1.0 decrease over the span of two years.

Mr. Yamartino is aware of the hard work it took for the administrators to get to this point and thanked them for their efforts.

Mr. Hicks agreed that an incredible amount of work has gone on and he feels the budget is in good shape. Mrs. Petrella thanked Dr. Veronesi, Mrs. Neubig and the administrative staff for really doing a yeoman's job to make changes to the budget to absorb the amount of money that is being lost from the state as well as the addition of the TRB yet still maintain a quality education that we can be proud of.

Mr. Augur is okay with the budget level, but feels that they could still talk about whether Latin should be offered in the middle school. Dr. Veronesi felt that that really is a board discussion because her proposal would remain the same, based on the interest that's been demonstrated by students. Mr. Augur felt that they should have that discussion, but since it would not impact the budget, it did not have to happen right now.

Dr. Taylor felt that they should discuss Latin as it impacts the individual personnel. He would like to see Latin continued to be offered in the middle school, at least for next year, and that would give the board time to evaluate the language program as a whole. Dr. Taylor would recommend that the district continues to offer Latin as an entry-level class for next year's students in seventh grade. Mr. Augur asked when students normally make those selections and Mr. Sadinsky stated that choices are usually made around the middle of May. Dr. Veronesi explained that if the current staffing levels are maintained at Strong, it would mean that students who have selected Latin as second language end up taking Latin because many of those students choose Spanish as their first choice and that would not be available. Mrs. Petrella asked if those students usually continue in Latin in eighth grade and Mr. Sadinsky explained that the reason they wait until mid-May for the first choice is that it is after the students' official visit when they meet with the language teachers. Mr. Sadinsky believes there are over 40 students taking Latin in eighth grade and there are 20 students presently enrolled in Latin I at Coginchaug, but he wasn't sure how many of those would actually end up at Coginchaug. He felt that is pretty typical for Latin enrollment.

Mr. Falcone stated that there are currently 46 students in Latin at Strong, 20 requested Latin for next year, 25 requested Spanish and one would not be taking a language. Going back to this year, there had been 22 students in eighth grade Latin that actually came to Coginchaug and 17 of them requested Latin, 4 requested Spanish and one did not take a language. Going back to the previous year, there had been 33 students in eighth grade Latin, 27 requested Latin, 6 requested Spanish and going to the prior year, 32 students were in eighth grade Latin, 24 requested Latin, 8 requested Spanish. Mr. Augur verified that the enrollment numbers for this year are not known yet for Coginchaug as it will impact the actual number of students coming in. Mr. Falcone also explained that Latin IV and V numbers are low and Spanish V is higher. With the declining enrollment, holding a Latin program with 17 kids, 27 kids, 24 kids, the numbers are dwindling. Mr. Augur agreed that it didn't make sense to hold a full-time person to cover two sections of Latin for a small number of students.

Mr. Moore agreed that this is not a financial decision at this point and is more of a policy decision. Dr. Taylor felt that the program has been responsibly reduced based on the demand and this is more about what is being offered to students. He was fine with delaying any vote on Latin, but warned that the window may pass and it will be done.

Dr. Veronesi asked what information the board would want to see besides historical enrollment and what the possible outcomes might be. Mr. Augur suggested that it may not be enough to offer two classes. Mr. Sadinsky doesn't have the projections yet for this coming year, but if Latin is only offered in seventh grade, two students would pick it as their first choice and there would be a significant increase in first-choice Spanish which then may be an increase in instructional time. He believes that part of the conversation should be about the district wants to place students and work towards everyone getting their first choice. Mr. Augur asked if it would be possible to find an employee to teach two Latin and however many other classes in Spanish. Mr. Sadinsky stated that there are dual-certified personnel, but he wasn't sure they could find that.

Dr. Veronesi summarized that she has looked at different methods for continuing to offer Latin and if they are saying that they want students to be able to get their first choice, then there may be a headcount impact somewhere else.

Dr. Friedrich asked if it's possible for the administration to make adjustments to headcounts during the year and wondered why the board was having this discussion. Mr. Moore stated that it was because a proposal was made to cut .5 in the budget. Dr. Friedrich felt that that was not a commitment, but was just a budget number. He would like to get through the business of tonight and talk about this issue at a later time. Mr. Yamartino felt that it did need to be decided before May and also asked if the teacher at the high school could go to Strong to teach Latin. He suggested that the board could add the .5 back at Strong and take that extra money out of the proposed capital, keeping the budget the same. Dr. Veronesi explained that they have looked at shared staffing and scheduling prohibits that. She stated that they would need to go back and look at the schedule and historical and projected enrollment.

Mr. Moore summarized that there is a sense that the board would like to keep Latin in seventh grade and figure out how to do it. Dr. Friedrich asked if it would make sense to take some money from the capital budget and move it into teaching salaries. Dr. Veronesi felt it would only be a slight adjustment and they could just over-expend the salary line by the additional FTE that was added. It was then generally agreed to move forward with the budget as it is and they will have a follow-up discussion about Latin before May. While Dr. Veronesi does not devalue the Latin program or teachers, she stated that she would choose a different area of FTE to increase.

Mrs. Petrella commented that she has been on the board for two years and doesn't believe that Dr. Veronesi would cut anything that would hurt the kids. She also believes they try to utilize the staff as best is possible.

### **2019-2020 Budget**

#### **A. Finalize 2019-2020 Budget for Public Hearing**

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to approve to go to public hearing on the 2019-2020 Regional School District 13 education budget on April 10, 2019 with a gross budget of \$37,010,579.*

*In favor of approving to go to public hearing on the 2019-2020 Regional School District 13 education budget on April 10, 2019 with a gross budget of \$37,010,579: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed unanimously.*

#### **B. Vote to hold Referendum on 2019-2020 Budget**

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to approve to hold a referendum on the 2019-2020 Regional School District 13 education budget on May 7, 2019, preceded by a district meeting to be held on May 6, 2019.*

*In favor of approving to hold a referendum on the 2019-2020 Regional School District 13 education budget on May 7, 2019, preceded by a district meeting to be held on May 6, 2019: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed unanimously.*

### **Bonding for Capital Projects**

**Consider and act upon a resolution with respect to recommendations for an appropriation and borrowing authorization for costs related to the design, construction and implementation of various capital improvements to District schools, facilities and property, and related improvements and work, the setting of a public hearing with respect to such recommendations, and related matters.**

Mr. Moore reviewed that this is the \$6.9 million that has been talked about which stays within the debt service currently in the budget and allows the most needed projects to be completed.

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to approve the resolution with respect to recommendations for an appropriation and borrowing authorization for costs related to the design, construction and implementation of various capital improvements to District schools, facilities and property, and related improvements and work, the setting of a public hearing with respect to such recommendations, and related matters and to waive a reading of said resolution, copies of which are available here and in the District's office, but to include it as part of the minutes.*

Dr. Taylor asked if this is the language that will be on the vote itself and felt that they should change the word various to critical to carry the import of these improvements. Mr. Roraback mentioned critical systems and safety improvements as possible wording. Dr. Friedrich questioned being too specific on the wording as it would invite the question as to what is really critical. Mr. Hicks felt that the language was probably carefully chosen by an attorney. Mr. Yamartino stated that the motion was to approve the

resolution and the resolution calls out in detail what will specifically be addressed. Dr. Veronesi also mentioned that next Wednesday's public hearing will be an opportunity to review all of the identified projects.

*In favor of approving the resolution with respect to recommendations for an appropriation and borrowing authorization for costs related to the design, construction and implementation of various capital improvements to District schools, facilities and property, and related improvements and work, the setting of a public hearing with respect to such recommendations, and related matters and to waive a reading of said resolution, copies of which are available here and in the District's office, but to include it as part of the minutes: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Caramanella, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed unanimously.*

Mr. Moore stated that the hearing on the bonding will be held on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 at 7:30 PM and the hearing on the budget is on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

### **Field Storage Building Discussion**

Mr. Moore reviewed that the board discussed this issue several months ago and there had been concern about the board including it in the budget as a direct item. Mr. Yamartino had suggested a separate vote on this by the general public and they have spoken to the board's attorney about this to decide if it should be included with the referendum. The attorney suggested that, because the value of this project is so low, that it be brought to a district meeting instead and have a vote on it at a district meeting and then issue a five-year note on it which would be consistent with the financing offer from the booster clubs. The debt service from that would hit the debt service line and may not have an impact on the debt service.

The building committee will need to compile further information and bring it back to a district meeting in the future. Numbers have not been refined yet. The district meeting would essentially be the two towns voting. Dr. Veronesi explained that because the project is less than \$500,000, the vote can be done at a district meeting rather than a referendum. She felt that the board would not be confident in bringing the numbers to the public without a timeline and details associated with the project. She suggested that several questions remain and she would like to be clear about what is brought to the public.

Dr. Friedrich summarized that this town vote would be to authorize the board to take notes for this project and it would have no impact on the budget. Mr. Moore felt that there would be quite a bit of room in the capital budget to support this. Mr. Augur reviewed that one of the reasons the board had wanted this as a referendum question is because it wasn't very long ago that something like this was voted down, yet now spending resources is being considered to go to a vote. Mr. Augur felt that they should ask the townspeople if they want the board to move forward with this. Mrs. Petrella was concerned that if it was done at a district meeting, only a handful of people would come out. Dr. Taylor echoed those feelings about concern about a district meeting vs. a referendum because of the fact that it was just voted down. Mr. Augur's concern would be that they would have already spent time and energy just to get to a district meeting. He felt that that question could be included on the referendum. Mr. Augur also felt that having it on the referendum also fits with their engagement policy to allow as many people as possible to vote.

Dr. Veronesi explained that the budget needs to be submitted to the paper on Friday, so if this is going to be on as part of the referendum, that may also need to be noticed. Mr. Moore suggested the wording be should the district consider construction of a field house with contributions from the various associations that have offered and move ahead with a plan to finance that. Mr. Yamartino felt that the first part of the

question should be whether the school district accepts the contributions that have been offered and then study the plan to complete the construction of the project. Dr. Friedrich suggested, should the board pursue construction of a field house to be funded partially by public contributions. Mrs. Petrella added that they should include not to exceed a certain amount of money. Mr. Yamartino would not feel comfortable including a ceiling since they do not have definite numbers. He added that the original funding included volunteer labor and that never happened. This time, people have made a commitment to pledge money and he felt it was important to put that front and center. Mr. Moore felt it was important to put a range in for the cost so people don't think it's another \$800,000 project.

Dr. Veronesi suggested that the board vote on this tonight so it can go in the paper on Friday. Dr. Friedrich suggested that the board vote to request that Mr. Moore and Dr. Veronesi develop language and Mr. Hicks suggested that they speak with the attorneys, but the board could approve the concept tonight.

Mr. Moore reviewed that the language should include (1) should the board pursue it, (2) money offered by various groups and (3) the lower total cost. Dr. Taylor was under the impression that this project may get up to the \$300,000 to \$400,000 range. Mr. Moore stated that the information from Nick Faiella was that the building was around \$80,000, concrete is about \$20,000 or so, with a current total of about \$111,000. No bathrooms are being proposed. This would get a building built to protect the concrete and allow for storage of equipment. There would still be a plan to put in bathrooms and lights at a future date. Dr. Taylor is concerned that the board is trying to go around the public by sneaking in various improvements and additions over the next several years. Mr. Augur agreed and didn't feel that District 13 should be spending its time and energy on this right now without asking the public. Dr. Taylor felt that anything other than explaining that there will be further phases to the project is just dishonest.

Dr. Veronesi reminded everyone that the district will be having another referendum in November about the building alterations. Dr. Taylor felt that that was a much more reasonable time frame to be able to answer these questions. Mr. Yamartino also reminded everyone that the concrete that currently exists will deteriorate over time. This will come under the purview of the building committee and Mr. Augur stated that it can also be discussed further at the Utilization committee meeting tomorrow.

### **Communications**

Mr. Moore received a nice letter from John Waterman, Elizabeth Waterman, Christine Waterman and Abby Waterman about Latin. He also received letters from Mary Elizabeth Taylor, Alan Ward, Maya Lis about Latin and from Mark Longo on ABA. Maya Lis also wrote thanking helpers on Odyssey of the Mind.

Mr. Augur stated that he has received 110 responses to the engagement survey so far. He also received communication from Mr. Bradanini about the survey but hoped he would speak during public comment.

Mr. Moore asked if there would be the possibility of having a third party look at the results of the survey and Mr. Augur explained that, in the past, a teacher at the high school was approached to see if the students were interested in working with any of the data.

### **Public Comment**

Carl Stoup, from Durham, echoed Dr. Taylor's comments about the field storage/field house that is being proposed now is only the tip of the iceberg. There will be additional costs each year, including janitorial staff. There are empty buildings in the district that provide plenty of room for storage, though it may not

be convenient. He felt that this is being back-doored in since it was overwhelmingly voted down not too long ago. There are sealers that can be applied to protect the concrete for far less money. Mr. Stoup stated that the public is getting tired of being ignored when they vote and it is then overridden.

Craig Bradanini, president of the teachers' union, stated that the union's executive board has determined that it is not in the best interest of the teachers to participate in the Board of Education engagement survey. The executive board respectfully requested that the board destroys any survey results that have been received. Their concerns are regarding confidentiality, reliability and validity, compilation and uses of the data gleaned from the survey.

**Adjournment**

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Education.*

*In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried unanimously.*

Meeting was adjourned at 8:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz  
Alwaz First

**RESOLUTION OF BOARD OF EDUCATION  
OF REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 13**

RESOLVED, That the officers of the Board of Education and the Superintendent are authorized to cause a district meeting to be called for the purpose of conducting a public hearing in the Robert O. Mason Library of Cogenchaug Regional High School on Wednesday, April 3, 2019 at 7:30 P.M. with respect to the following recommendations of the Board, which recommendations are hereby approved:

1. That \$6,900,000 be for costs related to the design, construction and implementation of various capital improvements to District schools, facilities and property, contemplated to include:

- On the Cogenchaug Regional High School/Frank W. Strong Middle School campus, resurfacing of all or portions of Pickett Lane and replacement of the Pickett Lane culvert near the former Francis Korn Elementary School;
- At Cogenchaug Regional High School, installation of a water line connection and sprinkler system, ADA upgrades to the auditorium and parking lot, and conversion of the heating system boiler from oil to natural gas;
- At Frank W. Strong Middle School, conversion of the heating system boiler from oil to natural gas;
- At Memorial Middle School, upgrades to the heating, air conditioning and ventilation systems including conversion from steam to hot water heating, replacement of the building automation system, lighting upgrades, and replacement of all or portions of the media center and the cafeteria roofs;
- At Frederick F. Brewster Elementary School, upgrades to the heating, air conditioning and ventilation systems including replacement of boilers, upgrades to the building automatic systems, an electrical equipment preventative maintenance thermal scan, installation of a sprinkler system, replacement of exterior doors, investigation of septic system, and installation of an emergency generator; and
- related work and improvements.

The appropriation may be spent for design, demolition, installation and construction costs, equipment, materials, testing costs, disposal costs, architects' fees, engineering fees, construction management costs and fees, grant application and management costs, legal fees, net interest on borrowings, other financing costs, and other expenses related to the projects. The Regional School District 13 Building Committee, established by the District Board of Education as the building committee for each of the projects, shall be authorized to determine the scope and particulars of

each of the projects, and may reduce or modify the scope of each of the projects as desirable, and the entire appropriation may be spent on the projects as so reduced or modified. The District anticipates receiving grants from the State of Connecticut for a portion of the eligible costs of various of the projects to defray in part the appropriation.

2. That \$6,900,000 bonds and temporary notes of the District be authorized to finance the appropriation. The amount of the bonds authorized shall be reduced by the amount of grants received by the District for the projects.

3. That the Chairman of the District Board of Education and the District Treasurer, or such officer or body delegated by the Board, be authorized to require the District and its member towns to comply with applicable federal income tax requirements for tax-exempt bonds.

4. That the Chairman of the District Board of Education and the District Treasurer, or such officer or body delegated by the Board, be authorized to make representations and enter into written agreements for the benefit of holders of the bonds or notes to provide secondary market disclosure information.

5. That the Regional School District 13 Building Committee be authorized to contract with architects, engineers, contractors and others in the name and on behalf of the District with respect to the projects, to approve design and construction expenditures for the projects, and to exercise such other powers as are necessary or appropriate to complete the projects.

6. That the aforesaid bond, note and temporary note authorization shall be submitted to referendum vote by the electors and citizens qualified to vote in the towns of the District.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the applicable projects be referred to the Durham Planning and Zoning Commission and the Middlefield Planning and Zoning Commission for a report, to the extent applicable, pursuant to Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes.