

Board of Education

Regional District 13

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, October 14, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. in the music room of Brewster School. Board members present: Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Currin, Ms. Gara, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, and Ms. Parsons. Absent: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Flanagan and Mrs. Golschneider. Also present: Mrs. Viccaro and Mr. Melnik

Mr. Hennick called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m.

Public Comment: Donia Viola of Durham asked for the minutes to reflect that the board meeting began late even though there was a quorum at 7:30 p.m.

Mrs. Viola spoke regarding the replacement of the oil tank at Korn. She stated that the oil tank was 21 years old and was disappointed that the tank was not replaced last year since the life expectancy of the tank was 20 years.

Mrs. Viola also spoke regarding the track and field project. She is concerned that the proposed current layout of the field will be going from east to west and she feels the sunlight will be detrimental to the players.

Mrs. Viola is also concerned about the use of artificial turf in the athletic field. She cited several studies indicating the potential health risks artificial turf may be linked to. She feels that the District should reconsider its current design and think about implementing natural turf as opposed to synthetic turf.

Next Board Meeting: The next regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting will be October 28, 2009 at Korn School.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second by Ms. Gara the agenda was unanimously approved.

Mr. Hicks made a motion, second by Dr. Ochterski, to accept the minutes of the meeting of September 29, 2009 as amended. Mr. Currin, Ms. Gara, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, and Ms. Parsons voted yes. Mrs. Boyle abstained.

Communications: Mrs. Boyle commented on how wonderful it was to receive a high school communication email and asked how many parents are receiving the email. Mrs. Viccaro said that 82% of the parents at the high school are currently receiving their communications in this new email format and that Dr. Wysowski was very instrumental in getting it up and running.

Mr. Hicks said that he recently visited the new library wings at both Korn and Coginchaug and thought the rooms were stunning and a wonderful addition.

Dr. Ochterski attended the French and Spanish Honor Society Induction and was happy to see how many students were inducted.

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Viccaro said that the Transportation Survey went out to all parents of the District a few weeks ago and she has received most of them back. She said she will share the results of this survey at the next Board meeting.

Mrs. Viccaro said that Tom Vannini from the Department of Homeland Security was coming to inspect the District's new security system on 10/15/09.

Mrs. Viccaro handed out a memo from Mark McQuillan, Commissioner of Education to the Board members regarding the 2009 CAPT Recognition Letters. The District had 16 students who received a letter from the Commissioner acknowledging their achievement at the Advanced level of all the CAPT subtests.

Mrs. Viccaro recently met with Emergency Management and the First Selectmen of both Durham and Middlefield regarding the H1N1 flu. She stated that the information is constantly changing and that the CDC information is different from the VPN website. She has been in contact with Dr. Wilkinson and continues to be updated. Mrs. Viccaro stated that the District is currently healthy.

Mrs. Viccaro said that 6 people from the District will be attending a Power School Seminar thanks to funding the District received from ARRA. Power School is a student information system which provides real-time student data such as students' schedules, attendance, and grades that are all viewable from any internet capable computer.

Mrs. Viccaro participated in a webinar aimed at helping districts craft surveys.

Mrs. Viccaro was contacted by the Warm the Children Program again this year and will be connecting them with families in the District who have fallen on hard times that would like to receive assistance in purchasing a coat or warm clothing for their child this winter.

Mrs. Viccaro stated that the Administrators will be participating in a workshop with the bus drivers.

Mrs. Viccaro said that the Coginchaug Valley Education Foundation's 2nd annual Spelling Bee will be held on November 6, 2009 at 7pm at the High School.

Mrs. Viccaro said that the Annual Report is close to completion and will be to the Board members soon. Mrs. Boyle asked that when putting this year's report together we be mindful of the cost and keep the printing simple – black and white in lieu of a color cover.

Mrs. Viccaro said the Crisis Manuals are being updated.

Mrs. Viccaro asked the Board if they wanted to have an Open House to show the community the new Reading Rooms at Korn and Coginchaug. Mrs. Boyle suggested a good day to hold the Open House would be during the Craft Fair on November 7th. Everyone agreed this would be at great time with high traffic. Mrs. Viccaro will discuss this idea with both principals and get back to the Board.

Business Managers Report: Mr. Melnik informed the Board that he is starting to put together the Budget Calendar for next year and will have it for them at the next Board meeting.

Mr. Melnik told the Board that the auditors were currently at Central Office and will be there until the end of this week and then return back in 2 weeks for another week.

Mr. Melnik told the Board that the Cafeteria contract was signed and adjustments in pay and benefits have been issued.

Mr. Melnik said that the current electric contract is up in December and that they are currently shopping for rates. He stated that there were several ways the District could go when shopping for rates such as reverse auctions or using a broker. He also stated that they were investigating using Shipman and Goodwin as a liaison. Mr. Melnik said that the District was in a very positive position for shopping for rates because of its low electric usage in the summer months and the fact that companies are comfortable knowing that a school district would not default in payment. Mr. Hennick suggested that Mr. Melnik get 2 different rates to use as comparison.

Mr. Melnik also informed the Board that oil prices have been locked in.

ARRA Update: Mrs. Viccaro updated the Board on the ARRA Grant.

- The 2 part-time ABA Therapist and Literacy Specialist positions have been advertised and the interview process is being done next week.
- The Brewster playground committee will be meeting soon to discuss plans for the new playground. They will have to go out to bid again and put together a new package that will incorporate the new

special education guidelines provided in the grant. Mrs. Viccaro thinks it will be spring before they go out to bid.

- They will be going out for bids on the new Special Education van.
- Rich Fielding and Amy Emory will be working together on the ordering of all the new computer software and computers that are to be purchased using the grant funds as these purchases all need to be tied back to Special Education and the IEP.

Mrs. Boyle asked when Mrs. Viccaro thought the playground would be completed. Mrs. Viccaro said she was unsure at this point.

New Business:

Board Topics/Presentations: Mr. Hennick asked the Board members to email Rosemary Allen a list of topics they would like to discuss at the Board retreat.

Mr. Hennick also asked the Board members to compile a list of things they would like presented at future Board meeting. This list should also be emailed to Mrs. Allen.

Committee Reports

Policy Committee: Mr. Hicks said that the Policy Committee met on Tuesday morning and discussed several items such as:

- Changing the bell times at Korn and Brewster
- Fundraising maximums
- Use of school facilities to allow commercial advertisement
- Access to school records

Magnet School Steering Committee: Mr. Hicks said the Magnet School Steering Committee met recently and enrollment was down. The school had budgeted for 755 students but only 734 students are currently enrolled. District 13 has 9 students currently attending – 2 6th graders; 2 7th graders and 5 8th graders. Mr. Hicks stated that that number is quite low and in the past the District has sent upwards of 24 but has never met its max of 30 students to the Magnet School. Mr. Hicks said that the Partnership agreement between the District and the Magnet School is up for renewal this year and Meriden is going to want to change the agreement to make the District pay for any unpaid seats that they do not fill. Mr. Hicks stated that the current agreement states that we do not have to pay for any seat not being filled and feels we need to be careful when negotiating this agreement. Mr. Currlin thought that it would be smart not to renegotiate as the District is grandfathered in with its current agreement and we could keep on not having to pay a penalty for seats not filled. Mr. Hicks said while that is great for District 13, Wallingford currently sends 17 students and does not have a vote and that is not fair.

Building Committee: Mr. Currlin started off by addressing the issue of the athletic field's orientation that was mentioned during public comment by Mrs. Viola and in an article in the Middletown Press. Mr. Currlin said that while the idea of switching the baseball field and athletic complex was discussed, financially it was not feasible and so it was decided that it would be built in its current footprint.

Mr. Currlin also addressed the concern Mrs. Viola had with the artificial turf. Mr. Currlin stated that the athletic fields recently built by surrounding high schools in Meriden, Wallingford and Middletown all used artificial turf. Mr. Currlin said that the upkeep for the artificial turf is minimal as opposed to the high upkeep it will be to maintain the natural turf. Mr. Currlin stated that the current test done in New York in May of 2009 indicates that this infill does not pose a health risk to players and in addition to the New York test the State of Connecticut is currently running its own test. Mr. Currlin added that two of the three fields being tested were put in and designed by our own landscape architects and preliminary indications give no reason to suggest that the Committee move in another direction.

Mr. Currlin said the bid documents should be completed by the end of October and then they will go out to bid by the end of this year / beginning of next.

Mr. Currin said that the bathroom/support building is being designed so that they will know where to put the plumbing and electrical in the slab. The building is not being built as part of this project.

Mrs. Boyle asked about the outcome of the recent Planning and Zoning meeting and Mr. Currin said that the project was passed with exceptions. Mr. Currin stated that Planning and Zoning is going to be holding a Public Hearing on October 21, 2009 to discuss a special permit for the lights for the athletic complex.

Communication Committee: Mrs. Boyle said that the Communications Committee met recently and each member was assigned a school that they would be responsible for. Mrs. Boyle said that Mrs. Adams prepared a letter that went out to each PTO or PTA in the District to let that group know who the committee liaison would be for their group. Mrs. Boyle was very happy with the responses she's received so far.

Mrs. Boyle wanted to point out to the Board that there will be a Technology Safety Meeting for Parents Tuesday, October 20, 2009 at 6:30 in the auditorium at Coginchaug. She also said that CABE will be holding a seminar on texting and Tweeting on the same day at 9:00 am at the Four Points Sheridan in Meriden. Mrs. Viccaro said she would be attending this seminar.

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

Virginia P. Antonelli