

Regional School District 12  
Board of Education  
Education Meeting Minutes  
Shepaug Valley School  
May 15, 2017

The Education Meeting of the Board of Education was called to order at 6:38 p.m., on Monday, May 15, 2017, by Chairman James Hirschfield. Present were Board members: Anthony Amato, Alan Brown, Gregory Cava, Michelle Gorra, Stephanie Kolnick (6:43), Jennifer Pote, Lisa Roush, Michael Sinatra, and Peter Tagley. Valerie Andersen was absent. Vacant seat: Bridgewater. Also present were: Patricia Cosentino, Ed.D., Superintendent; and Robert Giesen, Director of Finance and Operations.

Also present were: Cathy Colella, Principal at BFS / BS; Teresa DeBrito, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Karen Fildes, Director of Technology & Communications; Kim Gallo, Principal at SVS; Emily Judd, Principal at WPS; Allyson O'Hara, Director of Pupil Services; and Donald O'Leary, Director of Facilities.

### **SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

Dr. Cosentino began the evening by recognizing volunteers Sarah Foreman, Booth Free School; Ken Schultz, Washington Primary School; Christine Johnson, Shepaug Valley School; Ann Virbickas, Shepaug Valley School and District volunteers: Julie King and Tim Laughlin. Each volunteer was presented with a thank you gift. Chairman Hirschfield also thanked the volunteers and the BOE applauded all the volunteers for their time and support to the schools, staff and students of Region 12. Burnham School volunteer Christine Melatti was unable to attend but was also acknowledged.

Refreshments and photos followed at 6:48 p.m.  
The meeting resumed at 7:03 p.m.

**MOTION:** made by Anthony Amato, seconded by Michelle Gorra, to move item number 7 up in the agenda for K-12 STEM presentations.

**VOTE:** unanimous.

### **K-12 STEM**

Teresa DeBrito began the presentation explaining Next Generation Science Standards. Mrs. DeBrito introduced STEM/TAG teacher, Mary Ann Zoeller. To aid in her presentation, Mrs. Zoeller included students in Grades 1, 3 and 5. Members of the Board along with members in the audience were invited to the stations where the students demonstrated what was happening with science. Grade 1, Life Science, Pollinating; Grade 3, Physical Science, Magnets; Grade 5, Environmental Science, Oil Spill Clean-Up. Questions and discussion. Mrs. Zoeller shared that she visits 19 classrooms during the week at the elementary level.

Continuing with the science presentation, Teresa DeBrito gave some background information on MakerSpace. She introduced Principal Cathy Colella. Ms. Colella announced that Giselle Bazos, a Burnham School student, participated in the school level Invention Convention. Her invention, a Retainer Container, qualified her to the State level and from there Giselle was qualified to go on to the National level in Washington, D.C. Giselle demonstrated her Retainer Container to the Board. The Board wished her good luck in D.C.

Teacher, Sheila Gambino was introduced along with students who participate in what they have named, CAT Labs; Creative Advanced Technology Lab. Students who are enrolled in Ms. Gambino's PLTW classes, STEM classes and an afterschool pilot MakerSpace program, presented projects. Trip Caco demonstrated how his prototype was able to open a standard jar. Trip presented his project at the legislative building in Hartford. Seventh grade coders were students in the PLTW classes. Shepaug students participated in a global competition sponsored by DXC. Shepaug entrants in the DXC competition finished in first place (here this evening were Stanley Ambruso and Owen Hutchings). Another group of Shepaug coders, Annie Kuck and Madison Douskey, finished in second place and also presented their project. Both groups demonstrated their programs and explained the coding, challenges and how they incorporated Shepaug's Core Values. After all presentations, Mrs. DeBrito ended by stating she had applied for a Computer Science Grant at the high school level, and that Region 12 is part of the eleven districts in the State of Connecticut that received this grant. Mrs. DeBrito handed out and reviewed information titled: Program Improvement for Next Generation Science Standards in Grades K-5 and also a Sequence of Science Courses diagram.

### **TAG**

Mrs. Zoeller, who is also the TAG teacher, briefly spoke about the program. Currently, she works with six students between the elementary and middle schools. Mrs. Zoeller commented that in the upcoming school year she would like to work with Mrs. O'Hara to screen third graders to possibly identify more students who could benefit from the TAG program. Mrs. Zoeller thanked the Board for their support.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Carolann Dwyer, Bridgewater – Spoke on enrollment and tuition.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

*Approval of minutes:* Annual District Budget Meeting, May 1, 2017  
Business Meeting, May 1, 2017

### **REPORT OF THE CHAIR**

Mr. Hirschfield commented on the passing of the 2017/2018 School Budget and thanked all those who voted.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Cosentino reminded everyone of the Realtor Open House tomorrow, May 16. This will give realtors the opportunity to tour Shepaug. The event will take place from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Dr. Cosentino also reminded everyone of the upcoming concerts in the Region.

Dr. Cosentino reported on the resignations of Marc DiNicola, Educational Assistant at BFS effective May 5, 2017 and Catherine Satkowski, Paraprofessional at SVS effective May 19, 2017.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

*Approve revision to the 2016-2017 School Calendar:* Discussion on revising the 2016-2017 School Calendar and making June 21 a half day of school for students only.

**MOTION:** made by Michelle Gorra, seconded by Michael Sinatra, to approve revising the 2016-2017 School Calendar to reflect June 21 as a half day of school for students only.

**VOTE:** unanimous.

Verified were graduation dates for high school, June 17 at 10 a.m. and June 22 at 7 p.m. for middle school.

*Tuition change:* Alan Brown began the discussion. It was suggested to change the current tuition fee of \$7500 to \$5000. This would be a reduction for Grades K-5. Michelle Gorra shared that she had been to a meeting with the selectmen from the three towns to discuss tuition. Mark Lyon, Washington, and Barbara Henry, Roxbury, did not support the reduction and would find it difficult to bring this to their voters. It was mentioned that Bridgewater is currently offering incentives which already bring the tuition for Burnham School to \$5000. Curtis Read, Bridgewater, was not at the meeting. Discussion continued which included empty seat concept, per pupil cost, housing and area tuition rates in comparison to Region 12.

**MOTION:** made by Alan Brown, seconded by Michael Sinatra, to lower the tuition rate for K-5 to \$5000.

Discussion followed. Concerns mentioned were a district wide student acceptance, incremental cost and enrollment concerns. Alan Brown quoted the Region's policy and stated that these concerns were currently part of the Region's policy which is already in place. Discussion continued.

Alan Brown amended his motion:

**MOTION:** made by Alan Brown, seconded by Michael Sinatra, to reduce tuition in Grades K-5, throughout the Region for the upcoming 2017/18 school year, for only one year, to \$5000 with the caveat that the Region as a result, does not incur additional cost.

**VOTE:** in favor: Michael Sinatra, Jennifer Pote, Alan Brown, Lisa Kolnick, James Hirschfield, Michelle Gorra, Lisa Roush, Anthony Amato

Opposed: Greg Cava, Peter Tagley

Motion passed: 8 – 2

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MOTION:** made by Peter Tagley, seconded by Greg Cava, to go into Executive Session at 9:20 p.m. for discussion of attorney client privileged opinion re: elementary configuration.

**VOTE:** unanimous.

Chairman Hirschfield gave a 10 minute recess before going into Executive Session. Executive Session was relocated to room C25.

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The Board returned to public session at 9:40 p.m.

**MOTION:** made by Michelle Gorra, seconded by Jennifer Pote, to share the letter from Attorney Brochu.

**VOTE:** unanimous.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** made by Alan Brown, seconded by Jennifer Pote, to adjourn the meeting.

**VOTE:** unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 9:43 pm.

*sh/May 2017*