

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT
June 8, 2011

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Mr. Folan (left at 9:25 PM), Vice-chair Mrs. Rayhall, Mr. Adamo, Mr. Doyle, Dr. Switchenko, Mrs. Lambert, Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Haney

BOARD ABSENT: Dr. Sewall

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Ms. Ortiz, Directors Mrs. Banks and Mr. Nelson

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: No one

OTHERS PRESENT: general public, staff, administrators, news media

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mr. Folan called the June 8, 2011, Board of Education meeting to order at 7:15 P.M. in the Windham High School Library Media Center and apologized for the delay in the start of the meeting.

Mr. Folan asked for a motion to add to the agenda a re-vote of the School Improvement Grant due to modified language in the grant.

(257)Motion of Mrs. Rayhall, seconded by Mr. Doyle, that the Board of Education add to the agenda as an action item a re-vote of the School Improvement Grant due to modified language (D. Reference 5B).

On the motion: Aye, 8-0; unanimous

Mr. Folan asked for a motion to add to the agenda an executive session for the discussion of exempt documents pertaining to bargaining unit negotiations and personnel matters to take place following reference 4 on the agenda.

(258)Motion of Mr. Doyle, seconded by Dr. Switchenko, that the Board of Education add an executive session for the discussion of exempt documents pertaining to bargaining unit negotiations and personnel matters to the agenda to take place following reference 4.

On the motion: Aye, 8-0; unanimous

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Board and the public recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

May 25, 2011, Regular Board of Education meeting (Ref. 1)

(259)Motion of Mr. Doyle, seconded by Dr. Switchenko, that the Board of Education approve the May 25, 2011, Regular Board of Education minutes, Reference 1.

On the motion: Aye: Mr. Folan, Mrs. Rayhall, Mrs. Haney, Mr. Doyle, Dr. Switchenko, Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Lambert

Nay: No one

Abstained: Mr. Adamo

The motion passes: 7-0-1

June 1, 2011, Special Board of Education meeting minutes (Ref. 1A)

(260) Motion of Mrs. Lambert, seconded by Mr. Doyle, that the Board of Education approve the June 1, 2011, Special Board of Education minutes, Reference 1A, with the following amendments as noted by Mrs. Rayhall: adjournment time changed to 9:22 PM and inclusion of Wednesday, August 17, 2011, at 6:30 PM, as the date and time for the next Lighthouse Training session.

On the motion: Aye: Mrs. Rayhall, Mr. Adamo, Mrs. Haney, Mr. Doyle, Dr. Switchenko, Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Lambert

Nay: No one

Abstained: Mr. Folan

The motion passes: 7-0-1

STUDENT PRESENTATION

CABE Student Leadership Awards

CABE (Connecticut Association of Boards of Education) Student Leadership Awards were presented to high school students, Abbey Baldarelli, who did not attend the meeting, and Ryan Marsalisi, in recognition of their exceptional leadership skills. They were recognized by the Board members, Ms. Ortiz, Mr. Merlino and Mr. Harris and congratulated for achieving this exceptional honor.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mrs. Lambert congratulated the Middle School and High School band and chorus members for receiving excellent and superior recognitions at the two Music in the Parks events.

Ms. Ortiz spoke about this week's awards ceremonies at the Middle School and the High School acknowledging the exceptional students who were honored at each of these wonderful functions.

Ms. Ortiz read a correspondence from Mr. Wihbey stating that the First Lady of the State of Connecticut, Mrs. Malloy, has chosen Natchaug School to be the recipient of a personal donation of 500 books from the Scholastic Publishing Company. The generous donation from Mrs. Malloy has been received by the school and will supplement the literacy enrichment program.

Mr. Folan received correspondence from the Liberty Bank Foundation that Windham High School student, Pahola Almonte, is the recipient of a Liberty Bank Foundation scholarship. He also shared a card of appreciation from the Merlino family.

STUDENT COUNCIL

There was no report.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

(261) Motion of Mrs. Rayhall, seconded by Mr. Adamo, that the Board of Education enter into executive session at 7:25 PM for the discussion of exempt documents pertaining to bargaining unit negotiations and personnel matters.

On the motion: Aye, 8-0; unanimous.

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Mr. Folan, Vice-chair Mrs. Rayhall, Mr. Adamo, Mr. Doyle, Dr. Switchenko, Mrs. Lambert, Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Haney

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Ms. Ortiz, Directors Mrs. Banks, Mr. Nelson and Mr. Merlino

REGULAR SESSION RECONVENES

Chair Mr. Folan reconvened regular session at 8:42 P.M. and resumed the order of the agenda. He apologized for the delay.

CITIZENS/DELEGATIONS

Bob Morgan, Willimantic, said that Windham schools provided his daughter with a wonderful education and she now has her doctorate in veterinary medicine. He said that the traits she received while a student in the Windham schools cannot be purchased with money. He spoke highly of Mr. Merlino and said that the way he has been treated is not a good way to teach children.

Bernie D'Auteil, Willimantic, spoke about the way things were solved in previous times when people met at high noon on Main Street and pulled their guns. He was stopped from speaking because of his threatening words.

Peter Quercia, Willimantic, said he was happy that Windham did not release students early due to the heat. He lives next door to the school and can hear students yelling profanities in the parking lot. He said that he has called the high school many times and left messages but Mr. Merlino does not return his calls.

Mary Gallucci, Willimantic, said that she did not feel safe at the meeting. She spoke about Mr. Merlino's excellent credentials and his strong ties to the community. She asked that the differences be set aside and the challenges faced together.

Kendall Marquis, Windham High School student, presented a petition signed by students to keep Mr. Merlino as principal.

Carol Coley, Columbia, said that many people who were at the meeting to support Mr. Merlino left because the executive session was so lengthy. She said that since she spoke at the last meeting, she has heard from many more supporters of Mr. Merlino. She said that she did not understand why a waiver is not requested.

Jenny El Shakhs, Windham High School teacher, also said that many people left because of the long executive session and it was unfortunate that they didn't get to speak. She presented the Board with a petition signed by faculty and staff at the High School to keep Mr. Merlino as principal.

Mr. Folan apologized again for the long executive session but said when he met with the State on Friday, it was recommended that the Board hold an executive session and he was following those guidelines.

Rafael Calixto, Willimantic, said that he hopes the Board will keep the \$20,000 in the budget for the Middle School sports. He also said that some people indicated that they would not support the education budget until the issue with Mr. Merlino is resolved. He said that if a waiver can be gotten to keep Mr. Merlino as principal, then he should be given the opportunity to stay at the High School. He also said that Mr. Merlino lives in Windham and is committed to being the High School principal.

Mr. Folan said that the Board of Education will vote on the School Improvement Grant as written and another motion will be made regarding the waiver which is the Superintendent's decision.

SUMMARY ACTION

Personnel Action (Ref. 2)

(262)Motion of Dr. Switchenko, seconded by Mr. Adamo, that the Board of Education approve Reference 2 and the addendum distributed at tonight's meeting.

Resignations

- Melissa Kissane, Math Teacher/Windham High School effective June 20, 2011.
- Terri Bohn, Special Education Teacher/Windham High School effective June 30, 2011 for the purpose of retirement.
- [REDACTED], Speech Pathologist/Preschool Program effective May 26, 2011.
- Jessica Calvo, 1:1 LPN/Windham Middle School effective June 7, 2011.

Resignation (Addendum)

- Clare Rowland, Paraprofessional/Prospect Street Preschool Program effective June 20, 2011.

Appointment (Addendum)

- Mara Dumond, Data Consultant/Natchaug School effective September 1, 2011. Salary is MA/6th Yr/14, \$76,836, new position, SIG grant.

Leaves of absence

- Mary Provencher, Special Education Teacher/Windham Middle School, medical leave of absence from May 27, 2011 through June 20, 2011.
- Christina Conde, Kindergarten Teacher/Natchaug School, medical leave of absence from May 31, 2011, duration unknown.

Leave of absence (Addendum)

- Ada DeJesus/Bilingual Kindergarten/North Windham School, personal leave of absence September 1, 2011 through November 30, 2011.

Schedule A-2 appointments (see attached)

There was no discussion.

On the motion: Aye: Mr. Folan, Mr. Adamo, Mrs. Haney, Mr. Doyle, Dr. Switchenko, Mrs. Collins

Nay: Mrs. Rayhall

Abstained: Mrs. Lambert

The motion passes: 6-1-1

ACTION ITEMS

IDEA Grant (Ref. 3)

(263)Motion of Mrs. Rayhall, seconded by Mr. Doyle, that the Board of Education approve the submission of the IDEA grant application. There was no discussion.

On the motion: Aye, 8-0; unanimous

Carl D. Perkins Grant (Ref. 4)

(264)Motion of Mrs. Rayhall, seconded by Mr. Doyle, that the Board of Education approve the submission of the Carl D. Perkins grant application. It was noted that a corrected grant summary was distributed at tonight's meeting. There was no discussion.

On the motion: Aye, 8-0; unanimous

Approval of policies (Ref. 5 and Ref. 5A)

(265)Motion of Mr. Doyle, seconded by Mrs. Rayhall, that the Board of Education approve the Food Service Charging policy (3542.43) as submitted and the Educational Opportunities for Military Children policy (5118.2) including a change on the last page per Mrs. Haney's correction as noted under the second bullet to read "while living with the custodial parent **without** any tuition fee imposed."

On the motion: Aye, 8-0; unanimous

School Improvement Grant (SIG) (Ref. 5B)

(266)Motion of Mrs. Haney, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board of Education approve the submission of the School Improvement Grant (SIG) application which has been modified and updated by the Federal Government since the original vote of approval by the Board of Education. A re-vote on the submission of the grant application was requested by Board members due to language changes to the original grant that have been made by the Federal Government.

On the motion: Aye: Mr. Adamo, Mrs. Haney, Mr. Doyle, Dr. Switchenko, Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Lambert

Nay: Mr. Folan, Mrs. Rayhall

Abstained: No one
The motion passes: 6-2-0

School Improvement Grant (SIG) Waiver Option (Ref. 5C)

(267)Motion of Mrs. Collins, seconded by Dr. Switchenko, that the Board of Education request that the Superintendent consider the waiver option of the grant knowing that it is ultimately the Superintendent's decision.

On the motion: Aye: Mr. Folan, Mr. Adamo, Mrs. Haney, Mr. Doyle, Dr. Switchenko, Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Lambert
Nay: Mrs. Rayhall
Abstained: No one
The motion passes: 7-1-0

REPORTS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Superintendent's Reports

Alternate School Proposal (Ref. 6)

Mrs. Collins said that she was disappointed that the alternate school plan couldn't be implemented sooner. Mr. Forman explained that the original plan was to utilize the funding within the Windham schools. He said keeping students at EASTCONN was an option that could be considered and the tuition would cost about \$8000 more per student than in the past. He explained that Windham Mills is another option, and he and Mr. Nelson have visited the site. Mr. Forman said that classrooms would have to be designed and built there, and if this proposal were considered, it would be brought forward in stages for approval. Ms. Ortiz said that beginning in September, student outplacement would be considered. The Student Services Committee will continue to discuss options for an alternate school plan.

Financial Report – May 2011 (Ref. 7)

Mr. Nelson reported that the May financials were fine.

Announcements/Information (Ref. 8)

Included are the Windham High School honor roll; the Windham High School *Library Media Center newsletter*; Windham High School's *The Whippet*; and the Windham Federation of Teachers' *The Spectrum*. There was no discussion.

Subcommittee Reports:

Lighthouse: Dr. Switchenko reported that the major topic at the May meeting was professional development. He said that these sessions have been very enlightening and are going very well.

Personnel: Dr. Switchenko reported that items discussed will be brought up during executive session.

Program Development/Evaluation: Mr. Adamo informed the Board that the June 15 meeting has been canceled due to the many June activities.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Mrs. Haney said that the Family Spring Day activity will take place on June 11 at Jillson Square. She said that schools are participating with student activities and displays of student work. She thanked recreation department staff members for their assistance with organizing the event.

Mrs. Collins asked that the Middle School and plans for a feasibility study continue to be pursued.

CITIZENS/DELEGATIONS

Bernie D'Auteil, Willimantic, apologized for his earlier remarks if they were taken as being violent. He said that he is not a violent person and that was not his intention. He said that he did hope that those running for re-election wouldn't be sitting in these seats again. He said that he was giving fair warning that people are gathering information about the Board of Education by looking into dumpsters and going through garbage.

Carol Coley, Columbia, said that there is abundant evidence that Steve Merlino would be the best choice to stay in Windham and she would suggest the waiver option be submitted.

Mary Lou DeVivo, North Windham, asked the Board to look at moving the preschool out of the Kramer building to a safer environment with a playground. She would like to know when the reading and math scores would be received for Natchaug School.

Ms. Ortiz said the scores are received at the end of July or the beginning of August.

Bob Morgan, Willimantic, asked about expected standards prior to ninth grade and asked how Mr. Merlino could correct anything without funds from the grant. He said that Mr. Merlino hasn't been given due process.

Ms. Ortiz said that Mr. Merlino is not being terminated as an administrator in the district but displaced from his position.

(Mr. Folan left the meeting.)

EXECUTIVE SESSION

(268) Motion of Mr. Adamo, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board of Education enter into executive session at 9:25 PM for the discussion of exempt documents pertaining to bargaining unit negotiations and personnel matters.

On the motion: Aye, 7-0; unanimous.

BOARD PRESENT: Vice-chair Mrs. Rayhall, Mr. Adamo, Mr. Doyle, Dr. Switchenko, Mrs. Lambert, Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Haney

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Ms. Ortiz, Directors Mrs. Banks and Mr. Nelson

REGULAR SESSION RECONVENES

Vice-chair Mrs. Rayhall reconvened regular session at 9:38 P.M.

(269) Motion of Mrs. Lambert, seconded by Dr. Switchenko, that the Board add to the agenda at this time the recommended appointment of the Assistant Superintendent.

On the motion: Aye, 7-0; unanimous.

(270) Motion of Mrs. Lambert, seconded by Dr. Switchenko, that the Board of Education approve the appointment of Pamela Barker-Jones as the Assistant Superintendent at a starting salary of \$125,000 with the effective date to be determined.

On the motion: Aye: Mr. Adamo, Mrs. Haney, Dr. Switchenko, Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Lambert

Nay: Mrs. Rayhall, Mr. Doyle

Abstained: No one

The motion passes: 5-2-0

(271) Motion of Mr. Adamo, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board add to the agenda at this time the recommended ratification of the tentative agreement between the Windham Board of Education and the custodians.

On the motion: Aye, 7-0; unanimous.

(272)Motion of Mr. Adamo, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board of Education move to ratify the tentative agreement between the Windham Board of Education and the Teamsters Union Local 493 (custodians).

On the motion: Aye, 7-0; unanimous.

(273)Motion of Mrs. Lambert, seconded by Mr. Adamo, that the Board add to the agenda at this time the recommended approval of 2011-12 salaries for confidential and non-affiliated employees.

On the motion: Aye, 7-0; unanimous.

(274)Motion of Mrs. Lambert, seconded by Mr. Adamo, that the Board of Education approve the following 2011-12 salaries for confidential and non-affiliated employees: 1.90% increase for Superintendent, Director of Personnel, Director of Finance, Food Service Director, and Building and Grounds Director; and 0% increase for confidential secretaries, technicians, and all other non-affiliated positions.

On the motion: Aye: Mr. Adamo, Mr. Doyle, Mrs. Haney, Dr. Switchenko, Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Lambert

Nay: Mrs. Rayhall

Abstained: No one

The motion passes: 6-1-0

ADJOURNMENT

(275)Motion by Mr. Adamo, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board adjourn its meeting at 9:40 P.M.

On the motion: Aye, 7-0; unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

John Adamo, Secretary