

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION  
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES  
April 10, 2013

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Dr. Sewall, Vice-chair Mrs. Collins (arrived at 7:19 PM), Secretary Mrs. Osuba, Mrs. Lambert, Dr. Switchenko, Mr. Adamo, Mr. French

BOARD ABSENT: Ms. Tinker, Mr. Desaulniers

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Ms. Ortiz, Deputy Superintendent Ms. England, Assistant Superintendent Ms. Barker-Jones, Communications Officer Ms. Markey, Directors Mrs. Banks and Mr. Nelson

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: No one

OTHERS PRESENT: Special Master Dr. Adamowski, CT SDE Priority Project Manager Ms. Gabrielle Ramos, general public, staff; administrators, news media

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Sewall called the April 10, 2013, Board of Education business meeting to order at 7:03 P.M. in the Windham High School Library Media Center.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Board and the public joined Dr. Sewall in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES

March 13, 2013, Business meeting (Ref. 1)

April 2, 2013, Special Workshop meeting (held in place of the regularly scheduled March 27, 2013, Workshop meeting (Ref. 2))

Board of Education minutes, Ref. 1 and Ref. 2, were accepted as submitted.

PUBLIC DIALOGUE

Tom DeVivo, Chairman of the Magnet School Building Committee and the Natchaug Roof Replacement Committee, provided an update on the status of the Natchaug roof and STEM Magnet School projects. He said that the request to the State for an emergency exemption for the Natchaug roof project was denied; therefore, the committee is following the typical process for any town roof project that takes place. The anticipated date of completion is still November 1, 2013. Mr. DeVivo also reported that the STEM Magnet School project is on schedule and within budget which includes additional funding for FF&E due to the school's change to a STEM school. The dedication ceremony is planned for September 20, 2013. (Mrs. Collins arrived.)

Mary Gallucci, Willimantic, commented that it was too bad that the Board of Finance budget meeting overlapped with tonight's Board of Education meeting. She said that she is confused about the district not providing money to Our Piece of the Pie's Charter School for Windham students that attend since the money follows the student. She is concerned that this will deplete the high school budget. Ms. Gallucci asked what happens when the state money for charter schools runs out since this money is only given year to year. She said that she has a lot of questions regarding Our Piece of the Pie. She asked how the Board of Education could give up control of its students. The district used to have its own alternative high school for its

students. She said that the special master legislation does not state that the special master calls all of the shots and she asked the Board of Education to speak up.

Dr. Sewall clarified that Our Piece of the Pie's charter school is not a Windham school district program but it is a state charter school for students who have aged out of high school and funding does not come out of Windham's budget.

Mary Lou DeVivo, Willimantic, said that many parents want to know when the Magnet School lottery is going to be held. She also said that many parents are concerned with security at the schools in the Windhams and asked about hiring a security guard. She felt it would be helpful to have someone, unarmed, in a uniform.

Ms. Ortiz said the Magnet School lottery is tentatively set for April 23, 2013. She also said that there is direct access to two officers through the State Police for the two schools in the Windhams. Panic buttons are also in the schools which directly contact the police.

Eastern Connecticut Social Work Interns at North Windham School invited Board of Education members to the ninth annual career day for third and fourth grades at the school on April 18<sup>th</sup>, from 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM.

## REPORTS

### Superintendent's Report

#### Student Recognition

Editors of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue of Connecticut Student Writers magazine selected four Windham students as winners this year. Students read their pieces at the Board meeting and were congratulated for receiving statewide recognition.

Dayami Torillo Cortez (grade one, NWS) – *A Poem*

Alexa Esparza-Finsmith (grade three, NWS) – *The Whole Alphabet*

Naymarie Madera (grade seven, WMS) – *Oh No! I Lost My Pencil!*

Hannah Bassett (grade nine, WHS) – *My Response to the Newtown Murders*

Ms. Ortiz shared a letter from James C. Arena-DeRosa, Northeast Regional Administrator for USDA Food and Nutrition Service, informing the Superintendent that Windham High School, Windham Middle School, North Windham School, Sweeney School, Windham Center School and Natchaug School have been awarded the USDA's Healthier US School Challenge (HUSSC) Bronze award for creating healthier school environments by promoting healthy lifestyles.

### Middle School Audit

Ms. Ortiz provided an update on the Middle School audit as part of the Commissioner's Network. She highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the seven areas that the Turnaround Committee will be addressing in the upcoming weeks.

### Committee Reports

#### Finance and Audit Committee

In Ms. Tinker's absence, Mr. French reported on the financial audit. He said that there is the possibility for both the Town and Board of Education to use one program which would update procedures and save time used in both finance offices.

#### School Planning and Design Committee

Mrs. Lambert reported that an RFP and RFQ will be put out for the High School roof project. School options for dual language, Montessori and extended year were discussed at the last committee meeting. The Our Piece of the Pie State Charter School proposal was also discussed at the meeting. An informational meeting on the state's proposal is taking place on April 22, 2013, at Windham High School at 5:30 PM and

6:30 PM. The need for proper space in school buildings for art classes was also discussed, as well as the timeline for Phase I of the Facilities Master Plan.

#### Executive Committee

Dr. Sewall said that the committee has not met.

#### Ad hoc Transportation Policy Committee

Mr. French reported that the RFP for the transportation contract should go out on April 12 with bids opened and reviewed on May 8.

#### ACTION ITEMS

##### School Based Health Center grant application (Ref. 3)

**Motion of Mrs. Collins, seconded by Dr. Switchenko, that the Board of Education approve the submission of the School Based Health Center grant application for the Charles H. Barrows STEM Academy.**

**The motion is unanimously approved.**

##### Early Childhood Bond Funds grant application (Ref. 4)

**Motion of Mrs. Lambert, seconded by Mr. French, that the Board of Education approve submission of the Early Childhood Bond Funds grant application.**

**The motion is unanimously approved.**

##### Revised Board of Education Workshop Topics for 2012-2013 (Ref. 5)

Mrs. Collins requested that the Montessori feasibility study be removed from the May workshop list of topics. She asked for it to be discussed at a later time since there are so many changes already taking place in the district. Dr. Adamowski explained that this is part of the Strategic Operating Plan, which has implications to the Facilities Master Plan. He recommended that the Board learn about the feasibility study done by CREC and then make a decision regarding its implementation according to priority. It was suggested that the Montessori study be reviewed during the Board retreat in July instead of at the May workshop meeting.

**Motion of Mrs. Lambert, seconded by Mrs. Collins, that the Board of Education approve the following proposed revised workshop agenda topics for April, May and June 2013: Talent Strategy (April workshop meeting); Sweeney School (extra time) and expansion of dual-language program through ECSU as a partner (May workshop meeting); and Commissioner's Network at WMS (June workshop meeting) with the topic of the Montessori feasibility study moved from the May workshop meeting for discussion at the July Board of Education retreat.**

**The motion is unanimously approved.**

##### First Reading of 2013-2014 school calendar (Ref. 6)

There was a discussion regarding the proposed 2013-14 school calendar, especially the week for April vacation and the length of the December recess. The suggestions will be reviewed and the calendar will be brought back to the Board for approval at the next Board meeting.

#### Special Master's Report

Dr. Adamowski clarified information regarding the Our Piece of the Pie Charter School proposed as a regional, fully state funded charter school located in Windham for overage under credited high school students. The Strategic Operating Plan states that Windham will work with a partner to create a recuperative high school program. This program will help students who have dropped out of high school but still might be able to resume their high school education and receive a diploma. Dr. Adamowski

provided an update on the Charles H. Barrows Magnet School. He informed the Board that the revised operations plan has been resubmitted to the SDE for review. Once state approval of the plan is granted, the Board of Education will then have to approve the plan. The lottery will then be conducted by EASTCONN in accordance with the operations plan. Lastly, Dr. Adamowski spoke about increasing post-secondary opportunities for students once they graduate from high school. Measuring college attendance is part of the Strategic Operating Plan. The district has made an agreement with a national clearing house for this purpose. Base line data for 2011-2012 will be compiled and compared with data for 2012-2013. The College Summit program, which is an effective national program, is one way to create a college culture which will increase post-secondary opportunities for students. This program is a systematic way to help students negotiate the college admissions process to increase post-secondary opportunities for students. In order to gradually build college attendance opportunities, students will participate in activities throughout high school beginning in grade nine.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

**Motion of Mrs. Lambert, seconded by Dr. Switchenko, that the Board of Education enter into executive session at 8:58 PM for the discussion of exempt documents pertaining to nonrenewal of non-tenured teachers'/administrators' contracts.**

**The motion is unanimously approved.**

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Dr. Sewall, Vice-chair Mrs. Collins, Secretary Mrs. Osuba, Mrs. Lambert, Dr. Switchenko, Mr. Adamo, Mr. French

#### ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Ms. Ortiz, Director Mrs. Banks

#### REGULAR SESSION RECONVENES

Chair Dr. Sewall reconvened regular session at 8:45 P.M.

**Motion of Mr. French, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board add the nonrenewal of the employment contracts to the agenda at this time.**

**The motion is unanimously approved.**

**Motion of Mr. French, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board of Education approve the nonrenewal of the employment contracts for the following non-tenured teachers upon contract expiration at the end of the current school year: Christopher Richards, Windham High School; Larissa Montalvo, Windham High School; Rachel Norman, Windham High School; Jaclyn Berger, Windham Middle School; Lucrezia Delia, Windham Middle School; Lindsie Dexter, Natchaug School; Beatriz Andino, North Windham School; Charlene Broedur, Windham Center School; and Makaila McKinley, ECC Preschool Program.**

**The motion is unanimously approved.**

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Motion by Mr. Adamo, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board meeting adjourn at 9:00 P.M.**

**The motion is unanimously approved.**

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Luz Osuba, Secretary