

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
January 14, 2015

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Mrs. Lambert, Mr. Desaulniers (arrived at 7:27 PM), Mr. Montalvo, Mrs. Osuba, Mr. Kalajian, Dr. Gomez, Mr. French, Dr. Sewall

BOARD ABSENT: Mr. Quamme

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Dr. Garcia; Deputy Superintendent Dr. Gasper; Directors Mr. Johnson and Ms. Markey

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES Kathy Oyola and Nathan Cusson

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mrs. Lambert called the January 14, 2015, Board of Education Workshop meeting to order at 7:02 P.M. in the Windham High School Library Media Center.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mrs. Osuba led the Board and the public in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

Motion of Mr. Montalvo, seconded by Dr. Gomez, that the Board of Education approve the December 10, 2014, business meeting minutes (Ref. 1) and the December 17, 2014, workshop meeting minutes (Ref. 1A).

Aye: Mrs. Lambert, Mr. Montalvo, Mr. French, Mrs. Osuba, Mr. Kalajian, Dr. Gomez

Nay: No one

Abstained: Dr. Sewall

The motion passes.

REPORTS

Superintendent's Reports

Windham Center School Presentation (prior to Public Dialogue)

Windham Center Principal Ms. Goodwin noted the many parent engagement activities taking place at Windham Center such as the annual potluck that also included one of the literacy nights held during the year; the Traverse Wall which highlights community involvement; the Storyline Project., as well as all of the support and the many activities provided by a very active PTO. Ms. Goodwin also spoke about the many community members who contribute to the school in a variety of ways. She introduced technology teacher Mr. Katibian who spoke about computer programming which is taught at Windham Center. He introduced student Victor Garcia Cruz who created a video game using coding that he learned in the program. Gifted and Talented teacher Ms. Montgomery introduced students Julianna Cruz, Kadence Crossley, Keysha Torres Escheverria, and Victor Garcia Cruz who showcased projects that they designed and built. Parent Kim

Swart represented the School Governance Council and spoke about school compacts for each grade, guest speakers this year, the budget process, district level of support and parent engagement. Ms. Goodwin thanked her leadership team, teachers, parents and students for attending tonight's meeting.

(Mr. Desaulniers, who was at an activity at Barrows tonight, arrived.)

PUBLIC DIALOGUE

Mary Lou DeVivo, Willimantic, spoke about the strategic planning sessions that are scheduled at Kramer. She said that it is difficult for handicapped people to get to the room where these sessions are held, and parking is difficult even in the evening due to the activities taking place in the gym area of the building. She said that the first session on curriculum and instruction began at 4 PM and the session on parent and community engagement was at 5 pm, which are not convenient times for people to attend. She said that she understands that the session on district operations is from 6 to 7 PM but it is also at Kramer. Mrs. DeVivo said that faculty knows about curriculum and these sessions should be held for community members because they will be voting on the budget. She asked to receive the information on social promotion that she had previously requested. Dr. Garcia has the information for her. Dr. Garcia also said there will be two strategic planning sessions held at other locations.

Kim Swart, Windham, spoke as a parent, regarding her concerns about class size. She said that 26 students in one class are too many for one teacher. She said that she is very concerned about class sizes for next year and feels that parents have to try to do something but isn't sure what parents can do about the problem. She said that she doesn't know if this is a problem at other schools or just at Windham Center. Mrs. Lambert said that parents need to be vocal and attend Board of Finance meetings and Board of Education meetings to voice what they want for their children.

Henry Crane, Willimantic, said that the Board is considering a policy on coaches, and it is his understanding that the superintendent already has the capacity to fire a coach. He compared it to a recent policy shift in the Charter regarding police going out to the Windhams. He said that he believes the Board is sending a message that there are problems with the coaching staff. Mr. Crane said that when he went to school, the custodians, coaches and all staff stood up for the students and didn't tolerate bullying or unsportsmanship conduct. He said that he didn't understand this policy shift and thinks the Board should reconsider and not go forward with this policy. Dr. Garcia explained said this policy is mandated by the State and it is a policy that every school district has. This policy has been in place and revisions are being made to follow State mandates.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS (Order of the agenda resumes)

Minority Recruitment Committee

Dr. Garcia reported that the committee has met twice, and members are reviewing local and statewide data regarding hiring procedures and maintaining minority teachers. The committee's research should be completed by March, at which time recommendations will be made to the Board.

Strategic Plan Update

Dr. Garcia thanked everyone who has attended the strategic planning sessions so far. The series of sessions are in process and are opportunities for staff and community members to provide valuable input into the development of the strategic plan for the district.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance and Audit Committee

Mr. French reported that a committee meeting will be scheduled, and committee members will be looking at ways to increase the return of investments.

School Planning and Design Committee

Mr. Kalajian reported that the committee is moving ahead with the plan to go forward to referendum regarding the High School renovation project. He reported that the Windham Center well replacement has been defined as an emergency by the State and a building committee is in place. With the support of Mr. Donaldson, the project is moving along. Mrs. Lambert, who sits on the High School roof and flooring committee, said that the High School floors were worked on over the break and are looking much better. She said that there are no problems with the roof but it continues to be checked and is under warranty with the contractor. Mrs. Lambert thanked Mr. Donaldson for the work that is being done to improve the outside lighting at the High School. A grant was received to fund this project. Heating issues at the High School were discussed this evening.

Ad Hoc Policy Committee

Mrs. Osuba reported that the first meeting is scheduled to take place February 18, 2015, and the committee will meet every third Wednesday. She said that Dr. Garcia has policies to work on immediately.

Mrs. Lambert reminded committee chairs that meeting dates have to be posted on the district website.

Executive Committee

Mrs. Lambert reported that committee members discussed ethics as related to the Board of Education. She reminded members that the Board Retreat will take place on Saturday at Kramer.

ACTION ITEMS

Windham High School Field Trip to the LEAD Conference in Arlington, Virginia (Ref. 2)

Motion of Mr. French, seconded by Mr. Montalvo, that the Board of Education approve the trip request for Windham High School National Honor Society students to attend the LEAD Conference in Arlington, Virginia, from January 30, 2015, to February 1, 2015, in accordance with policy 6153. There was discussion regarding the cost of this trip and questions were answered.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Evaluation, Termination and Non-Renewal of Athletic Coaches (Ref. 3)

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. Kalajian, that the Board of Education approve the Evaluation, Termination and Non-Renewal of Athletic Coaches Policy in the 4000 series (Personnel). There was discussion regarding the state guidelines that are mandated to be included in the policy.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Donations

Arthur and Elizabeth Godbout Family Foundation (Ref. 4)

Motion of Mr. Montalvo, seconded by Mr. French, that the Board of Education accept with deep gratitude the donation of \$2000 from the Arthur and Elizabeth Godbout Family Foundation, Inc., to the Windham High School Athletic Department. On behalf of the Board, Mrs. Lambert extended sincere appreciation to the Arthur and Elizabeth Godbout Family Foundation for the generous donation.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Tap Room Restaurant, Lebanon, Connecticut (Ref. 4A)

Motion of Mr. French, seconded by Dr. Gomez, that the Board of Education accept with deep gratitude the donation of \$1000 from the Tap Room Restaurant in Lebanon, Connecticut, to the Windham Middle School Department. On behalf of the Board, Mrs. Lambert extended sincere appreciation to the Tap Room Restaurant for the generous donation.

Motion is unanimously approved.

There was discussion regarding the procedures for the receipt, the acknowledgment and the acceptance of donations.

Correction to Policy 5117.11 (Ref 5)

Motion of Mr. Desaulniers, seconded by Mrs. Osuba, that the Board of Education approve corrected policy #5117.11 that was approved at the April 9 2014, Board of Education meeting. Mrs. Lambert clarified that the line *Students entering Kindergarten* was inadvertently omitted when the policy was submitted to CABE for distribution.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Personnel (Ref. 6)

Motion of Mr. Desaulniers, seconded by Dr. Sewall, that the Board of Education approve the following appointments and accept the following resignations:

Appointments

- Robin Davis to the position of Grade 4 Teacher at Natchaug School effective December 9, 2014, salary BA/9 \$49,429. Replacement.
- Elizabeth Olney to the position of Grade 7 Math Teacher at CHBarrows STEM Academy effective January 5, 2015, salary \$MA/3 \$44,412. Replacement.
- Kristin Spear to the position of Social Worker at CHBarrows STEM Academy effective January 5, 2015, salary MA/10 \$56,127. Replacement.
- Norah Zarzecki to the position of Math Tutor at Windham Center School effective January 5, 2015, hourly rate \$16.37. New Position.
- Kristina Knapp to the position of Non-Certified Librarian at Natchaug School effective December 9, 2014, hourly rate \$20.00. Replacement.
- Laury LaMarche to the position of Kindergarten Dual Language Teacher at North Windham School effective January 5, 2015, salary MA/10 \$56,127. Replacement.
- Angel Corales Berrios to the position of Special Education Paraprofessional at Windham Center School effective December 8, 2014, hourly rate \$12.16. New Position.
- Leanne Connolly to the position of Music Teacher at Sweeney School effective January 23, 2015, salary MA+30/14 \$76,669. Replacement.
- Sarah Stockmann to the position of Grade 1 Compañeros Teacher at North Windham School effective January 12, 2015, salary MA/4 \$45,875. Replacement.
- Karen D'Agostino to the position of YPP Social Worker at Windham High School effective date TBD, salary MA/3 \$44,412. Replacement.

Resignations

- Floy Marks-Hamilton, Teacher at Sweeney School effective January 22, 2015 for the purpose of retirement.
- Brian Crudden, Teacher at Windham High School effective February 27, 2015 for the purpose of retirement.
- David Ricker, Teacher at Windham Middle School effective November 3, 2014.
- Kevin Nowak, Custodian at Natchaug School effective January 2, 2015.
- Chelsea Croke, Tutor at Windham High School effective January 8, 2015.

- JoAnn Rappahahn, Paraprofessional at Windham Middle School effective January 5, 2015 for the purpose of retirement.
Mrs. Lambert recognized Ms. Floy Marks-Hamilton, Mr. Brian Crudden and Ms. JoAnn Rappahahn on their upcoming retirements and thanked them for their many years of service to the district.
Motion is unanimously approved.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mrs. Lambert reminded everyone that the David Foster concert is this Friday at Windham High School with funds from the concert benefitting the High School music program. She commended the music department and students for their music performance at the High School in December.

Mr. Kalajian said that it is important to recognize the way the entire community views the value of education and the facilities in Windham so that as we go forward with an idea and a philosophy that education and the physical plan that supports education leads to a healthy town and affects the value of our community.

Mrs. Osuba said there is a big increase in suspensions at the High School and this is a concern. She asked the Superintendent to provide the Board with reports on the number of in- and out-of school student suspensions, the number of days students are suspended, and if the reasons fit the suspension . There was much discussion regarding this topic.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion of Mr. Montalvo, seconded by Mr. French, that the Board of Education enter into executive session for the discussion of exempt documents pertaining to personnel matters at 8:21 PM.

Motion is unanimously approved.

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Mrs. Lambert, Mr. Desaulniers, Mr. Montalvo, Mrs. Osuba, Mr. Kalajian, Dr. Gomez, Mr. French, Dr. Sewall

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Dr. Garcia

Mrs. Lambert reconvened regular session at 8:49. No action was taken by the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Montalvo, seconded by Mr. Desaulniers, that the Board adjourn its meeting at 8:50 P.M.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Juan Montalvo, Secretary