

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
(held in place of June 13, 2012, Regular Board of Education meeting)
June 14, 2012

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

BOARD ABSENT: Ms. Tinker

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Ms. Ortiz, Assistant Superintendent Ms. Barker-Jones, Directors Mrs. Banks and Mr. Nelson

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: No one

OTHERS PRESENT: Special Master Dr. Adamowski; general public; staff; administrators; news media

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dr. Sewall called the June 14, 2012, Board of Education Special business meeting, held in place of the June 13, 2012, Regular Board of Education meeting, to order at 7:03 P.M. in the Windham High School Library Media Center.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dr. Switchenko led the Board and the public in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Dr. Sewall announced that there will be a Town Meeting on Tuesday at 6 PM in the Town Hall to vote on the appropriation of funds for the K-5 core reading program and urged people to participate in the vote.

PRESENTATIONS

Windham Public Schools' Windham Reads Spelling Bee Winners

Certificates were distributed and congratulations given to the following spelling bee winners: Natchaug School – Joel Sotelo (grade one), Devyn Feliz (grade two), Zachary Niemi (grade three), Damani Gaston (grade four); North Windham – Rhiannon Slorach (grade one), Isabelle Perez (grade two), Victor Cazabal (grade three), Leisha Bencosme (grade four); Sweeney – Molly Nolan (grade one), Trinity Shannon (grade two), Devin Marquez (grade three), Karim Morente-Marquez (grade 4); and Windham Center – Thomas Parker (grade one), Yanfernee Ramos Ortiz (grade two), Brady Miller (grade 3), Ella Wilgis (grade four).

May 17th Third Thursday Sweeney School Slide Presentation

A slide show of Sweeney students participating in the May 17 Third Thursday physical education activity was viewed.

Sweeney School Reading Video

Sweeney School students performed in the video, *Reading It*, which was also viewed at tonight's meeting.

Ms. Ortiz spoke about the amazing solo performance by Sweeney fourth grade student, Julian Santos, at the recent spring concert. Julian, who is in the autistic program, sang *Teach Me*.

CONSENT AGENDA

The following minutes were approved as submitted:

Board of Education May 23, 2012, special meeting minutes (Ref. 1)

Board of Education June 4, 2012, special meeting minutes (Ref. 2)

PUBLIC DIALOGUE

Mary Gallucci, Willimantic, said that her first concern is about the Natchaug School physical structure which has been neglected for years. Since it is an historic building, it would be most prudent to replace the roof. She also said that she objects to the request for funding for the reading program because moving the expense to another part of the Town budget does not reflect the true spending on education. There is a state law for minimum budget requirement which is there for a purpose. She also feels that moving students is not in the best interest of the district especially with the situation at Natchaug. Ms. Gallucci asked what the previous budget proportions were for administration and schools in order to understand why there are so many new positions in central office. Ms. Gallucci commended the music program at the Middle School and asked what the music program would be like in the future.

Ms. Ortiz answered that there is still no concrete answer regarding Natchaug. She also answered that the book appropriation is a one-time request and by doing it this way, the funding will not impact the minimum budget requirement. Dr. Sewall also included that it is a one-time investment and Mr. French said that it is important to follow the Town government guidelines for this funding. Mr. Nelson answered that the budget ratio in the past was 69/31.

Mary Lou DeVivo, Willimantic, spoke about last Tuesday's Council meeting. She felt that there needs to be more communication between the Superintendent and the Board of Education. She also said that she has never heard the Board discuss using Brad Wojick and Joe Gardner. She said that the Board of Education should be setting policy. Dr. Sewall explained that mistakes happen and we will learn from it. He also said that personnel matters are covered in executive session.

REPORTS

Superintendent's Report

Summer Reading Program

Mrs. Packer provided a report on the summer reading program which was developed four years ago and has grown into a community effort supported by the three area libraries, as well as the schools. This year, the WFT in conjunction with First Book purchased 1000 books for Middle School students; United way is donating books to elementary students in summer school; and TD Bank will give out \$10 gift certificates for every ten books read. This year's summer reading theme is "Dream Big" and there will be a kick-off event at the Willimantic Library on June 21 from 5 to 8 PM. Summer reading lists were distributed to Board members and will be listed on the District website. Ms. Ortiz thanked Mrs. DeVivo for her ongoing support of the district's reading efforts.

Committee Reports

Finance and Audit Committee

Mr. French reported in the absence of committee chair Ms. Tinker. At the last meeting, the committee discussed the separation of the Board of Education audit from the Town audit. There will be a committee meeting on Monday prior to Tuesday's Town meeting where the vote on the appropriation for the reading program will occur.

School Planning and Design Committee

Committee chair Mrs. Lambert reported that the committee met with Gale Engineering and Friar Associates to discuss the Natchaug roof. The master facilities plan study being done by Friar Associates is

progressing. The finalized School Accountability Policy has been reviewed by the committee and will be brought forward to the full Board for approval.

Mrs. Lambert also reported that she has been attending the Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (FFE) ad hoc committee meetings for the Magnet School. Sometime in August, the FFE will be finalized and put out for bids. Also, it will be necessary for the Board to vote on the change of the Magnet School from a cultural school to a STEM school.

Ad hoc Transportation Policy Committee

Committee chair Mr. French reported that the committee will begin looking at transportation next week.

Ms. Ortiz publicly thanked Mr. Beebe and his staff at M&J Bus for the wonderful job they did getting the buses up and running following the recent bus vandalism. Due to their hard work, school was in session the next day.

ACTION ITEMS

Adoption of three-year Strategic Operating Plan (Ref. 3)

Motion by Mr. Adamo, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board of Education adopt the Windham Public Schools' three-year Strategic Operating Plan for 2012-2015. There was no discussion.

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

Approval of Appointment

Motion by Mr. Adamo, seconded by Mrs. Collins, that the Board of Education appoint Kathleen England to the position of Deputy Superintendent/Director of Schools effective July 16, 2012; new position. Ms. England said that she is delighted to be in Windham and looks forward to the opportunity.

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

Approval of IDEA grant application (Ref. 4)

Motion by Dr. Switchenko, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board of Education approve submission of the IDEA grant application. There was no discussion.

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

Special Master's Report

Dr. Adamowski reported that the approval of the three-year Strategic Operating Plan (SOP) and the hiring of a Deputy Superintendent are very much related. He explained that Ms. England is a reading specialist, has taught leadership at the university level, and has a well established reputation as a turnaround principal. She is a wonderful match relative to Windham's needs and the capacity Windham needs to implement its district operating plan. At the June 6, 2012, State Board of Education (SBE) meeting, Dr. Adamowski provided an update on Windham which included the presentation of the SOP. The SBE was extremely complimentary of the plan, as well as the Commissioner who felt it was a model for other school districts. Windham is one of thirty districts considered for the alliance district program which means that Windham will be eligible for \$700,000 of conditional ECS funding. One of the requirements to qualify for these funds is to provide an outline of the district's operating plan and Windham is the only district of the thirty that has a plan in place. These funds will be treated as special funds which will come directly to the Board. The balance may be carried over from year to year. The ECS conditional funding relates directly to the ESEA waiver and requires the state to tier its schools in five categories. Dr. Adamowski reviewed the different categories and explained that the High School and Natchaug are exempt because they are SIG schools. Dr. Adamowski congratulated everyone involved in developing the SOP which is the road map for future

improvement in Windham. The plan and its implementation in 2012-2013 will be reviewed at the Board retreat this summer.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Sewall called for adjournment of the Business meeting at 7:51 P.M.

(Mr. Desaulniers left)

Special Workshop Board of Education Meeting

June 14, 2012

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Dr. Sewall, Vice-chair Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Osuba, Mr. Adamo (left at 8:52 PM), Mr. French, Mrs. Lambert, Dr. Switchenko, Mr. Desaulniers (left at 7:51 PM)

BOARD ABSENT: Ms. Tinker

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Ms. Ortiz, Assistant Superintendent Ms. Barker-Jones, Directors Mrs. Banks and Mr. Nelson

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: No one

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dr. Sewall called the June 14, 2012, Board of Education Special workshop meeting to order at 8:10 P.M. in the Windham High School Library Media Center.

Workshop Session

Lockton Co.'s presentation on self-insuring the health benefit

Lockton representatives, Dan Escajeda and Debra Testa, provided an in-depth presentation on self-funding medical insurance. There was discussion throughout the presentation and questions were answered. Dr. Sewall thanked Ms. Testa and Mr. Escajeda for their presentation.

(Mr. Adamo left)

ACTION ITEMS

Health Benefit Fund

(Ref. 5)

Motion by Dr. Switchenko, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board of Education approve adopting a self-insurance program for their enrolled employees consistent with the "Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Annual Renewal Package," dated July 1, 2012 contingent upon subsequent approval by the Windham Town Council.

On the motion: Aye, 6-0; unanimous.

(Ref. 6)

Motion by Mrs. Lambert, seconded by Mrs. Osuba, that the Board of Education endorse the proposed Windham Town Council resolution creating a dedicated health care self-insurance fund.

On the motion: Aye, 6-0; unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. French, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board adjourn its meeting at 9:02 P.M.

On the motion: Aye, 6-0; unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Luz Osuba, Secretary