

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT
March 13, 2012

(Special Board of Education meeting in place of regularly scheduled March 14, 2012, Board of Education meeting)

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

BOARD ABSENT: Chair Dr. Sewall

ADMINISTRATION

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

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: Hossai Jabary, Katelynn Person

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

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-chair Mrs. Collins called the March 13, 2012, Special Board of Education meeting, to order at 7:00 P.M. in the Windham High School Library Media Center.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Ortiz led the Board and the public in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC DIALOGUE

Peter Quercia, Willimantic, spoke about a documentary he saw on Connecticut Public television which included Windham schools. He believes that there are three-segments in the series which will air again on March 20, 21, and 22 at 3:00 PM. He said that he has been doing an investigation and there is an e-mail from the Town that implies that he needs to be watched because he is some kind of sexual molester. He said that he is making these allegations fully public and believes that the Town cannot prove them or he would have been arrested. Tomorrow, he will be on the Republic Forum. He will also be attending an FOI meeting tomorrow. He said that at the first FOI meeting in January the Town spent a lot of taxpayers' money by sending attorneys, Superintendent Ortiz, and others to fight three pieces of paper.

Kara Wilk, Eastern Connecticut State University Social Work Intern at North Windham School, spoke on behalf of this year's interns at the school and invited Board members to the eighth annual career day hosted by them. This year's Career Day will take place on April 12 at North Windham School from 8:30 AM to 1 PM. Board members were asked to contact the interns if they have a career that they would like to present to the students. Mrs. Collins commented that it is a great day for the students and thanked them for continuing to host this activity.

Mary Gallucci, Willimantic, said that she has sent some questions but has more to ask. She mentioned that at last week's budget forum, two parents asked why buses do not have monitors on them. Ms. Gallucci commented that this would be a brilliant idea as having monitors would add a level of security on school buses. She said that she has been hearing for years about students' behavior on buses, and the bus driver needs to drive the bus and not discipline students. Because of this, students are not always punished for their behavior on the bus. She said that it would be an excellent way to spend money and is more important

than having a gifted program. She also said that the two parents also commented that they are happy with the quality of the preschool in Windham thus far and feel that this is very important. Ms. Gallucci asked if preschool numbers were pulled out of the enrollment numbers in the packet passed out at tonight's meeting so that the numbers don't look unbalanced. She said that Natchaug and Sweeney schools have slightly lower numbers than those on a previous form. She asked what is meant by a neighborhood school and busing? Ms. Gallucci said that it seems that something is being said in the background about sending students back which has a somewhat alarming undertone. She that Wikipedia explains that redistricting is sometimes necessary in a school district where attendance zones have grown disproportionately to occupant capacity of a school. She also spoke about Teach for America (TFA) and said that at a meeting last February at Southern Connecticut State University, it was said that the University would welcome TFA students to increase its master's program enrollment. She believes the money should be offered to Windham teachers and not to people getting certified using the Town's money.

REPORTS

Superintendent's Report

Windham Technology Student Association (TSA)

TSA advisor, Mr. Jim Hutson, thanked the Board for including the TSA presentation at its meeting. He informed Board members that students have received many top ten awards in TSA competitions, both in Connecticut and nationally. TSA assistant advisor, Mrs. Alicia Lynn, proposed that the TSA participate in the national initiative for the American Cancer Society and TSA member Kelly King came up with the idea of selling baskets to raise funds. It was decided make the donation to the American Cancer Society in the name of a Windham student who has been ill with cancer. At tonight's meeting, TSA Middle School president Noelle King presented a check for \$800 to Ms. Shannon Stahecki, Windham American Cancer Society staff representative. The students raised \$300, an additional \$100 was added by TSA, and WFT then matched these funds. A relay for life at Eastern Connecticut State University will be held on June 2 and 3 to raise additional money for this worthwhile cause. Ms. Stahecki accepted tonight's check, with much appreciation, saying that the money will help fund many programs sponsored by the American Cancer Society.

Windham High School Student Write Idea Tutors

Windham High School teacher, Ms. Dara Bowling, spoke about the Windham High School writing center which is in its second year. Students who attend the center work to develop their writing skills, as well as assisting other students with their writing. Ms. Bowling showed a brief video produced by students to promote the writing center within the High School. The following student Write Idea Tutors attended the meeting with Ms. Bowling: Julia Ayer, Rebecca Bowling, Nathan Cusson, Elizabeth Hendry, Gabrielle Lambert, Laura Perez-Handler, Aramis Ruiz Ruiz and Hector Tirado. Ms. Bowling answered Board members' questions and thanked them for having the Student Write Idea tutors attend tonight's Board meeting to speak about the exciting program.

Ms. Ortiz thanked the following members who will serve on the High School Art and Humanities and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) academies' design committees. Art and Humanities: Bev Goslin, Diane Ayer, Frank Costanzo, Imna Arroyo, Lindsey Hepple, Lisa Jurovaty, Stuart Parnes, and Madeline Negrón. STEM: Elizabeth Coli, John Settlege, Kate Starkey, Kurt Johnson, Laura Dawley, Tim Maclure and Pam Barker-Jones. Ms. Ortiz said that there will be an orientation meeting at Windham High School on Thursday.

Committee Reports

Finance and Audit Committee

Committee chair Ms. Tinker reported that the committee held a public hearing on the budget last week.

School Planning and Design Committee

Committee chair Mrs. Lambert reported that the committee meeting was postponed until receipt of the report from Gale Associates, which has now been received. Mrs. Lambert will schedule a committee meeting shortly.

Action Items

Approval of the 2012-2013 Superintendent's Recommended Education Budget (Ref. 1)

Ms. Ortiz briefly reviewed some highlights of the Superintendent's recommended budget. A general funds budget of \$43,313,706, which is an increase of \$555,852 from the previous year, is recommended for approval. Special funds have decreased 23% due to the one-time stimulus funding which expires June 2012, expending all Title I and IDEA carryover monies, and decreases to the School Improvement Grants at Natchaug and Windham High School. The total budget presented for approval is \$52,785,843 which includes all funds. One of the major goals of this budget was to increase the percent allocated to schools; therefore, 70% of resources are allocated to schools and 30% to central services. Per pupil allocations have been established at each of the levels basing all decisions on student need for higher levels of achievement. The Board's Finance and Audit Committee met several times to discuss the process and plan of action and School Governance Councils have also been included in the budget process this year.

Motion of Mrs. Tinker, seconded by Mr. French, that the Board of Education approve the all funds budget which is \$52,785,843, of which \$43,313,706 is the general funds budget.

Unanimously approved.

Ms. Tinker explained that the all funds budget includes all the grant money received. As a result of decreased grant funding and next year's changes, such as the redesign of the High School and the Middle School and reinstating the Gifted and Talented program, she said that the development of a budget has been challenging. She thanked all of the administrators for their efforts. Ms. Tinker is working with the Town to establish a date to present the budget to the Town's Board of Finance.

Appointments

Ms. Ortiz said that under appointments, the Guidance Counselor position at Windham High School is not bilingual as indicated.

Motion of Mrs. Lambert, seconded by Mrs. Tinker, that the Board of Education approve the following appointments:

1. Brennan McIntosh to the position of Guidance Counselor at Windham High School, effective March 5, 2012 replacing Yady King who resigned (*bilingual has been removed from the position title*).
2. Mayra Fox to the position of ESOL Teacher at Windham Middle School effective March 26, 2012, New Position.

There was discussion regarding removing *Bilingual* from the title of the guidance counselor position at the High School. Mrs. Osoba said that this concerns her because there is a huge need for a bilingual counselor to service High School students and parents. Dr. Adamowski explained that the staffing plan is to have dedicated counselors for each academy and for next year's eleventh and twelfth grade students, as well as at each house at the Middle School, with the Director of Guidance overseeing the entire program. He said that speaking two languages is an important characteristic of all guidance counselors.

Aye: Mrs. Collins, Ms. Tinker, Mrs. Lambert, Dr. Switchenko, Mr. Desaulniers, Mr. French

Nay: Mrs. Osuba, Mr. Adamo
Approved: 6-2

CONSENT AGENDA

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

Motion of Mr. French, seconded by Mr. Adamo, that the Board of Education vote on each set of minutes separately.

Unanimously approved.

February 8, 2012, Regular Board of Education Meeting Minutes (Ref. 2)

Motion of Mr. Adamo, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board of Education approve the February 8, 2012, Regular Board of Education meeting minutes.

Aye: Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Osuba, Mr. Adamo, Ms. Tinker, Mrs. Lambert, Dr. Switchenko, Mr. Desaulniers

Abstained: Mr. French

Approved: 7-1

February 15, 2012, Special Board of Education Workshop Meeting Minutes (Ref. 3)

Motion of Mrs. Tinker, seconded by Mr. Desaulniers, that the Board of Education approve the February 15, 2012, Special Board of Education Workshop meeting minutes.

Aye: Mrs. Osuba, Ms. Tinker, Mr. Desaulniers, Mr. French

Abstained: Mrs. Collins, Mr. Adamo, Mrs. Lambert, Dr. Switchenko

Approved: 4-4

February 22, 2012, Special Board of Education Workshop Meeting Minutes (Ref. 4)

Motion of Mrs. Tinker, seconded by Mr. French, that the Board of Education approve the February 22, 2012, Special Board of Education Workshop meeting minutes.

Aye: Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Osuba, Ms. Tinker, Mr. Adamo, Mrs. Lambert, Dr. Switchenko, Mr. French

Abstained: Mr. Desaulniers

Approved: 7-1

February 22, 2012, Regular Board of Education Workshop Meeting Minutes (Ref. 5)

Motion of Mrs. Tinker, seconded by Mr. French, that the Board of Education approve the February 22, 2012, Regular Board of Education Workshop meeting minutes.

Aye: Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Osuba, Ms. Tinker, Mr. Adamo, Mrs. Lambert, Dr. Switchenko, Mr. French

Abstained: Mr. Desaulniers

Approved: 7-1

January 25, 2012, Regular Board of Education Workshop Meeting Revised Minutes (Ref. 6)

Motion of Mr. Adamo, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board of Education approve the January 25, 2012, Board of Education Workshop meeting revised minutes.

Aye: Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Osuba, Mr. Adamo, Ms. Tinker, Mr. French, Mrs. Lambert, Dr. Switchenko

Abstained: Mr. Desaulniers

Approved: 7-1

Special Master's Report

Dr. Adamowski commended Superintendent Ortiz and Mr. Nelson, along with other members of the staff, for their work on the 2012-2013 budget preparation. At tonight's meeting, he addressed the pass-through transportation grant from the Town which has not taken place in the past, as well as special education transportation and seeking competitive quotes. He explained that a conservative estimate cost savings of \$150,000 will be realized by using the transportation services of EASTCONN, our local RESC, which is a non-profit agency, for special education and preschool students. He thanked EASTCONN executive director, Ms. Colen and her staff, for their efforts to work with Windham representatives to develop a transportation plan. A five-year transportation contract will be brought forward to the full Board for approval at an upcoming meeting. Dr. Adamowski recommended the development of a policy in the future that would allow for only one renewal of a transportation contract.

At tonight's meeting, Dr. Adamowski also spoke about the central services portion of the budget and recommended some changes to the format and placement of items. He also answered Board member questions.

Mrs. Collins said that Lieutenant Governor Wyman and Commissioner of Education Pryor will meet with Board of Education members prior to Governor Malloy's visit to Windham tomorrow night.

Mrs. Lambert reported that the tour of the Annie Fisher School in Hartford was extremely informative and she thanked Dr. Adamowski for arranging the visit.

Ms. Ortiz said that March is Board of Education member appreciation month. She recognized Board members and thanked them for being such an important part of the ongoing process of improving Windham schools.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Adamo, seconded by Mr. French, that the Board adjourn its meeting at 8:33 P.M. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Luz Osuba, Secretary