

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
October 8, 2014

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

BOARD ABSENT: Mr. Desaulniers, Mr. Quamme, Mr. French

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Dr. Garcia; Directors Ms. Beghetto, Mrs. Banks, Mr. Johnson and Mr. Cunha; Communications Officer Ms. Markey

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: Nathan Cusson

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

CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Lambert called the October 8, 2014, Board of Education regular business meeting to order at 7:02 P.M. in the Windham High School Library Media Center.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

The September 10, 2014, Board of Education business meeting minutes and the September 24, 2014, Board of Education workshop meeting minutes were accepted as submitted.

PUBLIC DIALOGUE

James Flores, Willimantic, said that he sent an email asking the Board to address the lack of minority teachers in the district and Mr. Desaulniers was the only person who responded. Mr. Flores spoke about his concern and said that there needs to be a process implemented. He said that he has talked with Mrs. Lambert. Mr. Flores said that under Superintendent's Reports on tonight's agenda there is an item about hiring minority teachers and this is the first time he's ever seen the topic on the agenda. He asked that the Board support Dr. Garcia and her future plans for hiring minority teachers.

Bill Powers, Windham, said that he spoke at the September 11, 2013, Board meeting and there has been very little progress. He said that he has been in a situation where there is a code of ethics called professional standards for teachers. He has run into real ethical dilemmas because of the lack of support for special education and ELL. He was told that if he went to the State of Connecticut, he could be terminated the next day. There is an ordinance in the Town of Windham that applies to every board, and there is an ethics commission that is now meeting. Mr. Powers said that he has requested a meeting with the ethics commission because teachers and administrators need somewhere to go to advocate for their students; and if they can't go to the State, they should have somewhere to go locally. He said that he has it in writing that the Board of Education decided not to abide by that code of ethics. He said that he hopes that the Board can deal with these ethical issues because the Board needs to take care of the students and staff and shouldn't leave it up to unions. He also spoke about speed limit signs being removed by the State in front of Windham Center School over a year ago. He said that the traffic study that took place was not done for a school zone and data was used from April 2011 when the speed signs were still up. He said that he hoped

that the Board would ask the mayor and the town to put the speed limit signs back up. Mr. Powers said that the Town has responded that everything is fine; however, the wrong study was done.

Mary Gallucci, Willimantic, said that in reference to the last Board meeting, students are tested too much and are demoralized and not learning. She commended the Board and Dr. Garcia for taking action regarding the school wells. Ms. Gallucci said that the High School should be examined to see what is needed in terms of renovations. She said that the school could be functional and updated at a better price and students deserve the best facilities possible. Ms. Gallucci spoke about the class that was canceled at QVCC and the school/university partnerships. She said that the high school needs AP courses so that students can take these classes and not depend on enrollment at the college/university. She said that she is a bit concerned about the new schedule at the Middle School with 90-minute blocks and students' attention spans need to be considered. She said that schedules at the Middle School shouldn't be so rigid that children's needs are not met.

Attorney Dennis O'Brien, Town of Windham's Representative on the Steering Committee of the Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding (CCJEF)

Attorney O'Brien explained that he was appointed by the Town to serve on the steering committee for CCJEF and has been asked by its Executive Director to report to the Town and to the Board of Education. He provided the history of the formation of CCJEF in 2004 which was established to address the achievement gap and the equality of education funding. In 2005, the Yale Law School Clinic filed the case that every child has a right to an adequately and equitably funded education; and in 2010, the Connecticut Court heard the case. A New York law firm is now conducting the case, in conjunction with the Yale Law School Clinic, which is set to go to trial on January 6, 2015. Attorney O'Brien said that he believes the case has great possibilities and will benefit Windham. There was discussion and Attorney O'Brien answered questions.

REPORTS

Superintendent's Report Needs Assessment

Dr. Garcia reported that the needs assessment for curriculum and assessment took place on September 30 and October 1, 2014, by Education Resource Strategies. The team observed classrooms, reviewed data and interviewed students and parents. Dr. Garcia said that a report with its findings will be provided and she believes that it will be very enlightening for the district.

NWEA Data – Fall 2014

Dr. Garcia reported that the NWEA assessment was completed on September 26, 2014. Data shows progress particularly at the seventh grade level. Data also indicated some loss, which is expected, over the summer. However, scores continue to grow.

Transportation

Dr. Garcia reported that there are major transportation concerns which have been addressed with the bus company and several steps are in the process of being put in place to alleviate these concerns. Letters will be sent to parents who will be affected by the changes.

Professional Development – October 14, 2014

Dr. Garcia reported that the focuses of the October 14, 2014, professional development are Common Core, math, writing, and cultural diversity at the High School.

Minority Teacher Hiring and Retention

Dr. Garcia reported that the concerns regarding the hiring of minority teachers are valid and asks the community to be patient while plans are being developed and work is being done to put a process in place for addressing the issue.

Committee Reports

Finance and Audit Committee

The committee has not met.

School Planning and Design Committee

Mr. Kalajian reported that the committee has been meeting regularly and there has been a great deal of active participation in planning to design a long-term vision for all of the schools.

Executive Committee

Mrs. Lambert reported that the committee met, and the Superintendent would like a retreat scheduled with the Board. There was discussion and the date of January 17, 2015, was agreed upon at tonight's meeting.

Motion of Mr. Kalajian, seconded by Mrs. Osuba, that the Board of Education add to the agenda the recommended approval of a Board of Education retreat to be held on January 17, 2015, as action item (R).

The motion is unanimously approved.

Ad Hoc Policy Committee

Mrs. Osuba reported that the second reading of the transportation policy is on the agenda for approval with the deletion of the words, *Director of Finance*, throughout the policy. Mrs. Osuba said that a full report regarding the policy audit should be received from CABE soon. She requested that the Ad Hoc Policy Committee meet the second Thursday of each month. Mrs. Lambert asked her to send a list of meeting dates to the Superintendent's office.

ACTION ITEMS

ED 049 for North Windham School Well Replacement (Ref. 2) and ED 049 for Windham Center Well Replacement (Ref. 3)

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. Kalajian, that the Board of Education approve the ED 049 for the North Windham School Well Replacement (Ref. 2) and approve the ED 049 for the Windham Center Well Replacement (Ref. 3).

The motion is unanimously approved.

Educational Specifications for North Windham School Well Replacement (Ref. 4) and Educational Specifications for Windham Center Well Replacement (Ref. 5)

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. Kalajian, that the Board of Education approve the Educational Specifications for the North Windham School Well Replacement (Ref. 4) and approve the Educational Specifications for the Windham Center Well Replacement (Ref. 5).

The motion is unanimously approved.

Grant Applications (Refs. 6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15)

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. Montalvo, that the Board of Education approve the following grant applications: Windham Middle School After School Program grant application (21st Century Community Learning Centers (Ref. 6); State After School grant application for Natchaug School, Sweeney School and C.H. Barrows STEM Academy (Ref. 7); Education for Homeless Children and Youths grant application for the year 2014-2015 (Ref. 8); North Windham Family

Resource Center grant application (Ref. 9); Natchaug Family Resource Center grant application (Ref. 10); 21st Century Windham Middle School Expanded Learning Time grant application (Ref. 11); Support for Parent and Pregnant Teen continuation grant application – Year 2 continuation (Ref. 12); Young Parent Program grant application (Ref. 13); Bilingual Education Program grant application (Ref. 14); and Title III, Part A, English Language Acquisition and Language Enhancement grant application (Ref. 15)

The motion is unanimously approved.

Windham High School Overnight Field Trip (Ref. 16)

Motion of Dr. Gomez, seconded by Mr. Kalajian, that the Board of Education approve the Windham High School overnight field trip to Washington, D.C., and Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

There was discussion, and Ms. Potter answered many of the Board members' questions. It was decided to defer a vote to approve the trip until the October 22, 2014, Board meeting allowing time for Board members to obtain more information.

Dr. Sewall moved to defer voting on the Windham High School overnight field trip to the October 22, 2014, Board meeting, allowing fundraising for the trip to continue; motion seconded by Dr. Gomez.

The motion is unanimously approved.

Transportation Policy (Ref. 17)

Motion of Mr. Kalajian, seconded by Dr. Sewall, that the Board of Education approve the revised transportation policy #3541 with the removal of the words, *Director of Finance*, throughout the policy wherever *Director of Finance* is stated.

The motion is unanimously approved.

Approval of Appointments

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mrs. Osuba, that the Board of Education approve the following appointments:

1. Karen Lapuk to the position of Director of ESOL, Bilingual and World Language Education at Central Office, effective date to be determined, salary Level III, Step 1, \$110,690. Replacement.
2. Nichole Federowicz to the position of Grade 8 Math Teacher at Windham Middle School, effective October 8, 2014, salary BA/4 \$43,197. New Position.
3. Qin Luo to the position of Mandarin Teacher, One Year Appt at Charles H. Barrows Stem Academy effective September 22, 2014, salary BA/1 \$39,864. Replacement.
4. Anjana Tihaiya to the position of Math Interventionist at Natchaug School effective date to be determined, salary MA/4 \$45,875. Replacement.
5. Rebecca Durfee to the position of Grade 4 Teacher at Sweeney School effective September 15, 2014, salary is MA/5 \$47,340. Replacement.
6. Connie Sharp to the position of .60FTE Math Teacher at Sweeney School effective September 15, 2014, salary is MA/4 \$45,875 prorated. Replacement.
7. John Sherman III to the position of Math Teacher, One Year Appt at Windham High School effective August 25, 2014, salary is BA/1 \$39,864. Replacement.

The motion is unanimously approved.

Board of Education Retreat in January 2015 - Added Agenda Item

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mrs. Osuba, that the Board of Education approve a Board of Education retreat to take place on January 17, 2015.

The motion is unanimously approved.

Dr. Garcia asked Student Representative Mr. Cusson his thoughts about the High School field trip. He said that he has signed up to attend and there is no financial barrier for students. He is looking forward to enjoying the experience and getting the educational benefits.

Board comments

Mrs. Osuba said that approval was given to purchase musical instruments and students need to be given the opportunity to participate in the music program. She urged the Board to look at the budget so that another person can be hired for the program.

Dr. Sewall said that the Board should be receiving a report on the adjustments made to the budget comparing what was requested last spring to what was passed this fall. He also said that plans for next year's budget need to be looked at earlier. Dr. Garcia said that work has begun on the 2015-16 budget and a budget calendar will be prepared by November 1, 2014.

Mr. Kalajian asked if the district was actively addressing concerns regarding the loss of the number of middle school students entering Windham High School. Dr. Garcia said that discussions have begun with Ms. Markey and will begin at Barrows. There will also be conversations regarding the future of the High School and what it will look like. Dr. Garcia also said that Windham has accepted the invitation to be part of the P-Tech grant and some administrators will be visiting the program in Norwalk on October 31st.

Dr. Garcia introduced Ms. Lapuk who was appointed to the position of Director of ESOL, Bilingual and World Language Education at tonight's meeting. Ms. Lapuk previously taught in Windham and said that she is looking forward to returning to Windham as the Director of ESOL, Bilingual and World Language Education.

Mrs. Lambert said that parent conferences will take place at the High School tomorrow, and the Breast Cancer Awareness Drive was hosted by the High School earlier today.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion of Mr. Montalvo, seconded by Dr. Gomez, that the Board of Education enter into executive session at 8:37 PM for the discussion of exempt documents pertaining to confidential attorney-client communications and bargaining unit negotiations.

The motion is unanimously approved.

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

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Dr. Garcia, Directors Ms. Beghetto, Mr. Cunha and Mr. Johnson

REGULAR SESSION RECONVENES

Chair Mrs. Lambert reconvened regular session at 10:12 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. Kalajian, that the Board meeting adjourn at 10:12 P.M.
The motion is unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Juan Montalvo, Secretary