

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
September 18, 2013

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

BOARD ABSENT: Mrs. Osuba, Ms. Tinker, Mr. Adamo, Mr. French

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Ms. Ortiz, Deputy Superintendent Dr. Gasper, Director Mrs. Banks, Communications Officer Ms. Markey

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Special Master Dr. Adamowski, Robert Roach from Friar Associates, general public, staff

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Sewall called the September 18, 2013, Special Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:00 P.M., in Conference room #1 (Room 223), Kramer building.

Mr. Desaulniers led the Board and public in the reciting of the pledge of allegiance.

Facilities Master Plan (FMP) Implementation and Planning for the September 24, 2013, Public Facilities Forum

Mrs. Lambert reported that it has come to the attention of the Board that the High School is coming up for accreditation, and there are many areas at the High School that need updating. The NEASC visitation to the school will take place in the Spring of 2015. Moving the High School to Phase I of the FMP will help support the High School and assist in securing its accreditation.

Dr. Gasper, who has served on many NEASC visiting committees both as a member and as a chair, reviewed the NEASC accreditation process, along with the timeline. He also provided highlights on some of the standards which NEASC uses for its accreditation process and explained the rating guide used to judge each standard.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the number of students attending the High School, cost of renovations to the building and changing the schedule of the FMP implementation. There was a consensus of the Board to have the renovations at the High School occur earlier in the FMP. Due to this change, the forum planned for September 24, 2013, will be re-scheduled.

Magnet Schools/Enrollment Outside of Attendance Districts Policy

Ms. Ortiz reviewed changes made to the policy including the addition of the dual language application process. Several aspects of the policy were discussed. The policy will be brought to the full Board for a first reading of the draft policy on October 9, 2013, and final approval at the November 13, 2013, Board meeting.

PUBLIC DIALOGUE

David Walencewicz, Windham, said that we need to have a vision of a program for K through grade twelve students. The high school is where Windham starts losing most of our students. He said that he personally likes the idea of a STEAM magnet high school. We need to retain people in the community by improving our schools. There are many schools in the state that are far older and have great programs. It is not about the age of the school but what happens within the school. The high school needs to be sold to the community because the next option would be to have schools up to grade eight and then send students out of the district for high school. He said that it is really important to have a good plan for grades k through twelve.

Mary Lou DeVivo, Willimantic, said that there are still people upset about the Windham Middle School since it only passed by four votes. People don't want these things to happen quickly. You need to be careful about sending younger children to the high school.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mrs. Lambert, seconded by Mrs. Collins, that the Board meeting adjourn at 9:21 P.M.

On the motion: Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Murphy Sewall, Board Chair