

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION  
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES  
(held in place of the September 12, 2012, regular business meeting)  
September 5, 2012

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Dr. Sewall, Vice-chair Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Osuba, Mr. Adamo, Mr. French, Dr. Switchenko, Ms. Tinker, Mr. Desaulniers, Mrs. Lambert (arrived at 7:15 PM)

BOARD ABSENT: No one

ADMINISTRATION

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

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: Brigid DeAngelis

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Robert Roach, Architect from Friar Associates, general public; staff; administrators; news media

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dr. Sewall called the September 5, 2012, Board of Education special workshop meeting, held in place of the September 12, 2012, regular business meeting, to order at 7:00 P.M. in the Windham High School Library Media Center.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Board and the public recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

WORKSHOP SESSION

Presentation of Ten-Year Facilities Master Plan and possible options by Friar Associates

Friar Associates' architect Mr. Roach said that Friar Associates was hired by the Windham Board of Education to help develop a ten-year facilities master plan for the district and has been working with the Board's subcommittee. Over the summer, Friar Associates completed the existing conditions studies at all of the schools, documented existing plans, and completed code and infrastructure studies. The reports and recommendations on that portion are completed. The next step in the master plan is to work with the Board of Education to look at program plans and enrollment projections. Existing building size, enrollment numbers and maximizing reimbursement are key factors. Mr. Roach reviewed options that would use existing buildings at their maximum capacity. The present proposal is to have pre-k through grade five in three elementary schools offering dual language (Sweeney), year round (North Windham) and Montessori (Windham Center) programs. Elementary students would continue with their team into the Middle School for grades six to eight. The Middle School, which doesn't require any major renovations, would be divided into three teams to keep continuity of the curriculum. The next steps for Friar Associates' study will include more accurate enrollment numbers in each building, programs at each school, and schematic site plans. Replacing the roof at Natchaug and using the school for swing space while renovations are taking place in other schools was also discussed. Options for the location of central office are also being reviewed for consideration. Once a plan for the district is decided, it will be phased in over time. Open forums will be

scheduled to discuss options. There was discussion throughout the workshop and Board members' questions were answered.

### PUBLIC DIALOGUE

Mary Gallucci, Willimantic, commented that it seems that all important decisions have already been made and there have not been any conversations with the community or with the parents. She said that for months the Board has said that the findings of the facilities master plan would be presented regarding the state of the buildings. The National Trust for Historic Preservation works to put the renovations of older and historic schools on the same funding level as construction of new schools. She asked if Friar Associates has ever been involved in renovations of historic structures. She asked if there is a conflict of interest since Friar Associates will get the job to renovate the schools. Mr. Roach responded that they have done historic renovations and have looked at the cost involved to renovate Natchaug and are still crunching numbers.

Mark Phelps, Windham, said that since these decisions will affect more than one generation, they are very important. He works in a pre-k to grade eight school and because so much is packed into the school day, there is not much of an opportunity for the interaction of older students with younger students. However, he said that there may be more of an opportunity if the school had a common theme. He asked about having central office move into one of the smaller schools and then build a new school, since renovating can be more costly than building. He said that field space in every school in Windham is inadequate and there is no space to add on to existing buildings.

Mary Lou DeVivo, Willimantic, spoke about parking at Kramer School which, she said, is horrendous and a hazard if fire trucks need to get to the building. She said that people were told that Kramer was not fit for children and that is why a new Middle School was built. She said she is concerned about the cost to the town for the new plan because busing costs would be very expensive for children to attend the different schools. Ms. Ortiz said parent teacher conferences were held today at Kramer which affected traffic, and also the addition of Natchaug kindergarten classes has created the need for more parking.

Doug Lary, Willimantic, thanked Nancy Tinker and Murphy Sewall for encouraging written documentation of the presentation as he was disappointed to attend this evening and not receive any material. He said that it isn't necessary to have three different schools to encompass year-round, dual language and Montessori concepts. He attended one school that offered all three and this would save on transportation costs.

### ADJOURNMENT

**Motion by Mr. Adamo, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board of Education adjourn its meeting at 8:20 PM.**

**On the motion: Aye, unanimous.**