

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT
July 8, 2009

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Mr. Folan, Vice-chair Mrs. Rayhall, Mr. Adamo, Dr. Switchenko, Mr. Doyle, Mrs. Haney, Mrs. Collins, Mr. Clements, Mr. Diaz

BOARD ABSENT: No one

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Mrs. Fuller, Directors Mrs. Banks and Mr. Nelson

REPRESENTATIVES

PRESENT: Student Council – No one
Columbia – No one

OTHERS PRESENT: Administrators, staff, general public, news media

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mr. Folan called the July 8, 2009, Board of Education meeting to order at 7:30 P.M., in conference room one (room 223), 2nd floor, Kramer School.

Mr. Folan began with an opening statement regarding privatizing food services for the Windham Public Schools. He explained the process thus far and the steps taken by the Board of Education reiterating that the Board respects and appreciates all staff. He apologized for the uncertainty and explained that the Board took time to ensure that the companies being considered would provide positions to staff already in place with pay and similar benefits guaranteed. He also explained that a change is being considered due to the program's operating loss of revenue. He announced that there will be a public forum on July 16, 2009, (note: on July 9th, following this Board meeting, the date was changed to July 14th due to scheduling conflicts within the Town), from 7:00 to 8:00 PM, at Windham Middle School, with a Special Board of Education meeting directly following the forum at 8:00 PM.

BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

June 10, 2009 Regular Board of Education meeting (Ref. 1)

(3) Motion of Mr. Adamo, seconded by Dr. Switchenko, that the Board of Education approve the June 10, 2009, Regular Board of Education meeting minutes, Reference 1.

On the motion: Aye: Mr. Folan, Mrs. Rayhall, Mr. Adamo, Dr. Switchenko, Mr. Doyle, Mrs. Haney, Mrs. Collins

Nay: No one

Abstained: Mr. Clements, Mr. Diaz

The motion passes: 7-0-2

June 16, 2009 Special Board of Education meeting (Ref. 1A)

(4) Motion of Mrs. Rayhall, seconded by Mr. Doyle, that the Board of Education approve the June 16, 2009, Special Board of Education meeting minutes, Reference 1A.

On the motion: Aye: Mr. Folan, Mrs. Rayhall, Mr. Adamo, Dr. Switchenko, Mr. Doyle, Mrs. Haney, Mr. Clements, Mr. Diaz

Nay: No one

Abstained: Mrs. Collins

The motion passes: 8-0-1

June 24, 2009 Special Board of Education meeting (Ref. 1B)

(5) Motion of Mr. Adamo, seconded by Mrs. Rayhall, that the Board of Education approve the June 24, 2009, Special Board of Education meeting minutes, Reference 1B.

On the motion: Aye: Mr. Folan, Mrs. Rayhall, Mr. Adamo,

Nay: No one

Abstained: Dr. Switchenko, Mr. Doyle, Mrs. Haney, Mr. Clements, Mr. Diaz, Mrs. Collins

The motion passes: 3-0-6

COMMUNICATIONS

There were none.

STUDENT COUNCIL

There was no report.

CITIZENS/DELEGATIONS

Yolanda Negrón, Willimantic, asked the Board to consider holding its meetings in a location that is more accessible to people with handicapping conditions and also in a location that would be conducive to broadcasting meetings. She spoke about the incredible asset that the food service employees are to the children in Windham. She said that the most important thing isn't necessarily the financial bottom line and urged the Board to really think through the option of outsourcing these services.

James Flores, Willimantic, asked the Board to forget about the money and think about the children. He said that people could be promised their jobs but then be laid off if the private company loses its profit. He wants his tax dollars to stay in the community and not go out of state, where the companies being considered are located.

Deborah Dubord, Assistant Manager of Food Services at Windham Middle School and President of the Local Chapter of CSEA SEIU Local 2001, delivered a petition to the Board signed by over 1,000 residents and pledge forms from local politicians who oppose the proposal to contract out the district's food services to a private, for profit food services vendor. Ms. Dubord also spoke about the healthy and nutritious meals served for more than seventy years by the food service department and said that the Board and food service employees, along with community members, should be working together to find cost saving ways.

Dawn Niles, North Windham, urged the Board to not privatize food services. She said that the Windham cafeteria workers spend their money in this community and these jobs should not be outsourced to private companies since outsourcing has not been proven to be successful.

Brian Anderson, Willimantic, strongly urged the Board of Education to oppose privatizing because it is fiscally unsound. He said that money may be saved in the first year or two, but these savings are short term and eventually the privateer raises rates because the company is profit motivated, not public service motivated. He also indicated that cafeteria workers are low wage workers and their standard of living will even be driven lower if the Board approves the privatization of these services. Mr. Anderson submitted an article from the *Chicago Tribune* that addresses the down side of privatizing food services in the Chicago's schools.

Dona Brodeur, Windham Middle School Nurse, said that the cafeteria staff work closely with the school nurses addressing student medical issues and food allergies. She asked Board members to ask the cafeteria staff about creative ways to make budget cuts.

Diane Angotta, Windham, said that she supports the cafeteria staff. She said that they have ideas on how to save money, and she asked the Board to consider listening to their ideas. She also said that the Middle School cafeteria staff members are amazing; they know the students very well; and the quality of the meals that they serve is phenomenal. She also said that bringing a private firm into the schools may diminish the contact that cafeteria staff members now have with the children.

James Flores, Willimantic, said that it seems like the deal is already done and the Board has been negotiating before going forward for public input. He said it seems like the Board is putting the cart before the horse.

Mr. Folan responded by saying that the Board needed to find out what was now in place before going forward with the public forum. Following the forum, a vote will be taken. He clarified that there have been no negotiations but the Board has done its due diligence to find out what was available. He said that the companies considered have been scrutinized on behalf of the present cafeteria workers and the cafeteria staff would have the option of taking their union with them to the new company.

Cathy Osten, president of entire Local 2001, said that the Board of Education will not have any control over keeping positions with the same pay and benefits once an outside company is brought in and it is inaccurate to make these promises.

SUMMARY ACTION

Personnel Action (Ref. 2)

(6) Motion of Mr. Adamo, seconded by Mr. Clements, that the Board of Education approve Reference 2 with the addendum (revised 2009-10 supplemental appointments schedule A-2) from Mrs. Banks distributed at tonight's meeting:

Resignations

- Angela Brower, Reading Teacher/WHS effective June 30, 2009.
- Christina Burdzy, Bilingual Guidance Counselor effective June 30, 2009.
- Douglas Kurwelnz, AIS Computer Technician/WMS effective July 31, 2009 for the purpose of retirement.

Appointments

- Kelly Demarchi, Administrative Assistant/Special Services effective date TBD. Hourly rate is \$20.55, replaces Renee Murphy who retired.
- Heather Blevins, School Psychologist/Natchaug School effective August 24, 2009. Salary is MA/2, \$39,001 pending certification, replaces contracted services.
- Kristine Cronin, Speech Pathologist/WMS effective August 24, 2009. Salary is MA/3, \$40,436 pending certification, replaces Jonathan Lieberman who resigned.
- Liza Ronzello, Guidance Counselor/WMS effective August 24, 2009. Salary is MA/3, \$40,436, replaces Mary Linda Jones who retired.

2009-2010 Schedule A-2 Appointments

- See Attached List

2009-2010 Schedule A-4/Extra Curricular Appointments

- See Attached List

There was no discussion.

On the motion: Aye: Mr. Folan, Mr. Adamo, Dr. Switchenko, Mr. Doyle, Mrs. Haney, Mr. Clements,
Mr. Diaz, Mrs. Collins

Nay: Mrs. Rayhall

Abstained: No one

The motion passes: 8-1-0

Windham High School Donation (Ref. 3)

(7) Motion of Mrs. Rayhall, seconded by Mr. Adamo, that the Board of Education approve, with deep appreciation, acceptance of a donation to the Windham High School music program of an alto saxophone, valued at approximately \$500 to \$700, from the non-profit organization, Horns for Kids. Board members were pleased to accept this donation.

On the motion: Aye, 9-0; unanimous

ACTION ITEMS

Title I Part A and Title I ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) grant application (Ref. 4)

(8) Motion of Mrs. Haney, seconded by Mrs. Rayhall, that the Board of Education approve the submission of the Title I Part A and Title I ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) grant application. There was no discussion.

On the motion: Aye, 9-0; unanimous

Investing and Personal Finance Education in the Public Secondary Schools grant application (Ref. 5)

(9) Motion of Mr. Doyle, seconded by Mr. Diaz, that the Board of Education approve the submission of the Investing and Personal Finance Education in the Public Secondary Schools grant application. There was no discussion.

On the motion: Aye, 9-0; unanimous

Education for Homeless Children and Youths grant application (Ref. 6)

(10) Motion of Mrs. Rayhall, seconded by Mr. Doyle, that the Board of Education approve the submission of the Education for Homeless Children and Youths grant application. There was no discussion.

On the motion: Aye, 9-0; unanimous

Natchaug Family Resource Center grant application (Ref. 7)

(11) Motion of Mrs. Rayhall, seconded by Mr. Adamo, that the Board of Education approve the submission of the Natchaug Family Resource Center grant application. In response to Mr. Doyle asking if it is known if this funding will continue, Mrs. Fuller said that it is not known at this time.

On the motion: Aye, 9-0; unanimous

North Windham Family Resource Center grant application (Ref. 8)

(12) Motion of Mr. Diaz, seconded by Mrs. Rayhall, that the Board of Education approve the submission of the North Windham Family Resource Center grant application. There was no discussion.

On the motion: Aye, 9-0; unanimous

IDEA and IDEA, ARRA grant application (Ref. 9)

(13) Motion of Mrs. Haney, seconded by Mr. Adamo, that the Board of Education approve the submission of the application for the following two grants: IDEA grant and IDEA, ARRA grant. There was no discussion.

On the motion: Aye, 9-0; unanimous

Foundation grant awards (Ref. 10, 10A, and 10B)

(14) Motion of Mr. Doyle, seconded by Mrs. Rayhall, that the Board of Education accept the following three grant awards for before and after school programming received from the following foundations: NewAlliance Foundation in the amount of \$5000 (Ref. 10); SBM Charitable Foundation, Inc. (SBMCF) in the amount of \$5000 (Ref. 10A); and Liberty Bank Foundation in the amount of \$7000 (Ref. 10B). Mr. Doyle explained that there is a reduction in grant funding but these awards will help defray costs.

On the motion: Aye, 9-0; unanimous

Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development Framework (Ref. 11)

(15) Motion of Mr. Adamo, seconded by Dr. Switchenko, that the Board of Education approve the Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development Framework as submitted. There was no discussion.

On the motion: Aye, 9-0; unanimous

Copier Lease Agreement (Ref. 12)

(16) Motion of Mr. Doyle, seconded by Dr. Switchenko, that the Board of Education approve the copier lease agreement for a five-year time period with Océ. Mr. Nelson explained that Océ offered the best prices, as well as the best service, when compared to the other companies that submitted bids. Information was presented to the Budget and Finance Committee for review.

On the motion: Aye, 9-0; unanimous

Cafeteria RFP (Ref. 13)

(17) Motion of Mr. Doyle, seconded by Mrs. Rayhall, that the Board of Education approve bringing Sodexo forward to a public forum as a finalist regarding the cafeteria RFP.

On the motion: Aye: Mr. Folan, Mrs. Rayhall, Mr. Adamo, Dr. Switchenko, Mr. Doyle, Mrs. Haney, Mr. Clements, Mr. Diaz

Nay: No one

Abstained: Mrs. Collins

The motion passes: 8-0-1

Retirement Incentives (Ref. 14)

Concessions and Give backs (Ref. 15)

Restoration of Positions (Ref. 16)

(18) Motion Mr. Doyle, seconded by Mrs. Rayhall, that Ref. 14, 15, and 16 be discussed in executive session during tonight's meeting.

On the motion: Aye, 9-0; unanimous

REPORTS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Preschool shift of funds report (Ref. 17)

Mrs. Fuller explained that the Windham Heights Daycare Center will not have a contract for funding from the Department of Social Services to receive Head Start services. Funds will be used to provide services to children using existing staff and keeping the number of children served equivalent to those served during this year with no additional funding required for 2009-2010.

Update on homeless students (Ref. 18)

Mrs. Fuller explained that this report is an update on homeless students in the district and asked the Board to note that the cost of transportation has increased significantly.

Financial statement for May and preliminary financial statement for June 2009 (Ref. 19 and 19A)

Mr. Nelson reported that the June statement is preliminary but will be balanced and finalized by the end of the month.

Announcements/Information (Ref. 20)

There were no comments.

Board of Education

Subcommittee Reports:

Budget/Finance: Mr. Doyle reported that all of the topics discussed at the meeting have been addressed at this meeting and the remaining items will be discussed in executive session.

Policy/Planning: Mrs. Collins reported that the following policies were discussed: defibrillator, nutrition and physical fitness. The student representative on the Board of Education policy was reviewed and is ready to be brought forward to the full Board.

Program Development/Evaluation: Mr. Adamo reported that Ms. Ortiz presented the math pilot program for next year; there was a review of the Teacher Evaluation Plan; and the following items from the May 20th

meeting were discussed: elementary technology and libraries, physical education and the elementary art teacher position.

Facilities/Maintenance: Mrs. Rayhall reported that there was a meeting with the Board of Selectmen regarding funding for the Windham High School pool and auditorium curtains. A report on the status of work being done on the media center at Kramer is now provided on a bi-weekly basis.

Heart Safe: Mrs. Rayhall reported that the committee is looking for funds to purchase automatic defibrillators for the schools and Mrs. Fuller will be asking for all staff to be certified.

Magnet School: Mrs. Collins reported that the property proposed for the site of the Magnet School is going before the Planning Commission tomorrow at 7:00 PM.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Adamo asked for summer school information prior to the usual report in September. Mr. Doyle asked that information be provided on the structure of the operating budget for the Magnet School. He suggested including this on a Budget and Finance Committee meeting agenda and also inviting the Bloomfield Superintendent to speak on the topic.

CITIZENS/DELEGATIONS

James Flores, Willimantic, said that the Board cannot make promises to the cafeteria workers before negotiations are entered into with the private food services company.

Mary Lou DeVivo, Willimantic, asked the Board to think about trying to find some money for the Natchaug Resource Center if the state cuts its funding. She said that it provides a great benefit to students and their families.

Deborah Dubord, Assistant Manager of Food Services at Windham Middle School and President of the Local Chapter of CSEA SEIU Local 2001, asked for the terms of the contract with the new company to be clarified. She asked if it would be required to employ all present employees without the option to cut the work force or hours of employment. She also said that she has talked with people who have children who attend schools where the food service program is run by a private company and food is brought in big boxes and staff only work four hours per day. She feels that it is not a good thing to go with a private company.

Mr. Folan replied that a one-year contract would be entered into with the company and the Director of Personnel and the Director of Finance would have specific contract information.

Mary Jackson, food service manager at Windham High School, spoke about the seniority of many of the food service workers saying that it makes the school system strong. She said at the high school, students work in the kitchen and cafeteria staff care about the students. She said that it is more than just about the money; however, she said that no one has asked cafeteria staff what they are willing to give up.

Mr. Folan said that he and his colleagues appreciate all that has been said and reiterated that Board members scrutinized the companies to the best of their ability. Mr. Folan explained that it took all this time to narrow the choices down. A Special Board of Education meeting was held to discuss the cafeteria RFPs but there were only five Board members in attendance; therefore, another Special Board meeting was held this evening with all nine Board members present. He apologized for the posting of the Public Forum on July 8th and said that it was immediately canceled following the July 1st meeting.

Kevin Mercik, Windham Center, asked if the RFP required that all employees remain employed. He said that the Board cannot guarantee that any contract will guarantee the level of wages and benefits for workers. He said that he expected the Board to look at the community, not just the dollars, and is disappointed that this does not appear to be the case.

Mrs. Fuller answered that the RFP asked for an outline of benefits and wages including health insurance.

Mary Jackson, food service manager at Windham High School, said that her responsibilities are great as she has ten staff members underneath her and it is her responsibility to make sure that the food served is safe.

Kristi Dudek, North Windham and teacher, asked if Alert Now and an e-mail message could go out to staff informing them of the public hearing.

Jill Phillips, general cafeteria worker at Windham Middle School, said that the State went to their employees asking for ways to save money and it would be appreciated if the Board would do the same thing.

Cathy Osten, president of the entire Local 2001, said that only one side would be presented at the public forum and suggested that a cafeteria worker sit on the panel. She said that the cafeteria workers have stood up for themselves.

James Flores, Willimantic, told Board members that before they vote, they have to listen to the community and the community is against bringing in a private food service company.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

(19) Motion of Mrs. Rayhall, seconded by Mr. Doyle, that the Board enter into executive session at 8:45 P.M., for the discussion of exempt documents pertaining to personnel matters, bargaining unit negotiations, information contained in confidential documents related to public supply contracts for cafeteria operations, retirement incentives, concessions and give backs and restoration of positions.

On the motion: Aye, 9-0, unanimous.

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Mr. Folan, Vice-chair Mrs. Rayhall, Mr. Adamo, Dr. Switchenko, Mr. Doyle, Mrs. Haney, Mrs. Collins, Mr. Clements, Mr. Diaz

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Mrs. Fuller, Directors Mrs. Banks and Mr. Nelson

REGULAR SESSION RECONVENES

Mr. Folan reconvened regular session at 9:20 P.M.

(20) Motion of Mrs. Rayhall, seconded by Mr. Doyle, that the Board of Education add the following to the agenda for combined approval: permission for the Superintendent to negotiate retirement incentive with personnel for the 2009-2010 year; approval of the Superintendent's contract with no raise; and restoration of three paraprofessional positions.

On the motion: Aye, 9-0; unanimous.

(21) Motion of Mrs. Rayhall, seconded by Mr. Doyle, that the Board of Education approve permission for the Superintendent to negotiate retirement incentive with personnel for the 2009-2010 year; approval of the Superintendent's contract with no raise; and restoration of three paraprofessional positions.

On the motion: Aye, 9-0; unanimous.

(22) Motion of Dr. Switchenko, seconded by Mr. Doyle, that the Board of Education add the approval of the rejection of the Windham Administrators' Association contract concession with a statement of gratitude to the agenda.

On the motion: Aye, 9-0; unanimous.

(23) Motion of Dr. Switchenko, seconded by Mr. Doyle, that the Board of Education approve the rejection of the Windham Administrators' Association contract concession with a statement of gratitude.

On the motion: Aye, 9-0; unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT

(24) Motion by Mr. Adamo, seconded by Mr. Clements, that the Board adjourn its meeting at 9:27 P.M.

On the motion: Aye, 9-0; unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

John Adamo, Secretary