WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 9, 2016

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Mrs. Osuba, Vice-chair Dr. Sewall, Secretary Dr. Gomez, Mr. Kalajian, Mrs. Lambert, Mr. Montalvo (arrived at 7:35pm), Mr. French, Mr. Quamme

BOARD ABSENT: Mr. Flores-Alvarez

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Interim Assistant Superintendent Mr. Chaffin, Interim Assistant Superintendent Dr. Hebert, Directors: Ms. Beghetto, Ms. Markey and Mr. Johnson

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES: None

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mrs. Osuba called the March 9, 2016 Board of Education meeting to order at 7:06 P.M. in the Windham High School Library Media Center.

PLEDGE OF ALLIEGIANCE

Dr. Sewall led the Board and the Public in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

February 10, 2016 business meeting (Ref. 1)

Motion of Mr. Kalajian, seconded by Dr. Sewall that the Board of Education approve the February 10, 2016, business meeting minutes (Ref. 1) as submitted.

Motion is unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike Desaulniers, parent and former board member, requested information about the allocation of the funding for the Special Masters Fund. He is also concerned about the high turnover rate in the district and the use of long-term substitutes. He expressed his hope that the Board would come together to move the district forward. Mrs. Osuba said the Board had a rough start to the year but she is working to unify the board.

Sarah Hill, former Eastern Connecticut State University Student, indicated that she has been working on a *Box Top for Education* incentive program to increase the amount the schools

are receiving through the program. The program would provide a monetary incentive to members of the general public who contribute box tops to the schools.

Henry Crane, resident, suggested that the public comment policy be changed so that it did not exclude comments from those who are non-residents and nonvoters.

Mary Gallucci, parent and chair of High School Governance Council, stated that the SGC wrote a letter to the Board regarding the number of teachers at the high school. The budget shows that the high school will lose teachers due to attrition. She indicated that there are many classes that are oversubscribed. She felt that teacher positions should not be covered by grants since the grant atmosphere in the state is volatile.

Kevin Hoxie, parent, stated that Rep. Johnson is promoting a magnet school for the district. He was concerned that some board members were not aware of the hearing for the proposal. He questioned whether the Board knew where the schools were spending the money. He is concerned about the addition of programming without funding and the reliance on grant funding. He is also concerned about discipline being handled by teachers instead of administrators.

Kellie Prescott, parent and SGC chairperson, reported that the SGC met and she will sign off on the Middle School budget next week since they did not have quorum at the last meeting. She said there is a need for an extra special education teacher at the Middle School.

Susan Collins, co-chairperson of the high school SGC, said that the group has identified positions that are needed at the High school. She commended the administrators and the teachers who were helpful in gathering information for the SGC. She said there is concern about retiring teachers who are not being replaced. Ms. Collins provided a letter containing the recommendation for additional needs to be included in the high school's budget.

Al Korsinsky, parent, thanked the Board and Dr. Garcia for acknowledging the importance of SGCs. He supports a coming together of the Board so the community can come forward to support the children of the District. He asked that the ECO program at the High School be evaluated as the budget shows provision for funding, when the funding was to come through the community partners. He asked for clarification regarding the status of field trips between the present time and May. He feels these trips are very important and should not be in jeopardy due to testing. He complimented the Board members that participated in the Dr. Seuss reading at the schools.

Lorraine McDougal, grandparent and member of the High School SGC, stated that she wants to ensure that the students coming into the high school have the opportunity to take a language other than Spanish. She was very disappointed that the third grade field trip to the symphony was cancelled. This is a program that has been sponsored for ten years.

Bill Powell, member of the Windham Center SGC, questioned the allotment for each student in the District. The SGC did not have that information when they were discussing the budget and it would have been helpful to have had it. He asked about the new evaluation system being used in schools that was reported in the local newspapers. His concern is that he has not seen data that the number of impoverished, ESOL or Special needs students has decreased and he does not think that the per student allotment shows an adjustment for those students who fall into those categories. He feels that 2.9% increase is not an adequate amount to help turn the District around.

Mr. French, as a member of the general public, was disappointed that Rep. Johnson made a proposal regarding magnet schools in the District without consulting the full board or

members of the public. He encourages looking at other alternatives that will not cost any money such as a state of the art regional center in collaboration with Mansfield.

REPORTS

Superintendent's Reports (presented by Dr. Hebert on behalf of Dr. Garcia)

University of Hartford visit to ECO Program

The Windham ECO students at the High School had an opportunity to engage with experts in the field of prosthetics and orthotics. The experience is part of the program's Workplace Learning Course and is an extension of the students' recent class project. This is the first of many guest speakers scheduled to visit the program.

Parent and Community University, April 9

Registration has officially opened for the second Parent and Community University session this year. This is a free resource that will provide opportunities for parents and residents to learn how to best support their students while equipping themselves with tools needed for personal success. The Parent and Community University will take place on Saturday, April 5, 2016. Registration is available online at parentcommunityuniversity.eventbrite.com, through any Windham Public School Family Liaison, or by calling (860) 465-2559.

Social Studies and Science MAPs

Two consultants have been hired from HMH to assist with the social studies and science MAPS. The teams working on the design will be provided with professional learning opportunities in rigorous curriculum design. The sessions have begun, starting February 29, 2016.

(The following reports were presented by Mrs. Osuba on behalf of Dr. Garcia)

State of Connecticut Accountability Report

The State of Connecticut released the results of the 2014/15 Next Generation Accountability System last week, which measures school and district performance *in preparing* every student for success in their future. Each school receives a score using a formula incorporating the accountability indicators. The results will be presented to the Board at the upcoming workshop on March 23. Important to note is that the District no longer has any Turnaround Schools, while last year there were three. The high-needs students category consistently out-performed high-needs students throughout the State. This is credited to the hard work of the teachers, students and District.

Education Matters Hosted by Windham Public Schools

Windham Public Schools has been selected to host *Education Matters,* a long-running local television show. The District's Public Relations Officer, Ms. Markey, is the host. The show is aired on Charter channel 192 and the plan is to highlight some of the great work being accomplished in Windham Public Schools.

The High School Magazine, *Mirrors and Windows,* Chosen for Award

The High School magazine, *Mirrors and Windows,* has been chosen to receive Rank of Excellence in this year's National Council of Teachers of English program that recognizes excellence in student literacy magazines. Congratulations to the club advisor, Dara Bowling, and to all the students who serve on the editorial board and contributed to the publication.

Middle School Students Compete in Statewide Math Counts Competition

Middle School students recently competed in the statewide Math Counts Competition held at the Coast Guard Academy in New London. One student scored in the top 20% of 265 students from more than 30 schools that competed. These students have worked for over a year to prepare for the competition. Congratulations to advisor, Katherine Sieglestein, and the students for their hard work and dedication.

North Windham Elementary School Participated in the Read Across America Program

Students at North Windham Elementary School participated in the Read Across America Day which is held annually on March 2 at thousands of schools, libraries and community centers across the country. The goal is to bring together kids, teens and books. On March 2, each North Windham Elementary classroom was visited by a member of the community and read a Dr. Seuss book. A special thank you to Mayor Ernie Eldridge, Dr. Murphy Sewall, Dr. Patricia Garcia and Windham Public Schools staff who took the time to read to the students.

Windham VEX Robotics Team Wins Awards

The VEX Robotics team at the high school has won two awards in the 2015-16 season. Their first victory was the Excellence Award received at a tournament held at Daniel Hand High School. This award is the highest award given at the tournament. The second award was the Tournament Championship won at Danbury High School against 39 other robotic teams. The team dedicated this tournament to Elizabeth Espitia to honor her dedication to the Windham Public School District. Both of these awards qualify the team for the Southern New England VEX Robotic Regional Tournament and their success will qualify them to compete in the World Tournament in Kentucky.

First Reading of Revised Board Policy 9305 Public Comment on issues of strong public interest

Dr. Sewall reported that the Revised Board Policy 9305 as presented was not reflective of the committee's intention to have the comments at the end of the meeting restricted to items on the agenda. The draft needs to be edited and will be voted on at a next month's meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance and Audit Committee

The Finance and Audit Committee met prior to the Board meeting and will present proposed amendments to the motion regarding presentation of the budget (Action Item VI.C). The total amount of the Superintendent's Proposed General Fund Budget is $46,461,586.

Dr. Sewall would like to reinforce the fact that the Board does know where the budget monies are being spent. The Board reviews the Superintendent's proposed budget and approves a budget total. The Board also votes on programs as advised by the Superintendent.

The responsibility of the Board is to have sufficient monies in the budget to carry out the mission of the schools.

Mr. French said that the Board should not add money to the budget without the Superintendent in attendance at the meeting. Dr. Sewell said that monies suggested in the amendments were in consideration of certain programs but, ultimately, the Superintendent has the responsibility of how the money is spent. Dr. Sewall asked that the debate be deferred to discussion of Action Item C.

Mrs. Lambert asked that two issues be addressed. First; that the Board sees the budget earlier next year in order to be better prepared to answer questions. Second; before the budget is submitted to the Board, the school SGCs have already approved their individual school budgets. Dr. Sewall advised that some of the issues that arose are due to the merger of the finance departments of the Town and the Board of Education. He said conflicts in the calendars need to be addressed to avoid issues in the coming years.

School Planning and Design Committee

Mr. Kalajian reported that the School Planning and Design Committee just received the plans on the educational specifications and will be working on them, based on the previous recommendation to the Board by the School Planning and Design Committee to renovate the high school. One priority is to have a singular, cohesive dual language program located in one building (that building has not yet been identified.) The issue of the high school becoming a magnet school was discussed a number of times. The legislative teams' involvement in the discussions and Rep. Johnson's recommendation in the face of a moratorium on Magnet schools was considered a place holder to give the District the option to go in that direction should it be determined beneficial in the future. In the past, the School Planning and Design Committee has recommended magnet schools for both the high school and the dual language school.

Policy Committee

In Mr. Alvarez-Flores' absence, Mrs. Osuba noted that there were two policies going back to committee for revision. There was no further comment.

Executive Committee

Mrs. Osuba reported that the Executive Committee met and Dr. Garcia introduced her plans for administrative offices and will bring those plans to the Board at an upcoming Workshop. The Executive Committee meeting scheduled for March 10 was cancelled.

ACTION ITEMS

Revised Board Policies (Ref. 2 and Ref. 3)

Seclusion and Physical Restraint Policy

Medication Policy

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. Kalajian, that the Board of Education approve the following revised policies:

Ref. 2 Seclusion and Physical Restraint Policy 5144.1

Ref. 3 Medication Policy 5144.21

Dr. Sewall noted these changes are in response to legislation. Ms. Lee Ann Packer noted that since the first reading, there was an addition to provide for children transporting their medication on the school bus.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Teamsters' Contract (Ref. 3)

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. Kalajian, that the Board of Education approve the Teamsters' Contract.

Mr. French noted that this contract applied to the custodians and that this group is very hard working and deserves the considerations given in the contract.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Proposed 2016-17 Windham Public School Budget (Ref. 4)

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. Kalajian, that the Board of Education approve the Superintendent's Proposed 2016-2017 Board of Education General Fund Budget in the amount of $46,461,586

Dr. Sewall proposed an amendment on behalf of the Finance and Audit Committee that the Superintendent's Proposed Budget be increased by $100,000 to support the Positive Step Program. Dr. Sewall explained that this is a long-standing program in the District and is in jeopardy of losing its funding from the State. Mr. Jeff Beadle, Executive Director of the Windham Regional Community Council (sponsors of the Program), gave a summary of activities provided to the children of the District. The group has had discussion with Dr. Garcia and is requesting $100,000 to run the program beginning July 1, 2016, with the understanding that any unused funds would be returned to the District's budget. The monies would be under the purview of the Superintendent to use for this program or an alternate program. Mr. French asked if Dr. Garcia agreed to this and Mr. Beadle said there has been no formal meeting, but she was aware of this program.

Mr. French asked that the motion be amended to provide that the money would be a placeholder for the Windham Youth Services program. If the monies come back they would be rolled into the surplus at the end of the year.

Motion of Dr. Sewall to modify the Superintendent's Proposed 2016-2017 Board of Education General Fund Budget to provide for an additional $100,000 as a placeholder for the Windham Youth Services program, which money, if not expended for the program , will be rolled into the surplus at the end of the year.

Motion is unanimously approved

Dr. Sewall proposed an additional amendment on behalf of the Finance and Audit Committee that the Superintendent's Proposed Budget be increased by $80,000 to provide for an additional special education teacher at Windham Middle School. Ms. Packer indicated that the Middle School Principal would like to have an additional teacher to assist with both the Chrysalis program which deals with children with behavioral issues, and the Plaid program which deals with children with severe disabilities.

Mr. Kalajian stated that the School Governance and the principal agreed that there is a need for one additional FTE for Special Education. Mr. French expressed a concern that Dr. Garcia was not present. Mrs. Lambert asked if it would be prudent to postpone the meeting

until Monday, but it was determined that the deadline would not allow time for a later meeting. Mr. French asked that the addition to the budget be contingent upon the agreement of the Superintendent before it goes to the Board of Finance. Dr. Sewall amended his motion to provide for the contingency.

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. Kalajian, to modify the Superintendent's Proposed 2016-2017 Board of Education General Fund Budget to provide for an additional $80,000 to support additional special education teacher at Windham Middle School, contingent upon agreement of the Superintendent, prior to presentation to the Board of Finance.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Dr. Sewall proposed an amendment to the budget to add the following positions to the High School: one additional full time position in English, Math, and Social Studies; two additional full time positions in world languages, and one gym teacher, plus an additional full time in-house substitute teacher. These additions would add $520,000.00. Mr. French asked Mr. Johnson what the percentage would be after all the additions. Mr. Johnson indicated the total increase would be 4.6%. This represents a 1.6% increase from the Superintendent's Proposed Budget presented previously. Dr. Sewall said that Dr. Garcia feels there is room in the budget to support the proposed positions without an increase to her proposed budget. He further stated that she is in support of the additional substitutes and world language positions. Mr. French stated that he did not feel that a 4.6% budget increase would pass, and that the SGCs should sit down with the Superintendent to see if some funding can be repurposed to support the additional positions that are being suggested and hold the budget close to 3%. Mr. Montalvo and Mrs. Osuba said that they feel that the Board should recommend the total amount to the Board of Finance because it represents the school needs. Mr. Kalajian commended the high school SGC for their clear and intuitive presentation and he supports the funding of the SGC's recommendation to find resources instead of cutting programs. Mrs. Lambert said the high school SGC is very thoughtful in their consideration. There is a real overcrowding issue. She suggests that the additional funding be put through and the Board instruct Dr. Garcia where it would like her to spend the money. The SGC's and parents need to come out and advocate for the budget.
Dr. Gomez indicated that the SGCs have worked hard to present their proposal, and, based on their facts, he agrees that the monies should be added in order to cover the needs.
Dr. Sewall said he believes there is not enough money invested in children's education.

Motion of Mr. Kalajian, seconded by Mr. Montalvo, to modify the Superintendent's Proposed 2016-2017 Board of Education General Fund Budget to provide for an additional $520,000 to support an additional teaching staff at Windham High School.

On the Motion: **Aye: Mrs. Osuba, Dr. Sewall, Dr. Gomez, Mr. Kalajian, Mrs. Lambert, Mr. Montalvo, Mr. Flores-Alvarez, Mr. Quamme**
Nay: Mr. French
Abstained: No One
The motion passes – 8-1-0

There being no further discussion, **Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. Kalajian that the Board of Education approve the 2016-2017 Board of Education General Fund Budget in the amount of $47,161,586.**

Mrs. Lambert stated that she is not convinced that this budget is as transparent as it could be, but, after meeting with the schools during the week and listening to tonight's discussion, she will vote in favor of the budget with reservations.

On the Motion: **Aye: Mrs. Osuba, Dr. Sewall, Dr. Gomez, Mr. Kalajian, Mrs. Lambert, Mr. Flores- Alvarez, Mr. Quamme**
Nay: Mr. French, Mr. Montalvo
Abstained: No one
The motion passes – 7-2-0

Addendum to Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs (Ref. 5)

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. Quamme that the Board of Education approve the addendum to the agreement for the Child Nutrition Programs. There was no discussion

Motion is unanimously approved.

Sweeney School field trip to Nature's Classroom (Ref. 6)

Motion by Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. French that the Board of Education approve Sweeney School's field trip to Nature's Classroom. Dr. Sewall commented that this is a great trip and an opportunity for the students to get outdoors and learn about nature.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Educational Specifications for Windham Middle School Micro Grid/Roof (Ref. 7)

Motion of Mr. Kalajian, seconded by Dr. Sewall that the Board of Education approve the Educational Specifications for the Windham Middle School Micro Grid/Roof. Mr. Kalajian said the committee is a hard-working group and they have done a great job generating the Educational Specifications.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Personnel Recommendations (Ref. 8)

Motion of Mr. Quamme, seconded by Mr. Kalajian that the Board of Education approve the following appointments and accept the following resignations as recommenced:

APPOINTMENTS

- Jessica Mastriani Carito, to the position of Grade 3 Teacher at Windham Center School effective March 7, 2016, salary $47,340. Replacement.
- Aida Torres Prieto to the position of New Arrivals Biology Teacher at Windham High School effective February 11, 2016, salary $41,950. New Position.
- Chrystal Galan-Rivera to the position of Paraprofessional at Windham Center School effective February 17, 2016, salary $12.29 per hour. Replacement.
- Shayna LaFlam to the position of .60 FTE YPP Nurse at Windham High School effective March 2, 2016, salary $29,742. New Position.

- Marlene Cianci to the position of Grade 3 Teacher at Charles H. Barrows STEM Academy effective March 25, 2016, salary $48,183. Replacement.
- Whitney McCormick to the position of Special Education Teacher at Windham Center School effective March 21, 2016, salary $50,268. Replacement.

RESIGNATIONS

- Elizabeth Gilmore, Teacher at Windham Center School effective March 10, 2016.
- Melissa Strauss, Teacher at Charles H. Barrows STEM Academy effective March 11, 2016.

Motion is unanimously approved.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mrs. Lambert congratulated the students on the VEX team on their accomplishments and wished them well on their world competition. She said she is saddened by the loss of Mrs. Espitia, which is a huge loss to the District. She would like to thank the many students who worked to stuff envelopes for Dollars for Scholars and hoped people will support the initiative. A special thanks to the teachers who helped with the initiative. She also commented on the field trips that had been previously scheduled and were cancelled. She indicated that the teachers she spoke with were aware of the testing and had made accommodations around the testing and are disappointed that the trips were cancelled.

Mr. Quamme commented on the Rep. Johnson's bill. He just found out about it last week and felt that everyone did not know about it. He felt the people of the community elected the Board to represent them and this matter should have come from the community through the Board. Dr. Sewall explained that the bill was a placeholder only. Dr. Gomez also indicated that he did not know about the bill, but was aware that there had been discussion about a dual language school several times, including at the retreat. Mr. Montalvo stated that the discussion about the magnet school was not proposed to the entire Board. Dr. Sewall stated that the Board has not been asked to vote on anything yet. There would be a process if the moratorium on magnet schools is lifted.

Mr. Montalvo asked why Planning and Design did not bring this issue to the Board. Mr. French indicated subcommittees have no authority other than to recommend up to the full board. The full board was not informed about Bill 5465. He said that he was not made aware of the bill but did note that several members of the Board of Education spoke on behalf of the bill, along with the Superintendent of Schools and the Windham Federation of Teachers. He felt this should have been brought to the full board.

Mr. French indicated that he has received documentation that there has been a printed exchange among five members of the Board, which may constitute an illegal meeting. He distributed a copy of 5 pages of documentation regarding the budget. Mr. French requested that legal representation give a decision regarding whether this constitutes an illegal meeting. He is asking that all documentation for the past 60 days be reviewed under an FOIA request to make certain similar exchanges have not taken place.

Dr. Sewall indicated that the superintendent asked that members of the Board send her questions regarding the budget. Mr. French stated that this exchange constituted a discussion and wants to make sure there are no future problems. Mrs. Lambert pointed out that there were only four other members copied on the email but all members should have been included.

Mrs. Osuba said that the information will be forwarded to Attorney Mooney for his review. She wants to change the direction of the Board to move forward in the best interests of the students.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. French, seconded by Mr. Quamme, that the Board adjourn its meeting at 9:34 P.M.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Jaime Gomez, Secretary