

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
May 14, 2014

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Mrs. Lambert, Vice-chair Mr. Desaulniers, Mr. Quamme, Dr. Sewall, Mr. French, Mrs. Osuba

BOARD ABSENT: Mr. Montalvo, Dr. Gomez

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Deputy Superintendent Dr. Gasper, Directors Mrs. Banks, and Mr. Cunha, Communications Officer Ms. Markey

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: Nicole Moore and Dakota Fleming

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

CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Lambert called the May 14, 2014, Board of Education regular business meeting to order at 7:04 P.M. in the Windham High School Library Media Center.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Desaulniers led the Board and the public in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

Motion of Mr. Quamme, seconded by Mr. Desaulniers, that the Board of Education approve the April 9, 2014, business meeting minutes (Ref. 1) and the April 23, 2014, workshop meeting minutes (Ref. 1A).

The motion is unanimously approved.

REPORTS

Superintendent's Report

Recognitions

Connecticut General Assembly Award for Service to the Windham Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

On behalf of State Representatives Susan Johnson and Linda Orange and State Senator Don Williams, Representative Johnson presented Kim Charon with a plaque in recognition of her eleven years of service to the Windham Parent Teacher Organization. On behalf of the Board of Education and the Superintendent, Ms. Charon was congratulated by Mrs. Lambert and Dr. Gasper.

Secretary of the State's 2014 PowerPoint Contest

State Representative Johnson honored North Windham School students, Eric Davila and Brayan Aleluya, with citations for their entries in this year's Secretary of the State's PowerPoint Contest. Eric's topic was the beginning of football and Brayan's topic was the submarine. On behalf of the Board of Education and the Superintendent, Eric and Brayan received certificates and were congratulated by Mrs. Lambert and Dr. Gasper.

Governor's Scholar Semi-Finalist

Windham High School student, Lindsay Phaneuf, was presented with a certificate for being selected as a semi-finalist in this year's Governor's Scholar Program. Mrs. Lambert and Dr. Gasper congratulated Lindsay on behalf of the Board of Education and the Superintendent for her outstanding achievement.

Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) Student Leadership Awards

Windham Middle School students, Wendy Hernandez-Mendoza and Allen Sfakios, and Windham High School students, Nicole Moore and Dakota Fleming, were recognized for their exemplary leadership skills. They are this year's recipients of CABE's student leadership awards. The students were presented with certificates and congratulated by Mrs. Lambert and Dr. Gasper on behalf of the Board of Education and the Superintendent.

PUBLIC DIALOGUE

Elizabeth Espitia, Willimantic, and Christine Werth, Windham, thanked Board members for serving on the Board which, they said, is a difficult job. Ms. Espitia and Ms. Werth both spoke on behalf of Superintendent Ortiz and said that they want her to continue as Superintendent. Ms. Espitia said that Ms. Ortiz knows staff and families by name and brings a lot to the school system. She said that it is wrong to let her go and morale is now very low in the district. She asked the Board to please consider keeping Ms. Ortiz as the Superintendent. Ms. Werth said that it is the wrong decision not to keep Ms. Ortiz as Superintendent. She said that Ms. Ortiz attends almost every event and has supported TSA as well as the community. Mrs. Werth said that she has never known a superintendent to give such support to the district and to the community.

Mary Lou DeVivo, Willimantic, said that a child in kindergarten at Barrows must reach Level 4 to advance to first grade. She asked for clarification on what Level 4 means and said that it should be explained to parents. If a child does not advance to the next grade, Mrs. DeVivo said that parents need to realize that their children are intelligent but just may not have mastered a certain skill to advance to the next grade.

Windham Middle School students Nathan Espitia, TSA President; Dylan Werth, TSA Treasurer; and Matthew Morin, TSA Reporter spoke in support of Ms. Ortiz saying they wanted her to stay on as the Superintendent. The students all said that she has put much time and dedication into Windham in all areas including the support she has given to TSA.

James Flores, Willimantic, said that Ms. Ortiz's contract was not renewed because of personal and political agendas, not because she was incompetent; and it is up to the Board to do what's right for the community. He said that he voted against the school budget because there are too many fat cats in the system and administrators do not live in town. When Ms. Ortiz leaves, there will be no Latino administrator in the district, and there are only eight Latino teachers. He said there is no Latino representation and the only role models for children are custodians.

Mary Gallucci, Willimantic, asked if there is an evaluation of the Kelly Substitute Service. She said that the district should pay the substitute teachers the extra money and have the district manage the substitutes. She said that Mr. Flores, who is on the Town Council, is against the Board's budget but the Town Council is not elected to determine how the Board funds education. She also said that there are too many temporary TFA teachers and, therefore, the schools cannot build capacity. Ms. Gallucci said that there are few enrichment programs left at the Middle School because they have all migrated to Barrows. She said that there is a difference in field trips, concerts, and enrichment programs offered at the Middle School compared to those offered at Barrows, and students at the Middle School feel that they are being short changed. She also said that it is not known if the money from the Commissioner's Network has been received and if it has been received, how it has been spent. Ms. Gallucci said that Willimantic should be attracting people to move into the area because it is adjacent to a college town which is expanding with the College Center but

that isn't happening because the schools are not funded properly. Ms. Gallucci said that due to the chaos at the Middle School, she has been unable to do programs there to celebrate the 450th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, which is this year.

Gloria Maldonado, Willimantic, (translated by Mrs. Osuba), said that she is representing the Hispanic community and spoke in support of Ana Ortiz. She said that many Hispanic parents feel that they were not properly informed about what is going on, and she and Hispanic parents do not want the Board to make a decision without consulting with parents in the community. They feel that it should be a community decision and another vote should be taken. Ms. Maldonado said that she believes the Superintendent has done a good job and does not want her to leave. She said that the parents want her to stay not only for the Hispanic community but for the non-Hispanic community as well.

REPORTS

Superintendent's Report

Mrs. Lambert said that Ms. Ortiz is absent from tonight's meeting because she is the emcee at a National Guard awards' ceremony at the Capitol in Hartford this evening.

Committee Reports

Finance and Audit Committee

Mr. French reported that budget transfers for the third quarter, which have been reviewed by the committee, will be voted on this evening. He also reported that since the budget did not pass, the committee will meet prior to next Wednesday's Board of Finance meeting to discuss possible cuts to the budget.

School Planning and Design Committee

Mrs. Lambert reported that a presentation was made last Tuesday at the Town Council meeting regarding the renovation and repurposing of the High School as part of the Capital Improvement Action Group. Members of the Town Council voiced objections to moving the Board of Education offices from Kramer to the High School due to the expense. However, because the High School is oversized, the main focus is to move the preschool there. The cost of keeping the offices at Kramer will be discussed at the next School Planning and Design Committee meeting.

Executive Committee

Mrs. Lambert reported that the committee has not met.

Ad Hoc Policy Committee

Mrs. Osuba reported that she will coordinate a date for the committee to meet to discuss the attendance policy. Any review of additional policies will occur after CABE conducts its policy audit.

Superintendent Search Committee

Mrs. Lambert reported that the committee met tonight and will be conducting interviews over the next two weeks.

ACTION ITEMS

First Experience Communications' Proposal (Ref. 2)

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mrs. Osuba, that the Board of Education approve the consulting proposal submitted by Ira Yellen, President of First Experience. Mrs. Lambert explained that Mr. Yellen is a consultant who will provide assistance with moving the High School project forward to referendum.

The motion is unanimously approved.

Alliance and Priority School District Consolidated Grant (Ref. 3)

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mrs. Osuba, that the Board of Education approve the submission of the Alliance and Priority School District Consolidated grant application for FY 2014-2015. There was discussion and Dr. Gasper answered Board members' questions.

The motion is unanimously approved.

High School Redesign Bond Funding Grant (Ref. 4)

Motion of Mr. Desaulniers, seconded by Dr. Sewall, that the Board of Education approve the High School Redesign Bond Funding Grant application. There was discussion and Dr. Gasper answered Board members' questions.

The motion is unanimously approved.

Dr. Sewall asked to combine references 5 and 6 for action and there were no objections.

1003(a) Improving Student Achievement in Low-Performing Schools Grant for Natchaug School (Ref. 5)

1003(a) Improving Student Achievement in Low-Performing Schools Grant for Windham High School (Ref. 6)

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. French, that the Board of Education approve submission of the 1003(a) Improving Student Achievement in Low-Performing Schools grant application for Natchaug Elementary School and 1003(a) Improving Student Achievement in Low-Performing Schools grant application for Windham High School. Dr. Gasper explained that both grants are competitive and are designed to be a follow up to funds received from the SIG grants at Natchaug and the High School.

The motion is unanimously approved.

Third Quarter Budget Transfers (Ref. 7)

Motion of Mr. French, seconded by Mr. Quamme, that the Board of Education approve the recommended budget transfers from January 1, 2014, through March 31, 2014, as presented. Mr. French said that these have been reviewed by the Finance and Audit Committee.

The motion is unanimously approved.

Summer Food Service Program (Ref. 8)

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mrs. Osuba, that the Board of Education authorizes Superintendent Ana V. Ortiz to sign the Summer Food Service Program Agreement and related claims for reimbursement. Mrs. Lambert provided an explanation of the program which has been in place since 1982.

The motion is unanimously approved.

Donation to Windham High School Music Department (Ref. 9)

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mrs. Osuba, that the Board of Education accept with deep gratitude the donation of \$1,000 from the Walmart Foundation and Facility #2022 to the Windham High School Music Department. Mrs. Lambert said that the Prisms Concert is at 7 PM next Thursday in the Windham High School auditorium.

The motion is unanimously approved.

Approval of Appointment

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. French, that the Board of Education approve the following appointment:

1. Andrew McNamar to the position of .50 PBIS Coach at Windham Middle School, effective May 1, 2014. New Position.

Dr. Gasper answered a question regarding this position explaining that teachers will be coached on using PBIS in the classroom.

The motion is unanimously approved.

Board comments

Mrs. Lambert said that she was disappointed that the budget failed and thanked those who supported the education budget. She said that the tentative date for another referendum is June 17, 2014.

She congratulated Dakota Fleming for being named Mr. Windham.

Mrs. Lambert also said that the dinner and ceremony held for Mrs. Banks, who will be retiring, was a nice event. She said that Mrs. Banks will be greatly missed.

She also reported that there will be concerts next week at Barrows on Wednesday and at the High School on Thursday.

Mrs. Osuba commented that disturbing e-mails have been received and, as Board members, they do not have the information and cannot comment on personnel matters. Mrs. Lambert said that on the advice of the attorney, the Board cannot comment on the matter.

Special Master's Report

There was no report

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. French, that the Board meeting adjourn at 8:07 P.M.

The motion is unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy Lambert, Chair