

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION  
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
August 10, 2016

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Mrs. Osuba, Vice-chair Dr. Sewall, Mr. Kalajian, Mrs. Lambert, Mr. Montalvo, Mr. Flores-Alvarez, Mr. Quamme

BOARD ABSENT: Secretary Dr. Gomez, Mr. French

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Patricia Garcia, Assistant Superintendent Tracy Youngberg, Interim Assistant Superintendent William Chaffin, Directors: Ms. Beghetto, Ms. Markey, Mr. Johnson

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: None

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mrs. Osuba called the August 10, 2016 Board of Education special meeting to order at 7:00pm in the Windham High School Library Media Center.

PLEDGE OF ALLIEGIANCE

Mrs. Lambert led the Board and the Public in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

BUDGET UPDATE

Mrs. Osuba noted that the Board of Finance has been informed that the budget cut they are proposing will result in the layoff of 19 people in addition to the unfilled positions. The Board of Finance indicated that there was no choice but to cut the budget in order to have the referendum passed. Mrs. Osuba encouraged everyone to attend the Board of Finance meeting which will be held on August 17 at 7pm at the town hall.

Dr. Garcia noted that there is a decrease of approximately \$800,000 from grant funding and \$500,000 from the local funding at the present time. She also indicated that some of the positions that are being cut will be from attrition and that monies have also been cut from supplies and textbooks and transportation. She also noted that the budget, as originally presented, showed no increase other than contractual obligations.

Dr. Sewall commented that every effort should be made not to cut teachers but, at this point, any further reduction would have to be in personnel some of whom are in the classrooms.

Dr. Garcia also noted that grant monies often are not available to support staffing needs but are available to build capacity.

#### DISCUSSION OF RFP FOR HIGH SCHOOL MANAGEMENT CONSULTING FIRM

Mrs. Osuba explained the advantages for the Board of Education to participate in a Request for Proposal to determine what the best scenario is for the future of Windham High School. She said it is important know what the numbers will look like for all alternatives and to share that with the public. The Board of Finance will pay for the study.

Dr. Sewall elaborated on how the study would have to look at the total financial impact on the voters. There are three options that need to be costed out. This should be a request for a study. Mr. Flores-Alvarez mentioned that there is additional impact beyond the finances when children are moved out of their home communities for schooling.

Mrs. Lambert attended the Board of Finance meeting and agrees that the study is in the prevue of the Board of Finance and would like it to be a product of the Board of Finance and not the Board of Education. She feels the study will show that it is best to keep the students in the community.

Mrs. Osuba says that this would be a joint effort of the two boards. Dr. Garcia said that the culture of the community and wellbeing of students emotionally and socially need to be paramount.

Dr. Sewall indicated the Board of Finance is not in a position to write the request for study. They are willing to pay for the study and the study will be conducted by an outside consultant group. Mrs. Lambert repeated that the Board of Education should not be involved and it should rest with the Board of Finance. There are many firms and resources that can assist in the study.

Mr. Kalajian endorsed using an outside consulting firm but voiced concern that they may not understand the culture of the community. He felt that the Board of Education should create the questions to be answered with an understanding of the town's culture. He also noted that once the high school is gone, it will never come back. Dr. Garcia noted that writing the RFP is important since you get the responses for what you ask for, therefore, the Board of Education should have input in preparing the questions. Mrs. Lambert said that the Board of Finance is looking for collaboration. Mr. Montalvo asked it the Board can write some questions to be included in the request. Mrs. Osuba clarified that the RFQ would be written in collaboration with the liaisons from both boards. This will provide questions from both groups in the RFP.

#### **Mr. Kalajian left the meeting at 7:30pm.**

Dr. Sewall proposed that the Superintendent be directed to take charge of the process to prepare a RFQ (Request for Qualifications) along with Ms. Haney and Mr. Griffin from the Board of Finance and the Chair of the Board of Education will appoint several members of the Board to work with the Superintendent to make sure everything is included. Mrs. Lambert disagreed and suggested a formal letter to the Board of Finance. Dr. Sewall says before the Request goes out there should be a vote of the board and at that time the board should have all the questions that are going to be included. Mr. Flores-Alvarez agreed that the Superintendent should be directed to undertake this work. Mr. Montalvo and Mr. Quamme had no objection to the proposal. Mrs. Osuba stated that the Superintendent was directed to supervise the

production of the RFQ. Dr. Garcia said that due to the opening of school, this is not something that can be done in the next several weeks. The Board agreed.

The next meeting of the Board will be set for August 17 at 7pm to accommodate the Board's availability to attend the Board of Finance meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. Flores-Alvarez, that the Board of Education enter into executive session at 7:40pm to consider confidential information from the Board's attorney.**

**The motion is unanimously approved.**

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Mrs. Osuba, Vice-chair Dr. Sewall, Mrs. Lambert, Mr. Montalvo, Mr. Flores-Alvarez

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Patricia Garcia, Attorney Jessica Souffer

**REGULAR SESSION RECONVENES**

Mrs. Osuba reconvened regular session at 8:30pm.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. Flores-Alvarez, that the board adjourn its meeting at 8:31pm.**

**Motion is unanimously approved.**

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Sewall, Secretary