

Regional School District 12
Board of Education
Meeting Minutes
January 10, 2022

The Board of Education Meeting was held virtually. The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. on Monday, January 10, 2022, by Chairman Gregory Cava. Present were Board members: Joseph Abdella, John Buonaiuto, Angela Macchiarulo, Alex McNaughton, Justin Ongley, Jennifer Pote, Lisa Roush, Jane Sarjeant, Julie Stuart, Peter Tagley, and Mary Weber. Also present was: Megan Bennett, Superintendent.

Also in attendance were: Ben Allen, Media Communications Specialist; Mike Croft, Assistant Principal at Shepaug Valley School; Teresa DeBrito, Director of Curriculum; Nicole Grant, Director of Finance; Don O’Leary, Director of Facilities; Matt Perachi, Athletic Director, Dean of Students at Shepaug Valley School; Don Schels, Principal at Shepaug Valley School.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Todd Rubsamen (Woodbury), re: football co-op
Victoria Ceylan (Bridgewater), re: football co-op
Ryan Ceylan (Bridgewater), re: football co-op

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of minutes: December 6, 2021, Board of Education Meeting minutes *with edit:* Change start time of meeting from 7:36 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

MOTION: made by Alex McNaughton, seconded by Joseph Abdella, to approve the minutes of December 6, 2021 with noted changes.

VOTE: In favor: Joseph Abdella, John Buonaiuto, Greg Cava, Angela Macchiarulo, Alex McNaughton, Justin Ongley, Jennifer Pote, Jane Sarjeant, Julie Stuart, Peter Tagley, and Mary Weber.

Opposed: None.

Abstained: Lisa Roush.

Motion passed (11 - 0 - 1).

COVID-19 UPDATE

Superintendent Bennett shared her screen which showed the continued tracking and updates for Facts and Figures, as of January 10, 2021 regarding COVID-19. The Omicron variant made a large impact with uptick in positive cases within our district.

No virtual learning per Governor Lamont; we will continue to increase social distancing with students and reduce lunchroom capacity. Gaiters are no longer acceptable face covering; there are masks available and we will adhere to strict mask wearing guidelines.

Below are the statistics for our schools last week:

- 88 school community members COVID +
- 20% staff/students were absent last week
- 45% custodial/maintenance staff were absent last week

According to our medical liaison, the fully vaccinated population is experiencing mild symptoms while those unvaccinated are experiencing more flu-like symptoms.

We are continuing with a 10 day quarantine period for those testing positive regardless of the CDC's new protocol. Fully vaccinated individuals are exempt from quarantine if they are a primary contact, but must quarantine if they test positive or show symptoms. Region 12 considers a fully vaccinated individual to have had two Moderna or Pfizer shots or one J&J shot.

Superintendent Bennett thanked Don O'Leary, Director of Facilities, for stepping in to complete the jobs for the custodial/maintenance staff that were absent last week.

CIAC (Athletics) still requires masks regardless of vaccination status. Gym spectator capacity will be limited to 25% for home team and opposing team viewing. There will be a waiting room for swim spectators to reduce time in the pool area; locker rooms are still available for student use.

REPORTS AND RECOGNITIONS

Board Chairman's Report: Chairman Cava reports that the agriscience and science lab projects are completed and the new planetarium and maintenance garage equipment have arrived. We've finished approximately \$400,000 under budget. Building committee met for its penultimate meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Buonaiuto mentions that the 2022-2023 budget process is underway and upcoming meetings will be held on January 24, 2022 (Finance & Operations), February 1, 2022 (re: elementary schools), and February 3, 2022 (re: Shepaug/agriscience). On February 14, 2022, the final budget meeting will be held with the Finance & Operations Committee. On March 7, 2022, the Superintendent's budget will be presented to the Board.

Superintendent's Report: Mrs. Bennett commended Greg Cava for the work he has put into the Building Committee. Superintendent Bennett discussed last Wednesday's ice storm and apologized for the late notice on closure. Rivals night was a safe success – we hosted Nonnewaug. Congratulations to our National Honor Society inductees who were sworn in on December 7, 2021. Commendations were given to all of our schools for hosting safe, fun-filled holiday events for our community. We have been offering lifelong learning opportunities to our communities and the latest was a sauerkraut making class and another class coming up will be a cheese making class.

Superintendent Bennett reported on staff appointments: Mary Clarke, School Nurse at Burnham School; Connor Douskey, Snow Removal Substitute; Margaret Groht, Agriscience Teacher (.5 FTE) at Shepaug Valley School; Joshua Murphy, Grounds Maintenance Worker. Superintendent Bennett reported on staff leaving: Allison Buckley, Educational Assistant at Shepaug Valley School (effective December 31, 2021); Jeffrey Masciarelli, Maintenance Worker (effective November 12, 2021); Alyson Montague, Farm Manager at Shepaug Valley School.

Committee Reports:

Curriculum and Education – Justin Ongley discussed courses of study to be offered at Region 12,

1. Black and Latino Studies - First semester focusing on Black experience and second semester focusing on Latino experience
2. TAG & STEM Program at elementary schools - Where do we as a district feel we need more focus?

3. Foreign Language Program - In 1996, Region 12 employed two full-time foreign language teachers. One teacher at WPS and one split their time between Booth Free School and Burnham School. In 2015 our district had one part-time teacher two days per week, and in 2017 down to one day per week. The committee is talking about reigniting the program.
4. Agriscience Field Trips - Mr. Lawlor looking for ideas on field "experience" ideas (National Convention field trip in 2021). One idea could be going on trips to see how agriculture is different/performed in other states and possibly, other countries.

Mike Croft presented a powerpoint presentation discussing upcoming grading changes. However, there are still ongoing discussions on this matter and more information will be available at the February BOE meeting.

EdAdvance – Joseph Abdella attended a January 6, 2022 zoom meeting with EdAdvance and they focused on 3 key points for this upcoming year.

1. Retention and Recruitment within EdAdvance
2. Head Start/Early Learning in Torrington & Winchester are looking for new locations since their original locations were lost due to the pandemic.
3. IT Dept expansion due to demand (Powerschool)

Two new board members were elected in EdAdvance, and two new districts joined, Danbury and Barkhamsted. They're also working on a fuel oil consortium.

Finance – Alex McNaughton reminds us that our excess funds should be put into CD's and to authorize Nicole Grant to open brokerage accounts with the appropriate banks.

Labor Negotiations – Chairman Cava reported that our district has reached an agreement with the Administrators Union and the Board will discuss it in Executive Session.

Long Range Planning – Julie Stuart reported that the meeting held in December, with Board Chairman Gregory Cava and Richard Lemons from Partners for Educational Leadership, discussed a framework for long range planning. Implementation of Long Range Planning will start in Fall of 2022.

NEW BUSINESS AND UPDATES

Football Co-Op Opportunities - Discussion of whether or not SVS should enter a co-op football team composed of Nonnewaug, Wolcott Tech and Region 6. Matt Perachi, Athletic Director, shared concerns that we do not have the student enrollment numbers to support football in addition to other sports, specifically soccer. A co-op football team is not a try-out sport and all who sign up will be on the team whether they participate or not which may take away numbers needed for other sports teams. Julie Stuart mentioned the ice hockey co-op and that it does not take students away from other sports. Angela Macchiarulo agreed we need to give our students a football option. Lisa Roush asked Superintendent Bennett to obtain more information on the subject so it may be discussed at the next meeting.

Agriscience Applications Update - Agriscience Team - Rachel Murray, Meghan Berry and Peter Lawler gave a powerpoint presentation updating the Board on agriscience applications submitted from surrounding towns.

Shepaug Schedule Change Process and Updates - Don Schels - Updated the Board on the 3-4 potential schedule models in the final round, based upon the needs of our school, that the committee will decide upon before presenting to Superintendent Bennett.

Presentation of Region 12 Finances - Per Pupil Cost (Budget) versus Revenue (Tuition In, Agriscience) - Nicole Grant - Presented to the Board regarding the effect of revenue on the District's cost per student using 2020-2021 audited revenue data.

State of Diversity - Secondary Efforts - Don Schels - Mr. Schels updated the board with our district's efforts to educate our students on diversity and give them access to an inclusive learning environment through the help of our advisory program.

ACTION ITEMS

To consider and if appropriate, approve the opening of a brokerage account with Webster Bank.

MOTION: moved by Alex McNaughton, seconded by Peter Tagley, to approve the opening of a brokerage account with Webster Bank.

VOTE: Unanimous.

Motion passed (12 - 0 - 0).

EXECUTIVE SESSION

To discuss Non-Certified increases for 2022-2023, discussion of administrators' contract, and to discuss a legal matter regarding floor repair.

MOTION: made by Joseph Abdella, seconded by Mary Weber, to enter into Executive Session at 9:35 p.m. to discuss Non-Certified increases for 2022-2023, discussion of administrators' contract, and to discuss a legal matter regarding floor repair. Chairman Cava invited Superintendent Bennett into Executive Session.

VOTE: Unanimous.

The Board returned to Regular Session at 10:09 p.m.

ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS

MOTION: made by Peter Tagley, seconded by Mary Weber, to approve and ratify the Shepaug Valley Administrative Association contract, July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2025, as presented.

VOTE: Unanimous.

Motion passed (12 - 0 - 0).

MOTION: made by Alex McNaughton, seconded by Joseph Abdella, to approve the Chairman's execution of the O&G letter of agreement dated November 4, 2021, related to the sidewalks and floors.

VOTE: In favor: Joseph Abdella, Greg Cava, Angela Macchiarulo, Alex McNaughton, Justin Ongley, Jennifer Pote, Lisa Roush, Jane Sargeant, Julie Stuart, Peter Tagley, and Mary Weber.

Opposed: John Buonaiuto.

Abstained: None.

Motion passed (11 - 1 - 0).

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by D. Quijada