FINAL

Regional School District 12
Board of Education
Meeting Minutes
June 9, 2025

The Board of Education Meeting was held in the library of Shepaug Valley School. The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. on Monday, June 9, 2025, by Chairwoman Jennifer Pote. Present were Board Members: Joseph Abdella, Gregory Cava, Victoria Ceylan, Stephanie Kolnick (Arrived at 7:02 p.m.) Angela Macchiarulo, Alex McNaughton, Justin Ongley, Jennifer Pote, Jane Sarjeant (VIA ZOOM), Peter Tagley, Mary Weber, and Christine Weydig (Arrived at 7:05 p.m.). Also present: Nicole Grant, Director of Finance and Operations, Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue, Interim Superintendent, and Keri Snowden, Director of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment.

Also in attendance: Ben Allen, Media Communications Specialist, Emily Judd, Principal of Washington Primary School, Emily Rhew, Principal of Booth Free School and Burnham School, Donald Schels, Principal of Shepaug Valley School.

RECOGNITIONS

Dr. Rodrigue recognized volunteers and staff. Dr. Rodrigue recognized each individual by describing their achievements in dedication to the Region 12 community and gave them all a gift.

Paraeducator of the Year
Brienne Leslie - Special Education Paraprofessional

Teacher of the Year
Christopher Dennis - Social Studies Teacher, Social Studies Content Coach/Coordinator

Volunteer Extraordinaires
Millie Johnson - Booth Free School
Miranda Hora - Burnham School
Alexandra Patrick - SVS Agriscience
Millie Perry - Shepaug Valley School
Sarah Belanger - Washington Primary School

Next, Dr. Rodrigue, Emily Rhew, Emily Judd, and Dr. Donald Schels introduced and spoke about retiring staff and presented them with a gift.

Retirees
Jill Horan - Reach Teacher at Washington Primary School
Eileen LeBlanc - Paraeducator
Mary Rose Granka - Math Interventionist at Booth Free School / Burnham School
Betsy O'Neill - Special Education Teacher at Shepaug Valley School / Shepaug Valley Partnership
Stephanie Davies - Special Education Teacher at Shepaug Valley School
Deborah Weik - Social Studies Teacher at Shepaug Valley School

Chairwoman Pote called for a recess to celebrate with the volunteers and staff from 7:32 p.m. until 7:50 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

No public comment.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of minutes: a. Board of Education Meeting, May 19, 2025
b. Special Meeting, May 20, 2025

REPORTS AND RECOGNITION

Board Chair's Report: Chairwoman Pote expressed sentiments about Dr. Rodrigue. Region 12 truly won the lottery when Dr. Rodrigue returned—not once, but twice—to serve as interim superintendent. We were incredibly fortunate. She's been so much more than a superintendent; she's been family. It has been an absolute honor to work alongside her. Tonight is Dr. Rodrigue's last Board meeting.

Dr. Rodrigue stated that returning was easy and described it as one of the best boards she has ever worked with and said she is truly honored to be part of it.

Chairwoman Pote thanked Gregory Cava, who will be leaving the board. She expressed sadness over his departure, acknowledging that although they've had bumps in the road, his contributions were deeply valued. She emphasized that his absence will be more than just an empty seat and shared her sincere gratitude for his service.

Gregory Cava said it's been an honor to be part of such a phenomenal board. He shared that Chairwoman Pote has truly impressed him and turned him into a fan, noting that she's really stepped up. He added that the board wouldn't be where it is today without her leadership.

Gregory Cava also thanked Dr. Rodrigue, saying she helped move the program forward and got things back on track. He noted that she didn't act like an interim, but like a full-time superintendent, and added that he couldn't thank her enough.

Chairwoman Pote mentioned the baseball game that will be on June 10, 2025 at 3:30 p.m. in Berlin, CT.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Rodrigue stated that we are days away from the close of the school year. She's been visiting all the schools. She mentioned that it is so wonderful to see how the children feel about their teachers and sad that the school year is ending. Lastly she said it has been a pleasure working in Region 12.

Dr. Rodrigue shared the following Personnel:

i. Appointments:
- Ashley Albanese, Special Education Teacher at Shepaug Valley Partnership
- Laura Bautista, Spanish Teacher at Shepaug Valley School

- Tanya Charette, Special Education Teacher at Washington Primary School
- Brianna Killion, Art Teacher, Elementary Schools
- Tammy McInerney, Building Sub at Shepaug Valley School for 2025-2026 (one-year position)
- Shanice Rolls, REACH Special Education Teacher at Washington Primary School
- Mackenzie Schaeffer, Building Sub at Shepaug Valley School for 2025-2026 (one-year position)
- Jenna Schildgen, Spanish Teacher at Shepaug Valley School

ii. Resignations/Retirements:

- Amanda Koschel, Special Education Teacher at Booth Free School (effective June 13, 2025)
- Eileen LeBlanc, Paraeducator at Washington Primary School (effective June 13, 2025)
- Katie Litscher, French Teacher at Shepaug Valley School (effective June 13, 2025)
- Shannon Rupar, Paraeducator at Shepaug Valley School (effective June 13, 2025)

Treasurer's Report: Alex McNaughton - Stated the F & O Committee met earlier today at 4:00 p.m. He stated that his Treasurer's report overlapped with the F & O Committee report. They discussed transfers between departments that are reassigning dollars to be spent in those same departments that the department heads requested but that does not add to the budget. They discussed redoing the backstop of the baseball fields. He mentioned that it will keep the balls from going into the woods and it will protect the children. He also mentioned they will be asking for approval later in the meeting to move money in the 2% fund. Lastly they will be talking about the cost to fix the elevators and the library projects.

Nicole Grant mentioned they received the final agriscience audit at 2:00 p.m. today and the state released an additional $760,000 which will go into our building fund to be used for future projects.

Committee Reports:

a. Agriscience Committee - Mary Weber - Tyler gave an update on the end of the year and the last few events coming up. She shared that UConn held a spring field day where two of our groups took first place—Food Service and Parliamentary Procedure. She also proudly announced that Mina Kareden became the first agriscience student from our program to be voted in as a state FFA official. Over the summer, students will take part in the Bridgewater Fair and help clean the facility. There's a focus on blending the Shepaug and agriscience students so they work together and see themselves as one group. Finally, she attended the FFA Banquet and Awards Night, and what really stood out to her was seeing the students rise and cheer as their peers received awards—it was a powerful moment.

b. Curriculum & Educational Programming Committee - Justin Ongley - It was shared that there was a meeting earlier tonight, and a few changes are coming to the middle school. For Physical Education in 7th and 8th grade, students will now have two options: 'Sports Strategies and Games' or 'Personal Fitness and Activity.' The idea is to give students who aren't interested in competitive sports a chance to focus on their own fitness. In the CTE department, some courses are being reshuffled—TV Studio will move to 8th grade, Robotics will be offered in 7th grade, and Project Lead the Way will be introduced in 6th grade. Lastly, 30 teachers will be working on writing the summer curriculum.

c. EdAdvance - Joseph Abdella - At the last Board of Directors meeting on June 5, 2025, the board approved three items related to the Head Start Program: a grant application, a self-assessment plan, and an enrollment priorities program. During the meeting, Jonathan informed the board that funding for the student mental health grant from the U.S. Department of Education will be cut short, with current funding ending in December 2025. This reduction poses challenges for hiring and retaining mental health staff. In response,

they are preparing a letter to challenge the decision, supported by many other representatives. The program has lost $5 million of the $8 million initially promised.

d. Finance & Operations Committee - Alex McNaughton - They went over the numbers as of June 6, 2025 and we have 8% of the budget remaining compared to May 31, 2024 there was 9.66% of the budget remaining but we are in a good position for the end of the school year. One of the other things they talked about that Nicole gave us a presentation on is the work that is going to be done on the library at Shepaug Valley School he stated that it looks like the final cost will be $552,336.00. He stated that we are having elevator issues, we are looking to put generators in all of the schools but as of right now they've only received two bids and they were so far apart, so they are going to start the process over again.
e. Labor Negotiations - Gregory Cava - No negotiations yet but this fall they will be negotiating with the teachers union and he urges us to get on that as soon as possible, don't wait until they give you a date for an arbitration proceeding. Whoever chairs the negotiations committee will want to get on that as soon as possible working with our council.
f. Policy Committee - Justin Ongley - Stated they looked at Policy 2000 which involves the Superintendent of schools and evaluation we will be looking at later in the meeting.
g. Strategic - Long Range Planning Committee - Jennifer Pote - No report.

YEAR-END PRESENTATIONS

Booth Free, Burnham and Washington Primary Schools – Emily Judd and Emily Rhew
Principals Judd and Rhew presented their year-end review of the elementary schools reviewing two shared activities. The activities the students worked on this year were Historical Fiction Units and Diving Deep Exploring Marine Life through Literature and Puppetry using the Flock Theater. Time was given for questions and discussion.

Shepaug Valley School - Dr. Donald Schels
Dr. Schels went over the highlights in all the departments of Shepaug Valley School for the school year. Time was given for questions and discussion.

District Video - Ben Allen
The Board of Education was shown the district video that Ben Allen made for the school year.

OLD BUSINESS

1. *Consider for approval Second Read of Policy 4218.113 Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (Personnel)*

MOTION: made by Gregory Cava, seconded by Mary Weber, to approve second Read of Policy 4218.11. Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (Personnel).

VOTE: unanimous

2. *Consider for approval Second Read of Policy 5145.5 Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment. (Students)*

MOTION: made by Mary Weber, seconded by Victoria Ceylan, to approve second Read of Policy 5145.5 Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment. (Students)

VOTE: unanimous

3. *Consider for approval Second Read of Policy 5144.12 Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response.*

MOTION: made by Mary Weber, seconded by Angela Macchiarulo, to approve second Read of Policy 5144.12 Challenging Behavior Prevention:Restorative Practices Response.

VOTE: unanimous

4. *Consider for approval Second Read of Policy 6220 Challenges to Educational Materials.*

MOTION: made by Gregory Cava, seconded by Victoria Ceylan, to approve second Read of Policy 6220 Challenges to Educational Materials.

VOTE: unanimous

NEW BUSINESS

1. *Review Superintendent Evaluation Program and Board of Education Self-Reflection* - Dr. Rodrigue went over the plan for the Superintendent Evaluation Program and Board of Education Self-Reflection and the tool that will be used for the evaluation. She stated that the recommended evaluation process will happen three times a year in July/September, December/January, and May/June. Time was given for questions and discussion.

2. *Motion to transfer $551,531.08 (2%) to the Educational Expenditures Reserve Fund.*

MOTION: made by Gregory Cava, seconded by Victoria Ceylan, to transfer $551,531.08 (2%) to the Educational Expenditures Reserve Fund.

VOTE: unanimous

3. *Motion to approve expenditures from Capital Non-recurring Elementary Funds.*

MOTION: made by Angela Macchiarulo, seconded by Gregory Cava, to approve expenditures from Capital Non-recurring Elementary Funds.

VOTE: unanimous

4. *Motion to approve funding for the library renovation at Shepaug Valley School.*

MOTION: made by Alex McNaughton, seconded by Mary Weber, to amend the motion to authorize the Director of Finance to spend up to 1 million dollars on the Shepaug library renovations and other projects that may come forward.

VOTE: unanimous

MOTION: made by Gregory Cava, seconded by Alex McNaughton, to authorize the Director of Finance to spend up to 1 million dollars on the Shepaug library renovations and other projects that may come forward.

Nicole Grant shared plans for the library renovations, costs and funding for the library and other Projects such as the Washington Primary School roof generator (shortfall), middle school baseball field, lining the tennis courts with arborvitaes to help with the wind on the courts, sugar shack chimney.

VOTE: unanimous

5. *Motion to approve budget transfers as recommended by the Finance & Operations Committee.*

MOTION: made by Gregory Cava, seconded by Victoria Ceylan, to approve budget transfers as recommended by the Finance and Operations Committee.

VOTE: unanimous

6. *Motion to add Dr. Donald Schels as signatory to all District bank accounts as of July 1, 2025 and simultaneously remove Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue.*

MOTION: made by Alex McNaughton, seconded by Angela Macchiarulo, to add Dr. Donald Schels as signatory to all District bank accounts as of July 1, 2025 and simultaneously remove Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue.

VOTE: unanimous

EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. Confidential Student Residency

MOTION: made by Gregory Cava, seconded by Mary Weber, to go into Executive Session to discuss Confidential Student Residency.

VOTE: unanimous

MOTION: made by Gregory Cava, seconded by Mary Weber, to amend his motion to go into Executive Session to discuss Confidential Student Residency to include Dr. Rodrigue and Nicole Grant.

VOTE: unanimous

The Board entered Executive Session at 9:19 p.m.

POTENTIAL ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEM

No action on Executive Session Items.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board returned to Public Session at 9:36 p.m. The meeting was adjourned by consent at 9:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by D. Perlowsky