

TANTASQUA REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Meeting of Tuesday, November 19, 2013
Junior High School Library

Mr. Valanzola called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with members rising to salute the flag.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Brimfield

Sheila Noyes-Miller
Dan Valcour
Thaddeus France

Sturbridge

James Ehrhard
Michelle Fitzgerald
Gary Galonek
William Haggerty
Megan Panek
Beth Tichy

Holland

Howard Fife
Larry Mandell

Brookfield

Sharron Austin
James Cooke
William Gillmeister ¹

Wales

Edward Boyce
Michael Valanzola

¹ Arrived after vote on minutes

NOT PRESENT

Elias Gillen (H); Dr. Susan Waters (S)

ALSO PRESENT

Erin Nosek, Superintendent; Jeffrey Zanghi, Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching; Deborah Boyd, Associate Superintendent of Finance & Business; Michael Lucas, High School Principal; Mark Wood, Technical Division Principal/Director; Christopher Starczewski, Junior High Principal; Grace McHugh and Will Katsogridakis, Student Representatives and audience.

1. MINUTES

Motion 14-23:

Mr. Haggerty moved, seconded by Mr. Boyce, to accept the minutes of October 15, 2013.

VOTE: All in Favor

Motion 14-24:

Mrs. Panek moved, seconded by Mr. Haggerty, to accept the Executive Session minutes of October 15, 2013.

VOTE: In Favor (13); Abstained (1)

2. FINANCIAL REPORT

- Financial Report - Mrs. Boyd reviewed the Financial Report for the period ended October 31st noting there are no significant issues at this point.
- FY13 Audit - Mrs. Boyd indicated the FY13 audit is completed, copies are available. The audit offered two recommendations - one regarding pension liability and the other about sweeping bank accounts which have the school's tax ID number.
- Budget Transfers - Mrs. Boyd indicated with the contracts settled the Budget Subcommittee approved the recommended budget transfers.

Motion 14-25:

Mrs. Noyes-Miller moved, seconded by Mr. Haggerty, to approve the FY14

recommended budget transfers as presented.

VOTE: All in Favor

- Lunch Pricing - Mrs. Boyd indicated that there has been a 23% increase in the cost of food and paper products since the last lunch price increase. In addition, regulations mandate annual review of pricing to ensure the school is charging at least the same for paid lunches as is received for free/reduced lunches. Therefore, Mrs. Boyd recommended increasing student lunch pricing to \$2.75 for the entire Tantasqua District effective January 1, 2014, as well as adult lunches to \$3.50.

Motion 14-26:

Mr. Boyce moved, seconded Mr. Haggerty, to approve the Tantasqua school lunch prices as recommended by the Associate Superintendent of Finance & Business.

VOTE: In Favor: (13)
Opposed: (1) Ehrhard
Abstained: (1) Gillmeister

- Community Innovation Challenge Grant - Dr. Nosek discussed a grant opportunity of which she recently became aware. The grant requires working on a project with municipal government. Because of the interest of the member towns, Dr. Nosek has begun to work on the grant which would be a collaboration to improve the efficiencies of each town's technology systems/programs by providing new hardware, software, electrical systems, etc. The grant includes a contract employee to help with the technical issues and includes support and assistance from Tantasqua - involving students in the technical programs. The total requested amount for the grant opportunity through the Governor's Executive office, will be \$238,200. Mr. Valanzola indicated this opportunity came up between meetings, so he reached out to the Selectmen in Brimfield, Brookfield, Holland and Wales and Dr. Nosek reached out to Sturbridge.

Motion 14-27:

Mr. Boyce moved, seconded by Mr. Fife, to support the Community Innovation Challenge Grant application and authorize the Chair to sign the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Short notice to School Committee. Administration was not aware of this opportunity at the last meeting. The grant is due 11/22/13.
- Failure to submit means there is no interest.
- Member towns have approached Tantasqua asking for help with their technology infrastructure and other technology issues.
- There's educational opportunity to engage students in the technology and electrical programs.
- Tantasqua will offer some in-kind support.
- Part of Superintendent's performance and goals includes engagement with the communities.
- Tantasqua Technology Director, Greg Rossow, indicated the funds will be used to design, build, and oversee the networking installations including hardware, software, electrical upgrades, firewalls, security, power protections, back-ups, switch layouts, etc.
- Grant includes assistive technology for special needs programs in the schools.
- Each town will be responsible for any continuum costs and will need to continue

to fund a person in their town budgets.

Motion 14-28:

Mr. Haggerty moved, seconded by Mr. Galonek, to move the question.

VOTE: All in Favor

VOTE on Motion 14-27:

In Favor (13)

Opposed (2)

3. STAFF REPORTS

Motion 14-29:

Mr. Ehrhard moved, seconded by Mr. Gillmeister, to direct the Chair to send a letter to the Boys Cross Country team for their 3rd place showing in the SWCL championship meet.

VOTE: All in Favor

Withdrawal of Books from High School Library

Motion 14-30:

Mr. Haggerty moved, seconded by Mrs. Panek, to approve the books to be withdrawn from the High School Library - list as provided.

DISCUSSION - There was significant discussion about the withdrawal of the books.

Motion 14-31:

Mr. Gillmeister moved, seconded by Mr. Cooke, to postpone the vote on the withdrawal of the books from the High School library to allow time to get further information.

DISCUSSION

- Information sought: how many other copies of the same book will be kept, if any.
- If not damaged, why not keep the books?

VOTE: In Favor (4)

Opposed (10)

Motion fails, back to original motion

Motion 14-32:

Mr. Gillmeister moved, seconded by Mr. Ehrhard, to remove the following books from the list of books to be withdrawn: *Paul Bunyan, John Henry and His Hammer, Religions in America, The Power of Positive Thinking, The Story of America's Religions, "In God We Trust", The Great Constitution, The Federalist Papers, The African Slave Trade, The Supreme Court in the American System, The Book of Patriotic Holidays, Beowulf, Happy Birthdays Round the World, The Meaning of Democracy, Mr. Madison's Constitution, U.S. Coast Guard, The Chief Executive, Folktales of China, A Bill Becomes a Law, Religion and Common Sense, Rifles and War Bonnets and The Major Shakespearean Tragedies.*

VOTE: All in Favor

VOTE on Motion 14-30, as amended by 14-32:

Majority, as declared by Chair

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Students - students reported on the following activities:
- Sports updates
 - Student Council activities: Penny war to benefit Diabetes research and a Bocce tournament to benefit Special Olympics
 - Skills USA activities
 - Dress for Success donations
 - NHS Food drive - 750 items collected
 - Musical: Wizard of Oz - Nov 22nd, 23rd & 24th - tickets available on line. In addition to the high school students, actors include administrators and elementary students.
 - Mr. "T" competition - November 26th
 - Culinary students participated in Harvest Fest (Sturbridge common)
 - Culinary Thanksgiving program & pie sale
- b. Budget - The Budget subcommittee met on Nov. 4th. Items reviewed and approved: Central Office Budget (see joint meeting minutes) Budget Transfers and Lunch Prices (see Financial Report). Meetings on the FY15 budget will begin in January.
- c. Technical - No meeting, no report.
- d. Curriculum - Mr. France indicated the subcommittee met and discussed the foreign language program. The subcommittee will be further reviewing and will return with any recommendations. The subcommittee also visited information on class sizes, and SAT scores. The subcommittee has identified the following areas to discuss this year: Review areas of content discussed last year; student assessments and evaluation and how they impact curriculum design; course offerings; accreditation review -preparation for NEASC; and class sizes.
- e. By-Law & Policy - No meeting, no report.
- f. Negotiations - No meeting, no report.
- g. Building & Physical Plant - No meeting, no report.
- h. Legislative Subcommittee - No meeting, no report.
- i. Ad Hoc - Regional Agreement Amendment Committee (RAAC)
Mr. Haggerty reviewed the report dated Nov. 11, 2013 included in the meeting packet. At this time the composition of the Tantasqua Regional School Committee is 13 elected members and 5 appointed (1 from each elementary school committee). Legal counsel has advised the RAAC that some areas are not consistent with current laws, including the method of selection of school committee members, the apportionment of district costs. operating expenses, construction costs, incurring debt and transportation. Specifically, the school committee membership, as it exists, does not comply with the principle of "One Man, One Vote". The correction could result in "weighted votes".
The current agreement predicates membership on student enrollment, but it must be based on the population of its member towns.

Mr. Haggerty noted that there are 5-6 other regions in the state also reviewing their regional agreements for compliance with state law.

Mr. Valanzola noted he attended a RAAC seminar at the recent MASC Conference.

Mr. Cooke suggested if the weighted vote system is needed, that a software program be purchased to assist tracking committee votes.

5. PUBLIC ACCESS I - No comments were made

6. COMMUNICATIONS

Included in the packet & reviewed:

- Memo from Dr. Nosek re: Surrounding Community Status
- Memo from Mrs. Boyd re: FY15 School Budget Liaisons
- Memo from Mrs. Boyd re: Recommendation Lunch Prices (see Financial Report)
- SWCEC Quarterly Report
- MCAS Data Tantasqua & Union #61 (requested at last meeting)
- Memo from M. Wood re: Electrical Donation

Motion 14-33:

Mr. Boyce moved, seconded by Mr. Cooke, to accept with appreciation the donation made by Village Green Campground in Brimfield of a Drive-Punch HYD 1/2x2 (7306) .

VOTE: All in Favor

7. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Nosek reported on the following:

- Activities/Events:
 - Wizard of Oz performance (see Student report for dates)
 - JV Football game - Saturday, Nov 23rd 4:00 pm
 - Ted Foundation - 5K Turkey Trot - Dec 1, 2013
- Evaluation Cycle - Staff completed Phase I of self-assessment and are well positioned to meet the next phase of goal setting.

8. PUBLIC ACCESS II - No comments were made.

9. OLD BUSINESS

MASC Conference

Members discussed their attendance to a variety of sessions and the top resolutions coming out of the conference:

- Sessions:
 - Legal discussions regarding arbitration and the trend of individual arbitrator's determinations
 - Approaches to bargaining
 - Expulsion of students and related mandated costs
 - Unfunded mandates - Mr. Gillmeister indicated the state auditor's office holds authorization to declare mandates as "unfunded" mandates. It was suggested the committee may want to ask whether the PARCC assessment and the issue of expelled students are unfunded mandates.
 - ACTION - Dr. Nosek will look at the mechanism needed to approach the State Auditor's office.

- Keynote speaker addressed the topic of why leaders fail.
- Resolution topics:
 - ❖ Delay of PARCC testing
 - ❖ Evaluation of Commissioner of Education

10. NEW BUSINESS

Casino Impact - Given the vote of Palmer residents to reject a casino, there was no further discussion on the matter.

11. OPEN FORUM

Field Turf - Mr. Galonek indicated he would like to re-visit the issue of field turf replacement. The issue was voted down in 2008, but he felt it was time to take another look at the replacement of turf on fields #2 & #3 (handout) by investigating costs and related matters.

Motion 14-34:

Mr. Galonek moved, seconded by Mr. France, to authorize the Building/Physical Plant Subcommittee to study the possibilities of field turf replacement and related costs.

VOTE: All in Favor

Civics - Graduation requirement - Mr. Gillmeister expressed his concern about the lack of civics in the required curriculum. It was noted that History is a graduation requirement, but the Dynamics of Democracy course is an elective. Mr. Gillmeister asked the Curriculum Subcommittee to review the addition of Civics as a graduation requirement.

Motion 14-35:

Mr. Gillmeister moved, seconded by Mr. Boyce, to have the Curriculum Subcommittee study the feasibility of a Civics course as a requirement of graduation.

VOTE: All in Favor

12. ADJOURN

Motion 14-36:

Mrs. Noyes-Miller moved, seconded by Mr. Boyce, to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 p.m.

VOTE: All in Favor

Respectfully submitted,
Sharron Austin, Secretary