

Filed subject to approval

REGON 9 BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING

Thursday, March 4, 2021 – 7:30 p.m.

Virtual via Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/93861059439?pwd=aVJqYXZKVEQwMkRlcXVFZmJ3T3BTdz09>

Meeting ID: 938 6105 9439

Passcode: 626997

Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Board Members: T. Johnston, M. D'Agostino, C. Graziano, M. Pampel, G. Denny, J. Berry, M. Williams, K O'Brien

Administration: G. Pin, M. DiStefano, Dr. Harrison, Dr. Pierson Ugol, C. Zachary, W. Czudak

CALL TO ORDER

The Region 9 Board of Education regular budget workshop meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the February 4, 2021 Special Meeting, the February 16, 2021 Regular Meeting, and February 23, 2021 Special Meeting were reviewed.

Motion: move to approve the Region 9 Board of Education minutes from the February 4, 2021 Special Meeting, the February 16, 2021 Regular Meeting, and the February 23, 2021 Special Meeting to include all edits by R9 Board Secretary. Approved, 8-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Shari Williams, Riley Road, Redding: concerned about removing SRO from schools. She commented that the Social Justice Group is favoring the SRO elimination.

Maureen Hanley, Andrews Road, Easton: Echoes Sherri's concerns about the SRO. She commented that the SRO provides a sense of security to the community.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT:

M. D'Agostino thanked the public for their comments and emails. He stated that he had a criticism that it was inappropriate that budget items be shared with the public before the board was notified. He was concerned that this was the first time the board was hearing of possible changes to the school SRO.

T. Johnston echoed Mike's comments and also appreciated emails from the community. He stated that as board chair, he was responsible for returning emails, but that all board members received and read the emails that were sent from the community. He too stated his concern that the board had not been notified of changes to the school SRO.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: PROPOSED 2021-2022 OPERATING BUDGET

R. Harrison gave introduction to the budget presentation to cover staffing, special education, Bridge program, and health care.

C. Zachary summarized that board had received documents to show the budget reduction to 0.57% increase of \$139,245.

T. Johnston clarified that board members should hold questions to the end of the presentation.

G. Pin thanked her staff for their hard work and presented the overview of the budget finances.

Redding summary: decrease of 39 students, cost (-\$691,000), and variance of (-\$607,646)

Easton summary: increase of 9 students, cost (+ \$691,000), and variance of (+ \$746,892)

Cost savings based on projects from Brown and Brown report

Administration asked for an increase in world language staff due to increases in class sizes over 25 students.

M. DiStefano presented information on Bridge Program and asked for increase of 1 full time social worker.

W. Czudak presented data to show need for an additional mid shift custodian to reduce workload and provide proper cleaning efficiency

G. Pin presented information to petition for change from SRO to SSO with cost savings from \$113,546 to \$60,000.

M. DiStefano presented special education budget changes

Lengthy discussion of changes to school SRO ensued. Board members expressed concern that this was the first they learned of the administration's plan to change and that coverage and safety would not be comparable with the SSO changes.

Motion: move that the Region 9 BOE restore the SRO position to the budget with duties in line with best practice (D'Agostino, Denny). Approved, 8-0.

Budget discussion ensued to answer Board Members questions on a variety of issues and concerns within the budget. A parking lot document was shared with administration for board member questions to be answered. Additional answers were still required in the document.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Carolyn Oppenheim, Huntington Ridge Road, Easton: stated that she is support of adding a school social worker.

Dana Benson, Pond Road, Easton: stated he is in support of keeping school SRO.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

M. D'Agostino thanked everyone for their input and thoughtful discussion.

K. O'Brien commented that we were not discussing removing the current social worker, perhaps just delaying hire of a second social worker.

T. Johnston thanked everyone for their time in the preparation of the presentation.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: move to adjourn the Region 9 Board of Education regular budget workshop meeting (Graziano, O'Brien). Approved, 8-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:44 p.m.

Recorded and Submitted by
Juliette Berry, Region 9 Board of Education Secretary