

Filed Subject to Approval

REGION 9 BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Meeting Budget Workshop Agenda
Joel Barlow High School
Thursday, March 7, 2019-7:30 p.m.

Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Region 9 Board of Education Members: D'Agostino, Hocker, Denny, Graziano, Coppinger, Hancock, Johnston.

Absent: Williams

Administration: McMorran, Pin, Pierson-Ugol, Reiss, McTague, Panos, Roszko, Santangeli, DeAngelo, Schemm, Staron, Czudak, Angell

Others: Videographers and 6 members of the public

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. D'Agostino called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: move to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2019 Region 9 Board of Education Regular Meeting. Coppinger, Johnston. Approved. Unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeff Fligelman, Pocahontas Road, Redding - on behalf of himself and other parents, spoke about their hope that the Latin program continues at Joel Barlow High School. The public perception of the uncertainty of the future of the program is causing students to be reluctant to take Latin.

Robert Tremont, Tatuck Trail, Redding spoke about the uniqueness of the Latin program and how as a student it helped him become a better writer. He voiced his concerns about the program.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Mr. D'Agostino acknowledged Latin as a current important topic and spoke about the difficult decisions the board makes and about their hopes for students to continue in the program until its completion. The program will continue to be monitored and he stated that there have to be enough students enrolled in a course for it to be offered.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: PROPOSED 2019-2020 OPERATING BUDGET

Dr. Pin introduced members of her staff and welcomed questions from the board and public. She spoke about the Technical Edits to Proposed Operating Budget as shown on a handout. The Technical Edits included items of cost savings and a deferral that had not been reflected in the preliminary budget proposal, totaling \$64,380. The new budget as proposed by the administration is \$24,141,114, a reduction of \$99,378 or 0.41% from the current year budget.

A line of particular interest was the "Possible addition of anticipated projected teacher retirement pension contribution" for \$91,669, referring to a current state proposal for towns to bear a share of teacher pension costs that are currently borne entirely by the state.

Mr. D'Agostino stated that board members need to decide if teacher retirement pension costs will become part of the budget in the future. The possibility exists that funds will be needed for this pension contribution but we will not know that until June 2019 at the earliest. Mr. D'Agostino asked board members to discuss the issue in order to arrive at a consensus. Mr. Reiss voiced his preference that the decision to use unexpended funds for this purpose should be made before the end of the current fiscal year. Dr. McMorran suggested revisiting this issue at a future meeting, given the current uncertainty.

Dr. Pin referred to "Staffing Implications" handout and described how staffing needs are accomplished at JBHS. She reported the changes in staffing would not result in the elimination of courses at this time. Dr. Pin asked various staff members to explain their approach to staffing certain courses. Mr. Coppinger spoke about the potential need to reduce classes based on the current decline in student enrollment. A discussion ensued about ways to offer courses that students need for successful college applications. Dr. Pin reported about the reduction of one Student Assistance Counselor. She also presented a "Pay to Participate" handout suggesting an increase of fees. Dr. Pin stated the rental fees for use of the fields and facilities go directly back into their maintenance. Board members expressed reluctance to increase fees at this time.

Mr. D'Agostino requested the board members to share their general impression of the proposed budget. Most of the members were generally supportive of the budget as presented, including technical edits, but were also uncertain about the impacts of the teacher retirement pension issue.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: ESTABLISH CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS BONDING AMOUNT

Mr. Coppinger spoke about bidders for the Campus Improvement Project and cost to include in the referendum to complete the work. The project includes paving the JBHS roadway, improvements to the sign at school entrance, guardrail replacement, curb replacements, resurfacing of tennis courts and track, and other selected areas on campus property. Mr. Reiss reported that the Redding Conservation Commission met and approved the project. He spoke about continuing with same legal representation for the duration of the fields and facilities project.

Motion: move to authorize Mr. Reiss to continue relationship with existing bonding attorney (Sandra Dawson, Esq.) for the duration of the project. The files will be transferred to the law firm of Pullman & Comley. Coppinger, Johnston. Approved. Hancock abstained.

Mr. Reiss discussed the bond process and fees, including the cost of short term vs. long term bonding.

Motion: move to direct Mr. Reiss to go forward with request of \$1,916,780.00 to finance campus improvement project for the next referendum. Coppinger, Hancock. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move to accept the bid from A & J Construction as the lowest qualified bidder for the amount of \$1,601,178.00 for the base bid plus Alternates 2 and 3. Coppinger, Johnston. Approved. Unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Mr. Coppinger and Ms. Denny thanked Mr. Reiss and the administration for work in moving project for campus improvements forward.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: move to adjourn the regular meeting of the Region 9 Board of Education. Coppinger, Hancock. Approved. Unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 p.m.

Recorded by Deborah DeLorenzo

Submitted by Chris Hocker, Secretary