

REGION 9 BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING
WITH BUDGET PRESENTATION
Joel Barlow High School - Library Learning Commons
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February 15, 2022 - 7:30 p.m.
Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Board of Education Members: D'Agostino, Johnston, Graziano, Lehberger, Pampel, Thompson
Absent: Denny, O'Brien
Administration: McKinnon, Pierson Ugol, Almeida, Petruzzelli, Scrofani
Others: the videographer and the recording secretary.

CALL TO ORDER

M. D'Agostino called the Region 9 Board of Education Regular to order at 7:33 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the minutes of the January 18, 2022 Regular meeting, with the following revisions: on page 2, following Dr. Pierson Ugol's report "K. Thompson asked where students are in terms of catching up on curriculum and learning; are they on track or behind, have goals shifted vs. a normal year, and what plans are in place to address these issues. M. D'Agostino requested a report on student performance, to help the Board understand where students are and if additional resources are needed to address learning lags." (Pampel, Lehberger). Approved. 6-0.

STUDENT COMMENT

Joel Barlow High School Student Government Representative, Griffin Ellis, reported on recent student body activity: the Student Council is planning a Spring dance and students are excited since freshman and sophomores have never been able to attend an event such as this at Barlow; the Girls & Boys Indoor Track teams did extremely well at the recent SWC meet, with Mariella Sweitzer setting an SWC record for the 55 yard hurdles; the Cheerleading team won the SWC championship; February 24-26 is the Theater Department's performance of "MacBeth;" the Debate Team won its eighth straight competition; and a Barlow School Store will be opening in March, being run by the Future Business Leaders of America Club.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

M. D'Agostino said he hopes that the public starts coming back to the in-person meetings. He said that the Region 9 Board welcomes comments from all constituents and that they appreciate receiving communication from parents and students. M. D'Agostino said the BOE has worked hard over the last couple of years to adopt effective mitigation strategies based on data-driven local recommendations, and that health and well-being remain a paramount concern for Board members and administration. He noted that Governor Lamont had signed HB 5047 extending the mask mandate to February 28. The Department of Public Health and CT Department of Education will provide additional data and guidance to school superintendents in the coming days. M. D'Agostino explained that Dr. McKinnon will continue to communicate with the Board and school community as more information becomes available.

M. D'Agostino explained that tonight's meeting kicks off the budget season and that Dr. Almeida and Dr. McKinnon will present the Superintendent's Proposed Budget for 2022-2023. He further detailed upcoming budget sessions to include Budget Workshops on March 3 and 10, and stated that the proposed budget will be finalized on or before the March 15 Region 9 BOE meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Jason McKinnon noted that the Administrative Reports section of tonight's meeting would be brief in order to save time for the budget presentation.

Director of Finance & Operations, Scott Petruzzelli, reported that he is close to having end-of-year numbers for the BOE and will definitely have them at the next BOE meeting. He addressed several lines of the Budget Object Summary report by saying that: the salaries line is a coding issue and the line will look cleaner next month; the other professional services line will change; line 513 is a re-classification issue; for line 564, the funds are expected to arrive in March and the line will reflect the Excess Cost Reimbursement in two months' time; and, line 709 will have a plan and the BOE will have to vote on it. BOE members had questions about unexpended funds in some transportation lines. The Transfers Report was presented with no questions. S. Petruzzelli stated that the Health Insurance Reserve was in good shape, and claims continue to track under initial projections. He said that he's almost done calculating where the District will land at the end of the year. BOE members asked about the frequency of presentations from Brown & Brown; Dr. McKinnon said that he can ask Brown & Brown for a Region 9 summary.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: REGION 9 POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

M. D'Agostino presented a charge for the Region 9 Policy Committee that included one revision concerning the number of BOE members who can serve on the committee. A Motion was made, and seconded, for this charge. C. Graziano presented another revision to the charge of the Policy Committee that included several revisions. A discussion took place about the merits and necessity of the revisions in each proposed charge, and how each one would work in coordination with Easton and Redding.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education amend the charge of the Region 9 BOE Policy Committee to state, under Structure, "The Policy Committee shall consist of a minimum of 2 members of the Region 9 Board of Education, one from each of the member towns. (Pampel, Thompson). Approved. 5-1. (Graziano opposed).

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: 2022-2023 SUPERINTENDENT'S PROPOSED BUDGET

Dr. McKinnon began his budget presentation by saying that education is an investment in human capital, and that there is a relationship between investment and student achievement. He said that the priorities for

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the District are: academic excellence; students being future-ready; students benefiting from a caring community; and combining a quality education with fiscal awareness. Dr. McKinnon outlined the new budget format that is organized around cost centers, which are: Joel Barlow High School, district-wide, facilities, athletics, pupil personnel services, curriculum & instruction, technology, and Central Office. He promoted the new budget website, which is accessible to all community members. The major budget drivers include district-wide transportation, outplacements, SpEd transportation and heating oil. Joel Barlow High School Head of School, Dr. Mario Almeida, detailed new staffing requests for increasing the part-time security position to full-time; the addition of a .6 FTE SpEd teacher; and increasing the part-time Wellness teacher to full-time. Dr. McKinnon presented the request for an ER9 District-wide Facilities Manager. This position would be shared between the 3 districts, working 3 days (.6 FTE) at Region 9 and 1 day a week (.2 FTE) in the Easton and Redding districts.

Dr. McKinnon summarized the 2022-2023 Region 9 Superintendent's Proposed Operating Budget of \$24,917,473.83; this is an increase of 1.31% over last year's budget. Dr. McKinnon also detailed the apportionment between Easton and Redding: Easton's share represents 51.3% of the student population and Redding's share is 48.63% of the student population.

A discussion ensued regarding the best practice for handling board member questions on the proposed budget by the Central Office staff. Administration will create a google document for BOE members to submit their individual questions, and Central Office will respond and share the information in a google document to board members. Director of Technology & Digital Learning, Sara Scrofani led BOE members through a tutorial on how to access the new budget format. She said that she was happy to assist Board members with further questions on the technology piece.

M. D'Agostino thanked the Central Office staff for all of their hard work and asked about receiving a staffing report and student performance report; Dr. Almeida will provide these reports at the next Region 9 Budget Workshop. T. Johnston agreed that a student performance report would be helpful in understanding the budget drivers. K. Thompson asked for a grant report and Dr. Pierson Ugol said that she would provide that report.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Pension Committee: T. Johnston reported that the Committee met on February 2 and had elected him Chair of the Pension Committee. He said that the actuarial rate has been set with a rate of return of 6.5%, and that the committee has recommended an increase in the board contribution.

M. D'Agostino reported on water penetration in the gym and said that some basketball games had to be rescheduled. He said that the roof will be flooded in an effort to ensure there are no open seams or punctures in the roof membrane.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

M. Pampel thanked the administrative team for putting the budget together.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education Regular meeting be adjourned. (Pampel, Graziano). Approved. 6-0.

The Region 9 Board of Education Regular meeting was adjourned 9:52 p.m.

Submitted by Mike D'Agostino
Chairman, Region 9 Board of Education

Recorded by Sarah Ota