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REGION 9 BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING

Joel Barlow High School - Library Learning Commons

on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpOKinELAtzbYQcJ5NA3-hg>

April 26, 2022 – 7:30 p.m.

Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Board members: D'Agostino, Johnston, O'Brien, Graziano, Denny, Lehberger, Pampel, Thompson

Administration: McKinnon, Pierson Ugol, Almeida, Scrofani

Others: the recording secretary and the videographer

CALL TO ORDER

M. D'Agostino called the Region 9 Board of Education Regular meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the minutes of the March 10, 2022 Budget Workshop as submitted. (Pampel, O'Brien). Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the minutes of the March 15, 2022 Regular meeting as submitted. (Pampel, O'Brien). Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the minutes of the April 4, 2022 Annual District Hearing as submitted. (O'Brien, Pampel). Approved. 2-0. (Graziano, Lehberger, O'Brien, Pampel abstained). The District Hearing is a Statutory event; it does not require a quorum of the board.

STUDENT COMMENT

Joel Barlow High School Student Council President, Benjamin Fligelman, read from a lengthy report on recent events and accomplishments of the school community.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

K. Thompson thanked the administration and students for the recent tour of Joel Barlow High School. She said it was thoughtful and, overall, a great and positive morning.

S. Lehberger said the recent tour was a wonderful experience, and she engaged with many students who had lots of energy.

K. O'Brien said that she also enjoyed the tour and that it was great to see everyone smiling and being positive.

M. D'Agostino said that he had attended the Town Of Easton Annual Meeting and wanted to provide greater clarity regarding a comment about safeguards being put into place relating to some of the unexpended purchases from last year. He said that he wanted to provide awareness to the public that we're taking a look at everything and also he wanted to make the Board aware that Nawrocki Smith has completed their investigative portion of their audit and their final report is expected in two to three weeks.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Jason McKinnon, reported that he had attended the mock car crash and felt that students were paying close attention and that it had resonated with them. He thanked Laura Wheatley and the police departments for organizing the event.

Dr. McKinnon said that S. Petruzzelli was not able to attend tonight's meeting and that any questions on the Budget Object Summary should be emailed to him. Dr. McKinnon presented a request to transfer funds for a previously outplaced student, who will now receive services attending Barlow.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the transfer of \$19,200 from Tuition Private School to Other Professional Services. (Denny, O'Brien). Approved. Unanimous.

Dr. McKinnon noted that a Joel Barlow High School Assistant Principal has put in a request to transfer to a teaching position. The A.P. position will be posted internally and externally tomorrow. He presented an overview of his proposed hiring process, which he has used in administrative searches. M. D'Agostino said that further discussion on this topic should take place at a future meeting when an item is posted on the agenda.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Stephanie Pierson Ugol, reported on the annual District Climate Survey. She said that: the School Climate Committee had met and had slightly edited the survey; there are 50 questions on the survey; questions deal with the topics of safety, learning focus, relationships, sense of place, and professional community; there are now follow-up opportunities with the questions; the survey will be taken during Wellness class and/or Advisory; parents have access to the questions; and, the survey remains anonymous. BOE members asked for copies of the survey questions; Dr. Pierson Ugol said she would provide them.

RECESS TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education recess into Executive Session for Performance Review of JBHS Head of School and invite Dr. Jason McKinnon. (O'Brien, Denny). Approved. Unanimous.

The BOE recessed to Executive Session at 8:17 p.m.

The BOE returned to Regular Session at 8:37 p.m.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: JBHS HEAD OF SCHOOL CONTRACT

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the contract of employment of Assistant Superintendent/Head of School, Dr. Mario Almeida, for 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25 school years

as presented, and authorize the Board Chairperson to sign the document subsequent to board counsel review. (Pampel, O'Brien). Approved. Unanimous.

M. D'Agostino said that the contract and the terms of the contract are located on-line for the public. He also thanked Dr. Almeida for successfully leading the school community through a year with many challenges.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: LEGAL CALL FOR DISTRICT MEETING

M. D'Agostino said that a notice for the District Meeting will appear in the Danbury News Times and the Connecticut Post. He further said that Section 10-51(a) provides that the regional board of education, not the town, votes to approve the call of the annual meeting and referendum vote. Region 9 Board counsel was contacted to review Region 9 practices and procedures related to legal compliance for the Annual District Hearing, Annual District Meeting, and Referendum. M. D'Agostino said that counsel provided recommended wording for the Legal Call, which was sent to both towns on April 6th. The Town of Redding printed ballots that reflected their preferred wording and which differed from the question submitted by Region 9. He further explained that: State Statute requires uniformity of the posted legal call with the question appearing on the ballot; Region 9 has chosen to align the question on our legal call for this election cycle with Redding; this decision was made in order to avoid reprinting the ballots at the expense of the taxpayers. The District wants to create an awareness, and state that we are hopeful the legally submitted question from Region 9 appears on the ballot for the next election cycle.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education accept the Legal Call for the May 2, 2022 Annual District Meeting as presented. (O'Brien, Denny). Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: POLICY REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education accept for Second Reading the repeal of Policy 5141.8 Face Mask Coverings. (O'Brien, Thompson). Approved. Unanimous.

M. D'Agostino stated that he wanted to table Agenda Item VIII. C. 2. saying that he thought it best practice to list the policies with links so that they will be accessible to the BOE and the public. Policy Committee members were asked if their work on the policies would be ready to deliver to Dr. McKinnon by Friday, May 6 and they responded affirmatively. A very lengthy discussion followed that included: about 40 policies are ready to move forward with action; workload should taper down for the summer; work needs to wrap up so that administrators are able to focus their efforts on other areas; the process for action on the policies; the categories in which policies will fall; reasonable goals for time and work; streamlining Policy Committee meetings; number of policies the District should have; and comfort level for taking action on policies.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: MOHEGAN TRIBE \$1,000 GRANT

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education accept the Mohegan Tribe Challenge Grant of \$1000, to be used for a field trip to the Tantaquidgeon Museum with great appreciation. (O'Brien, Lehberger). Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: JBHS WATER SYSTEM REMEDIATION

M. D'Agostino introduced the letter from the State of Connecticut, Department of Public Health and the proposal for work from Water System Solutions & Design concerning the JBHS water system remediation. He said that the proposal has a \$2,000 contingency built in and that the expectation is that

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the District will be reimbursed at the end of the project. A discussion took place about the project concerning when it would commence, how long it will take, any possible disruption of water and the timing of the BOC test to the lab. Dr. Almeida stated that he would prefer the final connections to the domestic water supply occur after the final day of school.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education accept Proposal #105870 from Water System Solutions & Design for an amount not to exceed \$24,200, to restore and reactivate the domestic water supply at Joel Barlow High School. (Pampel, Graziano). Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: JBHS OPEN CAMPUS

Dr. Almeida explained that the administration would like to pilot an Open Campus policy for senior students in good standing. He said that most seniors are already 18 years old and many have upwards of two to three hours of downtime due to the block schedule. Dr. Almeida said that most other high schools in the area have such a policy, seniors will need permission from their parents to participate and that students will need to sign out when they leave and sign back in when they return at the security desk. M. D'Agostino said that temporary implementation of this privilege for the remainder of the school year does not require a BOE vote. Dr. Almeida said he hopes to begin offering the privilege on Monday, May 2, 2022.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SUPERINTENDENT FOR NON-RENEWALS

Dr. McKinnon reported on the contracts for non-renewal. M. D'Agostino said that the non-renewals will not impact the number of classes or student services.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education accept that the contract of employment of Kailyn Stephens, Karen Sullivan, and Virginia Woods not be renewed for the following year upon its expiration at the end of the 2021-2022 school year, and that the Superintendent of Schools is directed to advise such persons in writing of this action. (Johnston, Denny). Approved. Unanimous.

AGENDA CHANGE

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education add Agenda Item VIII. H., ARP Funding Opportunities. (Lehberger, Denny). Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: ARP FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

M. D'Agostino explained the ARP process and how he would like to pursue funding for remediation of the water cooling tower at Joel Barlow. He explained that when the District installed the new chillers last summer, it became aware that components of the tower have been compromised by high levels of minerals in the water. The District has implemented water treatment for the system, but the buildup of mineral deposits over many years has impacted the water flow to the new chillers. This restricts water flow to the new chillers and impacts the performance and efficiency of the whole system. HVAC projects related to Indoor Air Quality for students aligns with the recommendations for American Rescue Plan fund disbursement as outlined by the federal government.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education authorize the Board Chairperson to pursue American Rescue Plan funding opportunities for the restoration of the Water-Cooling Tower at Joel Barlow High School. (Johnston, Lehberger). Approved. Unanimous.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Food Service: K. O'Brien reported that the committee had just met and is in the process of reviewing proposals from food service vendors.

Pension Committee: T. Johnston reported that the Committee had recently met and said that the fund is in solid standing. He also said, just as the stock market as a whole is down at this moment, so too is the District fund. He said it was down 6.63% in the 1st quarter, and the benchmark is down 4.97%, but that things will rebound.

Audit Committee: The question was asked if there were any updates on the regular audit. M. D'Agostino reported that he had not received an update on the year-end audit, but that he would check on its status and report back to the board..

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

K. Thompson asked about the AP class offerings for 10th graders for the fall of 2022.

A lengthy discussion then took place about the AP class offerings to 10th graders that included: what classes would be offered; the logistical complexities in offering the classes after schedules have already been made for next school year; and, the need for clear communication to students and parents.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education regular meeting be adjourned. (Graziano, Pampel). Approved. Unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:47 p.m.

Submitted by Karen O'Brien
Secretary, Region 9 Board of Education

Recorded by,
Sarah Ota