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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>

January 24, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.

Minutes

ATTENDANCE

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

Administration: McKinnon, Pierson Ugol, Almeida, Kellogg, Scrofani

Others: 8 members of the staff and public, the recording secretary and the videographer

CALL TO ORDER

M. D'Agostino called the Region 9 Board of Education Regular Meeting to order at 7:13 p.m. Meeting was broadcast live on channel 78.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the minutes of the December 20, 2022 Regular meeting as submitted. (Pampel, O'Brien). Approved. Unanimous.

STUDENT COMMENT

JBHS Student Government Representative, Owen Fellows, read from, *Noteworthy News*.

Highlights included: three Barlow students won awards in the Scholastic Art and Humanities Awards and their work is on display at the Silk Gallery exhibition in Hartford; Michael Sherman had a third place finish in the Fairfield County Math League competition; the Barlow Debate team had a top speaker in the Novice Division at a recent event; it was noted that Barlow students/athletes behave like winners both on and off the field; the Barlow Baseball Team recently volunteered to help with the fall leaf clean up at the homes of three Redding residents; Barlow baseball player Will Scott has been named to the HS Baseball All-American Team; Barlow football player Danny Shaban has been named to the CT All-State Football Team and been named the New Haven Register Football Player of the Year.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Shirley Melnyk, Cricklewood Road, Redding, expressed her concern about the NEST project and the impact it will have on the community and on her property. She referenced a proposed project at Barlow from 2001 and cited comments made from her previous neighbors, the Oppenheims. S. Melnyk said that she will be seeking an intervener status for herself for the NEST project.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

None.

AGENDA CHANGE

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the Agenda Change of adding new Item VII. D. Consideration to Approve Invoice. (Denny, Lehberger). Approved. Unanimous.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Jason McKinnon, welcomed everyone and said that the proposed 2023-2024 budget is in development and will be presented at the February meeting. He said that in an effort to provide an overview of possible requests and program changes, the Barlow administration would give a presentation.

AGENDA CHANGE

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the Agenda Change of adding new Item VII. A. Program Enhancements, and move down all other agenda items. (Denny, Thompson). Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS

Director of Special Education, Tracy Hussey, said that the development of the Transition Planning & Programming report had been done in conjunction with the JBHS Instructional Leader, David DeAngelo, and Director of Special Services for Easton and Redding, Jennifer Del Conte. She said that the unrolling of CT-SEDS (new special ed reporting software from the state) has been a little glitchy, but that the software is getting better and parents and staff both like the format much better than the previous format. T. Hussey said that currently her team is: actively involved with 8th grade teams at HKMS and JRMS; holding articulation meetings; active with SRBI planning; and, transition planning for families and students. She said enrollment in her department at Barlow is currently 112 students, and that she will email BOE members a breakdown of numbers of her students and provide a staffing chart for her department. C. Graziano asked if this number included students with 504 plans? It does not. Additionally, C. Graziano asked if we expect to see savings next year? T. Hussey said that there are more students coming into the Sped program next year than are going out. T. Hussey began the Transition Planning & Programming presentation by saying that the District has an obligation, by law, to prepare students for the transition after high school and that there are standards, by law, for this preparation. She said that since Barlow has no in-house 18-22 year old program, these services are contracted out to various other programs at a cost of \$325,364 per year, not including transportation. T. Hussey spoke at length about a possible partnership with Quinnipiac University to provide a more comprehensive transitional program with built-in services as well as the added onus of access to college courses that would provide the opportunity for real-world learning with typical age peers. The potential costs would be for a full-time teacher and support staff; approx \$175,000. Additionally, Milford High School is interested in sharing costs with Barlow for this program.

Head of School, Dr. Mario Almeida, began his presentation on Increasing Student Support Across Academic Areas by saying that the presentation was the work of the entire leadership team at Barlow. He then said that the staff continues to see a significant increase for additional student support in all areas. Joel Barlow High School Assistant Principal, Dameon Kellogg explained that currently, the Writing Center, Math Center and PIP all operate as separate programs. The proposal is to align the student support centers in order to maximize access for more students and create efficiency. A proposed new position of Coordinator of Academic Services, that would act as a liaison between students, parents and staff, and would be responsible for data work; a Secretary for the Support Centers, this position would provide administrative assistance to all three student support centers; Writing Center to provide writing support;

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Math Center, to provide math support; Academic Center, to provide executive functioning support. They both explained that other student support will include: on-line sign-ups and digital scheduling; support at the centers will cover all types of academic needs, including higher level classes; structured study halls; and, academic planners for 9th graders. Dr. McKinnon forwarded the presentation to all BOE members and said that they should send back any questions.

A Motion was made to add an agenda item to the meeting regarding the possible addition of a new AP course to Barlow's Program of Studies. A discussion took place as to whether or not this agenda item should be added to the meeting; some Board members felt the issue was being rushed, while others did not.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the Agenda Change of adding new Item VII. F. Consideration of the course, AP Seminar. (Pampel, O'Brien). Approved. 5-3.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: NEST BUILDING AND FIELD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

M. D'Agostino gave a re-cap of his presentation from the December 2022 meeting of the NEST Building and Field Improvement Project and said that the estimated final cost of the project has increased based on advice from council and bond experts. He said the next steps are for the BOE to move forward, notify neighbors, set a deadline for donations, and continue to vet costs. BOE members had questions about: funding; fundraising; ARPA contingencies; bonding; what the invoice is for; invoice for design of the building vs. design of the fields; timelines; vendor being a part of State approved list and CREC; ability to reimburse Capital Reserve; and Motion concerning Capital Reserve being a one-time passage.

Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education accept the design proposal from Field Turf in the amount of \$30,000 for design, permitting and engineering work for the 2023 JBHS NEST Building & Field Enhancement Project, and authorize the Director of Finance to issue a purchase order with funds from the Capital Reserve. (Denny, Pampel). Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education (the "District") hereby declares its official intent under Section 1.150-2 of the Federal Income Tax Regulations (the "Treasury Regulations") that project costs may be paid from temporary advances of available funds, which are paid within sixty (60) days prior to and any time after the date of passage of this resolution in the maximum amount of \$30,000 for preliminary design and study costs, including but not limited to cost estimates, scope determination and related information or for costs related to design, engineering, permitting, construction bid process and related information and document (the "Project"), and that (except to the extent reimbursed from grant moneys) the District reasonably expects to reimburse any such advances from the proceeds of bonds, notes or other obligations (the "Obligations") in an aggregate principal amount not in excess of \$30,000 for the Project. Such Obligations shall be issued to reimburse such expenditures not later than eighteen (18) months after the later of the date of the expenditure or the substantial completion of the project, or such later date the Treasury Regulations may authorize, but in no event more than three years after the original expenditure is paid. The Treasurer, or designee, is authorized to pay expenses of the project in accordance herewith pending the issuance of reimbursement Obligations. The District is authorized to amend this declaration of official intent (except as to the maximum amount) as they deem necessary or advisable and to bind the District pursuant to such representations and covenants as they deem necessary or advisable in order to maintain the continued exemption from federal income taxation of interest on the

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Obligations. This resolution is adopted solely for purposes of compliance with the Treasury Regulations and may not be used or relied on for any other purpose. (Johnston, Graziano). Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: CAPITAL PLAN

M. D'Agostino said that the priorities of the Capital Plan remain as health & well-being, student needs and cost & efficiency. He gave an update on the building Automated Control System, saying: it will enhance IAQ, reduce energy usage and lower utility costs; will have remote access for certain staff members; and, will have safeguards on it. M. D'Agostino explained this was possible through a new program with Eversource, called the Eversource Retro Commissioning Grant Opportunity, which offers low-cost and financed energy efficiency remediation to municipalities to encourage greater efficiency in energy consumption and reduced carbon footprint. He said Region 9 had already qualified for the initial phase and the next step would be to commit to an investigation on the Barlow building's operations for \$36,667. Further details shared about this program included: if Region 9 goes ahead with the remediation project from the findings of the energy investigation, the \$36,667 is funded by Eversource; Region 9 will be responsible for half of the cost of the remediation project; this amount will be funded by Eversource through a 5-year interest-free loan; paying on the loan will be included with Region 9 monthly electric bill; energy cost savings could be as high as \$35,780 per year for electrical, and \$35,100 per year for oil the energy savings would essentially pay for the program and over the long term would save significant money for the district. M. D'Agostino also explained that a new John Deere XUV865M needs to be purchased as the current one, at 20+ years old, has outlived its life expectancy and continual repairs are no longer cost effective.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education accept the investigation agreement CT 23S01738204 from Eversource Retro Commissioning and authorize the Chair to sign and direct the administration to issue a purchase order for \$36,667 from the Capital Reserve. (O'Brien, Denny). Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education add purchasing a new John Deere XUV865M for \$35,354 to the approved Capital Plan for 2023-2024 fiscal year, with a priority ranking of 1 and a condition rating of D. (Denny, Johnston). Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the Capital Plan revisions as detailed in our discussion. (Pampel, Lehberger). Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: APPROVAL OF PURCHASE ORDER

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education accept invoice 1188-2 from Millenium Builders in the amount of \$65,772.25 for progress payment on JBHS Upper Gym, HVAC & Safety Improvement Project. (Pampel, Lehberger). Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: CONSIDERATION OF COURSE, AP SEMINAR

M. Pampel said per the request from the BOE for more AP courses that would be available to 10th graders, Dr. Almeida has identified a course called AP Seminar. She said that the course is aligned with the District's goals and that 10th graders are now eligible for few AP courses. M. Pample described AP Seminar as a course that offers students an introduction to conducting independent analysis of complex ideas across various disciplines. It involves reading and understanding advanced source material in the

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form of texts and other media. She said it is a full-year course and successful completion will include: writing, presenting, research, synthesizing, arguing and the AP Exam. M. Pampel said that the projected cost for adding this course is \$7,000. A discussion followed that included: course having guidelines around it; students need to work closely with their parents and counselors to choose classes; guidelines for other AP courses; additional budgetary costs beyond start-up costs; having weighted grading for 10th graders; how the addition of this course will affect the progression of other courses; will there be a shift away from other AP courses; this course adds another lens to lit courses; how the course developed into present form; how long the course has been in existence; and, where will the class meet.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the course AP Seminar to be included in the Program of Studies beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, and be offered to 10-12 grade students. (Pampel, O'Brien). Approved. Unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

K. Thompson said that several parents have expressed to her confusion, frustration and disappointment in the course selection process for current 8th graders and JBHS students. She said that as a parent of an 8th grader and current Barlow student, she shares their concerns. K. Thompson asked several questions, including why the JBHS Program of Studies Orientation Night was scheduled for January 9th, after 8th graders were asked to submit their elective choices the week before winter break, and after Powerschool closed on January 8 for JBHS students/families to submit their course selections; why 8th graders were asked to fill out their elective choices in school, without parents being informed; why JBHS students were called to guidance to fill out their schedules during midterm exam week. K. Thompson said that several 8th grade families shared that the tone of the Program of Studies Orientation Night was not positive, and that they left the Orientation feeling that the Administration discouraged students from taking challenging or advanced courses, and were concerned that stress and anxiety is a significant issue at JBHS. Dr. McKinnon said that he would follow-up on the issue.

ADJOURNMENT

A Motion for adjournment was made by C. Graziano and seconded by K. O'Brien. Hearing no objections, M. D'Agostino adjourned the meeting at 11:37 p.m.

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

Recorded by,
Sarah Ota