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CHRISTINE HALLORAN
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REGION 9 BOARD OF EDUCATION
AND FINANCIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
March 1, 2016
MEETING
Minutes

Attendance: Region 9 Board of Education members: Coppinger, D'Agostino, Gombos, Hancock, Hocker, Johnston (7:36 pm), Lewis
Administration: Sullivan, Pin, Pierson Ugol, Sheehy, Geraghty, and additional members of the leadership team
Others: 16 members of the public, a representative of the Redding Pilot/Easton Courier, and the videographer

Mr. Hancock called the meeting of the Region 9 Board of Education to order at 7:31 pm in the Joel Barlow Media Center.

AGENDA CHANGE
Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education change the agenda to move Public Comment to the next item on the agenda. D'Agostino, Coppinger. Approved. Unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT
Heidi Armster, Easton: Mrs. Armster expressed concern about the impact of reductions on the class sizes, number and diversity of course offerings.

Sara Jorgenson, Redding: Ms. Jorgenson, the Board's Student Representative, provided the results of a survey she conducted. She collected information from about 100 students on what their favorite elective subjects were. Most of the students selected the S.T.E.A.M. courses as a favorite, followed by Art. Ms. Jorgenson commented that these courses provide students with a break from the AP & Honors classes.

Anita Husebaek: Mrs. Husebaek spoke of the importance of diversity of course offerings.

EXECUTIVE SESSION
Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education recess to executive session for a discussion of a matter pertaining to Special Education students. D'Agostino, Coppinger. Approved. Unanimous.
Dr. McMorran, Dr. Pierson Ugol, Mrs. Sullivan, Mrs. Pin and Ms. Roszko were invited to be present.
The meeting recessed at 7:39 pm.

RECONVENE
The meeting was reconvened in public session at 8:15 pm.

The Financial Advisory Committee was called to order at 8:15 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the minutes of the February 24, 2016 meeting as submitted. Gombos, D'Agostino. Approved. Unanimous.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS
Mr. Hocker complimented Sara Jorgenson on her survey work of the student's interest in non-elective courses.

Mr. D'Agostino commented that while it was a good idea for the administration to conduct a discussion of the budget with students, he thought it would have been good to have a board represented present.

Mrs. Gombos thanked the members of the public for their patience during the board's executive session.

DISCUSSION PF 2016-17 OPERATING BUDGET
Mr. Roszko presented detailed information on the proposed Special Services portion of the budget. Questions and discussion followed the presentation.

Mr. D'Agostino commented on the importance of having enrollment information, specifically Special Services enrollment, well in advance. He noted that the board was not aware that there would be such a large increase next year in the special services population and budget.

Mrs. Pin reviewed the additional reductions, technical edits, to the proposed budget. The new budget proposal is not $24, 330,017, or a 0.81% increase over the current year budget. She noted that the Staffing Report would be available in advance of the March 9 Budget Workshop

Discussion followed. The continuation of the Latin program was discussed. Mr. D'Agostino provided a list of items with the least impact on students for consideration of some reduction. Mrs. Gombos asked about the possible reductions in the Athletic Program.

Board members and FAC members were asked about their thoughts on the current budget proposal. Mr. Hocker commented that he is happy with the 0.81% increase, feeling that it is an acceptable and passable budget.

Mrs. Krivit (FAC) commented at a 0.81% increase is good for the taxpayers, and the lowest increase in many years.

Mr. D'Agostino would like the Latin Program retained, and reductions in areas with the least impact on student. He would prefer to see a 0.0% or -0.5% budget, and determine if that level would be acceptable.

Mr. Coppinger was surprised to see the high increase for Special Services, but believes the 0.81% is within the limits of voter approval. He asked to see what a -0.5% would look like, to see what would have to be eliminated.

Mrs. Gombos asked for a listing of the technical edits, separate from the proposed reductions. She favors continuation of the Latin Program, but suggested that there may be reductions in the Athletic area. She would like to see a 0.0% increase, which would be a 1.1% increase for the taxpayers of Easton. Mrs. Gombos also requested the reductions in the Special Education budgets in Easton and Redding that are moved to the Region 9 budget as the students will transfer to Joel Barlow. This is requested to show the taxpayers that some of the increase in the Region 9 budget is a transfer from the lower schools' budgets.

Mr. Hancock is good with the 0.81% increase and would not support a budget below 0.5%.

Mr. Lewis would be happy with a 0.0% increase, would consider reductions in professional development and the Special Services contingency.

Mr. Johnston would prefer to see a 0.0% increase and asked that all areas of the budget be explored for reductions.

Dr. Yonkers (FAC) expressed concern about the level of increase in Special Services and the overall impact on the general education budget.

PUBLIC COMMENT
Richard Bloom, Redding: Mr. Bloom asked that the board leave it to the educators to make the reductions, tell them how much to reduce, but not where to reduce. He added that sports are very important for the students to learn independence, life skills, and team work.

Tim Brady, Easton: Mr. Brady commented that the enrollment will continue to decline, and reductions across the board will be necessary.

Joan Davies, Redding: Mrs. Davies spoke of the importance of the sports program and the experience the students learn through teamwork.

ADJOURNMENT
Motion: move that the meeting be adjourned. D'Agostino, Coppinger. Approved. Unanimous.

The FAC meeting was also adjourned.

The meetings were adjourned at 10:35 pm

Submitted by Catherine Gombos, Region 9 Board of Education Secretary

Recorded by Mary Maday