

REGION 9 BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING
Joel Barlow High School - Library Learning Commons
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April 23, 2024 – 7:00 p.m.

Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Board members: Johnston, Thompson (arrived late), Parkin, Denny, O'Brien, Pampel, Stinson

Absent: Graziano

Administration: McKinnon, Pierson Ugol, Almeida, Scrofani, D'Agostino

JBHS Student Representative: O. Fellows

Others: 2 members of the public, recording secretary and videographer

CALL TO ORDER

T. Johnston called the Region 9 Board of Education Regular meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Minutes from the March 14, 2024 Region 9 Board of Education Budget Workshop

B. Approval of Minutes from the March 19, 2024 Region 9 Board of Education Regular Meeting

C. Approval of Minutes from the April 1, 2024 Region 9 Annual District Hearing

Hearing no objections or comments, T. Johnston deemed all Minutes approved.

STUDENT COMMENT

Joel Barlow High School Student Government Representative, Owen Fellows, read from the prepared report *Noteworthy News*. Highlights included: Julia Vassallo and Samangini Kalita both won first prizes in the Teen Visions Regional Art Show; Nathanael Knorr won the VFW Post 10059's 2023-2024 Voice of Democracy contest; Alexander Weiss, Christian Jhilal, Noah Beninati, and Zackary Jhilal all recently obtained the rank of Eagle Scout; the Debate Team won the Varsity State Championship for the 8th time; there are 285 students participating in Spring sports; the Baseball and Boys Volleyball team are currently undefeated; the Class of 2027 is hosting a Spring Fling dance to welcome incoming 9th graders on May 10.

C. Parkin added that he knew of a scout from Redding obtaining the rank of Eagle Scout, Martin Jara.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT: None.



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DEBORAH SZEGEDI
TOWN CLERK EASTON CT

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Joel Barlow Head of School, Dr. Mario Almeida, reported that 85% of student schedules are complete, with every student requesting an AP course has received at least their first choice AP course. He said any student schedule conflicts are now being worked out.

Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Stephanie Pierson Ugol, reported on the ER9 teacher evaluation update by saying that the new guidelines from the State of Connecticut give greater flexibility to the District in formulating an evaluation plan that meets their needs. She said that ER9 began this work during the 2022-2023 school year within the Professional Development and Evaluation Committee and that this group's evaluation pilot was used during the 2023-2024 school year. Dr. Pierson Ugol said that this work has continued and the evaluation plan will be refined and a draft evaluation plan will be implemented for the 2024-2025 school year. She was asked if teachers are still supportive of the plan and if work with consultant firm Tepper & Flynn will continue. Dr. Pierson Ugol replied that the substance of the work has been well received well, noting that change requires adjustments and that they are adapting the plan to address feedback; work with Tepper & Flynn will continue in the 2024-2025 school year, focused on coaching evaluators.

Director of Finance, Operations & Technology, Sara Scrofani, reported that within the Employees Benefit Account, March has been the most expensive month to date this year; they are watching healthcare costs closely and need more data before speaking to trends. Excess costs are expected to remain the same. She said she will present options for revised budget lines, including consolidation of some lines, to the Board next month. S. Scrofani also reported a school-level transfer within Student Activities of \$14,671.70 from the Jordan Wright Account to the NEST Account, which brought account balance to \$50,000..

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

Motion: Move that the contract of employment of Nikole Newman not be renewed for the following year based on a Reduction in Force and that the Superintendent of Schools is directed to advise such person in writing of this action. (Denny, Parkin). Approved. 6-0. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: NEST BUILDING PROJECT UPDATE

G. Denny reported on the last Building Committee meeting and recent community forum, noting that an interior grill in the building would be a significant expense and could be added later; the engineering between the building and pumphouse will be environmentally sound and the Building Committee will continue to be transparent regarding the project; a community member suggested a different pitch of the building's roofline. She said the Committee passed the a motion to recommend to the full Board the following:

Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education authorize the administration to secure pricing, construction drawings, and implementation plan through the ezIQC program for the NEST building in alignment with the presented conceptual design (considering a revised roof design). (Denny, O'Brien).

M. D'Agostino asked that an "s" be added after the word "building." C. Parkin said that at the March 19 Region 9 Board of Education meeting it was stated that a project timeline would be presented at this meeting and asked if there was a timeline. G. Denny replied that there was not a timeline. C. Parkin said that the motion made violates Region 9 Policy 32-23 that requires three competitive bids, and read the policy aloud. S. Scrofani said the ezIQC system through the State is a competitive bidding process in

and of itself. She said in the past, the District's auditor had not seen using ezIQC as a conflict with the Region 9 local policy, and added that she would ask the District auditor again as the intent is not to circumvent the procurement system or policy. Facilities and Operations Manager M. D'Agostino explained that the State ezIQC Program is a competitive bid program where qualified contractors bid on construction tasks and submit bids to a watchdog group who vets bids and awards the lowest qualified bidder in each region. The program is deemed to be competitively bid. A lengthy discussion followed that included: timing of wastewater project bid and project execution; obtaining wastewater pricing before building construction pricing as it could determine building budget guidelines; building will not be built this summer; permitting and bidding timeline; consideration of revising current Region 9 bid policy to clarify use of ezIQC Program; Board members asked for clarity regarding deliverables of motion, specifically does motion cover construction drawings or pricing/bid to complete those drawings, and what implementation plan includes; how alternate plan with different roofline will be addressed.

G. Denny withdrew the motion and this action was seconded by K. O'Brien.

M. D'Agostino said he could obtain project pricing, including pricing for construction drawings and engineering for wastewater, based on the conceptual drawings. A discussion followed that included: timing of wastewater work, sequentially or simultaneously with building; requirement of two separate applications for building and wastewater; wastewater drives the project and is most complicated piece. It was agreed that next steps are: 1). submit wastewater project to ezIQC; 2). separately, submit building construction drawings to ezIQC; 3). review Region 9 bid policy; and, 4). possible approvals.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: CAPITAL PLAN REVIEW AND POTENTIAL REVISIONS
M. D'Agostino presented the existing 2023-2024 Capital Plan, with the addition of two new items for discussion he said need attention: 1). wastewater treatment plant membrane, and 2). rooftop exterior door units. He said the wastewater treatment plant membrane is at end-of-life and now requires more cleaning and there is a one-year lead time for the membrane to arrive once order is placed. M. D'Agostino said the rooftop door units are allowing water to leak onto the new gym floor. It was noted that there is Operating budget funding to address an urgent repair to protect the new gym floor, if needed. The Capital Plan, including the two new potential items, will be reviewed and considered by the Region 9 Finance & Operations Committee. M. Pample made a motion to add the two items to the Capital Plan, then withdrew the motion.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: RCx PROJECT INVOICE CONSIDERATION AND PROJECT UPDATE

M. D'Agostino, presented three invoices for final payment. It was the opinion of the Administration that each invoice was in order.

Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve final invoice #8 from Millennium Builders in the amount of \$8,000 for the Joel Barlow Upper Gym Project and authorize the administration to issue payment from the Capital Reserve Fund. (Stinson, O'Brien). Approved. 7-0. Unanimous.

Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve progress payment invoice #1 from Millennium Builders in the amount of \$164,927.05 for the Joel Barlow Chiller Replacement Project and authorize the administration to issue payment from the Capital Reserve Fund. (Stinson, O'Brien). Approved. 7-0. Unanimous.

Motion: Move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve final invoice #J-1248 from NEEC Inc. in the amount of \$90,636.79 for the Joel Barlow RCx Automated Controls Project, and authorize the administration to issue payment using the Capital Reserve Fund. (Stinson, O'Brien). Approved. 7-0 Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: CONSIDERATIONS FOR POTENTIAL REVISIONS TO REGION 9 BOARD OF EDUCATION BYLAWS

T. Johnson said that the Board has talked about the need to revise the Region 9 Board of Education Bylaws because there have been no updates in a while. C. Parkin volunteered to prepare draft revisions; T. Johnston said the alternative would be to form a Board of Education committee to recommend any revisions. T. Johnston noted that if an individual manages draft revisions, there must be a mechanism to give C. Parkin guidance. C. Parkin suggested Board members send him their suggestions regarding revisions for future Board discussion. K. Thompson asked how suggested new by-laws would be shared with the Board, noting that it is important that Board members can clearly see suggested changes. C. Parkin said he would provide tracking of changes. Dr. McKinnon noted that Shipman & Goodwin may have model bylaws that would be a useful template for revisions. There was agreement that C. Parkin would handle revision process, with anticipated timing of review in late summer, 2024. Any revisions will require review by council, Shipman & Goodwin, before adoption.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

A Motion for Adjournment was made by J. Stinson and seconded by K. O'Brien. Hearing no objections, T. Johnston adjourned the meeting at 8:51 p.m.

Submitted by Kathy Thompson
Secretary, Region 9 Board of Education

Recorded by Sarah Ota