

Dighton~Rehoboth Regional District School Committee
Regular Meeting ~ February 25, 2014

A Regular Meeting of the Dighton~Rehoboth Regional School Committee was held on February 25, 2014, in the Dighton~Rehoboth Regional High School library.

Present:

Richard Barrett
Christopher Andrade
Tiffany Bartholomew
Eliza Couture
Peter Hebda
David Katseff
Susan Lorenz
Raymond Medeiros
Timothy Rapoza
Janice Terry

Also:

Michael Malone, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Gail Van Buren, Asst. Superintendent of Schools
Catherine Antonellis, District Business Administrator
Kellie Fagan, Recording Secretary

Mr. Medeiros stated that the committee would enter into open session at 6:35 PM, and was being recorded with the help of the Rehoboth Cable Advisory Board.

Mr. Medeiros led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Medeiros stated that the committee would enter into Executive Session per MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21, for the purpose of discussing union and non-union personnel issues, potential litigation, and security, and would return to open session.

It was moved by Mrs. Bartholomew, seconded by Mr. Hebda, and VOTED to enter into Executive Session per MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21, for the purpose of discussing union and non-union personnel issues, potential litigation, and security, at 6:36 PM. Roll call vote:

Mr. Andrade ~ Aye
Mr. Barrett ~ Aye
Mrs. Bartholomew ~ Aye
Mrs. Couture ~ Aye
Mr. Hebda ~ Aye
Mr. Katseff ~ Aye
Mrs. Lorenz ~ Aye
Mr. Medeiros ~ Aye
Mr. Rapoza ~ Aye
Mrs. Terry ~ Aye

MOTION PASSED

Mr. Medeiros stated that the committee would re-enter open session.

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Agenda Item #4, Vote to Approve Minutes:

It was moved by Mrs. Bartholomew, seconded by Mr. Hebda, and VOTED to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2014 meeting, as amended.

VOTE ~ AYE ~ UNANIMOUS

It was moved by Mrs. Lorenz and seconded by Mrs. Bartholomew to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2014 Executive Session.

It was moved by Mr. Andrade, seconded by Mr. Katseff, and VOTED to table the minutes of the January 28, 2014 Executive Session.

VOTE ~ AYE ~ UNANIMOUS

It was moved by Mrs. Lorenz, seconded by Mrs. Bartholomew, and VOTED to accept the Superintendent's Search Committee report.

VOTE ~ AYE ~ UNANIMOUS

Agenda Item #5, Bills and Payroll:

It was moved by Mrs. Lorenz, seconded by Mrs. Bartholomew, and VOTED to approve the following bills and payroll:

V - #21	\$ 94,628.64
V - #1040	\$524,605.41
V - #1041	\$ 78.00
V - #1042	\$ 15,108.23
V - #1043	\$ 27,486.28
V - #1044	\$ 53,803.91
V - #1045	\$134,063.71
V - #1046	\$248,365.05
V - #1800	\$626,356.11
V - #1801	\$219,254.40

VOTE ~ AYE ~ UNANIMOUS

Agenda Item #6, Public Input:

None at this time.

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Agenda Item #7, Correspondence & Enclosures:

Mr. Malone highlighted the following correspondence:

- All correspondence will be addressed during the Superintendent's Report

Agenda Item #8a, Superintendent's Report:

Mr. Malone updated the committee on the following:

- He met with Cambridge Institute regarding the Foreign Exchange Student program (the district should receive approximately \$10,600 in tuition per student)
- The district will be looking for host families, but Cambridge Institute will handle the logistics for choosing families (have 12 students interested in coming to D~R)
- Mr. Malone spoke about the NEASC meeting he attended:
 - The district will have our NEASC visit next fall; however, NEASC may be making changes in the future
- Superintendent's search:
 - Site visits have been scheduled for the 3 finalists

Mrs. Terry addressed the committee concerning the CTE Director's position. She asked if this vacancy had been posted and/or advertised. Mr. Malone stated that he is waiting for direction from the School Committee, as the budget will be impacted by the decision to fill or not.

Mrs. Terry pointed out that our CTE program brings in over \$750,000.00, through Chapter 74 funds, to the district. Mrs. Terry stressed that a CTE Director is critical.

Mr. Andrade would like to know how much the district receives from Chapter 74.

Mr. Malone is looking for committee direction on posting/advertising the CTE Director's position.

Mr. Katseff suggested that this position be a discussion item on the next meeting's agenda.

Ms. Fagan will add to the agenda for the March 11th meeting.

Mr. Medeiros asked Mr. Malone if the foreign exchange program needs to be approved by the School Committee first. Mr. Medeiros would like a presentation from the Cambridge Institute before any program is moved forward.

Mr. Malone noted that it may be up to a year before the district will see any positive financial impact on the budget, from the exchange student's tuition payments.

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Agenda Item #8b, Capital projects:

- ✓ Mrs. Bartholomew said that the next Capital Projects Task Force meeting will be scheduled in early April 2014. She reminded the committee, and the public, that the special town meeting for Rehoboth will be March 1st @ 1:00 PM in the DRRHS auditorium. The Dighton special town meeting will be held on March 4th @ 7:00 PM in the Dighton Middle School library.

Annual town meetings are scheduled for:

- ✓ April 7th for Rehoboth
- ✓ April 12th for Dighton

Mrs. Bartholomew briefly reviewed the roof projects that will be voted on.

Mrs. Lorenz addressed the committee and the public concerning the roof repair projects. She noted that any school that is not approved for repairs by both towns, is a significant amount of money that the district will lose.

Mr. Katseff asked whether these are “all or nothing” projects according to the MSBA.

Mr. Malone stated that the projects are stand alone, with the exception of the high school (both towns must approve the high school repairs). He also said that if these projects are not approved, the district will go to the end of the MSBA’s wait list, with no guarantee of being considered again.

Mr. Medeiros stated that the Rehoboth Special Town meeting warrant article vote will be to put a bond request on the regular town meeting warrant. The Town of Rehoboth Annual Town meeting is scheduled for May 07, 2014 .

Agenda Item #8c, Policy Subcommittee Report:

Mr. Hebda updated the committee on the meeting held on February 25, 2014:

- Section K was reviewed tonight
- The School Committee will vote on Section H later in the meeting

Agenda Item #8d, Advisory Finance Committee:

Mr. Malone updated the committee on the meeting held on 2/19/2014. There was not a quorum for that meeting; therefore, information was shared and no other actions were taken. The next meeting is scheduled for March 06, 2014.

Mr. Katseff reminded the committee that 2 members of each town’s Finance Committee are required to comprise the Advisory Finance Committee.

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Mr. Andrade addressed the committee regarding the Rehoboth vote not to support the roof repair project at the high school. Mr. Andrade stressed that public support is needed at both special town meetings.

Ed Swartz, Dighton Finance Committee Chair, stated that the Dighton Finance Committee can also vote on financial ramifications. He then asked why Rehoboth does not support the roof repair project for the high school.

Mrs. Bartholomew stated that the Rehoboth Finance Committee meeting is available for public viewing. Mrs. Bartholomew also noted that, although the Rehoboth Finance Committee is reviewing all options, there has been talk of moving towards a de-regionalization. Therefore, the town of Rehoboth does not want to put money into a "joint" (high school) building-type project.

Mrs. Bartholomew recommended that the communities watch the presentation given by MARS representative, Dr. Hemmens (available on-line).

Mrs. Bartholomew stressed that voter support is essential for the roof repair projects!

Mr. Malone commented on town de-regionalization. He suggested that both towns start thinking as a regional school district, not as two separate entities.

Mr. Andrade asked which town legally owns the high school. Mrs. Antonellis noted that that, according to the Regional Agreement, the district owns the high school complex; therefore, some the high school resides in both Rehoboth and Dighton.

[Agenda Item #8e, Chairperson's Report:](#)

Mr. Medeiros updated the committee on the following:

- ✓ Superintendent candidate site visits are scheduled for next week
- ✓ School Committee public Superintendent Candidate Interviews will be held on Saturday, March 08, 2014 @ 9:00 AM, in the high school library
- ✓ The Public Hearing of the FY '15 Budget will be held on March 11, 2014 @ 6:30 PM in the DRRHS Library/Media Center

[Agenda Item #9a, Director of Buildings, Grounds, and Operations Position Discussion:](#)

Mr. Malone and Mrs. Antonellis led a discussion on the proposed Director of Buildings, Grounds, and Operations position. The district has the money in the FY '14 budget for the pro-rated salary for the remainder of this year, as well as money ear-marked for this position in the FY '15 budget. Mr. Malone stressed that this new position will be particularly beneficial with the upcoming facilities improvement projects. The district needs a comprehensive maintenance plan for each school building.

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Mr. Malone noted that the district will save money in the long run. Mr. Malone recommended the hiring of a Director of Buildings, Grounds, and Operations.

Mrs. Terry addressed the committee regarding this position. She would like to see the salary for this new position used differently. Use this money for numerous, significant school needs.

Both Mrs. Lorenz and Mrs. Bartholomew spoke in favor of the Director of Buildings, Grounds and Operations position.

Mrs. Couture would like to review any proposed budget reductions, before the district funds this position.

Mr. Hebda agrees with the budget implications, however, he also noted that our school buildings are in serious disarray.

Mr. Barrett stated that the committee needs to find a way to get funds to repair our buildings, not just hire a director to oversee them as is.

Mr. Andrade asked why this position would be a 3-year contract. Mr. Malone explained that the 1st year will be for 15 months, and that these types of positions are normally a 3-year contract.

Mr. Katseff addressed the job description: he would like to see the title changed, as well as the length of the contract (not comfortable with a 3-year contract). Maybe the district can get a ½ time person, such as a retiree. This is not the right time for a new position ~ we need to support those staff necessary to teach our students. Mr. Katseff recommended that this discussion be put on-hold until the committee has a better picture of the FY '15 budget.

Mrs. Lorenz said the district has a lack of focus on our facilities; the upcoming roof projects need to be overseen by the district (with in-house staff).

Mrs. Couture asked if there is already a project manager assigned to the roof repair projects. Mrs. Bartholomew stated that there will be a manager assigned by MSBA; however, that person would not be from the school district.

Mr. Malone asked for School Committee approval of this position.

Mr. Medeiros recommended filling this position. He noted that facilities maintenance has been lacking for a number of years.

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Mrs. Lorenz would like to hear the budget presentation before making any decision on the position.

Tim Kelly, DRRTA Co-President and Dighton resident, stated that the DRRTA can not support this proposed, additional position.

Agenda Item #9b, FY '15 Proposed Budget:

Mr. Malone and Mrs. Antonellis led a discussion on the proposed FY '15 budget:

- Budget Level 1 proposed cuts total a 5.4% increase
- Budget Level 2 proposed cuts total a 2.02% increase (Level 2 presented tonight)
- Mr. Malone reviewed the FY '15 proposed assessments

Mr. Katseff talked about the methodology for assessments (the alternative method has been used for the past few budgets). The Advisory Finance Committee can recommend an alternative method and/or options to the School Committee. Mr. Katseff stated that the committee should present two different budgets to the towns, showing the statutory and alternative methods.

Mrs. Terry asked if the principals were given a specific money amount that had to be cut. Mr. Malone explained that the principals had the assessment numbers to follow. Mr. Malone also noted that the principals gave their "required" personnel lists to the Superintendent.

Mr. Malone asked for direction from the committee regarding the Level 2 proposal.

Mr. Malone stated that an alternative method should not be used immediately, but rather researched and presented in the future.

Mr. Malone read the proposed list of cuts for Level 2, school-by-school. The Level 2 reductions did not include the Level 1 proposal from the last meeting. There will be approximately 1.1 million dollars in savings using Level 2.

Mr. Malone stated that the district is still looking into full-day kindergarten as a reduction. Mr. Andrade asked about grants available for full-day kindergarten.

Mr. Medeiros stated that the committee would take a short recess, and return to open session, at: 8:25 PM.

Mr. Medeiros stated that the committee would re-enter open session at: 8:35 PM.

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Mr. Riley addressed the proposed reorganization of the special education department:

- He looked at other districts, and how they centralize their special education departments ~ most other districts are “centralized”

He is recommending the following changes:

- Add facilitators ~ will be centralized/district-wide employees(3)
- School psychologists to be centralized/district-wide employees(3)
- Special Education secretaries to be centralized/district-wide employees (3)

Mr. Terry asked who will perform the eliminated special education secretaries’ work. Mr. Riley stated that the proposal is to eliminate 1.5 secretaries, leaving 3 to work district-wide.

Mr. Malone stated that these changes are necessary for district efficiency.

Mr. Katseff asked exactly how many special education employees will be eliminated. Mr. Riley stated that total personnel cut is 13.5, but 11.5 will be added back. There will be a savings of approximately \$55,000 per town.

Mrs. Couture asked if these reductions are for the Level 2 proposal only, or will these changes take place regardless. Mr. Riley said that the centralization is a more streamline way to operate, and that they will be permanent changes, with committee approval.

Mrs. Couture asked about school adjustment counselors. Mr. Riley stated that these are more “student services” type positions, not just special education positions.

Mrs. Terry asked if the adjustment counselors will be able to do evaluations. Mr. Riley noted that the school psychologist would do evaluations.

Mrs. Antonellis pointed out that these “district-wide” programs would be reflected in the ‘08’ account.

Mr. Katseff asked where these district-wide personnel would be housed. Mr. Riley is not sure yet; this could depend on the scheduling needs of the children (per town), or could depend on building space.

Stephen Patrick, DRRTA Co-President, asked if these facilitators will be administrator positions. He stated that evaluations must be done by administration.

Mr. Malone stated that the district already has potential candidates for these positions.

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Mr. Medeiros requested a spreadsheet of all proposed budget levels (side-by-side), in order for the committee to compare the numbers.

Mr. Andrade asked how each principal got to those particular reductions (for Level 2).

Mr. Malone reiterated that this proposal is a work-in-progress, and will be re-visited.

Mr. Andrade addressed the committee regarding the proposed cut of the Director of Guidance. He noted that the district had been making positive steps in the area of guidance, and we should not regress.

Mrs. Bartholomew asked how much money will be left over in June 2014. Mrs. Antonellis approximated \$300,000.00 will remain. Mrs. Bartholomew noted that full-day kindergarten may need to be reviewed.

Mrs. Bartholomew asked about the Central Office. Mr. Malone stated that the Central Office will be looked at, as well.

Mrs. Lorenz reminded the public that this proposal is a clear picture of what the district will look like with these Level 2 reductions. She stressed that the School Committee needs public support in getting additional funding from the towns.

Mr. Malone addressed the reorganization proposal. He stated that community members are looking for efficiency throughout the district.

Mr. Hebda said that the committee must get public support for funding. He stated that the Level 2 cuts will be a struggle for the district.

Mr. Patrick asked if the Level 1 proposal included any staff reductions. Mrs. Antonellis stated that it did not.

Alicen Adams, Dighton resident, addressed the committee regarding full-day kindergarten ~ asking that full-day kindergarten remain in the FY '15 budget. Mr. Malone said that the district would like to keep full-day kindergarten in the budget.

Matt Iwen, Dighton, spoke in favor of full-day kindergarten.

Mr. Medeiros reminded the committee and the public that the 2007 assessments can not be changed due to a methodology error. Using the statutory method is how the committee will proceed from this point forward. The district needs community members to back the proposed budget.

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Glen Jefferson, Dighton resident, asked if Dighton can implement full-day kindergarten themselves.

Mr. Barrett stressed that both towns need to stop being a regional district “on paper” only.

Mr. Swartz noted that the towns should not be at odds. Everyone wants academic success for all students. He stated that both Rehoboth and Dighton need to work as one entity.

Mr. Katseff addressed the committee regarding research into an alternative assessment methodology.

Mr. Medeiros stated that the FY '15 Public Proposed Budget presentation will be held at the next meeting.

Agenda Item #10a, Vote to Accept Donation Requests:

It was moved by Mrs. Bartholomew, seconded by Mrs. Lorenz, and VOTED to accept a donation of a Wurlitzer piano from Laura Romano, to the Dighton Middle School (approximate value of \$750.00)

VOTE ~ AYE ~ UNANIMOUS

It was moved by Mrs. Bartholomew, seconded by Mrs. Lorenz, and VOTED to accept a monetary donation in the amount of \$18.25 from Abibow, to the Dighton Elementary School.

VOTE ~ AYE ~ UNANIMOUS

Agenda Item #10b, Vote to Approve FY '15 Tentative Assessments:

It was moved by Mrs. Bartholomew and seconded by Mrs. Lorenz to set the FY '15 tentative operating assessment for Dighton K-12 in the amount of: \$8,126,788.00. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Andrade asked where this 8.1 + million dollar assessment comes from. Mrs. Antonellis stated that this figure is based on the Level 2 budget that was proposed during the meeting.

Mrs. Lorenz stated that she is not comfortable with the Level 2 budget.

Mr. Andrade would rather have the committee vote a higher assessment number, which can always be adjusted.

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It was moved by Mrs. Bartholomew, seconded by Mr. Hebda, and VOTED to AMEND the vote, and to set the tentative FY '15 Dighton K-12 operating assessment in the amount of \$8,633,316.00. Roll call vote:

Mr. Andrade ~ Aye
Mr. Barrett ~ Nay
Mrs. Bartholomew ~ Aye
Mrs. Couture ~ Aye
Mr. Hebda ~ Aye
Mr. Katseff ~ Nay
Mrs. Lorenz ~ Aye
Mr. Medeiros ~ Aye
Mr. Rapoza ~ Aye
Mrs. Terry ~ Aye

7.0 ~ AYE 2.0 NAY

MOTION PASSED

It was moved by Mrs. Bartholomew, seconded by Mr. Andrade, and VOTED to set the tentative FY '15 Rehoboth K-12 operating assessment in the amount of \$14,988,625.00. Roll call vote:

Mr. Andrade ~ Aye
Mr. Barrett ~ Nay
Mrs. Bartholomew ~ Aye
Mrs. Couture ~ Aye
Mr. Hebda ~ Aye
Mr. Katseff ~ Nay
Mrs. Lorenz ~ Aye
Mr. Medeiros ~ Aye
Mr. Rapoza ~ Aye
Mrs. Terry ~ Aye

7.0 ~ AYE 2.0 NAY

MOTION PASSED

It was moved by Mrs. Bartholomew, seconded by Mrs. Lorenz, and VOTED to set the tentative FY '15 Dighton K-12 capital assessment in the amount of \$172,487.00.

VOTE ~ AYE ~ UNANIMOUS

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It was moved by Mrs. Bartholomew, seconded by Mrs. Lorenz, and VOTED to set the tentative FY '15 Rehoboth K-12 capital assessment in the amount of \$286,667.00.

VOTE ~ AYE ~ UNANIMOUS

It was moved by Mrs. Bartholomew, seconded by Mr. Andrade, and VOTED to set the tentative FY '15 District operating assessment in the amount of \$23,621,942.00.

VOTE ~ AYE ~ UNANIMOUS

It was moved by Mrs. Bartholomew, seconded by Mr. Hebda, and VOTED to set the tentative FY '15 District operating and capital assessment in the amount of \$24,081,096.00.

VOTE ~ AYE ~ UNANIMOUS

Agenda Item #10c, Vote to Approve Section H of the District Policy Manual:

It was moved by Mrs. Bartholomew, seconded by Mrs. Lorenz, and VOTED to approve Section H of the District Policy Manual.

VOTE ~ AYE ~ UNANIMOUS

Agenda Item #10d, Vote to Approve the Director of Buildings, Grounds and Operations Job Description:

It was moved by Mrs. Lorenz and seconded by Mr. Hebda to VOTE to approve the Director of Buildings, Grounds and Operations job description. Discussion ensued. Roll call vote:

Mr. Andrade ~ Aye
Mr. Barrett ~ Aye
Mrs. Bartholomew ~ Aye
Mrs. Couture ~ Nay
Mr. Hebda ~ Aye
Mr. Katseff ~ Nay
Mrs. Lorenz ~ Aye
Mr. Medeiros ~ Aye
Mr. Rapoza ~ Aye
Mrs. Terry ~ Nay

6.4 ~ AYE 2.6 NAY

MOTION PASSED

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Agenda Item #10e, Vote to Approve the Director of Buildings, Grounds, and Operations Position:

It was moved by Mr. Katseff, seconded by Mr. Barrett, and VOTED to table this issue until April 2014. Roll call vote:

Mr. Andrade ~ Nay
Mr. Barrett ~ Aye
Mrs. Bartholomew ~ Nay
Mrs. Couture ~ Aye
Mr. Hebda ~ Nay
Mr. Katseff ~ Aye
Mrs. Lorenz ~ Nay
Mr. Medeiros ~ Aye
Mr. Rapoza ~ Nay
Mrs. Terry ~ Aye

4.6 ~ AYE 4.4 NAY

MOTION FAILED

It was moved by Mrs. Lorenz, seconded by Mr. Hebda, and VOTED to approve the Director of Buildings, Grounds and Operations position. Roll call vote:

Mr. Andrade ~ Aye
Mr. Barrett ~ Nay
Mrs. Bartholomew ~ Abstained
Mrs. Couture ~ Nay
Mr. Hebda ~ Aye
Mr. Katseff ~ Nay
Mrs. Lorenz ~ Aye
Mr. Medeiros ~ Aye
Mr. Rapoza ~ Aye
Mrs. Terry ~ Nay

4.4 ~ AYE 3.6 NAY 1.0 ABSTAINED

MOTION FAILED

Agenda Item #10f, Vote to Approve surplus books:

It was moved by Mrs. Bartholomew, seconded by Mrs. Lorenz, and VOTED to approve surplus books from the Dighton~Rehoboth Regional High School.

VOTE ~ AYE ~ UNANIMOUS

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Mr. Medeiros stated that the committee would enter into Executive Session, as per MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21, for the purpose of discussing potential litigation, union issues, and security and would not return to open session..

It was moved by Mrs. Bartholomew, seconded by Mrs. Lorenz, and VOTED to enter into Executive Session as per MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21, for the purpose of discussing potential litigation, union issues, and security at: 10:25 PM. Roll call vote:

Mr. Andrade ~ Aye
Mr. Barrett ~ Aye
Mrs. Bartholomew ~ Aye
Mrs. Couture ~ Aye
Mr. Hebda ~ Aye
Mr. Katseff ~ Aye
Mrs. Lorenz ~ Aye
Mr. Medeiros ~ Aye
Mr. Rapoza ~ Aye
Mrs. Terry ~ Aye

MOTION PASSED

Mr. Malone, Mrs. Van Buren, Mrs. Antonellis, and Ms. Fagan were recused at: 10:25 PM.

Janice Terry, Secretary