

Dighton~Rehoboth Regional District School Committee
Regular Session ~ May 06, 2014

A Regular Session of the Dighton~Rehoboth Regional School Committee was held on May 06, 2014, in the Dighton~Rehoboth Regional High School library.

Present:

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

Also:

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

Mrs. Couture stated that the committee would enter into regular session, and was being broadcast/videotaped with the help of the Rehoboth Cable Advisory Committee, at: 6:35 PM.

Mrs. Couture led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda Item #3, Vote to Approve Minutes:

It was moved by Mrs. Terry, seconded by Mrs. Bartholomew, and VOTED to approve the minutes of the April 08, 2014 Special meeting.

VOTE ~ AYE ~ UNANIMOUS

Agenda Item #4, Bills and Payroll:

It was moved by Mrs. Bartholomew, seconded by Mrs. Terry, and VOTED to approve the bills and payrolls as presented:

| | |
|-----------|---------------|
| V - #25 | \$ 104,228.82 |
| V - #26 | \$ 95,168.42 |
| V - #1059 | \$ 8,959.38 |
| V - #1062 | \$ 14,469.69 |
| V - #1063 | \$ 361,430.63 |
| V - #1064 | \$ 18,046.80 |
| V - #1065 | \$ 1,621.13 |
| V - #1066 | \$ 868,875.42 |
| V - #2200 | \$ 646,558.28 |
| V - #2201 | \$ 175,695.19 |
| V - #3301 | \$ 1,100.27 |

VOTE ~ AYE ~ UNANIMOUS

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Agenda Item #5, Public Input:

Brian McCann, Rehoboth resident, addressed the committee regarding the change in MCAS science testing for freshman. Students will no longer be required to take the science MCAS in their freshmen year. Instead, the test will be given during the sophomore year. He felt that this decision puts his child at a disadvantage, not being given the opportunity to take that portion of the exam, while in 9th grade.

Mrs. Couture stated that Ms. Striano, DRRHS Principal, and Ms. Saxon, DRRHS Science Department Head, were both at a previous meeting to discuss this topic, and to give backup information for this decision. Mrs. Van Buren stated that she did not condone nor agree with the administration's decision to move the science exam to the 10th grade. Mr. Malone noted that the testing would be better for sophomores ~ this will give the students a better understanding of that subject. Also, state testing results show a greater success rate when the test is given in grade 10.

Mr. McCann read from the DESE website regarding MCAS results from Dighton~Rehoboth. For the past four (4) years, there has been a 100% passing rate for freshmen science MCAS testing.

Mr. Katseff asked if Mr. McCann had contacted high school administration regarding this matter. Mr. McCann stated that he did not, as he saw this as a School Committee decision.

Mr. Katseff suggested that Mr. McCann speak with high school administration first, and then follow the chain of command, if the issue is not resolved to his satisfaction.

Mr. McCann felt that this is a School Committee policy matter, and not one of a curriculum matter.

Mr. Medeiros suggested that this change be revisited at a future meeting.

Mrs. Van Buren will research the matter and respond to Mr. McCann.

Agenda Item #6, Correspondence & Enclosures:

Mr. Malone stated that all correspondence will be addressed during the meeting.

Agenda Item #9a, Approve Dual Enrollments:

Mr. Braga, was present to review and answer questions regarding the dual enrollment requests for:

- Paige Leite to Johnson & Wales, Alexandra Lakota to BCC, and Kaitlyn Perry to Johnson & Wales

Mrs. Lorenz asked if these students will be able to graduate with their class. Mr. Braga stated that the students would graduate with the class of 2014. He also noted that administration was consulted, and each dual enrollment was recommended.

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It was moved by Mrs. Lorenz, seconded by Mrs. Bartholomew, and VOTED to approve dual enrollments for: Paige Leite, Alexandra Lakota, and Kaitlyn Perry.

VOTE ~ AYE ~ UNANIMOUS

Agenda Item #7a, CTE General Advisory Board:

Wanda Hanson, CTE General Advisory Board spokesperson, updated the committee on CTE student projects and accomplishments. The board then gave a PowerPoint presentation on various student projects.

Mrs. Hanson congratulated DRRHS student, Casey Clausen, as the MAVA Outstanding Vocational Technical Student of the Year.

Mr. Malone said that the wood shop and the metal shop had created the plaque that was presented in China. They did an excellent job, and thank you very much.

Mrs. Couture thanked the advisory board for their presentation. This was a great way to fully view and comprehend the CTE department.

Mr. Barrett stated that he has visited a number of the CTE shops, and was very impressed.

Al Rose, CTE Interim Director, noted that the CTE auto shop previously went to Washington, DC, to participate in a competition. DRRHS auto shop students won that competition.

Mr. Andrade asked what programs the advisory board will be looking at in the future for CTE programs. Mr. Rose stated that this will be a priority for the new CTE Director. He/she will need to research future programs; new technology instruction should be a priority. He noted that this is the first time that the advisory board has appeared before the School Committee in a few years, and that tonight was a re-introduction of this board to the School Committee. The board and the new director will meet regarding new/future programs.

Each member of the advisory board came forward, introduced themselves, and explained their connection to DR's CTE Program:

- Chris LaPierre has expertise in the automotive field
- Wanda Hanson is involved in early childhood education
- Diane Johnson, parent, has a son currently in the machine tech program
- David Sousa, DRRHS machine shop teacher
- Mark Copeland, business owner, will be hiring a carpentry student from DR at the end of this school year (his son)
- Roger Sisson, Jr., parent, has a daughter in the DECA program

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Agenda Item #7b, Negotiations Subcommittee Report:

Mr. Katseff updated the committee on various contract negotiations:

- The committee received a letter from SEIU Local 888, requesting the start of custodial contract negotiations
 - The Superintendent will respond to the SEIU Local 888
- DRRTA: tentative language has been reached for the MOA regarding teacher evaluation and the parent portal
 - The MOA will be reviewed in Executive Session for a vote

Agenda Item #7c, FY '15 Budget Summary/ Fact Sheets:

Mr. Malone and Ms. Antonellis reviewed and gave a summary of the fact sheet(s) for town meeting (proposed budget information). Mr. Malone noted that student accomplishments had been included on these fact sheets.

Mr. Andrade asked if both of these sheets will be available at each town meeting. Mr. Malone confirmed that both sheets will be handed out at the meetings.

Mrs. Lorenz stated that both sheets are appropriate for town meeting.

Mrs. Bartholomew recommended that the information be condensed for the public to clearly understand the numbers.

Mr. Andrade asked that a "what if" scenario be created on these sheets (i.e. "What if only the minimum contribution is received from Rehoboth ..."; then state what the reductions will look like).

Mr. Rapoza suggested a summary page of both budget scenarios on one sheet. Also, possibly a heading that reads: "For example, these are the consequences if".

Committee discussion continued. Mrs. Bartholomew suggested that these sheets highlight the "Possible reductions with a Rehoboth minimum local contribution".

Mrs. Lorenz stated that the public needs to see the student achievements section. They need to know how their money is contributing to student successes.

Mrs. Bartholomew said that the public needs the budget numbers, as well as the student accomplishments.

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Mr. Andrade suggested the heading of "Rehoboth Finance Committee Recommendation" for the minimum contribution reduction numbers. The fact sheet could also list, in order of highest to lowest, budget increases, especially mandated increases (salaries, health insurance, transportation, Special Education, etc.)

Ms. Antonellis explained the minimum contribution budget reductions. She noted that there are many increases (mandated and/or district obligation), that have to be built into every budget. The committee then builds their budget around those mandated increases.

Ms. Antonellis will streamline the fact sheets by highlighting major increases or decreases in each budget scenario. She will keep the student achievements section on the back, while providing budget numbers on the front (both scenarios).

Mr. Katseff asked what the "budget presentation" will be for town meeting floor. He then explained the process of voting the budget recommendation or amendment(s). He noted that School Committee members can only address the budget that was presented; however a member of the community, or parent, can speak on behalf of the School Committee's budget proposal.

Mr. Andrade and Mr. Katseff both suggested that a School Committee member be present at each meeting, as well as the district administration.

Mrs. Terry suggested that Ms. Antonellis, District Business Administrator, speak at the towns meetings, as a resource for the School Committee. It was noted that Mr. Malone will not be available for the Rehoboth Town meeting.

Timothy Kelly, DRRTA Co-Chair, stated that the fact sheets need to clearly distinguish "cuts" from "increases" on the fact sheets.

Eric Brown, Rehoboth, would like as much information on the scenario sheets as possible. The fact sheets are a great step toward budget transparency and School Committee communication.

Mr. Andrade asked if a community member could request that the School Committee budget be moved up on the meeting's agenda. Mr. Medeiros said that this can be done on town meeting floor.

Mr. Medeiros suggested that the committee use our media resources for the fact sheet(s) publication.

Mr. Malone and Ms. Antonellis will revise the fact sheets and forward to the committee.

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Agenda Item #7d, Superintendent's Report:

Mr. Malone reviewed the following:

- Day on the Hill Program:
 - Budget discussions took place during the program
 - Mr. Katseff, and Mrs. Lorenz also attended
 - Everyone met with local legislators
- China trip:
 - Mr. Malone spoke, in detail, about his trip to China for the student exchange program
 - There are students interested in coming to Dighton~Rehoboth next year @ approximately \$10,000 per student for tuition
 - The district is looking for foreign exchange student host families
 - Cambridge Education will give a presentation on how to become a host family
 - Families are compensated for costs associated with the being a host family
- Christine Lynch, DESE, will be at the next School Committee meeting to review budget the process for budgets/assessments that do not pass town meeting (6:45 pm is the time for her presentation)

Mr. Medeiros asked that, if there is a town floor amendment for an override, what would be the contractual implications until the override is voted. Mr. Malone will check with Atty. Long and get back to the committee. Mr. Malone noted that employment notifications may have to go out if there is not a budget in-place by June 30, 2014.

Mr. Barrett asked for the approximate cost of unemployment. Ms. Antonellis explained the formula used for estimating unemployment costs.

Mr. Katseff suggested that town officials be invited to the May 27, 2014 School Committee meeting. Mrs. Bartholomew requested that parents be notified as well.

Mrs. Couture reminded the committee that Christine Lynch's presentation is scheduled for 6:45 PM on May 27, 2014.

By consensus, it was decided to hold the meeting of May 27th in the high school Media Center.

Agenda Item #7e, Chairperson's Report:

Mrs. Couture reviewed the following:

- Teacher/staff appreciation week ~ thank you to all staff members
- The Rehoboth portion of the high school roof project vote recount failed

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Mr. Andrade stated that there are many other things that need repair. Some of these projects may fall under “capital projects” purview. Mrs. Bartholomew reminded the committee that various repairs are continuously taking place, in accordance with the amount of money afforded each repair. Mrs. Couture stated that the district is making all repairs possible; however, these projects are temporary fixes.

Mr. Andrade suggested a Capital Stabilization Account discussion be included on a future agenda.

Mrs. Bartholomew spoke about the May 05, 2014 Rehoboth Board of Selectmen meeting:

- Many members of community would like the School Committee to put an end to hostility between the committee and the Board of Selectmen
- The Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee would like to begin a “round-table” discussion with the School Committee
- This meeting would be an open-dialogue discussion on the budget; there will be no specific power(s) of this group, and no actions or votes taken

Mrs. Bartholomew asked if the School Committee would like to send one member from each town to such a meeting.

Mrs. Lorenz was supportive of this type of discussion; all stakeholders need to find common ground.

Mr. Katseff said that the Advisory Finance Committee already does this.

Mrs. Bartholomew reiterated that this group would not be meeting to discuss the Regional Agreement.

Agenda Item #Regional Agreement Discussion:

Mrs. Couture led a discussion on the Regional Agreement.

Mr. Katseff suggested that the School Committee create a committee to address the Regional Agreement. He also recommended that Mark Abrams, Abrams Group, and/or Stephen Hemmens, MASS, make a proposal to spearhead a Regional Agreement Committee.

Mrs. Couture noted that she and Ms. Antonellis have already begun this process.

Mrs. Lorenz asked if the towns’ Boards of Selectmen would be interested in discussing the Regional Agreement.

Both Dighton and Rehoboth Boards of Selectmen would like to review the agreement.

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Mr. Rapoza suggested that the School Committee be in charge of the Regional Agreement Committee.

Mr. Andrade requested that Mrs. Bartholomew's proposal for a "round-table" discussion be reconsidered. Mrs. Cross noted that she also attended the Board of Selectmen's meeting on Monday, and understands that open dialogue is needed, and requested, by Rehoboth.

Mr. Medeiros suggested that the Advisory Finance Committee address the budget only, and make recommendations to the School Committee. He asked for an explanation of the "round-table" discussion - what is the charge of this group.

Eric Brown, Rehoboth, stated that the School Committee needs to "come to the table", in order to continue the developing support for our schools.

There was consensus that the School Committee Chair and Vice-Chair will meet with the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen of Rehoboth and Dighton, for a "round-table" discussion.

By consensus, it was decided to have the business administrator get a proposal on revisiting the Regional Agreement.

Mr. Katseff suggested that Ms. Antonellis contact Mark Abrams, Stephen Hemmens, and/or NESDEC for assistance.

Agenda Item #8b, District Treasurer Discussion:

Mr. Malone and Ms. Antonellis led a discussion on the District Treasurer's position:

- There is a need for a District Treasurer
 - this person will work in the Central Office 2 times per month; and
 - would need to be bonded
- Ms. Antonellis has been contacted regarding a qualified retiree, who may be interested
- This position will need to be posted/advertised immediately

Mrs. Lorenz asked if twice a month would equal the amount of time that is currently devoted to this position. Ms. Antonellis stated that the district only requires a treasurer twice per month. Mrs. Couture requested that this be posted immediately, with a closing date of June 06, 2014. Ms. Antonellis will take care of this.

Mrs. Terry spoke about the 'Exit Interview' she had with Mr. Meichelbeck. Mr. Meichelbeck suggested that a treasurer be hired as soon as possible. Mr. Meichelbeck also recommended that the committee begin looking for a new auditor, when the current contract expires. Ms. Antonellis is recommending that the district remain with our current auditor, Marcum Accountants (Dick Swanson). Mr. Swanson has extensive history and experience with the district. Ms. Antonellis did

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note, however, that the audit timeline for this past year was unacceptable, and she conveyed this to Marcum Associates.

By consensus, it was decided to post the position of District Treasurer, with June 06, 2014 as the application deadline.

Mr. Katseff requested that a discussion item regarding a new auditor be put onto the May 27, 2014 agenda.

Mr. Andrade recommended that the district continue with Marcum Accountants, and revisit this issue next year.

Agenda Item #8c, CTE Director Position:

Mr. Malone led a discussion on the CTE Director's position:

- Mr. Malone would like to wait until the town meeting, before deciding whether this position should be full-time or school-year
- Mr. Malone will review the matter with Dr. Azar
- Mr. Malone recommended that the district post/advertise; then interview at the end of June (after deciding whether this is a full or part-time position)

Agenda Item #9a, Vote to Approve Donation Requests:

It was moved by Mrs. Lorenz, seconded by Mrs. Bartholomew, and VOTED to approve monetary donations in the amount of \$16.34 and \$19.28, from Abibow Recycling, to the Palmer River Elementary School.

VOTE ~ AYE ~ UNANIMOUS

Agenda Item #9d, Vote to Appoint Procurement Officer:

It was moved by Mrs. Lorenz and seconded by Mr. Katseff to appoint Catherine Antonellis as the Chief Procurement Officer for Invitations for Bid, and Request for Proposals. Discussion ensued and no vote was taken.

Mrs. Lorenz and Mr. Katseff recanted the motion and second. Mrs. Lorenz amended the vote:

It was moved by Mrs. Lorenz, seconded by Mrs. Bartholomew, and VOTED to appoint the District Business Administrator as the Chief Procurement Office for Invitation for Bid, and Request for Proposals.

VOTE ~ AYE ~ UNANIMOUS

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Agenda Item #9b, Vote to Approve the Revised last day of the 2013-2014 School Year:

It was moved by Mrs. Lorenz and seconded by Mrs. Bartholomew to approve the revised last day of the 2013-2014 school year. Discussion ensued and no vote was taken.

Mr. Andrade asked why the students go to school 181 days, and not 180 days. He noted that the students go to school for 2.5 hours on the last day, and should this day be eliminated. Mr. Andrade asked if 181 days is a state law.

Mrs. Van Buren will research the required school days for students/teachers, and get back to the committee for a vote at the next meeting.

It was moved by Mrs. Lorenz, seconded by Mrs. Bartholomew, and VOTED to table this motion.

VOTE ~ AYE ~ UNANIMOUS

Mrs. Couture 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 Mr. Medeiros, seconded by Mrs. Bartholomew, 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, and would not return to open session at: 10:15 PM. Roll call vote:

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

MOTION PASSED

Richard Barrett, Secretary