

**RUTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS
FEB. 24, 2009**

School Board Members Present:

Christopher Book
Wayne Cooke
Richard Courcelle
Roberta Dress
Peter Fagan
Collin Fingon
Peter Forshay
Gina Fucci
Karen Gartner
Cindy Kilic-Murray

Member Absent

Peter Mello
Nicholas Ouelette

Also Present:

Superintendent Mary Moran
Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss
John Rice
Peter Amons
Ellie McGarry
Kristin Francoeur
Bob Johnson
Paula Albro
Bill Olsen
Jay Slenker
Kristen Hubert
Lyle Jepson
Andrea McQuade
Susanne Engels
Wil Cunningham
Christy Coloutti
Patricia Aigner

Motion by Gartner/Fagan to convene to executive session at 6:15 pm for the purpose of discussing personnel matters, the premature release of information regarding those subjects which would place the Board at a substantial disadvantage. Unanimously passed by those in attendance.

**MOTION:
EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

The Board came out of executive session at 6:55 pm.

**PUBLIC
SESSION**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Acting Chair Courcelle noted the absence of Commissioner Mello and Student Representative Ouelette.

**CALL TO
ORDER**

ROLL CALL

Motion by Gartner/Fagan to accept the minutes of the Feb. 10, 2009 regular school board meeting as written. Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

**MOTION:
MINUTES
2/10/09
MEETING**

Written Communication - None

**WRITTEN
COMMUN-
ICATION**

Oral Communication - Ben Lynch of 74 Church St. spoke to the Board about his concerns regarding the readiness of students entering the community after graduating from high school. He does not feel that many are prepared and he believes the schools should be doing more. Mr. Lynch said he does not think the schools should be doling out raises when others in the community are losing jobs. He believes more of an effort is needed toward academics. He asked for drastic changes to improve our education system in Rutland City to better perform and to better reduce tax expense to residents.

**ORAL
COMMUN-
ICATION**

**RESIDENT
SPEAKING
ABOUT THE
SCHOOL
SYSTEM**

Rutland Middle School Web Chat with Senator Patrick Leahy - Mr. Olsen and students discussed the recent Web Chat held between students and Senator Leahy. Student Renee talked about the preparation process starting with the presidential election and a

**EDUCATION
REPORT**

**WEB CHAT
WITH SEN.
LEAHY**

mock debate. Students studied US History and read up on Senator Leahy and what he has done for Vermont. Student Dylan said his class learned about Senator Leahy's achievements over his term in office. Students had pre-arranged questions. Renee said the students watched Senator Leahy on a big screen in the auditorium. There were about 200 students and faculty present. 17 students asked him questions and the Senator was able to see the student talking. Renee reviewed some of the questions students asked and said he answered all questions thoroughly. The students felt like he was in the same room with them. Dylan said the students enjoyed the Chat and felt very comfortable with the Senator. He made the responses easy for students to understand on their level. Mr. Olsen said it was set up with the help of Jack Adams and the entire Tech Department. Jack Adams spoke to the Board via Skype from a location in Fair Haven. He discussed new technologies the schools will be using and explained their benefits. He said there are many opportunities and he is excited about them. The Board asked questions of the students regarding the process used for preparing for the interview with Senator Leahy and future uses of Web Chats.

Rutland Middle School Math Counts Team - Josh Bunker, Math Teacher at RMS, presented the Math Counts program with students Renee and Dylan. Seven students competed a few weeks ago at the regional Math Counts competition and came in first place. The team will go to the state competition and possibly nationals. Renee said Math Counts and Math Club helps her with classroom Math. Dylan said he just tried Math Counts this year and has enjoyed it. He said he is now learning Math differently than how he usually sees things. Mr. Bunker explained the competition and how the rounds worked. He gave the Board some sample questions. He said some of the team members have been competing since 6th grade and they are now in 8th grade. It was rewarding to see them victorious.

Math / Science Grants- Mr. Bliss presented information on two Math and Science Grant opportunities we are applying for. There is a state level Title II B Math / Science Partnership Grant. We are applying as a collaborative with other entities in Southwest Vermont. It is a competitive application. We have applied with nine supervisory unions from as far north as Rutland Northeast to as far south as Mt. Anthony, and with Castleton State College and Bennington College, and other organizations. It is called the Math Science Partnership Southern Vermont. Mr. Bliss reviewed the proposal, which will involve 60 teachers over three years. We applied for a total of \$703,000 over three years. Mr. Bliss said he believes the collaborative is a strong model for the state.

The second grant is the 21st Century Learning Grant which we applied for in collaboration with Rutland Recreation and the Boys and Girls Club. This will target students in the summer with a high interest in science content and it will also target literacy skills. Mr. Bliss reviewed the proposal, which is also a competitive grant. It will be an arm of the Tapestry Program. The request is for \$264,000 over five years.

Mr. Bliss said both grants have a component having to do with field based experts. Mr. Courcelle asked how students will be chosen for this program. Mr. Bliss said he sees students being referred and it would be opened for model students on a fee-for-use basis.

Budget Information Wrap-up - Mr. Courcelle said there will be a public meeting held on Feb. 25, 2009 at 6:30 pm at the RMS Auditorium for further public opportunity to discuss the budget.

**BUDGET
INFO
WRAP-UP**

Commissioner Forshay asked if the State has set their tax rate and Ms. Moran said there has not been a change or news. We are operating under the assumption it will be \$.85 but the public has been notified it could go to \$.86. Commissioner Fagan said the Legislature is still discussing this. Commissioner Fingon said tomorrow night's meeting will also focus on the performance contract.

**INFORMA-
TION TASK
FORCE**

Information Task Force - Commissioner Fucci reviewed all the locations where there have been public Budget Buddies meetings. There have also been gatherings in people's homes. She said Budget Buddies is being established to be in place long-term for educating the public about school finances. Ms. Moran said Mike Ahearn and Patricia Aigner have been helpful with the technology and Budget Buddies website.

**PERSONNEL
REPORT**

Personnel Report - None

Bid - Carpet Installation at Longfellow - Mr. Rice reviewed the bids for Longfellow carpeting.

**BUSINESS
REPORT**

Motion by Fagan/Gartner to accept the recommendation of the Director of Building, Grounds and Transportation and approve the bid for removal of old carpet and the installation of new carpet in the Longfellow Building to Sherwin Williams Company of Rutland with a total base bid amount of \$23,928 to be paid from FY09 budgeted funds.

**MOTION:
LONG-
FELLOW
CARPETING**

Ms. Moran said this project is health related. The carpet is very old and this is an essential replacement.

Motion passed by all those in attendance.

Bid - RHS Painting - Mr. Rice reviewed the bids and scope of work for interior RHS painting.

**MOTION:
RHS
PAINTING**

Motion by Fagan/Kilic-Murray to accept the recommendation of the Director of Building, Grounds and Transportation and approve the bid for interior painting of RHS to Professional Touch Painting of Rutland with a total base bid amount of \$5, 800 to be paid from FY09 budgeted funds.

Ms. Moran said this was first proposed for last year but it could not be scheduled. There is a big discrepancy in bids and Mr. Rice said he escorted every contractor through the building and feels confident with the recommended company. He also checked their references. Mr. Rice will work with the contractor on scheduling. Most of the work will be completed during April break although part might be done in June after school is out.

Motion passed by all those in attendance.

Announcements:

- Ms. Moran said in collaboration with the Chaffee Art Gallery, she has arranged for professional art to be hung at Longfellow Building. There is now a display of impressive art by local artist Ann McFarren. She expects the display to be up for six to eight weeks and then changed. She invited the public to visit.
- Friday is Sun and Surf Day at Northwest and Pierpoint.
- There will be a Pond Party on Saturday for Northeast, Northwest and RIS.
- March 2-6 is Dr. Seuss week
- There will be upcoming movie nights for Northeast and Northwest featuring "Horton Hears a Who". There will also be a movie night upcoming at RIS
- RIS is participating in the Arts Fits Vermont community art project. Over 600 students have created a paper puzzle piece with self-portraits which will be publicly displayed during the month of March at the Diamond Run Mall.
- The RMS Math Team finished in first place at the MathCounts' South-West Vermont Chapter Competition. All four scoring team members, Renee Cruise, Dylan Conboy, Liam Clark, and Josh Wight, finished in the top 9 as individuals; Liam and Josh taking the top two spots. Alternates, Taylor Ampatellos, Anya Smith, Christina Lovett, also made a strong showing.
- Girl's Hockey is playing in the semi-finals tonight at Norwich and Boy's Basketball is playing in the semi-finals tonight at Gunderson.
- There has been a lot of correspondence from the Department of Education with regard to the budget and the impact of the stimulus package.

**LEGISLA-
TIVE
UPDATE**

Federal Stimulus Package - Ms. Moran said there is good potential for schools. Construction aid was cut and that was disappointing. She is working with the Governor and Department of Education on funding.

**COMM.
REPORTS**

Policy Committee - Commissioner Book reviewed the policies for first reading.

**POLICY
COMM.**

Motion by Cooke/Fagan to approve the following policies from the Student (7000) section of the Policy Manual for first reading:

**MOTION:
APPROVE
STUDENT
(7000)
POLICIES
FOR FIRST
READING**

7110 - Elementary and Secondary Students

7210 - Attendance

7220 - Age of Entrance

7221 - Pupil Proof of Age

7222 - Screening of New School Entrants.

7223 - Screening of New School Entrants Confidentiality of Information

7230 - Non-Resident Students

7231 - Payment of Tuition

7231.1 - Tuition for Students of Staff Members

7233 - Admission of Non-Resident Students

7250 - Students Seeking Admission

7330 - Testing Program

7340 - Rutland High School Graduation Requirements

7341 - Early Graduation

7342 - Graduation Ceremonies

7350 - Matriculation

7370 - Student Records

7371 - Student Records Access

Mr. Forshay offered a minor language change to Policy 7210. Commissioner Dress said she has heard there are students in the schools who are not residents and who are not paying tuition. Ms. Moran explained the depth of the review system. There is also an attendance officer at the high school who does a lot of verifying. She said there are many different types of students at the high school. There are tuition students from sending communities. There are families who do not live in the city but who privately pay tuition. There are ten School Choice students in the high school. Mr. Forshay said he knows there have been thorough checks in the past when there have been allegations. The school takes it seriously.

Commissioner Fucci said she would like to open Policy 7340, Graduation Requirements for further discussion. She does not believe in withholding graduation privileges for disciplinary action. The mission of the school board is to see all children graduate. She suggested that perhaps students can receive blank diplomas and then fulfill requirements in the summer. It is a strong action to withhold graduation privileges from someone who has worked for 12 years but might make a mistake at the end. Mr. Courcelle asked the Policy Committee to decide if an existing policy covers this or if something new should be written. Mr. Book said the full board should first discuss this to give the Policy Committee some direction. He asked for it to be an agenda item in the future. The Policy will not be approved for first reading tonight for this matter to be further discussed.

Amendment to the motion to approve the above-mentioned policies for first reading with the exception of Policy 7340.

The amended motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

New Business - None

**NEW
BUSINESS**

Old Business - Mr. Courcelle said due to spring vacation, the April 14 Board meeting will be moved to April 7. The March Board meetings will be March 10 and March 24.

**OLD
BUSINESS**

Motion by Book/Fagan to adjourn at 8:16 pm.

**BOARD
MEETING
SCHEDULE**

Respectfully submitted

ADJOURN

Janet Mondlak
Recording Secretary