

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

**School Board Members Present:**

Peter Mello  
Christopher Book  
Hurley Cavacas, Jr.  
Wayne Cooke  
Richard Courcelle  
Roberta Dress  
Peter Fagan (7:05 pm)  
Collin Fingon  
Peter Forshay  
Cindy Kilic-Murray  
Rob Towle  
Nicholas Ouelette

**Also Present:**

Superintendent Mary Moran  
Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss  
John Rice  
Jay Slenker  
Lyle Jepson  
Peter Amons  
Ellie McGarry  
Bob Johnson  
Larry Lattanzi  
Paula Albro  
Kristen Hubert  
Andrea McQuade  
Bill Olsen  
Patricia Aigner  
Wil Cunningham  
Christy Colutti

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Motion by Forshay/Kilic-Murray 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.

**EXECUTIVE  
SESSION**

**PUBLIC  
SESSION**

The Board came out of executive session at 6:45 pm.

**ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Mello noted the absence of Commissioner Fagan.

**MOTION:  
MINUTES  
3/10/09  
MEETING**

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

**WRITTEN  
COMMUN-  
ICATION**

Written Communication - Clerk Courcelle read letters from former Commissioners Gina Fucci and Karen Gartner with their thanks and acknowledgments.

**LETTERS OF  
THANKS**

Reorganization - Swearing in Elected and Re-Elected Members - The following Board members were sworn in:

**REORGAN-  
IZATION**

- a. Hurley Cavacas, Jr. - One Year Term
- b. Dick Courcelle - Three Year Term
- c. Peter Mello - Three Year Term
- d. Rob Towle - Three Year Term

**SWEARING  
IN BOARD  
MEMBERS**

Mr. Mello welcomed the two new Board members.

**ELECTION  
OF BOARD  
OFFICERS**

Election of Board Clerk - Mr. Mello called for nominations.

**MOTION:  
ELECT  
BOARD  
CLERK**

Motion by Forshay/Fagan to elect Richard Courcelle as Board Clerk

There were no other nominations.

Motion to elect Richard Courcelle as Board Clerk passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

**MOTION:  
ELECT  
BOARD  
PRESIDENT**

Election of Board President - Mr. Courcelle called for nominations.

Motion by Kilic-Murray/Forshay to nominate Peter Mello as Board President.

There were no other nominations.

Motion to elect Peter Mello as Board President passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

**ORAL  
COMMUNI-  
CATION**

Oral Communication - None

Mr. Mello reminded all Board members of the Board committee lists. He asked them to inform him of their choice for different, additional, or new committee assignments.

**EDUCATION  
REPORT**

Co-Teaching Report - Ms. McGarry reviewed the No Child Left Behind and IDEA laws. She said co-teaching is a great opportunity for all students to have access to the same curriculum and standards. However, Vermont does not reimburse for co-teaching. Ms. McGarry said last fall, we approached the State and put forth a proposal, asking for reimbursement for special education teachers to be co-teaching in the classrooms with general education teachers and they approved it.

**CO-  
TEACHING**

Ms. Colutti explained the model of co-teaching and said it allows students with challenges to be in a regular classroom setting with their peers. Mr. Johnson reviewed a chronology of the co-teaching plan in Rutland, and how it was created and put into action into the primary schools. Teachers have done a lot of training and preparation work. Ms. Hubert explained the methods of delivering education using the co-teaching model. She said co-teaching is beneficial for all students, not just the special education students. All students are able to access the special educators which has benefits for everyone. Ms. Hubert said this is a two-teacher model and a cultural shift in the classroom.

Mr. Slenker said in January 2008, the Intermediate School started to study implementing co-teaching, particularly in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades. This fall, they started co-teaching. Students are in the classroom now approximately 90% of the time. He explained the implementation, planning, scheduling, and teamwork needed. He said so far it has been good for the students and the teachers want to continue their relationships. Mr. Slenker said when co-teaching is really working, no one can tell which teacher is the general educator or which one is special. It is not team-teaching. They plan and work together and decide who is accommodating and working with the students. It is very seamless. The model keeps the students in the classes with their peers.

Ms. McGarry reviewed the students who receive special education support and said it is a diverse population in a classroom. The teachers work together to decide how to

deliver to all the students. It takes teamwork and cooperation. Mr. Mello asked if it distracts from students who do not require any services. Mr. Johnson said there is a big disconnect when students are taken out of class for services. He said all students are benefitting from the expertise of the two types of teachers – the one with the extensive curriculum delivery expertise and someone with behavioral management skills expertise. They work together to deliver a better and more inclusive plan. Mr. Slenker said at RIS, four out of eight classrooms are now co-teaching. The classroom sizes have not changed. He said planning time is difficult. Most of the services are in math and language arts.

CO-TEACHING, cont

Ms. McGarry reviewed how they will measure success and the steps being taken with the State Board of Education and Department of Education. We are being considered a pilot site. We will want to expand in the future but there are no plans right now. She said this is a successful model around the country. Ms. Hubert explained the differences in the program right now in the two elementary schools and Mr. Johnson reviewed the scheduling and planning process. Ms. Moran reviewed some of the personnel changes that had been made with Board support to accommodate this. Ms. McGarry said this is also more cost-effective. Mr. Mello urged the administrators to continue with this effort and said he thinks it is worthwhile.

Rutland Kids Garden - Ms. Moran said the Rutland Kids Garden is about to be launched on property behind the Middle School. She said it is a voluntary, community effort involving many organizations and groups. It will focus on RIS and RMS children. Volunteers have offered a backhoe and mulch. John Rice is a key component. There is an upcoming planning meeting to move it forward.

RUTLAND KIDS GARDEN

Motion by Cooke/Forshay to approve the Licensed and Non-licensed section of the Personnel Memorandum No. 401 dated March 20, 2009, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

PERSONNEL

MOTION: PERSONNEL MEMO #401

The appointments and retirement were reviewed by Superintendent Moran. They are attached.

Motion passed by all those in attendance.

BUSINESS REPORT

Health Insurance Buyout - Mr. Amons reviewed what the district pays in the health insurance buyout, which is a payout to employees. Commissioner Dress said she does not think we should be paying someone not to do something. She understands it saves the district money but she said that paying someone to do nothing grates her the wrong way. Mr. Amons said this is a common practice in governmental and non-profit organizations. It is not an employee benefit. When someone declines to take our family plan, we save \$9500, even if we are paying them \$5500 to do it. Most school districts do it. The payment was set up to be 50/50 initially but over the years, as insurance rates increased so much, the Board froze the payment at the 2006 levels. Mr. Amons said every year, approximately five to ten people drop off the buyout. As other organizations' plans become slimmer and insurance costs more in the private sector, fewer people will be taking the buyout and more will be taking the insurance. There will be an economic shift which will cost the district more. Mr. Forshay said without the buyout, costs would skyrocket in this area which would put the district at a greater financial disadvantage.

HEALTH INSURANCE BUYOUTS

HEALTH  
INSURANCE  
BUYOUTS,  
cont.

We are better off insuring fewer. Commission Fingon said this allows our employees to make the best decisions for themselves economically instead of just taking the plan. It looks like we are giving them an incentive to do nothing but we are not. Ms. Moran said employees have to verify with documentation that they have health insurance elsewhere in order to qualify. Mr. Courcelle said this is a very rich plan. Most people in the private sector cannot afford this and are paying a lot out of pocket. Mr. Forshay said this is a current discussion. The staff relations committee, through negotiations, is trying to make progress on this for the benefit for the board, district and employees. Ms. Moran said this is not part of negotiations. It is a Board policy. Mr. Amons said it was never meant to be an employee benefit.

BIDS

Asbestos Removal at Success - Mr. Rice reviewed the process and bids. The money is in the 2010 budget.

MOTION:  
ASBESTOS  
REMOVAL  
AT  
SUCCESS

Motion by Cooke/Fagan to accept the recommendation of the Director of Buildings and Grounds and accept a bid in the amount of \$11,875 from Levaggi Environmental Contracting to remove floor tile containing asbestos from the Success building.

Mr. Rice said the tile is in classrooms, the administrative offices, staging, and a few other spaces. It is not in the multi-purpose room. In-house staff will do the replacement work this summer, as well as some painting.

Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION:  
PAVING AT  
SUCCESS

Paving - Mr. Rice reviewed the process and bids. The money is in the 2009 budget.

Motion by Cooke/Fagan to accept the recommendation of the Director of Buildings and Grounds and accept a bid in the amount of \$37,469 from Springfield Paving to pave the parking lot at the Success building.

Mr. Fagan asked if there are any underground storage tanks here and Mr. Rice said there are not, but there are some large boulders. Ms. Kilic-Murray said she was concerned with the very low bid. Mr. Rice said the contractor will be watched carefully. They have met on-site and they understand the scope. They have done work for us in the past and Mr. Rice said he has checked other references. Mr. Mello said this is significantly under-budget and asked if there is other boulder work to be done. Mr. Amons said there was \$12,000 for repair of paving at the high school in next year's budget and he would like to do that work from this year's budget. Mr. Cooke asked if there is a change to grade. Mr. Rice said there will be an improvement in the drainage but the major changes in grade will not be accomplished. Mr. Rice said the bids did not include a life expectancy but they all bid on the same materials.

Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

Motion by Fagan/ Forshay to authorize John Rice to spend \$12,000 + 10% contingency, if necessary, to repair the parking lot at RHS as previously prescribed.

MOTION:  
PAVING AT  
RHS

There was discussion about this and it was decided that the work will be bid separately. The motion was withdrawn. The bids will come back to the Board for approval.

MOTION  
WITH-  
DRAWN

## Announcements

- At Northwest and Pierpoint, Friday is Crazy Shirt and Tie Day. On Tuesday, there will be Kindergarten and first grade concerts. April 2 will be Grocery Bingo pm.
- At Northeast, second graders recently enjoyed Tin Cup Adventures, a traveling museum containing artifacts of the colonial period and first graders visited Sugar and Spice to learn about maple sugaring. Spring pictures were recently held and next Tuesday, is the second of three Reading is Fundamental book distributions.
- Congratulations to Maricate Mangan, a 6th grader who represented RIS at the VT Spelling Bee contest at St. Michael's college. She came in 10<sup>th</sup> out of 45 participants across the state.
- The RIS PTC has their annual roller skating party on Saturday, PTC Family Movie Night is April 3 and the PTC Family Spring Dance is April 4.
- The RMS Drama Club presents *Twice Upon A Time* on March 31. It features the talents of many students.
- On March 27 the RMS Student Council is sponsoring a March Madness Event featuring volleyball, ping pong, a Hoop Shoot contest, karaoke and games
- Twenty-two members of the Model United Nations club at RHS just returned from the International Model UN Conference in New York City. RHS students represented North Korea and Armenia in the 5 General Assembly Main Committees, the Committee on the Status of Women, and the World Bank. Students attended a speech by the Ambassador to the UN from Israel at the UN building, debated in committee and participated in the drafting of resolutions.
- GMTI Helping Hands Carnival will be Saturday March 28<sup>th</sup>.
- Five RHS Choral Festival Club students recently sang in the 240-voice New England Music Festival Chorus in Durham, CT.
- Congratulations to the cast and crew of *Journey to the World's Edge* on their performance at Regionals on March 14. The following students were recognized for excellence in puppet making - Kelsey Soto, Jessy Wilman, and Garth Vest., for excellence in technical theatre - Conner Ritter, Hannah Mace, Jared Hall, Liam Fagan, Anna Gerretson, and Nick Strinskas, for excellence in puppetry Justin Enzor, for excellence in acting Chelsea Smith and Nick McKelvie. The play was recognized for best use of special effects and puppets.
- RHS Encore Theater will be having a fashion show on April 2.
- Ms. Moran distributed an updated legislative report and said we are being well represented in Montpelier by Mr. Fagan.
- Administrative search teams are well underway.

SUPERIN-  
TENDENT'S  
REPORT

ANNOUNCE-  
MENTS

COMM.  
REPORTS

## Policy Committee

Motion by Book/Forshay to approve the Policy 7222, Screening of New School Entrants, for second reading. Passed unanimously.

POLICY  
COMM.

Motion by Book/Kilic-Murray to approve the following policies for first reading:

7410 Conduct and Discipline

7440 Tobacco Use

7452 Interrogations

Passed unanimously.

MOTION:  
APPROVE  
POLICY 7222  
FOR 2<sup>ND</sup>  
READING

MOTION:  
APPROVE  
POLICIES  
7410, 7440,  
7452 FOR 1<sup>ST</sup>  
READING

Mr. Bliss said the Student Senate will be discussing a couple of Board policies at their next meeting.

Mr. Fagan said his son was on the UN trip. Everyone behaved themselves well. They followed through with all instructions and had a rigorous time. He said the chaperones did well.

**NEW  
BUSINESS**

**UN TRIP**

Nick Ouelette said he was on the UN trip as well. He also reported that there was a blood drive today and they exceeded expectations with donations.

**BLOOD  
DRIVE**

Motion by Fagan/Courcelle at 8:23 pm, after a recess, for the board to convene to executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel and contractual 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 9:40 pm.

Motion by Book/Forshay to adjourn at 9:51 pm. Passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC  
SESSION**

**ADJOURN**

Respectfully submitted

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Janet Mondlak  
Recording Secretary