

**RUTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS
FEBRUARY 12, 2013**

School Board Members Present:

Peter Mello
Hurley Cavacas, Jr.
Richard Courcelle
Douglas Gage (6:32 pm)
Peter Fagan (6:45 pm)
Rob Kurchena
Jamie Pemrick
Kate Thomas
Lena Cohen

Members Absent

Wayne Cooke
Erin Shimp
Rob Towle

Also Present:

Superintendent Mary Moran
Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss
John Rice
Peter Amons
Bill Olsen
Peter Miller

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. There are six Board members present which is a simple majority. The Recording Secretary is absent but she will write the minutes after watching the tape. Chair Mello noted the absence of Commissioners Shimp, Cooke, Fagan, Towle, and Gage.

Motion by Kurchena / Cavacas to accept the minutes of the Jan. 22, 2013 regular school board meeting as written. Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

Written and Oral Communications - None at this time

Budget Outreach Update - Ms. Moran said the budget FAQ sheet is enclosed. It answers most questions people have. It will be posted on the website and is being made available around the district. There was a Budget Buddies meeting today to discuss strategies and these were reviewed. Mr. Mello said the questions and answers are helpful for Board members who are often approached by the public. There will be PEGTV programming as well.

Fine Arts Report - Peter Miller presented an overview of the Fine Arts program. The department offers programming in art, music, theater and serves students in all schools. He reviewed the many capacities teachers and students participate in the arts at all levels and explained the many offerings in art, music and theater. Mr. Miller introduced Brent Barnett, music teacher at RIS, RMS and RHS. Mr. Barnett said the program has been revitalized at RHS with the number of participating students having doubled in the last few years. There is quality of performance and enthusiasm of students. A large number of students participate in district and all state festivals. Mr. Miller thanked the Board of Commissioners for their support of the Arts program in the public schools.

Commissioner Fagan said he went to a performance recently and all the groups were fabulous. He asked how people without a connection with the school can find out about performances and Mr. Miller said the district website has complete listings. Mr. Mello said the Fine Arts Department faculty and students have distinguished ourselves. It is an

**CALL TO
ORDER**

ROLL CALL

**MOTION:
MINUTES
01/22/13
MEETING**

**WRITTEN &
ORAL
COMMUN-
ICATIONS**

**EDUCATION
REPORT**

**BUDGET
OUTREACH
UPDATE**

**FINE ARTS
REPORT**

outstanding program. It was noted the Stafford Jazz offering is also part of the program.

**MIDDLE-
BURY
LANGUAGE
PROGRAM**

Middlebury Language Program - Ms. Moran said years ago there was discussion with the Middlebury Interactive Languages program but it was very expensive at that time. Now, there is an opportunity for the first 30 schools to take part in the program at a cost of \$6000 a year. Bill Olsen said the RHS World Language program can expand with this offering. It is all web-based and allows students to practice speaking, writing, grammar, and learn about culture. Teachers can keep track based on assessments. It can be done independently so, for example, the Chinese class can stand on its own. Instruction can also be blended as a supplement to what we are doing. Mr. Olsen said currently, a set of textbooks for one classroom can cost \$6000. He said the Middlebury program's cost is guaranteed for five years. The World Language department faculty is interested.

Mr. Mello asked if this would take the place of a full semester course. Mr. Olsen said for the Chinese course, it would be offered at a level of competency, not fluency. With that course, there is a connection with Middlebury teachers to help assess the students since we do not have anyone in our school who can teach Chinese. Ms. Moran said this would be offered as an elective for juniors and seniors at the beginning. Commissioner Gage asked what face time would look like and how students would be evaluated. He also asked if there are enough computers and time. Mr. Olsen explained how the course work would be handled. Some could be outside the regular school day and some could be in the classroom. With Chinese language, this would be the sole vehicle in which a student would receive instruction. Mr. Olsen said there are funds available from the School Improvement Grant to buy more laptops and computers on wheels. Mr. Olsen said inside and outside classrooms, the program can be a supplement or as an independent course such as Chinese. Mr. Mello questioned the funding and Ms. Moran said it would come out of the normal RHS budget from instructional supplies or the textbook account.

**MOTION:
MIDDLE-
BURY
LANGUAGE
PROGRAM**

Motion by Gage / Fagan to support using the Middlebury Interactive Language Program at a cost of \$6,000 as presented.

Commissioner Courcelle said this is a prerogative of the administration and does not think it should be a Board action item. He said it is detail he is not comfortable managing. He said he applauds the administration for this initiative. Mr. Mello said this is a new course and curriculum, not offered before and that is why he would like to see the Board state they would like to offer this. Mr. Courcelle said this is a different way of delivering instruction. He thinks it is fantastic and this type of instructional technology is the wave of the future but he is not comfortable voting on the instruction is delivered. Commissioner Cavacas asked if the Board approves the Program of Studies and Mr. Mello said no. Mr. Cavacas said he agrees with Mr. Courcelle and commended the administration for looking into this. Commissioner Thomas said she agrees with Mr. Courcelle that it would set a precedent if there was a vote. Commissioner Kurchena said if this supplements what we are doing or adding something new he does not think the Board needs to vote.

**MOTION:
TABLE
MOTION ON
LANGUAGE
PROGRAM**

Thomas / Fagan moved to table the motion. Passed.

Written Communication - Mr. Mello presented Commissioner Fagan with a nine years of service to the Board of School Commissioners award.

**SERVICE
AWARD
PRESENTED
TO COMM.
FAGAN**

Personnel Report - None

PERSONNEL

Business Report

Security - Mr. Rice said there has been a lot of discussion about security needs and there have been a variety of drills which have been observed and evaluated. The Police Department has been involved. He has recommendations for immediate measures which total approximately \$60,500 and recommends they be paid for by FY13 contingency funds. Mr. Rice reviewed the importance of some of the measures including visitor controls, developing digitized floor plans, engagement of a building security analysis study, and updating the public address systems in all school buildings. Mr. Amons said after these expenditures, there would remain a balance of \$67,000 left in contingency. He said he feels it should be sufficient to get to June 30. Mr. Cavacas said the Building Committee met and recommends the Board approve the expenditures. The Committee is also looking at longer term security items.

**BUSINESS
REPORT

SECURITY**

Motion by Fagan / Kurchena that the Board of School Commissioners approve charging the FY13 contingency account for expenditures of \$60,500 for security improvements including the creation of updated digitized floor plans, the engagement of a building security analysis study and the procurement and / or repair of public address systems in school buildings.

**MOTION:
APPROVE
SECURITY
EXPENDI-
TURES TO
BE
CHARGED
TO FY13
CONTIN-
GENCY**

There were Board questions and discussion with Mr. Rice about some of the measures.

Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

**WATKINS
BUILDING**

Extension date for sale of Watkins Building - Mr. Amons said the Purchase and Sales with the Housing Trust of Rutland County agreement expired on December 1, 2012 and they have asked for an extension through August 31, 2013. He said the Housing Trust continues their work on zoning, applying for tax credits, and looking into a brownfields grant. Mr. Cavacas said the Building Committee met and supports the extension.

Motion by Gage / Pemrick for the Rutland City Board of School Commissioners authorize the Superintendent to sign a second amendment to extend the Purchase and Sales Agreement with the Housing Trust of Rutland County, Inc. for the Watkins Avenue property, as presented. Passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

**MOTION:
EXTENSION
DATE FOR
SALE OF
WATKINS
BUILDING**

Extension of Dana Listing Agreement - Mr. Cavacas said the building has been on the market and there is now potential interest. The Building Committee recommends an extension on the listing agreement until April 30, 2013.

**DANA
BUILDING**

Motion by Fagan / Pemrick that the Rutland City Public Schools extend the sales listing agreement between Chris Fucci Associates, LTD and Rutland City Public Schools for the sale of the former Dana School until April 30, 2013. Passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

**MOTION:
EXTENSION
OF SALES
LISTING
FOR DANA
LISTING**

Legal organization of RPS Boosters Club and RPS Foundation - Ms. Moran said this action is to support the creation of RPS Boosters Club so they can become a 501C3 organization, which will help personal and corporate donors. There will still be a strong relationship between Boosters and City Schools.

LEGAL
ORGANI-
ZATION OF
RPS
BOOSTERS
AND RPS
FOUNDA-
TION

The creation of the Rutland Public School Foundation would be to receive gifts of scholarships and bequeathments. She said once the final legal opinion is received it will come back to the Board. There were questions and discussion on some of the details.

SUPERIN-
TENDENT'S
REPORT

Superintendent's Report Announcements

ANNOUNCE-
MENTS

- Lena Cohen said this is the last week of school before February vacation. There are final projects and tests. There have been Valentines Day fundraisers. The Key Club delivered pillows and blankets they made to the Pines residents. Last night was the RHS and MSJ game. Lena and Christina Lovett have been working on a presentation to deliver to the whole school about school wide rubrics. Ms. Moran asked for the presentation to be made to the Board as well. Mr. Cavacas said there is an upcoming blood drive competition between RHS and Fair Haven.
- Northwest Primary School Therapy Dogs will be with grade 2 on Friday. This Friday is Science Fair Day at NW school. Successful STAR student skating trip at Spartan Arena yesterday. Thanks to Dirk Steupert and RHS hockey players for their help.
- RIS annual Spelling Bee was recently held under the direction of Mrs. Lorriane Bargmann-Metz. Over 100 students tried out for the Bee before it was narrowed down to 30 students. Grade 4 student Billy Latkin from Mrs. Candon's class was the winner.
- The RMS Math League Team of Nova Wang, Phoebe Sargeant, Cameron Clark and Emily Wight placed 4th out of 15 teams in the regional competition last month. They are confident that their high score will make them eligible for the state competition which takes place in mid-March.
- The RMS Cheerleaders placed first in their category and won the grand prize for the highest score in the statewide competition that took place last Saturday at Keefe Gym. It was Darwin Day at RMS on Feb. 11. Visiting scholars spent time with each core team discussing Darwin's theories. This special visit was made possible by a grant submitted by the middle school's 2013 Darwin Day Scholar, RMS Science teacher Ms. McKeen.
- Congratulations to Josh Wight, Cameron Pierce, and Dylan Conboy, RHS National Merit Scholarship Finalists. These students are members of a group of 15,000 finalists recognized around the country. They have the opportunity to earn National Merit Scholarships at the end of the school year.
- Stafford Technical Center is holding its second annual Winter Carnival at Pico Mountain Resort, February 14th. All students from Stafford will be bused to the mountain and will spend the day learning to ski, snowboard or snowshoe. Students are given all equipment, a lesson and lift pass for the day at a very reduced rate. Thanks to the hard work of the staff at Pico mountain resort and to Stafford's English Teacher Melissa Paterson, this event has been made possible.
- RHS Graduation is set for Thursday, June 13.

Legislative Report - Ms. Moran said the Southwest Superintendent's Association met yesterday and there was a terrific meeting with Senators and Legislators. Discussion on many ongoing legislative issues.

**LEGISLATIVE
REPORT**

Building Committee - Mr. Cavacas said the Building Committee has been talking about safety planning. There will be a report in executive session. It has been a lot of work for Mr. Rice and his department. They are doing long range planning looking at a multi-year plan on safety, maintenance and upgrades, possibly looking at a bond in the next year or two. Things have gone well during drills, which included Rutland City and State Police.

**COMM.
REPORTS**

**BUILDING
COMM.**

New Business - Ms. Moran distributed VSBA packets of about World Class Education to Board members.

**NEW & OLD
BUSINESS**

Old Business - None

**MOTION:
EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

Motion by Thomas / Fagan at 7:48 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.

**PUBLIC
SESSION**

The Board came out of executive session at 8:20 pm.

ADJOURN

Motion by Fagan / Thomas to adjourn at 8:20 pm. Passed.

Respectfully submitted

Janet Mondlak
Recording Secretary