

RUTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS

October 13, 2020

School Board Members Present:

Alison Notte, President
Joanne Pencak, Clerk (6:56 pm)
Brittany Cavacas
Hurley Cavacas, Jr.
Ann Dages
Dena Goldberg
Kevin Kiefaber
Matthew Olewnik
Charlene Seward
Erin Shimp
Cathy Solsaa
Hannah Solimano, Student Representative
Isabella LaFemina, Student Representative
(6:46 pm)

Also Present:

Superintendent Bill Olsen
Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss
Director of Finance Ted Plemenos
Director of Technology Patricia Aigner
Director of Equity & Inclusion Pam Reed
Director of BG&T Michael Derevjanik
Executive Director Tapestry & EPIC Marie Gilmond
Carol Baker, Pati Beaumont, Kate Bosnich
Kerry Coarse, Melissa Connor, Scott Corbett
Susanne Engels, Cathy Farman
Jessica Henderson, Meaghan Marsh
Bianca McKeen, Sharon Napolitano
Loren Pepe, Justine Ruhlin, Steve Sampson,
Greg Schillinger, Erica Wallstrom, Jennifer
Wigmore

President Notte called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. She noted all commissioners are in attendance except for Commissioner Pencak (6:56 pm.)

**CALL TO
ORDER**

Approval of the Agenda - Motion by Cavacas (Hurley)/Cavacas (Brittany) to take the Mascot Discussion (7 – A. *Board Discussion on School Symbols*) off the agenda, postpone the discussion for a future agenda and discuss in executive session with legal counsel.

**MOTION:
AMEND
AGENDA**

Vote by Roll Call: Cavacas (Brittany) – Yes, Cavacas (Hurley) – Yes, Dages – Yes, Goldberg – Yes, Kiefaber – No, Olwenik – No, Seward – Yes, Shimp – Yes, Solsaa – No.

Motion carried 6-3.

Motion by Cavacas (Hurley)/Cavacas (Brittany) to approve the consent agenda which includes:

**MOTION:
CONSENT
AGENDA**

- Minutes of Previous Meeting
- Personnel Memorandum #614 (Attached)
- Approval of Technology Purchases (Attached)
- Second Reading Policies:
 - Policy 3140 Flagpole Use and Display Policy
 - Policy 7700 District Equity Policy

Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

Superintendent Olsen commented on Personnel Memorandum #614, recognizing Michael Derevjanik for his service to the District, noting his exemplary work with the RHS Library renovation, building operations and energy efficiency projects. A search team for Michael's replacement, led by Assistant Superintendent Bliss, will be organized.

Communication – Public Input:

**PUBLIC
COMMENT**

- Kim Peters, Superintendent, Department of Recreation and Parks spoke regarding past, current and future programs, collaboration and community events at the former CSJ Athletic Complex including: basketball, summer programs, high school remote learning hybrid location, adult leagues, tag sales, flu shot clinics and announced upcoming, week long, safe Halloween events for families to be hosted at the Complex. Assistant Superintendent Bliss, Superintendent Olsen and Greg Schillinger echoed that the Complex has become a hub of the community.
- Stephanie Stoodley, Rutland City (Parent of 2 RHS Students) asked the Board: What is the Policy on District Employees and Social Media and are their ramifications for employees who post personal political views? What are the results of the opinion poll of the current student body related to the mascot and name change? President Notte noted that all policies are available online and suggested that Ms. Stoodley contact the appropriate building director or principal. Her second question was not addressed as public comment is for bringing up issues and is not for debate or exchange.

School/Program Updates – Student Representatives’ Report – RIS held their first virtual assembly on fairness and resiliency as well as a successful Open House. Northeast and Northwest will be celebrating Red Ribbon Week October 26-30, 2020. Northwest held their first Hero Assembly virtually. Both Northwest and Northeast will be holding Parent Teacher Conferences virtually. (*Student Representatives’ Report was continued later in the meeting, due to technical issues.)

**STUDENT
REPS’
REPORT**

Tapestry/Epic Program Updates – Marie Gilmond, Executive Director, Tapestry and EPIC reviewed the programs including their purpose, history, financial support, procedures, standards, confidentiality, assessment, after school licensing regulations and COVID Guidance and impact. She reviewed enrollment, which continued to go up at each site during the first few weeks. Most sites now have small wait lists (some are age specific.) She estimated that enrollment is at 70% of where we would like. Greater Rutland is at maximum capacity due to available staffing. Superintendent Olsen commended Ms. Gilmond for her work. Commissioner Kiefaber noted the programs are a valuable asset to the community.

**TAPESTRY &
EPIC
PROGRAM
UPDATE**

Enrollment Analysis – Superintendent Olsen reviewed the annual enrollment analysis noting that there is nothing new or unique to Vermont. District enrollment peaked in 2000-2001 and there has been a slow, steady, continued decline (2% average annually.) The budget planning process going forward is for Administration to look at staffing to match enrollment, meet student needs, strengthen what we have to offer and be fiscally responsible. Discussion revolved around impact on area home sales and enrollment and increase in home schooling (Assistant Superintendent Bliss noted: from the AOE Weekly Report, that there are 21 additional requests for home schooling compared to last year.) Discussion continued related to the difference in projected and actual enrollment, the process for projecting enrollment and new students entering the District.

**ENROLL-
MENT
REPORT**

*Student Representatives’ Report – Continued – RMS has had few issues related to wearing masks during the first 5 weeks of school. Social distancing is challenging, but they are making it work. Parent Teacher Conferences are upcoming and students will be sharing their identity projects and personal interest projects with families. Recreation Department outdoor trails were cleaned up as part of the Bridges Program. A virtual integration for student collaboration took place in which students tested model drones to deliver fragile objects.

***STUDENT
REPS’
REPORT
(CONT.)**

School Choice Report – Steve Sampson – provided an overview of the School Choice Program, noting inclusions in the Board information packets: outline, advertisement, application dates and a participation list of incoming and outgoing students. He thanked Cherie Bizzarro for redacting the names on the list for confidentiality. Currently, 40 students are allowed in and 40 students are allowed out. January 4th – February 26th are anticipated dates for the School Choice application process. Twelve openings for incoming school choice students are anticipated (because there are currently 12 seniors.) Current School Choice in Students: 12 seniors, 13 juniors, 8 sophomores and 7 freshmen. Current School Choice Out Students: 5 seniors, 3 juniors, 5 sophomores and 1 freshman. Superintendent Olsen reminded the Board of the schedule for setting limits at the January meeting.

**SCHOOL
CHOICE
REPORT**

Central Office Reports – Superintendent’s Report – Superintendent Olsen thanked the community, students, staff and families for a successful 5 weeks of school and asked for continued attention to following health guidelines. He spoke to the passing of Act 154 and noted related Federal money to flow into schools, ADM to be no lower than last year and 5 less student attendance days required. Two hours ago, he received notification via email from the AOE that the Department of Agriculture will allow for free meals for students, K-12, through the end of the school year. Details will be worked out with Food Service. He called on Steve Sampson to speak about a High Reliability School Program based out of Colorado. Under Steve’s leadership RHS has achieved the second level (Safe and Collaborative Culture and Solid Instruction) in this program. The Committee meets monthly and is now focusing on guaranteed and viable curriculum. The hope is to complete the process by the end of the school year. Administration is discussing using this process K-12.

**SUPERINTEN-
DENT’S
REPORT**

Budget Planning Overview – Director of Finance, Ted Plemenos, advised that the District is on track with FY22 budget preparation. Leadership has been conducting meetings with principals and directors. The Business Office Team is progressing with estimating revenues and expenses. A preliminary budget review is anticipated with the Superintendent and Finance and Planning Committee in early November. He recommends a special meeting for budget review for the full Board in December. A potential follow-up meeting could take place before winter recess if additional analysis or revised scenarios are required. The final budget is to be approved on January 12, 2020.

**BUDGET
PLANNING
OVERVIEW**

Committee Reports – Finance/Planning Committee Report – Chair Pencak noted that President Notte has agreed to a special meeting for budget review.

**COMMITTEE
REPORTS:**

**FINANCE &
PLANNING**

Policy Committee Report – Chair Olewnik advised of a policy required by VSBA (Electronic Communications Between Employees and Students.)

POLICY

Motion by Cavacas (Hurley)/Goldberg to accept Policy #8251 (Electronic Communications Between Employees and Students) for first reading.

**MOTION:
POLICY #8251**

Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

Chair Olewnik noted Committee work on a policy, required by VSBA, related to Title 9. Legal counsel is currently reviewing. The Committee is currently working on a review of updating policies (every 3 years.)

Staff Relations – Chair Goldberg advised that initial phases of communications/negotiations are moving forward with each bargaining unit. More to come later this month.

**STAFF
RELATIONS**

Old and New Business – VSBA Annual Meeting Delegate and Alternate

**OLD/NEW
BUSINESS**

Motion by Pencak/Olewnik to appoint Commissioner Notte as the VSBA Annual Meeting Delegate with Commissioner Dages as the Alternate Delegate.

**MOTION:
VSBA
DELEGATE &
ALTERNATE**

Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

Motion by Pencak/Kiefaber at 7:49 pm that the Rutland City Board of School Commissioners enter into an executive session with Superintendent Olsen, Assistant Superintendent Bliss, Director of Finance Ted Plemenos for the purposes of discussing contractual items the general public knowledge of it which would clearly place the Board at a substantial disadvantage.

**MOTION:
EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

The Board came out of executive session at 8:02 pm.

**OUT OF
EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

Motion by Cavacas (Hurley)/Goldberg to adjourn at 8:03 pm. Passed.

ADJOURN

Respectfully Submitted,
Betty Kapitan, Recording Secretary