

LITCHFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 6, 2013

A regular meeting of the Litchfield Board of Education was held on Wednesday, November 6, 2013, at Litchfield High School Library/Media Center.

Present were: Mr. Simone, Chairperson; Ms. Carr; Ms. Fabbri; Ms. Rosser; Messrs. Bongiorno, Falcetti, Katzin, Shuhi and Waugh.

Also present were: Dr. Wheeler; Mr. Lathrop, Mr. Zaremski; Ms. Della Volpe; Ms. Murphy; Ms. Turner; Ms. Kubisek; and members of the public.

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Ms. Fabbri: to add to the agenda an Executive Session to discuss negotiations.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

Litchfield Students Excel Through Wamogo Agriscience

Mr. Rowland and Mr. Harran introduced Abby Hutton; Mandy Hutton; and Bailey Fisher presented information about the Agriscience program including: Overview of program; courses of study in Veterinary Services; Animal Science; Natural Resources; Plant Science; Mechanics; FFA Events; SAE Supervised Agriculture Experience; Personal Student Experience; Wamogo FFA 2013 Highlights; Leadership Opportunities; and Agriculture Education Advisory.

Board members discussed the following: supervision; degree/diploma; hours in school needed; job administration; college credits; UConn credits.

Mr. Simone presented Mr. Katzin with a gift from the Board and thanked him for the many years of dedicated service to the Board.

Mr. Katzin thanked the Board for being part of his 14 years of service and thanked the administration and staff for their constant dedication and professionalism citing: Ms. Murphy, principal at the L.I.S. for her quiet demeanor and effective communication. He shared concerns about buying software for administration that was not requested; need to buy books; and eliminating programs because Board members thought a program was not being taught well.

Refreshments were served.

Approve Minutes

MOTION made by Mr. Shuhi and seconded by Mr. Falcetti: to approve the minutes of Special meeting October 15, 2013 with the following corrections: on page 3182 the open session resumed should read “10:26 p.m.” and the second motion should say “Mr.” and not “Ms.”

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. Ms. Carr and Mr. Waugh abstained.

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mr. Bongiorno: to approve the minutes of the regular meeting October 16, 2013 with the following correction on 3185 under Dr. Wheeler public comment correct “ande” to “and.”

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mr. Falcetti: to approve the minutes of the special meeting October 24, 2013 as submitted.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. Ms. Rosser; Mr. Bongiorno and Mr. Shuhi abstained.

Approve Payment of Invoices

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mr. Bongiorno: to approve payment of Accounts Payable invoices for 2013-2014 as required.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. Mr. Simone abstained.

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mr. Bongiorno: to approve the payment of Food Services invoices for 2013-2014 as required.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

Public Comment and Correspondence

- a. STPC – Ms. Fabbri reported: next meeting December 2nd at 7 p.m. in the L.H.S. library to discuss basketball concession stand fund raiser.

- PTO – Mr. Zappone reported: successful fall festival; 651 attended; \$4,439 raised; reading calendar in place; Nov. 16 – father-daughter dance; and initiative for teachers and programs.
- b. LHS Student Council – Natalie Wihbey reported on the Student Council activities at the LHS.
 - c. Public Comment
 - Ms. Wilson commented on student safety in schools.
 - Dr. Wheeler commented that school safety issues will be discussed at the FFT meeting at L.I.S. at 6:30 p.m. on November 18.
 - Ms. Buzzuto commented on drug issues at L.H.S.
 - Ms. Garden commented on drug issues at L.H.S.
 - d. Correspondence
 - A copy of Education Connection Annual Report.
 - CAFE new Board members workshop.
 - Letter from Meredith Shafer regarding drug/alcohol prevention program.
 - Letter from Donna Winn regarding loss of family member due to drugs.
 - Letter from Bill Burgess regarding Wellness Policy.
 - e. Administrators' Report
 - Ms. Turner reported: Veterans' Day Program on Friday at 10:15; successful Parent Conferences; family costume party; PTO training for literacy program started today.
 - Dr. Wheeler reported: C.S. host for Plymouth schools for writing workshops; K-4 with 34 attending; collaboration with other districts; PD for teachers; and CC in action.
 - Ms. Della Volpe on behalf of the L.A.A. thanked Mr. Katzin for his time on the Board and his participation in HoWiERoll band; began self-study at L.H.S.; adhering to NEASC requirements; and parent participation needed.
 - Ms. Murphy reported: Veterans' Day Celebration scheduled; hosting vets; and Tuesday before Thanksgiving annual McCormick mile run at 2:15 p.m.

Superintendent's Report

a. Resignations

Dr. Wheeler informed the BOE, with deepest regret, of Mr. Zaremski's intent to retire after 34 successful years. He is recognized in other districts and across the state by colleagues; and esteemed by parents and colleagues in the district.

MOTION made by Ms. Fabbri and seconded by Mr. Falcetti: to accept with deep regret the resignation for retirement of Gary Zaremski at the end of this school year, June 2014.

Board members discussed: personal experience with child's needs; first class professional; thought of highly by many and thanks for all the good work he has done for the

school and the students.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mr. Bongiorno: to accept the resignation of sixth grade teacher, Heidi Lechich at the end of the school year, June 2014.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

- b. Prevention Council Update – met October 21; problem community-wide and the school need to play a role in any town initiative; Housatonic Valley Coalition on Substance Abuse program; survey for the system; student interests and attitudes; developmental aspects; parental concerns; request parental vetting of survey; preview and opt out option for parents; need to make sure everyone is comfortable with the process.

Board members discussed: guarantee of anonymity; survey last year on school climate; how survey administered; detailed and specific; attitudes in district; not for LIS; for grades 7-12; how address below 7th grade; parental options needed; setting for survey; possibly school day; safeguards used; done by pen and paper; health and wellness curriculum; school climate issues; community responsibility; possible fiber optic connection to Troop L; parent and adult survey; possible satellite office space for officer; and presence on campus.

- c. Use of Dogs in School

MOTION made by Mr. Waugh and seconded by Mr. Bongiorno: to allow confidential document from Board Council to become public.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

Dr. Wheeler reviewed the highlights of the opinion document from Attorney Dorsey including: legal to use; risks associated with dog searches; from Litchfield Police officers; lockers, hallways, during class time; limited to school property; not to search persons; 4th amendment protects people not places; CT General Statutes; justified at inception; reasonable suspicion; canine sniff is search; our Board policy; no mandate to notify police for drug possession; dogs extend to school property and not students; have agreement with police department before search; guidance from the Board.

Board members discussed: implementation of DARE program that does not have proven results; effective parenting; dogs keep substances out of schools; education needed; social consequences; dogs identify substances; deterrent for students to bring to school; need school

safe for kids; need to do it soon; need to get help for students; need to have police in place for support as needed; expulsion issues; shock value of dogs; resident officer in school is needed; networking; need follow up solution; need for School Resource Officer; constitutional situations challenged; if carrying on student, then dogs don't get access to drugs; potential for large failure; students locked in classroom while dogs search; possible climate of fear and distrust between students and teachers; alienate kids; need for more positive environment; possible other methods tried first; undermining community; system in place to support students; input comes from students to administrators; would appreciate steps taken for their safety; will build trust and not alienate; \$30,000 for SRO; dogs support resource officer; proved effective; possible DARE program or something similar; involvement from Rep. Miner; possible state funding level; SRO takes care of kids with problems; intervention and addressing the problem; validate student concerns; SRO positive environment; DARE can be ineffective; possible speaker program might work; need to put in hands of students; need to take pressure off kids who come forward; and need to bring forward judicious use of dogs and develop SRO program; need to look at various programs; possible sharing of resources with other district; money in student activity account; reasonable suspicion; input from administrators; Resource officer can deal with bullying issues; prevent fights; previous SRO shared with Region 6; dogs not only answer; curriculum changes; athletic programs; speakers; students spend 13% of day with us; problem bigger than just the schools.

New Business

- a. Section 218 Resolution – FF&T discussed pros and cons; implementation to cost saving measures; S.S. program; allow to opt out; all new employees will enroll; \$10,000 savings for Board and employee.

MOTION made by Mr. Waugh and seconded by Ms. Carr: to enter into a professional services agreement with Precision Retirement Group in the amount of \$660 for the implementation of a FICA alternative plan.

Board members discussed: town made decision that gave municipalities the right to do this; government program; grandfather of current people; manage funds; 403B provider; explore options and investment option choices.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

MOTION made by Mr. Waugh and seconded by Mr. Falcetti: to authorize the Superintendent of the Board to negotiate the terms and execute the 3121 FICA Alternative Plan and Trust Administrative Services Agreement Service Agreement with Pelion Benefits Inc.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

- b. Budget Development Calendar - Mr. Lathrop reviewed the Calendar timeline document and discussed: January and February schedule; and tight timeline.

Board members discussed: Board of Finance schedules; last years' experience; concerns about timing before the town meeting; duties of Finance Committee; need to have more Committee work before it comes to the Board; need for Superintendent to reflect thoughts to entire Board not just Finance Committee; need to resolve conflict; need to keep with policy; capital timeline; meet with Jack Healy; prioritize; discuss with FF&T at next meeting.

Mr. Lathrop reported: copier bid for schools; completed bid package.

Committee Reports

Curriculum, Programs and Personnel - Ms. Fabbri reported that the committee will meet next Thursday the 14th.

Facilities, Finance and Technology - Mr. Shuhi reported that the committee met on the 25th and discussed: update on lights; internet filtering; new filter appliance; internet traffic; 218 plan; expenditure reports; budget; capital; food service; \$37,000 potential loss; future agenda item-proper procedure for purchases example laptops; Mr. Tofuri to update the Board every quarter; and cell phone use benefits and risk.

Policy - Ms. Carr reported that the committee will meet on the 21st and will discuss the laptop policy and item d is off the agenda for this evening.

Policies

- a. Review – Policy # 5137.1 Participation in Extracurricular Activities.
- b. First Reading – Policy # 4131 Professional Development – no changes made. Return to BOE for second reading at next regular meeting.
- c. First Reading – Policy # 6180.1 Student Wellness, Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy – remove footnote and return to BOE for second reading at next regular meeting.
- d. Bylaw #9500 Philosophy and Bylaws of the Board of Education – tabled. Will return to Committee for further review.
- e. Second Reading – Policy # 5131.81 Personal Cell Phones.

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mr. Waugh: to accept Policy # 5131.81 Personal Cell Phones as amended.

MOTION failed. Ms. Carr, Ms. Rosser, Mr. Katzin and Mr. Waugh voted in the affirmative. Mr. Bongiorno, Mr. Falcetti, Mr. Shuhi and Mr. Simone voted in the negative. Ms. Fabbri abstained.

f. Second Reading- Policy # 5132 Dress and Grooming.

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mr. Katzin: to approve Policy # 5132 Dress and Grooming as amended.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

Reminder that Board meetings scheduled on November 20th and December 18th will not be broadcast live.

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mr. Waugh: to move to Executive Session to discuss Negotiations.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

Executive Session to discuss negotiations.

Present were: Mr. Simone, Chairperson; Ms. Carr; Ms. Fabbri; Ms. Rosser; Messrs. Bongiorno, Falcetti, Katzin, Shuhi and Waugh.

Dr. Wheeler was invited to attend.

Open session resumed at 10:07 p.m.

No action was taken.

MOTION made by Mr. Falcetti and seconded by Ms. Carr: to adjourn the meeting at 10:09 p.m.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

Respectfully submitted,
Donald Falcetti, Secretary
Joanne Bertrand, Recording Secretary