

**RUTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS  
SEPTEMBER 8, 2009**

**School Board Members Present:**

Peter Mello  
Christopher Book  
Hurley Cavacas, Jr.  
Wayne Cooke  
Richard Courcelle  
Roberta Dress  
Peter Fagan  
Collin Fingon  
Cindy Kilic-Murray  
Rob Towle

**Members Absent**

Peter Forshay  
Daniel Wigmore

**Also Present:**

Superintendent Mary Moran  
Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss  
Peter Amons  
Wil Cunningham  
Lyle Jepson  
Ellie McGarry  
Bill Olsen  
Patricia Aigner  
Jay Slenker  
Glenn Olson  
Kristen Hubert  
Susanne Engels

Motion by Kilic-Murray/Book 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 Forshay and Student Representative Daniel Wigmore

**MOTION:  
MINUTES  
8/25/09  
MEETING**

Motion by Kilic-Murray/Towle to accept the minutes of the Aug. 25, 2009 regular school board meeting as written. Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

**WRITTEN  
COMMUN-  
ICATION**

Written Communication - Clerk Courcelle read a letter of thanks to the school board from the Sherman family for the donation to the Amyloidosis Research Foundation in memory of Madeline Sherman.

**LETTER OF  
THANKS**

Oral Communication - None

**ORAL  
COMMUN-  
ICATION**

ARRA Funds Discussion - Superintendent Moran said this is a follow up to the request to consider allowing RCPS to purchase the Learning Lab for up to \$265,000 with IDEA-B ARRA Funds. Mr. Amons said the federal stimulus program to Rutland City is worth about \$1.7 million. We have to apply for the money and we have to use it within their guidelines. There is \$1 million in Title I money and \$700,000 in IDEA-B monies, which are overseen by Ms. McGarry. He explained two spreadsheets showing a tentative plan. Ms. McGarry said we amended the grant application because of playground money needed at Pierpoint and that is waiting for approval.

**EDUCATION  
REPORT**

**ARRA  
FUNDS  
DISCUSSION**

Ms. McGarry said we would like to purchase the Stratton Road property. She included

in the packet an explanation to the State about the Learning Lab and the financial ramifications. There has been discussion about elevator repairs / replacements at RIS / RMS and that is awaiting an estimate. Another possibility discussed is a van purchase for Success. Ms. McGarry said they take a lot trips for outdoor adventure programs and transportation has been a challenge. She also explained the cost associated with a Speech Language Pathologist we hired on a contract through a staffing agency. This is a two year proposal – a time-limited position, which is one of the intents of the funds. It costs us about \$15,000-20,000 a year to use a staffing company. Ms. Moran said she knows of two people who are working on their Masters and licensure to practice SLP in the schools.

There was discussion on the numbers and a proposed balance of \$56,000 over two years. Ms. McGarry said she has asked the buildings to project what they might need for students and ideas are being submitted. Mr. Rice is getting elevator advice on repair and / or replacement. The administration is looking for board opinion tonight relative to the allocation.

Ms. Moran said at the last meeting, Commissioner Book had said that he had asked about buying the Stratton Road house in the beginning but was told it was not a good idea then. Mr. Amons explained that last year we could have bought the house but there would not have been state or federal money for it. Now, there is 100% aid for it. It changes the dynamics of owning or renting. Mr. Book asked about the assessment. Commissioner Kilic-Murray said she guesses about \$115,000-116,000. Mr. Fingon said it is commercial and different than residential. Ms. Moran said we need to find out. Mr. Amons said the owner bought it for \$105,000 out of foreclosure and put over \$100,000 into it to meet our specifications. We have a ten year lease. In order to buy it, we would have to put the proposal out to bid and we would need three qualified bidders. The owners of the Stratton Road property would be able to bid. Mr. Amons said that Mr. Rice has expressed he does not think anyone could come up with a property like this in close proximity to the school for less than \$265,000.

Commissioner Courcelle said philosophically, he is struggling with the issue of using ARRA funds and also taking the building off the tax rolls. However, he sees the benefit to the school district. Mr. Mello said the schools are buildings not on the tax rolls. This is a school building we have created to our specs for a certain population. Ms. McGarry says we will always have the students to fit into a program in this building. It becomes another school building as opposed to purchasing a house. Commissioner Cavacas asked if the building would still meet our needs in ten years and Ms. McGarry said it should continue to serve our needs, knowing who is in our lower grades now.

Commissioner Fingon said economically it is a smart thing to do. We would be purchasing the building with US taxpayer dollars instead of just spending Rutland City and State of Vermont taxpayer funds. He said if we do not take that money, someone else will. He sees the only other option purchasing another building at a lower cost and having STC students do the modifications. Commissioner Towle said if we find another property, we still have the ten year lease on this building. Mr. Amons explained the business model of the owners of the Stratton Road building – they buy, renovate and lease. They have agreed to be flexible with us because we are the school district.

Commissioner Cooke asked if the building could be expanded if needed or if it is up against the property lines. The building committee has discussed the proposal and also the Success school. He asked if any money might be available for that building. Ms. Moran said the summer work done at Success is good. The gym still needs work. Commissioner Fagan asked if the Stratton Road property abuts the high school and if the access into the property could be changed. Ms. Moran said the lot lines on the sides are tight. The backyard leads into our property. There is a culvert that needs to be built up. We do not yet know if the property could be expanded. Mr. Fingon said we are already using the building and under lease for ten years. We are going to spend \$265,000 in ten years, no matter what. He recommends we purchase it with the opportunity we have to use these funds. Mr. Amons said the state has approved this as far as meeting their needs. The Federal officials need to approve it still.

Mr. Mello said the second part of the proposal was Title I. Mr. Bliss said we got some guidance on the use of the Title I ARRA funds. The funds need to be used over 27 months and he explained the proposal. The goal is to make sustainable investments to improve the schools and teaching and hopefully attain higher student achievement. Mr. Bliss said one of the proposals is to fill the network administration and supervisor position with these funds. It would be a two year position and after that time the Board could determine if they want to support the position or not. He reviewed other ideas. Ms. Moran said the positions mentioned would all be time-limited in terms of the funds and the people would be hired and contracted as such. Mr. Bliss said we will receive a flat amount of money – \$1 million to be used over 27 months.

There was board discussion about the proposal:

- Why are the reading and math tutors proposed for only 18 weeks and not full year? Mr. Bliss said the model they are now using is six week segments. Perhaps it could be adjusted to avoid the gaps.
- It seems like we are supplanting some services versus using the money for professional development which improves skills. If we use the money to supplant, once the funds are gone, we might be in a position where “we can’t stop the programs.” Mr. Bliss said we are allowed to enhance what we are doing, for example we may want to enhance the after school academies. At the end of the two years, we will need to address that. The other concept is “maintenance of effort” which is allowable in the event that local funds cannot maintain what we have been doing. The funds will go away in 27 months. Ms. Moran said the “maintenance of effort” funds are supposed to keep people working and to avoid lay-offs.
- Professional development is an investment. For example, we invested in Wilson Reading a few years ago. Is there money for specific training now? Mr. Bliss said we have done a pre-K - 6 framework of literacy and we will amplify those efforts in the middle and high schools.
- What about technology, like smart boards? Ms. Moran said they are in the plan. Mr. Bliss said the \$19,500 is a specific investment in technology at the Howe Center. Regarding smart technology, we have a school wide plan but we cannot overwhelm our capacity to upgrade effectively.
- Are the students doing the same things in the after school academy than they do at Tapestry? Can they conjoin? Mr. Bliss said structurally we already do that. If these investments are good, that is where the finances are headed. Diana

Pfenning of the Tapestry program will be working on measures using new software to monitor student data.

ARRA  
FUNDS  
DISC., cont.

- The proposed school psychologist is following the RTI model currently getting up and running in grades K-2 and this would expand it 3-6.

Ms. Moran said the proposed personnel additions would be the software / network administrator, the SLP, and the psychologist. These people would be hired with clear time-limited parameters. There was consensus from board members to pursue these proposals.

H1N1 Update - Mr. Mello said there is no new news. Ms. Moran said we are working with the nursing staff and following communication from the Departments of Health and Education. There is information on the school's web page.

H1N1  
UPDATE

Draft Board Calendar for 2009-2010 - Ms. Kilic-Murray noted a typographical error on the Sept 22 meeting. She also said that the budget is proposed to be ratified by December 15. She said it is a busy time. Budget buddies began in January. It is hard to get people involved in November and December. Ms. Moran said the timeline for the budget preparation worked well last year. Mr. Mello said it is smart to start it up as early as possible. Ms. Kilic-Murray agreed to head up the committee. Ms. Dress will also help out and others will be recruited. Mr. Courcelle said his preference is to defer the book discussion until later in the school year. He prefers to concentrate on the budget in the upcoming months. Mr. Mello said throughout the meetings, he wants to make sure we reflect on items that came up at the retreat. Tonight's communication planning discussion came from the retreat. Board members have said they would like another retreat scheduled for January. Mr. Cooke said he would like the budget presented to show percentage to percentage. This will be discussed with Mr. Amons. Mr. Fagan said he wants to see a discussion, perhaps in May, on action plan results.

DRAFT  
BOARD  
CALENDAR  
FOR 2009-  
2010

Board Communication Planning Discussion - The Board discussed ideas.

- Keep providing ways for people to ask the board questions.
- Offer more open forums and try harder to get people to show up.
- The Budget Buddies was very good.
- Show student presentations.
- Ask the Rutland Herald to have newspaper coverage showing what is going to be on the board agenda before each meeting.
- Continue to post minutes and agendas on the web.
- The administrative leadership team has the PEG-TV show and that schedule will be published. Encourage board members and interested citizens to contribute.
- Send home information from the leadership team, perhaps some board topics.
- Infinite Campus, a parent portal software, will be up and running in January. It will be very interactive. Can we include an Ask the Principal or Superintendent section? That can be added to the website.
- Perhaps a school wide Facebook application.
- Ms. Moran said teachers are learning up to four new significant programs this year and there are "wiki" groups being used for team members to communicate with each other. Students are using these applications and staff needs to also.

BOARD  
COMMUNI-  
CATION  
PLANNING  
DISCUSSION

Motion by Fagan / Cavacas to approve the Licensed and Non-licensed section of the Personnel Memorandum No. 409 dated September 4, 2009, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

**PERSONNEL**

**MOTION:  
PERSONNEL  
MEMO #409**

The family medical leave and the co-curricular advisors 2009-2010 were reviewed by Superintendent Moran. They are attached.

Motion passed by all those in attendance.

**MOTION:  
APPROVE  
EMPLOY-  
MENT  
CONTRACT  
FOR ELOISE  
MCGARRY**

Eloise McGarry Employment Contract

Motion by Dress / Fingon to approve the employment contract between Eloise McGarry and the Rutland City Public Schools from July 1, 2009 ending June 30, 2011 as presented.

**BUSINESS  
REPORET**

Business Report - None

**SUPERIN-  
TENDENT'S  
REPORT**

Announcements

**ANNOUNCE-  
MENTS**

- School open houses are upcoming.
- We are proud of Dr. Kerrie Wright for successfully defending her dissertation.
- The Northeast fall spruce up date was successful with volunteers pruning, mulching, weeding, working the nature pond, etc. The PTC meeting is Sept 14. Family Fun Saturday is on Sept. 9 with a magician and songwriter.
- Northwest students in grades 1-2 will go to the fair on Sept 10. Kid Community Meetings will begin soon with the theme "Personal Power."
- RMS picture day is Sept. 16.
- At RHS, the Tutorial / Study Assistance Program recently began. It is a proactive approach developed through a collaborative effort with staff to increase the likelihood that students succeed academically if they are having trouble meeting standards.
- Also at RHS, the GMTI Mentor Program was a success. Freshman orientation was terrific. Freshmen are connected with upper classmen. The Key Club will meet this Wed. They are involved with RHS graduate Andy Cunningham, one of the founders of the Wisser School in W. Africa. Andy will be visiting Sept. 21.

**COMM.  
REPORTS**

Policy Committee

**POLICY  
COMM.**

Motion by Book / Kilic-Murray to approve the 7000 Series - Student for Second Reading:

**MOTION:  
APPROVE  
7000 SERIES  
FOR  
SECOND  
READING**

- 7610 - Immunization of Students
- 7611 - Prescription and Non Prescription Medication
- 7612 - Athletic Program Safety
- 7650 - Emancipated Minors
- 7690 - Non-discrimination on the basis of Disability 504 Act of 1973 & the Americans with Disabilities Act
- 7692 - Head Lice
- 7694 - Provisions of Special Education Services to Private School Students

Mr. Towle asked about Policy 7620 and how it works in regard to communicable diseases like TB or scarlet fever if parents do not want to immunize their students. Mr. Mello said there is a clause for parents who want to exempt their children for religious

or philosophical reasons. Those students can be in the school system. Ms. Moran said it is the law.

**MOTION:  
APPROVE  
7000 SERIES  
FOR  
SECOND  
READING,  
cont.**

Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance

Building Committee - Mr. Cooke said there was a lot of great work done this summer. He reviewed the list of achievements.

**BUILDING  
COMM.**

- Success school. Just the gymnasium work remains
- Pierpoint and Northwest are concluding a roof project.
- RIS and RMS - they are currently working on the boilers.
- Alumni Field - Ms. Moran reviewed the situation the day of the heavy rain a few weeks ago and flooding on the field. Silt had backed up across the street and the deluge was backing up under the field which forced up the air under the field. The turf field looked like a dome. John Rice and his team dug out the silt and as soon as it was removed, the field drained quickly and the field resettled with no damage or tears. Our crew worked well with the city crew and they will try to keep it clear in the future.
- The committee discussed the Stratton Road House.
- The committee will be looking into a safety investment plan. Besides the elevators at RIS and RMS, they will look at all the lifts and elevators, fire detection systems and emergency lighting.
- There was a lot of work performed around efficiency. The Efficiency Lighting package allowed us to install state of the art lighting systems with a better light and less wattage. The project is nearing completion.
- The window project at several schools eliminated old and drafty windows. This is a big impact. Some windows were non-operable. It makes the classrooms healthier.
- The committee heard from the Environmental Health Team. They played a role in the start of school with a slide presentation on the top ten things that can be done to create a safe and better school environment.
- School Dude, a software which tracks building issues, was installed.
- Camera upgrades - some were installed and they are working effectively. Looking at even more effective ones for troublesome spots.

Mr. Cooke commended John Rice and the team for the amount of work and quality of work accomplished. Ms. Kilic-Murray asked if the Environmental Health Team has been testing the quality of air at RMS. Ms. Moran said there has been a lot of work on ventilators. Part of the top ten list included not blocking the ventilators. She said it will be even better when the new boiler goes in. Mr. Cooke said the ventilators are expensive to change. They bring in fresh air but in the winter, it is cold air. Ms. Moran said the major project including the windows, Energy Efficiency, and the boilers are part of the performance contract with Johnson Controls

**NEW  
BUSINESS**

**New Business**

Mr. Fingon said Sept. 25 is the Fingon Raider Golf Tournament. Proceeds will go to the varsity girls basketball team for new jerseys.

**FINGON  
GOLF  
TOURNA-  
MENT**

Mr. Mello said he extended a personal overture to the board chairs of the Rutland Central and Rutland South Supervisory Unions from board chair to board chair to see if

**WORK  
WITH  
OTHER  
BOARDS**

they would be interested in being part of a study group to look at how our three districts could work together to improve things for students and / or operate more efficiently. He was remiss in not notifying the Rutland City Board members prior to sending out the invitation. It was a personal overture. He will send board members a copy of the letter. He will bring back information to the board.

**WORK  
WITH  
OTHER  
BOARDS,  
cont.**

Old Business

**OLD  
BUSINESS**

Ms. Moran distributed *Outliers*, the next group book read for board members.

**NEXT  
GROUP  
BOOK READ**

Motion by Fingon / Fagan at 8:25 pm, after a recess, for the board to convene to executive session for the purpose of discussing, 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 8:30 pm.

Motion by Courcelle / Cooke to adjourn at 8:30 pm.

**PUBLIC  
SESSION**

Respectfully submitted

**ADJOURN**

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Janet Mondlak  
Recording Secretary