

**RUTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS
NOVEMBER 10, 2009**

School Board Members Present:

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

Also Present:

Superintendent Mary Moran
Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss
Peter Amons
Wil Cunningham
Lyle Jepson
Ellie McGarry
Bill Olsen
Glenn Olson
Bob Johnson
Jay Slenker
John Rice
Susanne Engels

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

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

Motion by Towle/Fagan to accept the minutes of the Oct. 27, 2009 regular school board meeting as written. Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

**MOTION:
MINUTES
10/27/09
MEETING**

Written Communication - None

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Oral Communication - Mr. Mello said at the last meeting, Mrs. Connolly presented the board with a letter and spoke about her concerns. He said he sent board members a copy of the letter he sent to her as a response.

ORAL COMMUNICATION

UVM Teachers of the Year Recognition

Joanne Trucker - Science Teacher at RMS - Mr. Cunningham introduced Joanne Trucker and said she is a wonderful teacher and goes above and beyond to celebrate students. Ms. Trucker said she has been teaching since 1976 and she is still passionate and committed to working with middle school students.

UVM TEACHERS OF THE YEAR RECOGNITION

Todd Stratton - Elementary Teacher at RIS - Mr. Slenker introduced Todd Stratton, who teaches grades 3 and 4 and said he is a team leader, building leader and site coordinator of the Tapestry Program. Mr. Stratton thanked the board and administration for the opportunities he has been given.

EDUCATION REPORT

Activities and Athletics Report - Mr. Olson and Mr. Norman presented the report. They discussed the overall activity participation numbers for 2008-09. Mr. Olson presented the percent of RHS student participation over the past ten years. 58% of RHS students last year were involved in either an athletic or non-athletic activity. Activities numbers are already up this year so far. Mr. Norman presented the numbers of students who are Tri-Scholar, both in the middle and high schools. Mr. Olson said the Academic Achievement Award is determined by number of hours a student is involved, instead of seasonal. Mr. Olson said there are a number of shared advisor

ACTIVITIES & ATHLETICS REPORT

positions. He reviewed some of the items the Activities Council is focusing on, mainly increasing student involvement. Mr. Norman reviewed the agenda areas for the upcoming Athletic Council meeting. If there is a topic which crosses into both Athletics and Activities, such as the Substance Abuse Policy, the Councils meet together. Mr. Olson presented participation numbers for activities at RMS and RHS and explained some of the numbers. Mr. Norman reviewed the sports participation numbers by sport. He said the fall 2009 sports participation was higher than 2008 fall sports numbers. He said the coaching staff has remained just about the same although some positions were shared so there may be more people involved. Mr. Norman reviewed the Athletic Training Services provided to RHS by Vermont Orthopaedic Clinic. The trainer is at school every day and the students are getting terrific care.

Commissioner Dress asked about the people playing three sports or participating in more than one activity. Mr. Olson said students could be in a club and playing a sport at the same time. Ms. Dress asked if it was too much for some students. Mr. Olson said there is research on student participation which shows that students who participate do better on average than those who do not. However, a few years ago, the Activities Council limited the number of leadership roles a student can hold. Commissioner Cooke asked if there is a hybrid award for i.e., a student participating in two sports and an activity. Mr. Olson said a student can get an Academic Achievement Award using sport hours. Mr. Mello asked if the Student Senate format changed. Mr. Olson said it used to be Student Council and students were elected differently. The numbers shown are for the Senate executive board. Dan Wigmore chairs the Senate. Dan said that every sport, club and activity can send representation to the Student Senate.

Mr. Cooke asked the number of advisors or coaches who are members of the faculty. Mr. Olson said he believes 100% of advisors. Mr. Norman said he thinks less than 15% for coaches. Ms. Moran said as we higher younger staff, there will be more. Dan Wigmore said he participates in a lot of activities. All of his coaches and advisors are accommodating and understand that school comes first. He said it is easy to approach an advisor and tell them there is a conflict.

School Action Plans (SUCCESS) - Mr. Bliss said this is the first time that Success has had an action plan. Ms. Engels said they view social behavior and achievement as tightly linked and in order for students to achieve success, the students need to be present and prepared. The plan shows how it is all interdependent and integrated and focuses on behavior, social and emotional aspects. She reviewed the Written Language goals and said it is the academic primary focus. There is a focus on Fine Arts so students have positive ways to express themselves and their abilities. There is also a goal to enhance communication and collaboration with the community and a goal to reinforce the link between climate and learning. Commissioner Kilic-Murray said she is happy to see this report and asked about student transitions back to their regular schools. Ms. Engels said students enter Success with goals they need to meet before they transition out. Many students transition back to the intermediate level and some transition back into the middle and high school levels. She said that some students graduate from Success.

Mr. Cooke asked how Success handles "specials." Ms. Engels said they have a

project-based curriculum and much of it is integrated. There are contracted teachers for both art and music who each spend a day a week there. She reviewed the physical education offerings and said many of the students are very physical and they have activities for them. Students earn p.e. credits through the Vermont Outdoor Adventure program which is part of Rutland Mental Health's services. The program is action based and gets students into the outdoors. Commissioner Forshay said it is great to have a plan from Success. He asked why the plan was dated 2008-2010 if this is the first plan. Ms. Engels said she started in December 2008 and she started the strategies and outcomes when she began. Mr. Mello said this is an excellent plan designed around the school and students based upon what they have found to be important and not directed by the Department of Education.

Mr. Amons said the Capital and Maintenance Plan is the first step in developing the total budget. The proposed FY2011 budget figures column will be included in the budget proposal being presented in two weeks, unless the Board makes some changes. Mr. Rice said the handout notes discretionary items, non-discretionary items, and priority items. The total budget for all items being proposed for FY2011 is \$1,180,000 which compares to the current year's budget of \$1,080,000. Mr. Rice said last year, 21 items were deleted during budget planning and they totaled about \$200,000. Five of those items are in the 2011 budget proposal and the remaining items continue to be deferred. He reviewed other major deferred items. Mr. Rice reviewed the discretionary and prioritized items noted in the report. There were questions and discussion from Board members:

- Do we depreciate assets? Mr. Amons said we do, although it has no effect on cash.
- What is the a differentiation between capital and maintenance items? Mr. Amons said capital items are those which have a timeframe. They have no effect on cash or taxes.
- What about the deferred list? Mr. Rice said in the future, he would hope to pull those in.
- There are three buried oil tanks which need attention . 1) Longfellow is planned for 2011. 2) Watkins is deferred. How much of the Watkins property is heated? Mr. Rice said the whole building is heated in actuality but it is the offices downstairs which are heated. 3) Success is deferred even further out. Commissioner Fagan said he does not like deferring the oil tanks. He asked about the recent fuel leak incident at Success. Mr. Rice reviewed the incident and said there will be a meeting later this week to discuss it further. How old are the Watkins and Success tanks? Mr. Rice said they are equivalent to the tank at Stafford. He said it was piping issues that caused the leak, not the tank. He said the tank was in good shape. It is hard to check the status of the other tanks without going inside them. Mr. Rice said they will have to dispose of the oil they are collecting.
- Can the ventilation modification project be spread out? Mr. Rice said yes, the number involves all the units and they can be phased. Mr. Rice reviewed the phasing and the steps that have been done so far.
- What is being done about the middle school roof leaks? Mr. Rice said the RMS roof is the next one they will be inspecting and repairing. If there is a leak, they repair it when they find them. Sometimes it is hard to find the leaks. Roofs are an

ongoing problem and part of the regular budget. They are fixed internally and not with a contractor.

- Is the pick up truck with snow plow replacement the one the Board just approved? Mr. Rice said this is another one
- Is there any thought to eliminate the unit ventilators? Mr. Rice said they will be looking next at RIS, where the majority of the unit ventilators are. The conditions at RMS are building -wide issues and at RIS, they are individual classroom issues.
- Why the \$12,000 installation cost for a folding addition at RHS? Mr. Olsen said the new class, American Voices, needed a bigger space. There are 40 students in the class. Other teachers are interested in the space for team teaching.
- Is the fire suppression system in compliance? Mr. Rice said the systems are over cooking ranges in school kitchens. In the past, they used a powder and now they use a liquid, which is less destructive. It is an upgrade and any new installation will be required to meet the new standard.
- How did Mr. Rice come up with priority numbers? The elevator compliance is priority 1 but also deferred. Other items are priority 2 but in the budget. Mr. Rice explained why the elevator is a priority 1 but they do not want to replace until they have to. He said it is a dilemma.
- Mr. Mello said this is an extensive list and the board's first opportunity to look at it. He asked Board members to review it.
- Mr. Fingon said he would not mind seeing the tanks being replaced now and added into the FY11 budget.
- How long do we plan on keeping Watkins Ave.? If we are only using a small component, maybe we should not be spending a lot of money on it. Ms. Moran said we continue to investigate it.
- Ms. Moran said we have been investigating if we could use ARRA funds for the elevator because it effects accessibility.
- How many offices are at Watkins? Mr. Rice said two rooms of offices but all of Mr. Rice's staff operates out of the building. It is a logistic center. He said depending on long we are thinking of keeping the building, we might be able to replace the tank with a smaller above ground one. If we are going to keep the building for a number of years, he thinks we should keep it. Maybe we could replace it with an above ground smaller tank if we are keeping it fewer years. The Longfellow tank is the highest priority because there are new boilers and water gets into the tank and we do not want to damage them.

Motion by Fingon/Forshay to approve the Licensed and Non-licensed section of the Personnel Memorandum No. 413 dated Nov. 5, 2009, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

**MOTION:
PERSONNEL
MEMO #413**

The appointments were reviewed by Superintendent Moran. They are attached. Ms. Moran reviewed the Howe Center Employment Specialist position which is grant-funded. She said the person helps students in the workplaces.

Motion passed by all those in attendance.

**BUSINESS
REPORT**

Business Report - None

Announcements

- The fifth grade newsletter was distributed. It is a terrific piece.
- Last year's results of PathPoints Health program was distributed. It is the employee health program. The best participation rate was at Success at 95%.
- A copy of the Roots of Success journal was distributed.
- There is elementary school art work displayed at Longfellow. Art teacher Brad Bender worked with the children on proportion.
- There were wonderful Veterans Day celebrations in the schools. Ms. Moran commended the staff and students on the 3 and 4 grade assembly which included the chorus, band, and children singing and narrating. Veterans were honored; several are staff members.
- At Northeast School, in celebration of Veterans Day, Charles Skuba, a World War II Veteran and Purple Heart recipient, visited and spoke of his service to our country.
- Congratulations to Susanne Engels of Success and Patricia Shappy, Northwest Volunteer Coordinator who both received an award from the Rutland Regional Partnership for Family Services. They were both recognized for actively supporting children, families and individuals in our area.
- Congratulations to RHS Social Studies teacher John Peterson who will receive the Victor R. Swenson Humanities Educator Award from the Vermont Humanities Council. The award is given to a Vermont educator in grades 6 through 12 who exemplifies excellence in the teaching of the humanities. John was nominated by fellow Rutland teacher and former student Jennie Gartner.
- All school activities are listed on the website.
- Flu Clinics - The first clinic was at Northwest yesterday and the students and staff were terrific. Ms. Moran announced the schedule for the other schools. Staff members who are in high risk categories can get a shot but the general faculty cannot.

**SUPERIN-
TENDENT'S
REPORT**

**ANNOUNCE-
MENTS**

**FLU
CLINICS
UPDATE**

ARRA Fund Use - Ms. Moran said there has been discussion on the possible use of ARRA funds for time specific needs. Mr. Bliss and Ms. Aigner have worked on a plan which has received approval. There are two added positions. 1) An additional psychologist to support the youngest children. Use the existing job description. 2) A Network Administrator, which has been discussed before. Ms. Moran said both jobs would be advertised and noted that they are for a period of time based upon ARRA funds. After the funds run out, the jobs will be evaluated to see if there is a need to keep them going and how they would be funded. A job description for the Network Administrator was distributed. Ms. Moran said the Network Administrator position is non-aligned. Mr. Amons has done some market analysis and believes the salary should be between \$55,000 - \$65,000. Benefits would be on top of that. Mr. Bliss said there is enough in the grant to cover the total including benefits. Mr. Courcelle said this is the intent of the grant - job creation - and he supports it.

**ARRA FUND
USE**

Motion by Courcelle/Cooke to approve the Network Administrator job description as presented and to fill the position; to be paid for with ARRA money for a time period of approximately 18-21 months.

**MOTION:
APPROVE
NETWORK
ADMINI-
STRATOR
POSITION
USING ARRA
FUNDS**

Mr. Towle asked if there is a time limit in we have to spend the money and Mr. Bliss said this is a one time allocation over 27 months starting July 09.

Motion passed unanimously with the conditions stated.

Ms. Moran said psychologists are shared through the district but having someone else to work in pre-K through grade 3 will be helpful.

Motion by Fagan / Towle to approve filling a psychologist position as presented; to be paid for with ARRA money for a time period of approximately 18-21 months.

Motion passed unanimously with the conditions stated.

Policy Committee

Motion by Forshay / Cooke to approve the following Policies for second reading.

- 6420 - Leaves of Absence
- 7310 - Student Placement, Retention and Acceleration
- 7320 - Promotion and Retention (deleted and being added to 7310)
- 8470 - Animal Dissection

Motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Ms. Dress asked for a future agenda item to be about buildings, such as Dana, and their future.

Mr. Cooke gave a Building Committee update. He said they toured Stafford Technical Center and got an update of how their programs have developed. Some of the existing facility is bulging. He said Stafford was able to renovate one of the outbuildings to bring it up to code. Much of the funds came from monies generated from participating towns. There is another outbuilding that is in dire need of work and a renovation project. Mr. Jepson and the team have put together a plan, which would require significant monies – a bond. Mr. Cooke reviewed some of the building needs. He said that Stafford is part of our facilities. Mr. Mello said a bond would be distributed and shared by all the sending schools but Rutland City school board would do the bonding. Mr. Cavacas said there is also a program expansion being discussed which would create a program which is needed and not available in this area.

Ms. Kilic-Murray said the first Budget Buddy meeting was held last night and was well attended. They set up a plan similar to last year. They will begin the education process in January.

Old Business

Mr. Fagan said he would like to continue the discussion about planning for the flu and cold. He reviewed what is being done in other states. He asked what we will do if i.e., 10% of students are out. He does not want to see a student penalized for getting the flu. Mr. Cavacas asked if teachers are already responsible for having lesson plans in place. Ms. Moran said there are plans in place; both teaching and learning plans. They are working closely with the Department of Health and she is monitoring daily student and adult absences. They are following the Department’s advice regarding when someone can come back to school. She said teachers have lesson plans and unit plans in place. The current advice is to not cancel school if there are a lot of absences because the Department has found it does not decrease the spread of the disease and

MOTION:
APPROVE
PSYCHOL-
OGIST
POSITION
USING ARRA
FUNDS.

COMM.
REPORTS

POLICY
COMM.

MOTION:
APPROVE
POLICIES
FOR
SECOND
READING

NEW
BUSINESS

FUTURE
AGENDA
ITEMS

BUILDING
COMM.
UPDATE AT
STC

BUDGET
BUDDIES

OLD
BUSINESS

PLANNING
FOR
ABSENCES

it often means students are home unattended. They would cancel school if there were not enough adults to safely watch the children. They will not ask for doctor's notes for flu but do continue if there is a suspicion of truancy. She said they are tracking attendance and send the Department a report once a week. She said she is very proud of the administrative team and nursing staff. Mr. Fagan said he appreciates that and said he did not have that information. He asked how long in advance are lesson plans prepared. Moran said there are daily, weekly and unit plans. If a teacher is out, they are in touch with the department chair or team leader. Students work on making up work. She said it has all been dialogued with teachers.

**PLANNING
FOR
ABSENCES,
cont.**

Student Report - Dan Wigmore said he has been talking with Mr. Olsen on the Constitution, which will be passed along to the Activities Council. It has not been updated since the 1990s. He said the school does a lot of work with colleges and does a good job of getting out information to students. It is making the college process easier.

**STUDENT
REPORT**

Motion by Kilic-Murray / Cooke at 8:53 pm, after a recess, for the board to convene to executive session for the purpose of discussing superintendent's evaluation, 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 9:30 pm.

**PUBLIC
SESSION**

Motion by Cooke/Forshay to adjourn at 9:31 pm. Passed.

ADJOURN

Respectfully submitted

Janet Mondlak
Recording Secretary