

**RUTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS
OCTOBER 26, 2010**

School Board Members Present:

Peter Mello
Christopher Book
Hurley Cavacas, Jr.
Wayne Cooke
Richard Courcelle
Roberta Dress
Peter Fagan
Collin Fingon
Peter Forshay
Erin Shimp
Rob Towle
Blake Bohlig

Also Present:

Superintendent Mary Moran
Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss
Peter Amons
Wil Cunningham
Lyle Epton
John Rice
Bill Olsen
Jay Slenker
Kristen Hubert
Glenn Olson
Mike Norman
Susanne Engels

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.
Chair Mello noted all Commissioners were present.

**CALL TO
ORDER**

ROLL CALL

Motion by Towle / Book to accept the minutes of the October 12, 2010 regular school board meeting as written. Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

**MOTION:
MINUTES
10/12/10
MEETING**

Written Communication - None

**WRITTEN &
ORAL
COMMUNI-
CATION**

Oral Communication - None

**EDUCATION
REPORT**

Activities and Athletics Report - Mr. Olson said students have a great selection of activities and athletics. There are excellent student leaders and he thanked the board and community for their support. He highlighted the make-up of the Activities Council, the agenda areas reviewed at their meetings, the advisor staffing, and student participation rates over the past ten years. Mr. Olson discussed the purpose of some of the clubs and how many students are needed to keep a club going. He said there is no firm number for how many students participate but the advisor stipend takes into account the size of the group. Numbers change with some of the activities as the season progresses. Mr. Olson presented the 2009-2010 numbers of students who are involved in more than one activity or sport. Commissioner Forshay said he prefers to see a full year of numbers rather than partial year. Mr. Mello recommended there be a procedure developed for reviewing an activity or sport to see if we need to make a change. There is a correlation between academic success and other activities and he would like a goal of engaging 100% of students in an activity or sport.

**ACTIVITIES
AND
ATHLETIC
REPORT**

Mr. Norman reviewed numbers from the 2009-2010 school year. He explained the Athletic Council and the items they will be reviewing at their meetings. He highlighted the number of students who are tri-scholar athletes, the students receiving the academic achievement award, and the total number of students by grade and gender involved in every sport at RHS and RMS. Ms. Moran said there will be some recommended budget cuts which correlate to participation numbers. Mr. Norman

showed a ten year chart of the coaching staff numbers and volunteer coaches as well as a chart based upon participation by sport / season.

Commissioner Dress questioned \$30,000 in stipends for ten coaches for the football program. She said Rutland is not that big nor does it have a major football program and she questioned the amount. Ms. Moran said the football program has seven positions split ten ways. Mr. Norman said football has a very senior coaching staff so most are at the top of the stipend chart. There are three football teams – freshman, JV and Varsity and each team has 3-4 coaches. The numbers are similar to the other Division I teams in the state. They focus on safety and quality of instruction. Mr. Norman reviewed the fluctuation of numbers in the program over the years. The program has not had student cuts. Mr. Norman said per pupil, some sports cost more money than football but football generates the highest gate receipts, although that is not a factor. Mr. Norman reviewed other sports which have had cuts or additions over the past few years. Commissioner Book asked if tuition students come to RHS for the athletics. Mr. Norman said students come to RHS for academics and also for activities and athletics. Mr. Norman reviewed the athletic training services provided by Vermont Orthopaedic Clinic. He said it is a significant opportunity provided to our students.

RHS Action Plan - Mr. Olsen said much of the core of the RHS Action Plan is what was in the School Improvement Grant presented a few weeks ago. Teacher teams have been created at the high school working in departments or interdisciplinarily to further goals. Each team is looking at the curriculum and making sure teachers are teaching to them. They are creating common assessments which are being shared and will be used to make changes for progress. Mr. Olsen said there will be a focus on helping all different types of students. He reviewed some of the action steps being implemented. Mr. Mello asked if RHS successes on the NECAPS are attributed to teacher efforts and the Action Plan. Mr. Olsen said it is difficult to use just one measure, such as the NECAP, to say that a particular effort is working. There have been successes in NECAP scores and there are more students passing classes. They are looking at common assessments and other measures.

Commissioner Cooke asked about other assessments which might be helpful at the high school. Mr. Olsen said they have looked at PSAT, AP and other test scores. He believes the course level assessments will be the most effective and they can be used to quickly determine if intervention is needed. There was further discussion and questions on intervention and determining when a student needs help. They are working on a standardized system across the board that everyone is committed to.

School Choice Report - Superintendent Moran presented data on the School Choice program and reviewed the process and the numbers. Each school sets their own number of how many students can participate. She shared an analysis of school choice county-wide over the life of the program. Some of the strongest reasons students change schools are family convenience, different opportunities for the student, and providing a fresh start. There was further discussion about the participation numbers, schools with waiting lists and if school choice is going to be encouraged by the county collaborative.

Enrollment Analysis and Staffing Patterns - Ms. Moran reviewed the K-8 enrollment analysis; current numbers projected and actual and projected for 2011-12. She explained class size per grade with and without potential cuts based upon enrollment projections. There was discussion about some of the class sizes. She said with co-teaching, larger class sizes, especially in K and 1, are more manageable. At RHS enrollment numbers are also presented broken out by Rutland resident and tuition student. Mr. Forshay said he was surprised by the one RHS class which shows a large decline in numbers. Ms. Moran said that one class has a large number of students who have left due to mobility, graduating early, and students choosing to leave school. Stafford students are counted as RHS students.

Budget - Ms. Moran said this is the same budget process used in the past. The timing of the process has been moved up because of the Challenges for Change request from the state. This is a budget which is believed to be the best for students while being the most fiscally responsible. Input has been received from all across the district. Ms. Moran, Mr. Bliss or Ms. McGarry have personally met with any employee who might be in jeopardy of losing their job. According to the union contract, if there is a reduction in force, a position might be cut but that person might keep their job due to bumping rights.

Ms. Moran shared a report from the state which shows the expenditures in each budget in particular categories. She said that Rutland City Public Schools shows we are the lowest spending district statewide in four major categories and second-to-lowest in a fifth category. That includes direct instruction, general administration, school administration, instructional staff support services, and pupil support services. There was discussion about the technical centers statewide and how their numbers are reported. Mr. Mello said he asked Ms. Moran to include this information because it puts into perspective our spending and rating relative to every other district in the state. He said there was a recent meeting with our legislators and this information was presented to them. It shows where we stand locally and why we are concerned with the budget target from Challenges for Change. Ms. Moran said we have been given grant funds to improve our schools while being asked to cut the budget.

Ms. Moran presented to Board members four tiers of recommended cuts. Some would be recommended anyway due to declining enrollments. Mr. Mello said the tiers are a series of ranked priorities of items which could be reduced from the budget. He asked Board members to ask for clarifications. Explanations of some of the items:

Tier One:

- We are currently switching to outsourcing Medicaid billing. It will eliminate two salaries and benefits. It is a more accurate system. It will reduce the budget by \$56,000.
- Ms. Moran said regarding anything to do with busing, Mr. Rice has programmed a per mile cost for every bus including real numbers of fuel, depreciation and driver cost.
- What is FWI? A realignment in a job due to a retirement.
- Reduced textbooks? This would be a district wide reduction of \$60,000.
- How many volunteer coordinators? Two half time each at Northeast and

Northwest and one full time at RIS. Ms. Moran said any reduction in staffing includes the total savings including benefits.

- Would the tier one cuts be recommended if we did not have Challenges for Change? Ms. Moran said most likely, yes.
- Cut one ELL teacher (formerly known as ESL teacher). There are currently two ELL teachers. There are currently about 30 students, which is a decline. It is not reimbursable.
- School secretary reductions are due to student enrollment declines.
- If a class wants to raise funds for a field trip, would they be able to? Ms. Moran said if the board feels that it would be appropriate, that would be fine. Some field trips are being funded by PTCs but they are not line items in the budget.
- Are the two general education paraeducators operating without the reimbursement? Ms. Moran said yes.
- How many secretaries at RMS and RHS do we have now? RMS has two. RHS has five-and-a-half including athletics, guidance, receptionist and two in the main office. This reduction would be one of two in the main office.
- Are the library aides assistants to the librarians? Ms. Moran said they are library paraeducators. One cut would be at RMS and the other would be a half-cut at each elementary school. There would still be services there. There are two at RHS. One was funded by STC and they are cutting it. The other RHS position will remain.

Mr. Mello said of the 13 items, ten of them reflect either positions or programs.

Tier Two:

- Bus Aides - Ms. Moran said there are six part time bus aides for regular education. They help maintain order and discipline.
- K-12 Music - Ms. Moran said the recommendations near the end of the list are enrollment driven.
- Theater program - The numbers continue to be low.
- Home school coordinator - social worker. Recommendation due to declining numbers.
- RMS Industrial Arts - Ms. Moran said this was looked at alongside Family and Consumer Science but due to a teacher retirement, this is the recommendation.
- World Language - Ms. Moran said the recommendation is not to cut the RMS program but to change the scheduling.
- If the RHS home school coordinator is eliminated, how does it effect the guidance counselors? Ms. Moran said the five guidance counselors would have to carry out the functions. The school would not lose the function but it would be reassigned. How many students are the home school coordinators currently servicing? Ms. Moran said the position is an adjunct to the guidance counselors. They do not have a set case load but work with families in crisis..
- Where is the recommendation for the teacher reductions at Northeast, Northwest and RIS? Ms. Moran said they are the last items on the lists.
- How many nurses are there in the buildings? There are three nurses between RIS and RMS. Health units would be taught by other educators or administrators.
- Crossing guards reduction by 50%? Ms. Moran said they would keep the guards at the highest need areas.

Tiers one and two proposed cuts equal \$1,068,738. Mr. Mello said nine out of 13 cuts in tier two reflect either positions or programs. So far there is no lost revenue.

Tier Three:

- Pick up truck - Mr. Rice said we are following the same procedures to replace one truck per year. We will skip a year and defer replacement.
- The last four recommended cuts on the list: What is the average class size for each? Ms. Moran said because there are multiple sections, they cannot yet say. It would probably mean changes from approximately 16 students to 18 or from 17 to 19. These are potential cuts based upon enrollment decline. She said the numbers are actual costs of people who are believed to be vacating a position. One is a known retirement.
- Alumni field bleachers - Ms. Rice explained the issue with the bleacher supports. We should fix the foundations although the engineer does not believe we are in imminent danger.
- Would a program be cut, such as physics? Ms. Moran said no. There are no recommendations to make programmatic cuts. There might be fewer options or sections.
- Might any teachers be enticed into early retirement? Ms. Moran said there is early retirement in the contract. We analyze potential retirements every year but there are things we do not know about employees. So far we know that six teachers and two paraeducators are retiring. Teachers have to notify in January.
- Two exterior doors at Northwest and RHS? Will they save energy if replaced? Mr. Rice said the Northwest doors are in the rear. They are in very poor condition and have been cut out of the budget for the past two years. The RHS doors are fine for energy but they present maintenance and security problems.
- RIS access control install? Mr. Rice said he believes we need better control of access to the schools, especially nights and weekends.
- Northeast fire alarm system? Mr. Rice said there could be improvements. There have been problems with the panel. This is would start the process.

Tier Four:

- School buses - Defer replacement cycle for one year.
- Grades 7-12 athletic reduction - Ms. Moran said this would be a reduction in teams, not an elimination of any programs.
- Mr. Cavacas said he has an issue with eliminating academic items such as team leaders and department chairs when there is \$30,000 budgeted football. Ms. Moran said Mr. Norman is looking into the per student cost for athletics. Mr. Cavacas said there could be savings from cutting night games or distance travel. He advocates for spending on academics rather than some of the extra curricular. Ms. Moran said a problem is that most Division One teams are in the north. She has an upcoming meeting with VPA officials to discuss investigating cost saving measures like scheduling, travel distances, and number of games being played.
- Commissioner Fingon said perhaps some of the teams being cut could be at the middle school level where the students have more options through Rutland Rec. By freshman year, there are more students with nothing else to do. Perhaps there could be non-traveling teams. Ms. Moran said the proposal does not call for eliminating all middle school or freshman sports. There are fewer students.
- The World Language teacher at RHS? Ms. Moran said it is the last resort and she cannot recommend it.

- If there is a reduction in staff and it is primarily junior teachers who would face elimination, what does that do to Pathwise mentor stipends? Ms. Moran said it is a potential small savings.
- Coaches for \$100,000 - Ms. Moran said these are the K-6 literacy coaches. Those teachers would move to the classroom and junior teachers would be bumped. These are funded out of a grant. Mr. Cooke said regarding grants, we have to be careful we are not supplanting.

Tier four shows ten out of 15 recommendations effect staff or a program. If tiers one - four are fully implemented, Mr. Amons said it would cut 28 full time positions and another six full time equivalents. Mr. Book asked about the RIS assistant principal. Ms. Moran explained that the position would be combined with special education. It would be an extraordinarily large load and we would cover legalities but it would be very difficult. Mr. Mello said preparing this document was not easy. The bottom line is in excess of \$2.5 million. He asked Mr. Amons if there is a number that would allow the Board to approve a budget with a \$0 impact. Mr. Amons said that would be a \$1.2 million reduction due to inflation. With a reduction in potential revenue, it would be between \$1.2 and \$1.4 million. He will have real numbers on November 23.

Mr. Cavacas asked about the Watkins Ave. fuel tank. Is this something that could be potentially removed if the Board made the determination to dispose of the building? Ms. Moran said that could be a savings. Mr. Mello said there will be time for more questions at the next meeting. Ms. Moran said we are looking to respond to Challenges for Change by December 7. The best case numbers will be presented November 23. The budget will need to be adopted in January.

**MOTION:
PERSONNEL
MEMO 432**

Motion by Towle / Cavacas to approve the Licensed and Non-licensed section of the Personnel Memorandum No. 432 dated October 22, 2010, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

The retirements were reviewed by Superintendent Moran. They are attached.

Motion passed unanimously.

Watkins Building / Porter Place - Mr. Amons said since the last meeting, Mr. Rice has done more research on the building and the building committee has met. Mr. Rice investigated three areas:

**BUSINESS
REPORT**

**WATKINS
BUILDING /
PORTER
PLACE**

- Test relocation - will things fit? Mr. Rice said with some minor alterations, all the buses, vehicles and equipment will fit.
- Crime / vandalism factor. Mr. Rice said he has the police blotter for the neighborhood including the entire Howe Center. In the past year, there have been three thefts and one assault. They were all during daytime hours.
- Possible conflicts with the rail at two locations - Mr. Rice said there would not be a conflict with the Route 7 crossing. The Park Street crossing is a potential problem with a ten minute train at 7 am. That could effect two buses. He would make accommodations.

There were questions and discussion from Board members:

- Is the building large enough to pull in a bus and work on it? Mr. Rice said yes. Three buses were pulled in. The newer buses, which are trip buses, would be stored indoors at night.
- Is there room to expand the fenced area if we get more buses? Mr. Rice said the fence would have to be moved but yes. We might move the fence anyway to make it more workable. There are two additional areas just inside the Howe Center which would be available for lease and which could be converted to work space if necessary in the future.
- Does the lease preclude Crestmark from selling the building to someone else while we are leasing it? Mr. Amons said yes, for 12 years.

Building committee - Mr. Cooke said the committee met and supports this. They reviewed it with an eye toward Challenges for Change and looking at the cost-effectiveness. They unanimously recommend moving forward.

MOTION:
AUTHORIZE
NEGOTIA-
TION OF A
LEASE
WITH
CREST-
MARK, INC
FOR
LEASING 156
PORTER
PLACE

Motion by Fingon / Dress that the Rutland City Board of School Commissioners authorize Mary E Moran, Superintendent or Peter Amons, CFO, to negotiate a lease with Crestmark Inc. for the leasing of 156 Porter Place substantially in the terms as previously presented to the board.

- Will we shut off the water and power to Watkins? Mr. Rice said eventually but he does not expect to be fully using Porter Place until April. There is some preparatory work to be done there. Maintenance would move first. After transportation moves, he will shut down Watkins. He said the heat will not be very expensive for both buildings through the winter. Only part of Porter Place will need be heated until everything is moved.
- Is the intention to sell Watkins Ave? Ms. Moran said the intention would be to try to sell Watkins or request bids.
- After we have vacated, would all further maintenance at Watkins cease? Mr. Rice said that is the intent.

SUPERIN-
PENDENT'S
REPORT

Motion passed unanimously.

ANNOUNCE-
MENTS

Announcements

- The Howe Campus newsletter was distributed. Ms. Moran said the students do a fantastic job.
- At Northeast, "Red Ribbon Week" was celebrated all week with a focus on making "Good Healthy Choices". Each day, there will be an emphasis on "Good Character Concept" (Cooperation, Responsibility, Caring, Trustworthy, and Respect). Winners of the annual Poster and Essay Contest will be announced next week. Today, the "Ah Cappella" Vocal Quartet from the Vermont Symphony Orchestra visited and performed selections that included the Vermont State Song. All kindergarten classes will visit the Fire House this week as part of October Safety Month! On Friday, the Northeast Puppets will have a special performance for the children about Halloween Safety. The annual Halloween Parade is scheduled for this Friday.

- Northwest School is celebrating Red Ribbon Week. Monday is an assembly with RAP coalition. Tuesday is wear crazy socks for “sock it to drugs day”. Wednesday is wear sweat clothes “living drug free is no sweat day”. Thursday is wear sunglasses to “shade out drugs day”. Friday is the Halloween Parade “Say Boo to drugs day!” Therapy Dogs begin “reading” with NW students on Nov. 5.
- RIS is celebrating Red Ribbon week with a theme for each day. Monday is Hat Day; Tuesday is Sports t-shirt/sweatshirt day; Wednesday is Mis-Match Day; Thursday is Throw-back Thursday fashion; Friday is Red Shirt Day. On Friday, Red Ribbon Week will wrap up with a RAP Coalition presentation in the morning and the 2nd Annual RIS Fall Field Day in the afternoon.
- At RMS, four students will be on the WCAX-Channel 3 news this week for their involvement in the creation of a school-wide campaign to support breast cancer awareness. The RMS Pops Concert will be held on Thursday. RMS Drama Club students invite you to their production, *The Princess and the Princess* on November 4.
- Thanks to RHS Juniors and their parents/ guardians for another strong effort on the NECAP assessment over the last few weeks. The RHS Music Department will present their third annual Pops Concert on Wed. GMTI and Encore, with the help of Will Baker, hosted a very successful Haunted School Tour on Oct. 22. Approximately \$600 was earned which will be donated to the Cystic Fibrosis Fund. GMTI and Student Senate are hosting a Youth Risk Behavior Survey Analysis Retreat.
- Mr. Mello said on Nov. 4, superintendents, business managers and some board members from Rutland Central and South Supervisory Unions will meet to continue discussion on working together to improve efficiency.

COMM.
REPORTS

Policy Committee

Motion by Book / Cavacas to approve for second reading the following Policies:

#5115 Comparability

#6450 Workers Compensation

#6150 Health Examinations

#8470 Minimal and Optimal School District Average Class Size

Motion passed unanimously.

POLICY
COMM.

MOTION:
APPROVE
POLICIES
FOR
SECOND
READING

Mr. Book said the second reading of the field trip policy will be at the next meeting.

RHS
REPORT

RHS Report - Blake said for Spirit Week students raised \$168 for breast cancer awareness soliciting donations at lunchtime.

NEW & OLD
BUSINESS

New Business - None

ADJOURN

Old Business - None

Motion by Towle / Book to adjourn at 8:58 pm. Passed.

Respectfully submitted

Janet Mondlak, Recording Secretary