

**RUTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS
MARCH 8, 2011**

School Board Members Present:

Peter Mello
Christopher Book
Hurley Cavacas, Jr.
Wayne Cooke
Richard Courcelle
Roberta Dress
Peter Fagan (6:50 pm)
Collin Fingon
Peter Forshay
Erin Shimp

Members Absent

Rob Towle
Blake Bohlig

Also Present:

Superintendent Mary Moran
Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss
Peter Amons
Wil Cunningham
Lyle Jepson
Ellie McGarry
Kristen Hubert
Jessica Henderson
Patricia Aigner
Cathy Farman
Pam Reed

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Mello noted the absence of Commissioners Towle, Fagan and Student Representative Bohlig

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

Motion by Cooke / Forshay to accept the minutes of the Feb. 22, 2011 regular school board meeting as written. Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

**MOTION:
MINUTES
02/22/11
MEETING**

Written Communication - Mr. Mello acknowledged letters from the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and Director of Personnel expressing interest to have their contracts extended through the 2013 school year. He said the Board has received them and are responding. He said speaking for the Board, he is pleased all three administrators have decided to extend their contract through another year.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

LETTERS TO EXTEND ADMIN. CONTRACTS RECEIVED

Oral Communication - Michael Dick of Rutland City had three points to make. 1) As a taxpayer and supporter of the city schools, he acknowledged the wonderful job the Board, administrators, faculty and staff are doing to provide a school system at a rate taxpayers can afford. 2) Dr. Dick recommended the JV girls lacrosse coach on tonight's personnel memorandum. 3) Dr. Dick praised the years of service of Peter Forshay on the Board. He said Mr. Forshay has been on the Board for 11 years and stepped in to chair building projects and negotiations, became board clerk and board chair. He said Mr. Forshay always speaks appropriately and people listen to him. Mr. Dick thanked Mr. Forshay for all he has done for the students and the school system.

ORAL COMMUNICATION

COMPLIMENTS TO THE BOARD

THANKS AND PRAISE FOR PETER FORSHAY

Recognitions - Mr. Mello recognized two departing Board members, Roberta Dress and Peter Forshay, who both exemplify community service. Ms. Dress has been a dedicated and dependable board member and served on various committees for three years. He said she has strong convictions and is not afraid to present them and stand by them. He said he respects that. Mr. Mello recognized Peter Forshay, a Board member for 11 years. He said Mr. Forshay has been his mentor and he has always valued his opinion. Mr. Mello and the Board presented Ms. Dress and Mr. Forshay with gifts. Their terms of office are up on March 15. Both Ms. Dress and Mr. Forshay commented favorably about their years of service on the Board.

RECOGNITION TO DEPARTING BOARD MEMBERS

March 18 Professional Development Program - Mr. Bliss said there are parent teacher conferences on March 16 and 17 and March 18 is a district in-service day. Ms. Aigner and Ms. Etzler have put together a menu of choices focused on targeted school improvement activities. Teachers will spend the morning in sessions or activities they can choose from. The sessions are mostly technology-oriented. In the afternoon, each building leader will present school level improvement efforts. He said there remains a focus on major goals. Local independent school colleagues and board members are invited. Ms. Aigner said the morning sessions were designed around national technology standards. One goal is communication and collaboration. Presenters are both from around the state as well as being local teachers and administrators.

There were questions and discussion from Board members:

- How are we using technology to facilitate professional technology? Mr. Bliss said technology is allowing people to work together without sitting in the same room together. We have created an on-line Wiki to store, edit and share documents. 100 hours of work were accomplished without 100 hours of meetings.
- Ms. Aigner said there are several sessions on Wikis, Google Docs, the Cloud, e-textbooks, and Web 2.0. We are looking at Global Classroom - a learning management system.
- There are many offerings. How easy is it to be a jack-of-all-trades rather than creating subject matter experts? Ms. Aigner said we are focusing on a few specific products: Google Docs, Learning Management Systems and Wikis. Mr. Bliss said these are tools to allow people to collaborate and work together. We ask ourselves, "How can we use these tools to better engage our students and work together collaboratively."
- What are the pros and cons of e-texts? Should we be going down that road? Ms. Moran said that is an ongoing discussion.
- Do we actively pursue applications which we pay for or which are free? Ms. Aigner said many things we use are free or free to educators.
- Can Board members receive a "dictionary" of all these resources with an explanation of what they do? It would be helpful.
- Does the use of smart boards slow down teaching? Ms. Aigner said absolutely not. She said we take existing good curriculum and make it interactive with the smart board. It allows us to engage the student in the content differently than paper and pencil. It gives us leverage when we look at working with and organizing students. They can work independently or work in small group or large group instruction.
- Will there be a limit to the class sizes at the in-service? Mr. Bliss said there is a limited number based on the presenters preference and equipment. There will be priority to RCPS teachers.
- Would it be beneficial in the future to expand the morning offerings to a full day? It seems like teachers might be interested in a few different sessions. Ms. Moran said there is a strongly felt need to do building-based sessions.
- Commissioner Cooke complimented the offerings for the in-service. He said there has been a great growth in technology over the last few years.
- Commissioner Fagan said in the Statehouse, there continues to be some support for a state wide calendar. He said if there was, it seems like there would not be enough presenters for this type of professional development. Ms. Moran said it could be a problem. There may not be enough experts to go around.

Learning Lab Report - Ms. Reed said the HOUSE March 10, 2011 offers a learning environment to give students practice skills for independent living and employment. Students are provided with opportunities to obtain skills in education/training, employment and independent living skills. Ms. Reed reviewed the skills which students are learning and presented slides of students in their learning environment. In the summer of 2011, the school will serve a transitional program for those students who qualify for a full year school program. The curriculum will include all the skills discussed. Ms. Reed showed a video of some students in the program talking about what they do and learn and why they like the house. Students are from all grades in the high school. Commissioner Courcelle said he appreciates seeing the storytelling -- the human element. He said it essential to the work Board members do. Mr. Mello said this is an excellent example of the investment made and exemplifies the district's mission: Every student, every day.

**LEARNING
LAB
REPORT**

Motion by Dress / Fagan to approve the Licensed and Non-licensed section of the Personnel Memorandum No. 441 dated March 4, 2011, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

PERSONNEL

**MOTION:
PERSONNEL
MEMO #441**

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

Business Report - None

**BUSINESS
REPORT**

Announcements

- Music in our schools Month: The RHS Music Department will present city-wide concerts on the following dates: March 9 - Orchestra concert; March 10 - Choral concert; March 15 - Band concert. The concerts are free and open to the public.
- Northwest School was notified that they were a "Silver Level" winners in The Fit and Healthy Kids School Wellness Awards. They will receive \$2,000 to support their initiatives this year. The awards recognize schools whose policies and practices reflect a high priority on healthy outcomes for children and staff. Also at Northwest, "Caps for Sale" puppet performance will take place on Thursday. From March 14 – 16th there are special music classes for all K-2 students, with an artist in residence (dancer). March 16 and 17 are parent / teacher conferences and book fair.
- Last Friday, Northeast concluded their celebration of Dr. Seuss' Birthday with an array of guest readers and a Family Film Fun Night. On Wednesday, Leah Abatiell's first grade will present the musical "Spaced Out: A Celestial Celebration" in conjunction with their study of the solar system. On March 16 and 17 there will be spring parent / teacher conferences and book fair.
- RIS celebrated Dr. Seuss Day on March 2 with trivia and guest readers throughout the day. They also celebrated "Spread the Word about the Word" Day in conjunction with the Vermont Special Olympics. Special thanks to paraeducator Keith Page for spearheading the campaign at RIS. RIS also two school wide assemblies: March 11 - Beach Ecology and March 25- Tyco Drummers.
- RMS staff and PTC are preparing a spaghetti dinner on March 16 for RMS families who are attending parent / teacher conferences on March 16. They are holding a World Language Night on March 23. Students and their families are invited for a free evening of student exhibits, songs, skits, dances and refreshments. RMS term three Progress Reports were mailed out yesterday.

**SUPERIN-
PENDENT'S
REPORT**

**ANNOUNCE-
MENTS**

- RHS Encore Theatre will present *Blessings* by Mary Hall Surface on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. This is a family show about a dyslexic who finds herself and helps others to find themselves as well. The Key Club is sponsoring a Princess / Prince for a Night project combining efforts with Reincarnation Upscale Resale and Fabulous Finds stores. They are collecting prom gowns and accessories, suits and sports jackets to be sold at RHS on March 19.
- The Governor has announced new appointments to the State Board of Education.

ANNOUNCE-
MENTS, cont.

Legislative Report - Superintendent Moran reviewed bills in the Legislature which impact or involve education. She said there are some she is concerned about which can result in new unfunded mandates and she will be communicating with legislators. She said many of them have value but she does not agree with unfunded mandates. Mr. Fagan said the military bill was read on the floor today and will be voted on tomorrow. There is a question about residency for military families.

LEGISLA-
TIVE
REPORT

COMM.
REPORTS

Policy Committee

Motion by Fagan / Forshay to approve policy #7260 - Participation of Home Study Students for second reading. Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

POLICY
COMM.

MOTION:
POLICY
#7260 FOR
SECOND
READING

New Business - Mr. Fagan said he read an article about a school in Vermont which was sued because a staff person failed to report something to police. He asked if we have a policy. Ms. Moran said the incident occurred in 2003 and involved the assertion of abuse in a community. A staff member "knew" about it or should have known and reported it. She said we do have a policy for it as well as reporting being mandated DCF and police.

NEW
BUSINESS

POLICY
QUESTION

Old Business - Commissioner Fingon recognized all the hard work and efforts of Mr. Amons through the budget process. He said he appreciated his reports and direction and knows it required a lot of time and long hours. He said the rest of the administration and Board and Budget Buddies also did a great job. He thanked the community at large for the resounding vote. Mr. Mello echoed Mr. Fingon thanking Mr. Amons and his department as well as City voters who have confidence in the schools.

OLD
BUSINESS

THANKS TO
BUSINESS
OFFICE FOR
BUDGET
WORK

Motion by Book / Cavacas at 7:30 pm, after a recess, for the board to convene to executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel, legal contractual matters, 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 8:02 pm.

PUBLIC
SESSION

Motion by Cooke / Courcelle to uphold the Superintendent's decision to deny the Level 3 REA Personal Day Grievance. Passed.

MOTION:
UPHOLD
DECISION
ON
GRIEVANCE

Motion by Cooke / Forshay to adjourn at 8:03 pm. Passed.

ADJOURN

Respectfully submitted

Janet Mondlak, Recording Secretary