

**RUTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS
MARCH 22, 2011**

School Board Members Present:

Peter Mello
Christopher Book
Hurley Cavacas, Jr.
Wayne Cooke
Peter Fagan
Collin Fingon
Jamie Pemrick
Erin Shimp
Kate Thomas
Rob Towle
Blake Bohlig

Member Absent

Richard Courcelle

Also Present:

Superintendent Mary Moran
Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss
Peter Amons
Wil Cunningham
Bill Olsen
Pam Reed
Lyle Jepson
Jay Slenker
Ellie McGarry
Susanne Engels
Jessica Henderson
Bob Johnson

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.
Chair Mello noted the absence of Commissioner Courcelle.

**CALL TO
ORDER**

ROLL CALL

Motion by Towle / Cavacas to accept the minutes of the March 8, 2011 regular school board meeting as written. Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

**MOTION:
MINUTES
03/08/11
MEETING**

Written Communication - None

**WRITTEN &
ORAL
COMMUN-
ICATION**

Oral Communication - None

**REORGAN-
IZATION**

Reorganization - Swearing in Elected and Re-Elected Members - The following Board members took the oath of office.

- a) Wayne Cook - Three Year Term
- b) Peter Fagan - Three Year Term
- c) Jamie Pemrick - Three Year Term
- d) Kate Thomas - Three Year Term

**MOTION:
ELECTION
OF BOARD
CLERK**

Election of Board Clerk

Motion by Towle / Cooke to nominate Richard Courcelle to be Board Clerk for one year. There were no other nominations. Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

Election of Board Chair - Mr. Mello passed the gavel to Commissioner Cooke, who called for motions for election of Board Chair.

**MOTION:
ELECTION
OF BOARD
CHAIR**

Motion by Cavacas / Fagan to nominate Peter Mello to be Board Chair for one year. There were no other nominations. Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

Chair Mello welcomed Commissioners Thomas and Pemrick and asked them to consider their committee assignments.

SUCCESS Report - Ms. Engels said the Success program serves approximately 50 students in all Rutland City schools. She reviewed the staffing in each class and for the program. She said there are six Master level counselors (three employed by Rutland Mental Health and three employed by the school district) and that working with Rutland Mental Health provides many important services and it is a good partnership. Ms. Engels said the program follows the district's curriculum and they partner with the other schools. She explained the therapeutic part of the program and how they integrate that into the curriculum. Ms. Engels reviewed the new components of the Success program including instruction from a Family & Consumer Studies teacher and technology. She reviewed the Positive Behavior Interventions model which is their way to approach school climate and behaviors.

Ms. Engels said the Success students in grades 3 - 6 are now situated at RIS and this has been a great opportunity for those students. The students feel good about themselves. Success will have a great summer program this year and they will be collaborating on a community garden. Ms. Engels introduced Robin Ellison and Gina Fucci, two Success staff members.

There were questions and discussion from Board members:

- How many students are there and how well are we doing to transition students to the regular classroom? Ms. Engels said there are approximately 50 students from all Rutland City schools and some other schools in the county. She said students enter the program with goals formed with teachers, family members / surrogates. Some students have been in the program for years and some for months. She said students who are there for a longer time feel it is a safe environment and sometimes do not want to go transition out.
- Are there opportunities at Stafford? Ms. Engels said there are no Success students at STC full time. However, Stafford has been gracious to expose Success students to job opportunities and welcomes them for tours. She said Stafford is very much a goal for many Success students.
- How does the high school award credit? Ms. Engels said students of high school age follow RHS requirements – 26 credits. Success counselors work with RHS guidance. The students follow the same content however if a student is on an individual plan, what makes up a credit could potentially vary.
- Are the grades 3 - 6 students at RIS blending in? Are there stigmas? Ms. Engels said the Success students are blending in well. There is a welcoming attitude by teachers and she said other students do not realize they are Success students. Ms. Moran said the goal, when space allows, is to move the K-2 students into a primary school and follow that role. Allen Street would be turned back for grade 7-12 students and the space would be used differently.

Mr. Mello said he has seen a lot of growth and progress with the Success program although there are a lot of challenges. He said there are the added challenges of the behavioral issues. He said it has been a terrific program. Ms. Moran said all the students take all the assessments which all the other students take such as NECAPs. Ms. Engels explained they are looking into forays into distance learning. The learning has to be relevant. Technology helps keep students engaged.

Motion by Fagan / Book to approve the Licensed and Non-licensed section of the Personnel Memorandum No. 442 dated March 18, 2011, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

PERSONNEL

MOTION:
PERSONNEL
MEMO #442

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

Motion passed by all those in attendance.

REDUCTION
IN FORCE

Reduction in Force - Mr. Mello said this is required action item. Ms. Moran said the Board spent a lot of time analyzing budgets and making decisions on cuts. They have been voted upon by the Board and the public. This is the beginning point for notifying people. Positions are listed, not names. Some other positions were eliminated but they were done through retirements and do not need this type of action. Ms. Moran said it has been reported that there will be "fewer courses" due to the cuts but that is not accurate. There will be fewer sections of some courses.

Motion by Towle / Fagan to affirm the reductions in force for the following positions: English, English Language Learning (ELL), Mathematics, Music, Social Studies, STC Architecture, and STC Technology. Also to eliminate two ARRA funded positions: Northwest Integrationist and District-Wide Psychologist. Passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

MOTION:
AFFIRM
REDUC-
TIONS IN
FORCE

IDEA-B ARRA Funds - Mr. Amons said federal stimulus money is coming to a close and funds must be spent by September 30, 2011. However, the state is asking that we amend our grants and spend the money by April 1. This does not need Board action. Mr. Amons said these are all special education items and Ms. McGarry reviewed the items:

BUSINESS
REPORT

IDEA-B
ARRA
FUNDS

- Purchase a regular van at the high school to transport students to community and work placements - \$26,000
- Purchase a handicap accessible short bus - \$55,000
- Purchase a variety of technology for Special Education use - \$40,000
- Repair wheelchair lift at RIS - \$25,000
- Install handicap door opener at RHS special education classroom - \$4000
- These expenditures total \$150,000.

Ms. Moran said a meeting was held with the more significantly disabled students at the high school and their top request was for one door into the school to be handicapped accessible. She said the meeting was a terrific example of student empowerment. The special education van (not handicapped) is a seven passenger van. The new bus could handle six passengers and four wheelchairs. This will help with bus replacement scheme but this is a different bus than the one in the budget. Ms. McGarry said built into the cost of the van is training. The drivers will not need CDL. Paraeducators will be trained and will be able to transport. Ms. McGarry said the technology tools are for Netbooks to be used for writing, some iPads for younger students and some SmartBoards. Mr. Amons said these are all legitimate expenses for use of the money. Mr. Mello said this is an information item. There were no Board member objections.

Announcements

- Ms. Moran recognized the art display at Longfellow -- third grade self-portraits. More student art can be seen through April 9 at the Chaffee Art Gallery in Rutland.
- Featured Northwest students at the Chaffee show are: Charisma Ragins, Emma Gilmore, Natalie Henry, Augie Louras, Aaliyah Potter, and Callum Smathers. April 1 is the next STAR student trip – students will travel to the Rutland Bowlerama.
- At Northeast, the next Principal's tea at March 24. On the agenda is co-teaching and NECAP exams. On March 29 - 30, first graders will visit Sugar and Spice to learn the maple sugaring process. On March 31, there is Family Literacy night for parents and children.
- RIS had a wonderful school wide presentation about Ecology on March 11. The Ferry Beach School Project from Saco, Maine presented a informational performance on the study of ecology that can be found right out our front door. This week Drum Journey is presenting to the students. Both are sponsored by the PTC.
- RHS was notified that they were the "Bronze Level" winners in The Fit and Healthy Kids School Wellness Awards. They will receive \$1,000 to support their initiatives. This award is sponsored by Action for Healthy Kids Vermont, New England Dairy & Food Council, the Vermont Departments of Health and Education, and the Vermont Education Health Initiative. The fifth annual Soup Bowls for Hunger will take place at the RHS cafeteria on Thursday. The benefit is the Community Cupboard. It is completely sold out.
- Parents of kindergartners entering September 2011 are urged to bring in their children for screening and registration.

**SUPERIN-
PENDENT'S
REPORT**

**ANNOUNCE-
MENTS**

Legislative Report - Ms. Moran said board members have been receiving the legislative reports concerning education issues. She reviewed some of the legislation under consideration.

**LEGISLA-
TIVE
REPORT**

Committee Reports - None

**COMM.
REPORTS**

New Business

Mr. Fagan said he enjoyed three recent concerts in the schools. There is one more concert coming up; the Jazz Ensemble at RHS which begins at the end of Soup Bowls for Hunger on Thursday. Ms. Moran said there was a great photo in the Rutland Herald of the lower grades band.

**NEW
BUSINESS**

**MUSIC IN
SCHOOLS**

**KUDOS TO
STC
CULINARY**

Mr. Towle said he was at a business meeting at STC and commended Mr. Jepson for a terrific meal. He said there is a lot of talent in the culinary program.

**RHS BLOOD
DRIVE**

Blake Bohlig said there was a blood drive at RHS today. 65 people participated. It was well organized and she thanked the Red Cross and everyone who participated or helped.

**OLD
BUSINESS**

Old Business

Mr. Cavacas said he would like to see another meeting scheduled with Rutland Central and Rutland South. He thinks they are in transition and he thinks we should sit down

**MEETING
WITH
OTHER
SCHOOL
DISTRICTS**

together. Mr. Mello said he was frustrated with the first two meetings but he is open to discuss how to work efficiently together. Mr. Cavacas said Rutland South sounds like they are willing to work together. There was a conversation about how open the business community and both REDC and the Chamber officials were enthusiastic. Mr. Mello said he thought the REDC director was going to pursue it further. Mr. Mello said the last he remembers is that a different venue was needed to move the agenda along. He said perhaps a community forum is needed to get input from community members about how collaboration might work. Mr. Mello said he thinks the school district needs to play a leadership role.

Blake Bohlig said there was a lot of food left over from the food sponsors at the blood drive and they will be bringing it to the food shelf.

Motion by Towle / Fagan at 7:27 pm, after a recess, for the board to convene to executive session for the purpose of discussing 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 8:15 pm.

PUBLIC
SESSION

Motion by Cooke / Book to adjourn at 8:16 pm. Passed.

ADJOURN

Respectfully submitted

Janet Mondlak
Recording Secretary