

WEST BOYLSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
WEDNESDAY, March 13, 2013**

LOCATION: West Boylston Middle/High School Media Center

PRESENT: SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

John Owanisian, Chairman

Richard Shaw

Erin Palumbo

James Pedone

ADMINISTRATORS

Elizabeth Schaper, Superintendent

Lawrence Murphy, Principal Middle/High School

Christopher LaBreck, Associate MS Principal

Marjorie McCarthy, Elementary Principal

Roger E. Pontbriand, Jr., Business Administrator

Sherri Traina, Special Education Administrator

COMMUNITY

Faculty & Staff: 4 Guests: 21

Student Advisors: 3 Press: 1

Mr. Owanisian opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the March 13, 2013 School Committee Meeting.

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Shaw made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular School Committee Meeting of February 13, 2013; Ms. Palumbo seconded. Motion approved. **Voted 4-0-0.**

Student Recognition Awards

Mr. Owanisian introduced Ms. McCarthy, who presented the Student of the Month Award to Major Edwards Elementary student, Ricky Shaw.

Mr. LaBreck presented the Student of the Month Award from the Middle/High School to Michelle Loven, a 7th grader who is new to our school as of this past fall.

Mr. Murphy presented the Student of the Month Award for the High School to McKenzie Dano.

Student Advisory Council

Mr. Owanisian introduced the members of the Student Advisory Council – Kelly Sorge, Rachel O'Connor and Tyler Arme, who updated those in attendance regarding current events happening in the Middle/High School.

Rachel indicated that the Math Team was getting ready for their next meet, Wednesday, April 3, 2013 at North High School. She also advised the Student Council had a very successful blood drive two weeks ago with the Red Cross. She said that Play Competitions would take place next Friday. Rachel stated that last week a couple members of the council went to Hyannis to represent West Boylston in a once a year conference. She stated that they won many awards such as the Council of Excellence Award.

Tyler indicated the council attended several workshops while in Hyannis which would prepare them for the regional conference in April. He also updated those in attendance regarding activities involving Peer Advocates and Project 27.

Kelly talked about the Peer Lion Program. She stated that is when a stuffed animal is given to

someone in the school, either a faculty member or a student about once a month. It is given to someone who goes above and beyond to contribute to the WB community, who inspires others to do the same, treats others with respect and demonstrates personal integrity. This month the lion was given to senior, Jenna Coviello.

Mr. Owanisian asked the council if there were any updates with regard to sports.

Rachel stated tryouts for spring sports would start next Monday.

Mr. Owanisian announced Mr. Murphy who introduced the high school cheerleaders and their head coach Ms. Debora Goodwill.

Mr. Murphy stated that cheerleading has been a sport that within the last few years has been in decline and they were looking to induce some enthusiasm and energy into the sport.

Ms. Goodwill introduced, about half of the cheerleading team, to those in attendance. She stated that during the fall they tried to emphasize what cheering is all about. She stated that during the football season, the squad had a phenomenal period because the team won the Super Bowl. She stated that it was a great for the girls' conditioning because every time the team scored, the cheerleaders did pushups for the total of the score.

Ms. Goodwill then introduced one of her assistants, Ms. Amy Smith. Ms. Smith stated that she taught Pop Warner for 8 years and coordinated for 7. Ms. Smith indicated the girls went to Pro Athletics (a tumbling gym), every week for 2 hours. Ms. Smith stated that we have huge parent support helping the team with concessions and fundraising.

Ms. Goodwill indicated the team won the league championship, so the numbers will go up on a banner in the gym.

Mr. Owanisian congratulated Ms. Goodwill and her team for an outstanding job.

Mr. Owanisian introduced Dr. Schaper who indicated that the 2013-2014 calendar was complete, and there was a copy of same in the School Committee packet.

Dr. Schaper presented the calendar for initial approval indicating that it would then be sent out to the staff and brought back next month for a final approval.

Mr. Shaw asked if there were any specific changes to the calendar, such as half days.

Dr. Schaper explained that one professional development day was moved

Mr. Owanisian asked if the graduation date had been determined and Dr. Schaper stated it is always the first Friday in June. She said the only caveat to that would be if we had so many snow days that that didn't fall within the law.

Mr. Owanisian asked how the decision was made as to when the snow days kicked in.

Dr. Schaper explained the snow day regulations.

Dr. Schaper stated that we put the two parent conference days at Major Edwards during the week of Thanksgiving break so that it made it easier for parents.

Mr. Owanisian asked if the first day of school would be August 28, 2013 and Dr. Schaper indicated that was true.

Highlight on Schools

School Calendar

School Choice Recommendation

Dr. Schaper presented her request for school choice for FY14. .

Dr. Schaper stated that a school choice lottery would be held in the Superintendent's Conference Room on April 1, 2013 at 9:00 a.m.

MOTION:

Mr. Pedone made a motion to approve the school choice recommendation for FY14, Mr. Shaw seconded; **Voted 4-0-0.**

Subcommittee Reports

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Budget Subcommittee. Mr. Pedone stated the Subcommittee did attend the Selectmen Meeting last month.

Mr. Owanisian indicated the School Committee would like to separate their budget from the vocational budget line. He stated that we really have no control over the vocational budget. Mr. Owanisian stated he felt it was appropriate to present it as a separate line item and not have it imbedded in our budget.

Mr. Shaw indicated that the School Committee has gone to the Selectmen in town several times and discussed the idea of taking the vocational school expenses off our line item, as this is a fixed expense just like health insurance. It is the responsibility of the town, not the responsibility of the schools.

Mr. Shaw indicated some towns have a maximum amount of kids that can attend the vocational schools. He would like there to be legislation in that area and stated that our school committee is working on that issue. He mentioned that every town around us has the vocational school expenses built into the town budget, not the school budget.

Mr. Shaw would like to see that a letter is written to the Selectmen specifically stating that this is what we believe is in the best interest of the town and the schools.

Mr. Owanisian asked if there were any additional comments.

Ms. Palumbo stated that she was very new to this discussion, having recently been elected to the School Committee, but that she was in agreement with writing the letter to the town.

Mr. Owanisian felt there should be a separate education line item for Assabet, which would place greater visibility on it.

Mr. Shaw stated that the letter would go with specific recommendations that it's not our School Committee number and it has to be separated away from the school completely. He said we should go with that specific recommendation – as what we are looking for is a separation completely.

Mr. Owanisian stated he would support that proposal.

Mr. Owanisian asked if someone would make a motion to have the Superintendent draft such a letter to the town regarding the vocational budget. Mr. Shaw made a motion to authorize Dr. Schaper to create a specific letter requesting that the vocational budget line is removed from the schools and added to the town budget line, Ms. Palumbo seconded; **Voted: 4-0-0.**

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Ch. 74 Subcommittee. Mr. Shaw indicated there was nothing to report since their meeting with Representative Jim O'Day.

Mr. Owanisian indicated the Marketing Subcommittee continues to distribute the School Choice posters and when they met with Selectmen a few weeks ago, Mr. McCormick offered to put up some of the posters in the local establishments.

Mr. Owanisian stated the Negotiations Subcommittee had been quite busy in the recent months. Included in the School Committee's packet was a Memorandum of Agreement Between the West Boylston School Committee and the West Boylston Teachers' Association. Mr. Owanisian thanked all those involved with the negotiations process including - former School Committee member; Siobhan Bohanson and Michelle Gangai, the president of the teachers' union.

MOTION:

Mr. Shaw motioned to accept the Memorandum of Agreement Between the West Boylston School Committee and the West Boylston Teachers' Association, Mr. Pedone seconded; **Voted: 4-0-0.**

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Policy Subcommittee. Ms. Palumbo stated that both she and Ms. Breen met to work on the Homework Policy. Dr. Schaper provided them with examples from other towns. The subcommittee came to an agreement as to an amount of hours/guidelines regarding homework assigned per grade level. Dr. Schaper is putting a draft together and we expect to see that next month.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the School Building Subcommittee. Mr. Shaw stated the committee met last week with the CIP for the town. The primary discussion involved the roof leakage in the Middle/High School library. The subcommittee checked with an architect as to what we could do to solve the leaks on the outside of the building as well as suggestions for improvement to the inside of the building once we solve the leak problems.

Mr. Shaw indicated that the School Building Subcommittee also discussed school safety. Dr. Schaper, Mr. Pontbriand and administrators met with the Chief of Police to discuss safety needs of the schools, such as changing locks in the classrooms so that the teachers can lock their rooms from the inside.

Mr. Shaw stated that they've also been investigating the possibility of using natural gas in the schools, as the price is approximately 1/3 the price of oil.

Mr. Pontbriand explained to the committee that he met with a representative from NStar to discuss the possibility of converting the boilers to natural gas. He stated that from the numbers provided by the representative it was a savings of over \$100,000.00 for both of our facilities on an annual basis. He stated that this process is still in the preliminary stages.

Mr. Owanisian stated there was a need for a vote to authorize submission of a statement of interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

MOTION:

Ms. Palumbo made the motion to submit the statement of interest for the West Boylston Middle/High School, Mr. Shaw seconded; **Voted: 4-0-0.**

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Technology Subcommittee. Mr. Pedone indicated there was nothing to report at this time.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Transportation Subcommittee. Ms. Palumbo indicated there was nothing to report at this time.

Mr. Owanisian thanked Mr. Bokankowitz for filming the meeting.

Community Input

Mr. Owanisian asked if there was any community input and seeing that there was none, moved to Communication and Reports.

Communication and Reports

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the elementary school. Ms. McCarthy advised the community that if they've not yet registered their child for kindergarten, they may do so at the Major Edwards Elementary School main office and should do so as soon as possible. Ms. McCarthy stated there were many interesting things going on at Major Edwards this month – such as: Kindergarteners beginning their Encouraging Time Together, a take home reading program, first grade science unit called Life Cycles, grade two whales presentation by Ms. Breen and grade 5 literature circles.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report of the Middle/High School. Mr. LaBreck stated the 7th graders were finishing up a non-fiction unit by writing a 5 paragraph essay in preparation for the Language Arts MCAS exam, 8th graders and Ms. Luby's algebra students were graphing exponential functions on graphing calculators, 6th graders were studying Asian cultures, and the 5th grade students information night would be held on March 14, 2013 at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report of the High School. Mr. McCarthy stated the NHS held its induction ceremony on March 12, 2013 brining in 16 new members, Ms. Tetler was further recognized by the art teacher community as the eastern regional representative for excellence in art education and the Super Bowl championship football team would receive their rings in a ceremony on March 17, 2013.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Director of Special Education, to which, Ms. Traina advised there was nothing new to report at this time.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Business Administrator. Mr. Pontbriand requested the School Committee authorize either the school superintendent or himself to write a thank you letter to the Worcester County Sheriff's Office for their assistance painting at the Middle/High School during this past February vacation. Mr. Pontbriand also indicated that now that the teachers' contract has been approved, we could move forward with implementing the salaries.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the superintendent.

Dr. Schaper provided an explanation of the New Requirements of the FLLAC Agreement. Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the School Committee. Ms. Palumbo, Mr. Shaw and Mr. Pedone advised they had nothing to report at this time.

Mr. Owanisian stated that the School Committee met with Dr. Schaper to discuss the data dashboard; he felt the meeting was effective. Mr. Owanisian stated that he is continuing his series of interviews for Ch. 12. He indicated that next Friday he would be interviewing the first grade teachers Dianne Holmes and Susan Cassidy.

Adjournment

At 8:40 Mr. Shaw made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Pedone seconded; **Voted: 4-0-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Johnson
Recording Secretary