

BERLIN BOARD OF EDUCATION
February 25, 2013
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING

Attendance: Gary Brochu
Kristin Campanelli
Jeffrey Cugno Arrived at 7:07 p.m.
Julie Erickson
Irene Matulis Absent
Timothy Oakes
Kathleen O'Donnell-Moss
John Richards
George Synnott Arrived at 7:56 p.m.

Also in attendance: Superintendent of Schools David B. Erwin; Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Brian Benigni; Director of Business Operations Roman Czuchta; Director of Human Resources Denise Parsons; Director of Pupil Personnel Services Linda Holian; Principal of Berlin High School Francis Kennedy; Principal of McGee Middle School Dr. Scott Ratchford; Principal of Griswold School Laurie Gjerpen; Principal of Hubbard School Alfred Souza; and Principal of Willard School Salvatore Urso.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Brochu called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. in the Board of Education (“the Board”) meeting room at 238 Kensington Road, Berlin, CT. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by student, Sarah Daddario. A Moment of Silence was observed.

II. SPECIAL PRESENTATION – CABE AWARD OF EXCELLENCE FOR EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

Becky Tyrrel, member of Connecticut Association of Boards of Education’s (CABE) Board of Directors, presented the 2012 CABE Award of Excellence for Educational Communications to the Board. This award recognizes school districts for interesting and innovative publications as well as audio visual presentations. The Board was recognized for the *Berlin Board of Education Member Handbook*.

III. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Czuchta provided the Board with an update on the SmartBus program, sharing an email he received from SmartBus sent to Peter Agostini at New Britain Transportation. Mr. Czuchta shared with the Board an email received from Mark Bowling, high school band director, indicating he has taken delivery of the new band uniforms, and also in the email, Mr. Bowling raised the question if the old band uniforms can be sold to alumni that may want one.

Ms. Parsons reported the custodial staff has filed a petition to change their union and reported on the first meeting that was held today. Once a union is determined, Ms. Parsons reported she will need Board representation. Ms. Parsons reported secretarial negotiations will begin March 19, 2013. Ms. Parsons reported the Human Resources Department is rolling out an online web access for employees to access payroll information.

Mr. Benigni reported on the Professional Development that occurred on Friday, February 15, 2013.

Ms. O'Donnell-Moss reported she is planning on attending CABA's *A Day on the Hill* on Wednesday, March 6, 2013. Ms. O'Donnell-Moss reported she will co-chair her last Education Council meeting on Monday, March 18, 2013.

Mr. Richards reported he attended the Public Building Commission's regular meeting on Thursday, February 14, 2013. Mr. Richards reported he attended the Berlin girls' basketball CCC tournament quarterfinals game against Southington in Farmington on Monday, February 18, 2013. Mr. Richards reported he and the Superintendent attended the Capitol Region Education Council's (CREC) regular meeting on Wednesday, February 20, 2013, at which Commissioner of Education Stefan Pryor was in attendance.

Mr. Erwin reported on the Professional Development Day that occurred on Friday, February 15, 2013. Mr. Erwin reported he, along with Mr. Brochu, attended the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education/Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CABA/CAPSS) convention planning committee meeting last week to plan for the fall conference. Mr. Erwin reported he attended CREC's regular meeting on Wednesday, February 20, 2013, which dealt with CHOICE, noting the Commissioner of Education is grateful for the support the districts have given in increasing the number of CHOICE seats. Mr. Erwin reported he would like to find a way for AFSCME to assume the responsibility for the Board's legal services from this morning's meeting concerning the custodians' petition for a new union. Mr. Erwin reported there was an administrator meeting last week and Chief of Police Paul Fitzgerald, Deputy Chief of Police John Klett and police officers came and discussed safety procedures. Mr. Erwin reported he, along with Mr. Czuchta, met today with BlumShapiro regarding uniform chart of accounts. Mr. Erwin shared correspondences received from Rosemary Walczewski and Cathy D'Amato.

Mr. Brochu reported proposals for presentations for the CABA convention are due March 8, 2013. Mr. Brochu provided Board members with a copy of a letter from Commissioner of Education Stefan Pryor dated February 22, 2013 concerning implementation of the new teacher evaluation model. Mr. Brochu reported he will send Board members, by email, a listing of unfunded mandates to Boards of Education. Mr. Brochu encouraged Board members to attend CABA's *A Day on the Hill* on Wednesday, March 6, 2013. Mr. Brochu reported Berlin will give a presentation at the National School Boards Association (NSBA) annual conference in April. Mr. Brochu requested coverage from Board members for an upcoming community event he is unable to attend. Mr. Brochu reported the Board will meet with the Town Council's Budget Committee on Monday, March 4, 2013, regarding the Board's proposed budget.

IV. STUDENT PRESENTATION – CATHERINE M. MCGEE SCHOOL

Students demonstrated a lesson using the Vocabulary Magic System that shows one of the ways literacy is being integrated into the science curriculum. Jason Rosa, grade 8 science teacher, demonstrated a mini-lesson in science vocabulary development, which the Board participated. The student presenters were Sarah Daddario, Ashley Skinner and Melody Zielke.

A short recess was taken from 7:46 p.m. to 7:58 p.m. to celebrate the Board's accomplishment.

V. RECOMMENDED ACTION – PART I

1. Emma Hart Willard School Roof Replacement

Al Jacunski, of Jacunski Humes Architects LLC, presented preliminary plans and specifications and cost estimates for a full roof replacement at Emma Hart Willard School in accordance with the Board's Educational Specifications and Statement of Need dated October 24, 2011 and responded to the Board's questions regarding his presentation. A copy of the budget cost estimate and schematic drawings were provided to Board members.

Moved by Mr. Richards, seconded by Ms. Campanelli, that in accordance with Section 8-11-4 of the Charter, the Board of Education requests from the Town Council an amount of \$1,714,970, as recommended by the Public Works Department (the Building Committee), for final plans and specifications, architectural fees and construction costs for the roof replacement at Emma Hart Willard School in accordance with the Statement of Need dated October 24, 2011.

Mr. Czuchta indicated the motion needs to be amended to include prior to Statement of Need the following: "Educational Specifications and "

Moved by Mr. Richards, seconded by Ms. Campanelli, to amend the motion to incorporate these words.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 7:0**

Moved by Mr. Richards, seconded by Ms. Campanelli, that in accordance with Section 8-11-4 of the Charter, the Board of Education requests from the Town Council an amount of \$1,714,970, as recommended by the Public Works Department (the Building Committee), for final plans and specifications, architectural fees and construction costs for the roof replacement at Emma Hart Willard School in accordance with the Educational Specifications and Statement of Need dated October 24, 2011.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 7:0**

Item added to the agenda

Moved by Mr. Richards, seconded by Ms. O'Donnell-Moss, to add an item to the agenda concerning the full-day kindergarten room renovations.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Brochu**

Mr. Czuchta is requesting the Board waive the bid requirements for architectural services and authorize the administration to enter into a contract with Jacunski Humes Architects LLC to complete the plans

and specifications for the full-day kindergarten room renovations. These services are not to exceed \$16,000.

Moved by Mr. Richards, seconded by Ms. Erickson, to waive the bid requirements for architectural services and enter into a contract with Jacunski Humes Architects LLC to create plans and specifications for the retrofitting of classrooms for the full-day kindergarten program not to exceed \$16,000.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 7:0

VI. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Nothing to report.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Minutes – Special Meeting of February 13, 2013

Moved by Ms. O'Donnell-Moss, seconded by Mr. Oakes, to approve the consent agenda as presented.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 6:0:1; with Board Member Campanelli abstaining.

VIII. INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. Facilities Related Updates – Code Renovations – Berlin High School

Director of Business Operations Roman J. Czuchta reported he attended the Public Building Commission meeting held on Thursday, February 14, 2013. Mr. Czuchta reported there was a work session meeting held prior to the Public Building Commission meeting at which time there were discussions concerning the updated cost estimate for the high school that was later presented formally to the Public Building Commission. Two components of that discussion was the technology being proposed in the building as well as furniture, fixtures and equipment. Mr. Czuchta reported there will be some discussions with the administration as to whether there is any suggestion for these two line items. Mr. Czuchta reported, at the Public Building Commission meeting, Tom Smith from Gilbane Building Company reported Phase I has begun and work is being done on the connections of utilities to the site; installation of the footings for the new building has begun; the oil tank on site has been removed; and the generator will be relocated. Mr. Czuchta reported there was quite a bit of discussion at the Public Building Commission meeting concerning the plans and specifications for Phase II that have gone to a third-party for review. The third-party reviewer completed his work last Friday, February 22, 2013, three days earlier than had been planned. His list of corrections will now go to Silver Petrucelli + Associates to respond to them. FIP Construction plans to put Phase 2 out to bid on March 11, 2013. This is contingent on Silver Petrucelli + Associates being able to make the adjustments to the drawings based on the third-party reviewer's comments and to get an appointment with the State to accept the Phase 2 plans. In terms of technology and furniture, fixtures and equipment, Mr. Brochu suggested a

representative from the district meet with Gilbane Building Company and begin the initial questions: relationship between technology; infrastructure versus what is being purchased; what kind of consultants are utilized; and timelines, etcetera and then the Board can have a report back for a status. Mr. Czuchta reported the Public Building Commission will meet on Thursday, February 28, 2013, and the Advisory Committee will meet prior to that meeting.

B. Overview of Performance of Open CHOICE Students

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Brian Benigni provided an overview of the performance of Open CHOICE students. Mr. Benigni's presentation consisted of the year CHOICE students entered Berlin public schools; absences; current grade level; years in Berlin public schools; services students are receiving for regular educational interventions; number of disciplinary actions; latest CMT and CAPT levels; grade point average for high school students for years 2011-2012; and current grade point average for high school students. Mr. Benigni also provided Board members with the individual student CMT performance level comparison for multiple years. Mr. Benigni provided Board members with a copy of his presentation.

IX. RECOMMENDED ACTION – PART II

A. Open CHOICE Program Participation

Superintendent David B. Erwin provided the Board with a document reflecting, by grade and school, his recommended number of additional CHOICE students for 2013-2014. Mr. Erwin reported the district currently has ninety-one (91) CHOICE students, of which eighty-eight (88) students will advance one grade next year. Mr. Erwin reported the State Department of Education is requesting the district accommodate an additional thirty (30) students for the 2013-2014 school year. These thirty (30) students have selected Berlin as their first choice. Mr. Erwin began his presentation recommending twenty-eight (28) students. Mr. Erwin provided the Board with a breakdown of his recommendation for placement of these students within grade kindergarten at Hubbard (1); Griswold (3) and Willard (3); Grade 1 at Griswold (1) and Hubbard (2); grade 2 at Hubbard (1) and Griswold (2); grade 4 at Hubbard (2); grade 5 at Hubbard (1); grades 6, 7 and 8 at McGee (1, 3 and 1 respectively); and grades 9 and 10 at the high school (4 and 3 respectively). Mr. Erwin reported the kindergarten seats are pending budget approval of a full-day kindergarten program. The State Department of Education is requesting the district accommodate siblings wherever possible. Included in these numbers are nine (9) sibling seats, one (1) of which is in grade 6 and one (1) in grade 10. Mr. Erwin reported he is accommodating the one sibling in grade 6 but not the other two students due to the reorganization of grade 6 and the reduction of two teachers to accommodate for other needs. Mr. Erwin also left, as an option to the Board, to accept just the one sibling in grade 10 and not the other two students. The Board entered into a lengthy discussion concerning the impact of these additional twenty eight (28) seats to the district; entry level for CHOICE students; the demands on the district's resources and supports; and the amount of funding the district will receive in return. The Board also discussed the impact of including the two additional grade 6 CHOICE seats. In particular, there was discussion surrounding the district determining a strategy for offering seats, based on a steady state condition for the district, and wanting to honor the specific requests of Hartford students to come to Berlin as their first choice of school district.

After the discussion, Mr. Erwin's final recommendation, regarding the level of participation in the Open CHOICE Program for the 2013-2014 school year, was the thirty (30) students the State Department of Education is requesting the district accommodate.

Moved by Mr. Synnott, seconded by Ms. Erickson, to approve the superintendent's recommendation regarding the level of participation in the Open CHOICE Program for the 2013-2014 school year as presented with the thirty (30) students.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Brochu

X. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Ms. O'Donnell-Moss, seconded by Ms. Campanelli, to adjourn the meeting at 10:17 p.m.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 7:0

Respectfully submitted,
John Richards
Acting for the Board Secretary
Berlin Board of Education