

March 26, 2014

The Brooklyn Board of Education held its regular monthly meeting on March 25, 2014 in the middle school library. In attendance were: Mrs. Lyons, Attorney Kelley, Mr. Rossi, Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Majek, Mr. DonFrancisco, Mr. Voccio, Board of Selectmen, and Mr. Otto, Board of Finance. Also present were Dr. Berry, Superintendent, and Mr. Yanku, Middle School Principal. Members of the teaching staff and public were in the audience.

1. Call to Order

Mrs. Lyons called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm.

2. Comments by:

- a. BEA – none
- b. Local 1303-AFSCME – none
- c. PTO – none
- d. Public – Mrs. Michelle Cole, the mother of a student in the elementary school voiced her concerns about safety on school grounds outdoors. She informed that she has done some online research concerning grants for school safety improvements. She received estimates from Fence One, with Ms. Rotella's approval, to install vinyl coated chain link fencing around certain areas of the school grounds. Mr. Rossi spoke on behalf of the Capital Committee and informed Mrs. Cole that the committee funds large-scale improvements. They are planning on hiring a company to do a full-scale comprehensive assessment of the security needs of the school. They would be interested in the findings of her research and grant information for school safety improvements. The Board of Education will remain in contact with her regarding her concerns.

3. Minutes of

- Board Meeting held on February 26, 2014

Motion to accept the meeting minutes of February 26, 2014

(Rossi / Majek)

Unanimous vote to accept

4. Correspondence:

Dr. Berry informed the board that she received a letter from David Klein of Norwich Free Academy asking if the Brooklyn Board of Education is open to him coming in for an informational meeting to speak about NFA and what they have to offer.

The board of education stated that they are interested in hearing what NFA has to offer.

The Woodstock Academy 2nd quarter honor roll list highlighting Brooklyn students who made honor roll was included in the board's packet.

Dr. Berry informed the Board of Education members that she had received a letter of resignation from Joyce Davis.

Motion to accept the letter of resignation with regret from Joyce Davis
(Johnson / Majek)

Unanimous vote to accept

5. Consent Agenda

- None

6. Administrative Reports:

a. Elementary School Principal

A report from Ms. Rotella was included in the board packets.

b. Middle School Principal

Mr. Yanku gave a presentation on Smarter Balanced testing. He explained the differences between CMT testing and Smarter Balanced testing. He informed the members that the CMT science test is still given to 5th and 8th graders because, at present, there is no Smarter Balanced test for science. Mr. Yanku gave the board members a practice Smarter Balanced test. Discussion of the testing ensued.

c. Assistant Principal

Mrs. Sweet's report on spring sports was in the board packets. Dr. Berry informed that there are two potential softball coaches. They have been interviewed and Mrs. Sweet is currently checking on their certifications.

d. Special Education Director

- Special Education Enrollment

Dr. Berry presented the Special Education Enrollment Report. She stated that tuition for outplaced students is costly. She stressed that placement is determined

on the basis of the best needs of the student. She also stated that there are times during the course of the year when certain circumstances require that a student be outplaced.

e. Superintendent

- School Calendar 2013-2014

Dr. Berry stated that there is presently 6 school days that need to be made up. She recommended to the Board of Education members, a change in the number of school days for students from 182 to the state required 180. The last day for students could be Thursday, June 19, 2014 and professional development days for staff members could be Friday, June 20, 2014 and Monday, June 23, 2014.

Motion for the last school day for students to be Thursday, June 19, 2014, 8th grade graduation be Wednesday, June 18, 2014 and Friday, June 20, 2014 and Monday, June 23, 2014 be professional development days for staff.

(Rossi / Majek)

Unanimous vote to accept

- Enrollment Report

Dr. Berry presented the Enrollment Report. She noted that there is a closer balance in the number of students choosing Woodstock Academy and Killingly High School than in previous years.

- Union Contract Negotiations

There is a meeting on March 27, 2014 with the negotiations committee and Attorney Littlefield to prepare for Local 1303 contract negotiations.

- 2014-2015 Budget Draft

Dr. Berry presented the proposed 2014-2015 budget. She noted that there is a 2.2% increase and the total proposed budget is \$17,022,826.00. The budget also reflects a 12.78% increase in health costs and the salary costs for a full day kindergarten program.

Motion to accept the proposed 2014-2015 budget

(Kelley / Rossi)
Unanimous vote to accept

- Job Description – Finance Manager

Dr. Berry informed the Board of Education members that she had met with Mr. Ives and a draft job description for a finance manager has been developed.

Mr. Voccio stated that the wording in the “performance bond” language in the description should be changed to “fidelity bond”.

- School Calendar 2014-2015

Dr. Berry presented a draft of the 2014-2015 school calendar. The calendar is consistent with the recommendations sent from the EastConn Regional Education Center.

Motion to accept the 2014-2015 school calendar
(Johnson / Rossi)
Unanimous vote to accept

- Full Day Kindergarten

Dr. Berry presented information on a full day kindergarten program versus a half-day program. She informed the members that the State of Connecticut strongly recommends full day kindergarten. She stated that funds have been included in the proposed 2014-2015 budget for the increase in salaries. There will be no need for equipment, furniture or materials in that there are plenty in the kindergarten at present. There will also be a savings in transportation due to a change from four bus runs mid-day down to two.

- Current Bills

Dr. Berry presented a list of current bills to the Board of Education members for their review.

- Woodstock Academy Transportation

Dr. Berry informed that there are presently 7 foreign students who are attending Woodstock Academy and living with host families in Brooklyn. The Brooklyn School District is not

legally responsible for transporting these students to and from Woodstock Academy. The headmaster at Woodstock Academy has asked for a meeting with Brooklyn's Superintendent to discuss this issue.

7. Public Comments

Mr. Otto commented that the budget increase is 2.3% and not 2.2% as previously reported.

8. Committee Reports

a. Policy – Attorney Kelley received a packet of policy concerning the medical leave act. He has not had a chance to go through it yet.

b. Curriculum

Nothing to report at this time

c. Negotiations

There is a meeting scheduled for March 27, 2014 with Attorney Littlefield and the negotiations committee of Local 1303.

There are currently four (4) contracts needing signatures.

Motion to approve the contracts of the Property Services Manager, the Elementary School Principal, the Coordinator of Business Operations and the Director of Special Education.

(Rossi / Johnson)

Unanimous vote to accept

d. Capital

The Capital Committee has received three bids to repair the alarm system and bring it up to code at the middle school and elementary school. The bids are \$139,000; \$157,000; and \$164,000.

The roof of the Rose Wing is in need of repairs and the committee is waiting the results of the environmental test that was conducted.

The Capital Committee has received an estimate for phase 1 of repairs to the north parking lot. The \$65,000 estimate is from Mr. Green and it covers repairing and repaving the asphalt and redirecting the flow of traffic.

Motion for fire alarm repairs and security upgrades, repairs to the Rose Wing roof, and repairs to the north parking lot be the priority of the Capital Committee
(Rossi / DonFrancisco)
Unanimous vote to accept

e. EASTCONN

Mrs. Johnson presented her report on the EastConn Board meeting.

f. High School Relations

A Brooklyn student, Bailey Cummings, received the Headmaster's Award at Woodstock Academy. Other Brooklyn students were also recognized for their athletic accomplishments.

The Athletic Director at Woodstock Academy is generating great enthusiasm for a variety of sports.

g. Recreation Committee

Mr. DonFrancisco attended the meeting and the budget was approved.

Representatives from the:

PTO – none

BEA – none

BOF – Mr. Otto commented on the teen center.

9. Old Business

Dr. Berry informed that she received a call from First Student. Brooklyn's contract with them states that they will not use a bus older than five years to transport students. At this time, there are five buses that will be five years old in June. They offered a reduced rate of \$35,000 for continuing to use the buses for one additional year and a reduced rate of \$40,000 for continuing to use the buses for two additional years.

There is also a need for an additional small wheelchair bus. First Student has agreed to provide an additional wheelchair bus as well as give Brooklyn a reduced rate for the utilization of buses older than five years old.

Motion for Dr. Berry to negotiate with First Student
(Rossi / Kelley)
Unanimous vote to accept

10. New Business

There is a meeting scheduled for April 16, 2014 at 6 pm for the Board of Education to meet with the Board of Finance.

11. Public Comments

Mr. Otto asked if it was the position of the board of education to ease up on the academic pressure in the lower grades by adopting full day kindergarten and increasing the academic pressure in the higher grades.

Mrs. Lyons restated that it is not the board's position to ease up on academic pressure by adopting full day kindergarten, but rather to give children the opportunity to learn through play and foster socialization.

12. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 10:31 pm
(Johnson / Kelley)

Respectfully Submitted

Joann Engel
Recording Secretary

John DonFrancisco, Secretary