

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO COMMITTEE APPROVAL AT THE
Dec 01, 2016 MEETING
REGIONAL SUPERVISION DISTRICT COMMITTEE**

October 06, 2016

A regular meeting of the Regional Supervision District Committee was held on Thursday, October 06, 2016 in the John Winthrop Middle School Library, with the following Committee members present:

CHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION: David Fitzgibbons, Charlene Fearon, Arthur Henick

DEEP RIVER BOARD OF EDUCATION: Michelle Grow, Nelle Andrews, Miriam Morrissey

ESSEX BOARD OF EDUCATION: Lon Seidman, DG Fitton

REGION 4 BOARD OF EDUCATION: Chris Riley, Jennifer Clark, Jane Cavanaugh

Also in attendance: Dr. Ruth Levy, Superintendent; Kristina Martineau, Assistant Superintendent; Garth Sawyer, Business Manager, and Jennifer Bryan, Committee Clerk.

Audience of Citizens: 7

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Chris Riley called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. (The position of Committee Chair rotates yearly among BOE Chairs, and moved to Region 4 for Nov. 2015-16.)

CONSENT AGENDA

On motion duly made and seconded the Committee unanimously VOTED to accept the consent agenda consisting of the Accounts Payable Report, and the minutes from the June 02, 2016 regular meeting.

OTHER ITEMS

Frank Kulick of First Student gave his annual Beginning-of-Year Transportation Report. He reported that there are currently buses covering twenty in-district routes and also one out-of-district Vinal/VoAg run that is done in cooperation with the Westbrook School District, helping to keep costs down for that out-of-district run. There are currently 24 buses at the yard, leaving 4 in reserve as backups, and for athletics or field trips. He noted there were two maintenance issues so far this year, which caused approximately 20 minute delays, however, no students were on the buses during the breakdown. He also noted that as always, he was dealing with driver shortages at the beginning of year, but has all positions currently filled. He is continuously recruiting throughout the communities. Mr. Kulik also reported that there had been some problems with some of the older digital cameras this year, so he is purchasing 5 new ones this year and plans to purchase 5 new ones next year, at no cost to the district. These cameras will be dual view (front to back field) recording. He reported that all of the buses are within contract specs with the oldest being a 2006. All have a 71 passenger minimum with 10 buses being capable of holding up to 84 passengers.

Dr. Levy commended Frank for working so well with administration during a recent incident at Cumberland Farms in Deep River and a recent false smoke alarm at JWMS. She thanked Mr. Kulik for going above and beyond in providing flexible accommodations to the benefit of the students

Business Manager Garth Sawyer led a discussion regarding the distribution of Supervision District Services as requested by Committee member Jane Cavanaugh. Ms. Cavanaugh explained that she requested the discussion because she had recently joined the Supervision District Committee and in going through last year's budget process, she learned that some Supervision District expenses are billed by ADM and some are billed by building usage, and so she questioned what the most effective and consistent way to do it would be.

Mr. Sawyer reviewed information that he handed out while explaining the current method of payment for services and the possibility of changing that formulation for a variety of types of services/teachers.

Attorney Kevin Roy briefly discussed the current Supervision District agreement and noted that the agreement allows for a variety of calculation methods. It is up to the Committee to determine which methodology is most acceptable.

There was a lengthy discussion during which two main schools of thought were revealed with regards to the best method to use. The two main points of view were as follows: Either individual schools can pay for the total cost of their individual usage of Supervision District teachers and services (a "pay to play" approach), or total costs can be divided out between schools, thus providing a type of insurance policy to help level out any big, unanticipated cost swings from year to year and providing better budgeting predictability. There was support from different Committee members for both methods discussed.

Concerns, beyond monetary, were stated by Superintendent Levy and Committee member D.G. Fitton with regards to losing progress made in working as a collaborative, cooperative PK-12 district as opposed to 4 individual districts with little cohesiveness in curriculum and academic services.

It was determined that the topic is important and warrants discussion from all boards at their individual meetings in November, and then again at the next Supervision and/or Joint Board meeting. Possible action may be taken in time for budget development and planning, which begins December 6th with the first Supervision District Budget Workshop.

Chester Board of Education member John Stack gave a presentation on his proposal for a Long Term Financial Planning Committee. His presentation highlighted the need for an ongoing committee to oversee 3-5 year strategic financial planning and analysis of the Region 4 School District (including Chester, Deep River, and Essex). The committee would be tasked with developing recommendations for financial strategies that are beyond the scope of annual budget reviews. He stated that the proposed committee is not intended to be intertwined with budget process, but rather used as a mechanism to maximize dollars spent towards student education.

Board Chair Chris Riley asked Mr. Stack if he had made his presentations to any other groups yet, such as Boards of Finance, Boards of Selectmen, or other Boards of Education. Mr. Stack said that he had not yet, but that he would be more than happy to give his presentation at anyone's meeting.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the need or place for such a committee. Chairman Riley thanked Mr. Stack for his presentation and said while there is value in his idea, there are no clear next steps to be taken by the Supervision District Committee at this time. He would like to revisit the idea at a future, but as of now, undetermined date. He encouraged Mr. Stack to share his presentation at the meetings of other Town Boards as previously discussed in order to gauge their interest.

PUBLIC COMMENT -

There were 6 citizens present.

Lauren Gister, First Selectwoman for Chester thanked Mr. Stack for his effort and said that currently the Chester Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen are working diligently at this type of long term strategic planning.

Bob Gorman, Chester Board of Finance member stated that he feels that the issue has always been a lack of any meaningful communication between the Boards of Education, Finance, and Selectmen. He said that he is in favor of bringing various boards together more often, and anything that helps foster more cross communication would be a plus.

Virginia Carmany, Chester Board of Finance Chair said that they are grappling with yearly-basis budgets and that she is very excited at the possibility of 5-10 year planning. She feels that any future attempt at regionalization has to involve Boards of Finance and Boards of Selectmen.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATION

Financial Status – Business Manager Garth Sawyer reviewed the 2015-16 end of year financial status, which is currently in the middle of the audit process. He also reviewed highlights of the Supervision District financial status updates for the current year. The Supervision District is currently in good shape for the current year.

Individual BOE reports

Chester – Board Chair David Fitzgibbons reported that Joanne Beekley is currently in her final year as Principal at Chester Elementary, and that Tyson Stoddard will take over as Principal in 2017-18.

Deep River – Board Chair Michelle Grow reported that the School has converted to natural gas and hopes to realize a money savings right away.

Essex – Board Chair Lon Seidman reported that several new construction projects are completed.

Region 4 – Board Chair Chris Riley reported that the District will be evaluating block vs traditional scheduling and also looking at Valley becoming an International Baccalaureate school.

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Held until the Joint BOE meeting

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Information and Communication

Superintendent Levy's main district report was held until the Joint Board meeting.

Superintendent Levy presented the proposed District School Calendars for 2017-18 and 2018-19 as recommended by the Joint BOE Calendar Committee. There is very little leeway in scheduling due to the statutory requirement to adhere to the Uniform Calendar guidelines. The Committee will vote on the calendars at their December meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT –

None present

The Committee moved into Executive Session at 7:13 p.m. for a personnel matter to hear the Superintendent's presentation of her goals.

The Committee moved out of Executive Session at 7:23 p.m.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Next regular Supervision District Committee meeting – Dec. 01, 2016
- Rotation of Supervision District Chair and election of officers (*Dec.*)
- Second Reading and possible VOTE to approve Proposed District School Calendars for 2017-18 & 2018-19 (*Dec.*)
- Possible Review/approval of Supervision District Audit Report for 2015-16 (*Dec.*)
- BOE and Community input on 2017-18 Budget (on-going)
- Superintendent Presents draft Supervision District budget for 2017-18 (TBD)

ADJOURNMENT:

On motion duly made and seconded, the Committee unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

DG Fitton, Secretary,
Jennifer Bryan, Clerk