

NORWICH BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY APRIL 1, 2009
7:00 PM, MARION CROSS SCHOOL

Minutes

Present: Board members Addante, Callaghan, Day, Mackall, Vitt; Administrators Gersen, Aubin, Brush, Kelley; and 15 member of the public. Recorded by R. Lohr

1. Call to order – Chair Callaghan called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

2. Agenda Review – Business Requiring Discussion

The public and Board discussed the septic system issues on the school/town green. Jonathan Brush reviewed the design of the existing septic system, gave an overview of previous problems with septic odors, and reviewed preliminary results from soil tests conducted last week. He reported that the results showed no significant e coli bacteria and low levels of coliform bacteria. He reported that the test results indicated no health hazards on the Green. An engineering firm had provided insight to the problems on the green during mud season related to freezing, compaction, drainage, and operation of the leach fields. It was suggested that the sandbox be removed. There was concern expressed about closing the entire green for any lengthy time period if renovations were necessary.

The Board decided that Facilities Director Jonathan Brush would assess the leach field system with regard to proper functioning; develop a plan for using and upgrading the green for the Board to review; and that the staff consider the development of guidelines restricting the use of the Green so that it can be protected. It was suggested that Principal Kelley incorporate information about the green in the next school newsletter and speak with the PTO about it at the next scheduled PTO meeting.

The Board thanked Jeff Marshall for his annual efforts to provide and maintain the ice rink to the families and kids in Norwich.

3. Agenda Review - PTO Report

The kindergarten information night was well attended and Becky French was thanked for coordinating a successful program. The PTO grants are now being decided. The listserv project is still in process. The Spelling Bee is set for April 3, and 36 teams have registered to participate. The school Ecoteam has been busy with initiatives at the school and in the community. A Vermont author will visit the school on April 6 and 7. The next PTO meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 6, at 3:30 PM in the Art room. The May PTO meeting is scheduled for May 4 (two days before the May Board meeting).

4. Agenda Review – Business Requiring Discussion

French Presentation

Alison Litten gave a presentation about the French language program at the Marion Cross School. It has been coordinated with French instruction at the Ray School and Richmond Middle School. In the presentation, Ms. Litten reviewed textbooks and activities in class and provided the Board with an example of the immersion methods she uses in the classroom.

5. Approval of minutes

Linda Addante moved and Jim Mackall seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 4, as submitted, the Executive Session I of March 4, the Executive Session II of March 4, and the Special Meeting of March 24, 2009. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Communications and Reports

a) Report of Chair

Chair Callaghan announced that the next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 6, 7:00 PM at the Marion Cross School Library. The Board retreat meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 11, 4-9 PM.

Carey Callaghan and Mary Sachsse will review the draft of the Norwich Town Long-Range Plan. A document of committee assignments was distributed.

b) Reports of Administrators

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Gersen distributed a listing of the new Norwich Finance Committee members.

Principal's Report

Principal Kelley commented that 37 kindergarteners have already been registered for the full-day kindergarten program, and there have been calls regarding prospective tuition students interested in the program. If the kindergarten enrollment continues to increase, space and staffing issues will be considered.

7. Public Input

A question was raised about potential stimulus funds that might be available for the school district. Superintendent Gersen reported that Facilities Director Jonathan Brush sent a list of potential projects to the state, but the next steps are unknown at this time. Federal funds are expected for special education and Title I but the amount is uncertain. There may be some timing issues and strings attached to the Federal funding. Jim Mackall or Geoffrey Vitt will contact Representative Cheney regarding stimulus funding in Vermont.

8. Business Requiring Discussion

The Board had the first reading of Policy IJOC Screening of Designated Volunteers and Work-Study Students. The Superintendent would like to have this policy adopted by the end of the school year so that it can be in place in September. There was concern expressed about discouraging volunteerism if the volunteers are required to have their backgrounds checked. Another classification of volunteers could be established to avoid this problem. The School Leadership Team will look at this issue.

The Board also discussed topics for the scheduled Board Retreat. It was decided that long-range planning will be addressed in a session facilitated by Principal Kelley. Linda Addante will look for caterers for the retreat meal and snacks.

9. Business Requiring Action

Linda Addante moved and Jim Mackall seconded a motion to accept with gratitude the gift of \$643 from the Vermont Community Foundation. The motion passed unanimously.

Linda Addante moved and Anne Day seconded a motion to accept with gratitude the gift of \$600 from Shelburne Farms for the expanded recycling initiative. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Executive Session

Linda Addante moved and Jim Mackall seconded a motion to enter executive session in accordance with Title 1, Section 313 for discussion of negotiations.

The motion passed unanimously. The Board entered executive session at 9:45 PM.

The Board re-entered public session at 10:01 PM

Superintendent Gersen nominated full time assignments for Leslie Dustin, Ruth Hall and Beth Haney and Jennifer Newberry and asked the Board to rescind the half-time contracts issued to Ruth Hall and Beth Haney.

Linda Addante moved and Anne Day seconded a motion to approve the teacher nominations and rescinding of previously offered contracts as recommended by the Administration. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Adjournment

Linda Addante moved and Jim Mackall seconded a motion to adjourn.

The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:02 PM.