

LITCHFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 15, 2008

A regular meeting of the Litchfield Board of Education was held on Wednesday, October 15, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. in the I.S. art room.

Board members present were: Mr. Katzin, Chairperson; Ms. Carr, Mrs. Fabbri, Messrs. Falcetti, Gorman, Noone, Shuhi and Simone. Mrs. Reardon arrived at 7:15 p.m.

Also present were: Dr. Vita; Mr. Buccitelli; Mr. Johnson; Ms. Della Volpe; Mrs. Longobucco; Ms. Marinelli; and members of the public.

MOTION made by Mr. Gorman and seconded by Ms. Carr: to add to the agenda an Executive Session to discuss the Assistant Principal's search.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

MOTION made by Mr. Shuhi and seconded by Mr. Falcetti: to approve the minutes of September 24, 2008 meeting as submitted.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

Public Comment and Correspondence

Mr. Waugh updated the Board on the status of the Building Committee including: no parking lot; money put back into FF&E; painting, ventilation, landscaping, and concrete issues; canopy adjustment; and topics to be covered at tomorrow night's meeting.

Board members discussed the following: project end date; facilities committee discussion on punch list, FF&E, wish list, underlying concerns, substantial number of items on all lists, timing for getting things done; holding retainer; need for one more joint meeting with the building committee and the Board; input from Mr. Crowe; and prioritizing list.

Mrs. Simaitis expressed concern over the Board's possible decision to remove the water coolers at LHS especially from the nurse's office. The office only has running water in a bathroom in a hallway and drinking water from a bathroom sink can be unsanitary. Thirty-eight students take their medication in front of her while drinking from the water cooler so she can be sure they take their meds. Also, the hot water tap is used for warm compresses and/or tea for an upset stomach. She asked that the Board consider keeping the cooler in the office.

Mr. Simonin commented on the traffic issues at the schools when picking up students after events. He suggested a survey be composed to see if parents would like a late bus for students to take home which would possibly cost the parents less than the gas for their car.

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Ms. Scozzafava commented that the water cooler in the faculty room is the only source of water for staff and keeping it there will send a strong message to the faculty.

MOTION made by Mr. Simone and seconded by Ms. Carr: to move to Executive session at 7:20 p.m. to discuss the Assistant Principal search.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. Mr. Shuhi abstained.

Executive Session

Present were: all the above Board members except Mr. Shuhi, including Dr. Vita, Ms. Della Volpe, Mrs. Kathy Johnson, Lynn Rice Scozzafava and Trevor Deering.

Mrs. Reardon arrived at 7:15 p.m.

Open session resumed at 7:50 p.m.

Open Session

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mr. Simone: to add to the agenda a discussion on the appointment of an Assistant Principal at the high school.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions. Mr. Shuhi recused himself.

MOTION made by Mr. Simone and seconded by Ms. Carr: to hire Stephanie Kubisek as the Assistant Principal to the high school as soon as she is available.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative except Mrs. Fabbri who voted in the negative. There were no abstentions. Mr. Shuhi recused himself.

Administrative Reports

Mrs. Longobucco reported on the following Center School activities: addressing 2 items from NEASC report (changing the report card and promoting cultural diversity awareness); Professional Development in math and Language Arts; Professional Development presented by Lori Shuhi and Robin Rosenfield; completion of goals meetings; fire prevention week activities; and beginning the process for a new technology plan due before June 30, 2009 and needing Board approval.

Ms. Marinelli reported on the activities at the Intermediate School including the following: Professional Development including math and science building; professional goals; Language Arts outcome for each grade level; Social Studies using library for research skills; and fire prevention week activities.

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Ms. Della Volpe reported on the activities at the High School including the following: successful Open House on Sept. 25th; Professional Development including learning and the brain; Litchfield County Times magazine section included Michelle Mongeau from the Litchfield High School special education department; senior dance; courtyard masquerade; successful autumn fest; Berkshire League Leadership Council included 150 students including Trevor Deering; and upcoming spirit week.

Mr. Johnson reported on the following: a great Professional Development day including 33 special education department participants; ropes course participants; curriculum direction; blind scoring; brain workshop; technology workshop; 30-day free access to ABC Cleo for social studies and language arts; project “turn it in” for research papers and how to use the research in an authentic way; world language web content on Rosetta Stone; and grant writing.

Mr. Buccitelli reported that the business office is working on cross training in case of absences; making the budget mechanics more efficient and investigating if the consortium bids can be renegotiated some way.

Mr. Crowe reported on the following building issues: meeting with Facilities Committee; need for joint meeting with the building committee; construction issues list; need to happen before Nov. 30th; update on CL&P audit; status of bus office; roof leak repair at Center School repaired by town; and display cases possibly covered by private donations.

Superintendent’s Report

Dr. Vita reported that the transition should be smooth when he leaves on the 31st.

Mr. Katzin thanked Dr. Vita for his years of service and the school system is in better shape than before he started. His legacy is very much appreciated.

Old Business

Mr. Katzin reported on the status of the superintendent search process including: the interim search process to be held next Wednesday, October 22, 2008 with the Board at 7:00 p.m. in the Central Office Conference room. Board members may have the information on the candidates to review ahead of time. The Superintendent search process will have the Board informally interview two candidates next week who are sitting Superintendents.

Board members discussed the following: having an informal conversation with the candidates; concerns about the administration participation; 3-month lag time; critical timing; pool opening up in the spring; Superintendent is like our CEO; administration input is critical; have good comparative basis; and constructive and informative process.

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New Business

MOTION made by Mr. Shuhi and seconded by Mr. Falcetti: to approve the payment of invoices and adjustments to the line item expenditures for 2008-09 budget as required.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. Mr. Simone and Ms. Carr abstained.

Board members discussed the possibility of videotaping the board meetings by students involved in video production and media. POCAD goals include this recommendation to help the community have the opportunity to see the board operate. Costs must be determined in such a tight budget year. Board consensus was to discuss this further after more information is gathered regarding budgetary impact.

Board members discussed the proposed meeting schedule for 2009 as presented. Board consensus was to change the January meet to two meetings on the 7th and 21st. Also Change the Wednesday, April 8th meeting to Tuesday, April 7th.

MOTION made by Mrs. Reardon and seconded by Mr. Falcetti: to approve the proposed 2009 meeting schedule as amended.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative except Mr. Shuhi who voted in the negative. There were no abstentions.

MOTION made by Mr. Simone and seconded by Mrs. Fabbri: to accept the notice of retirement from Mr. Kotsaftis effective June 30, 2009 with great regret.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

Mr. Katzin reported that other districts were looked at that have a consent agenda which include agenda items that can be combined to condense the Board meeting time. Board members can lift items from the consent agenda if further discussion is needed. Warrant issues should be resolved through emails. Board consensus was to try this at the next meeting.

MOTION made by Mr. Simone and seconded by Mrs. Reardon: to authorize one full time educational assistant position at LIS for a special education student.

Board members discussed the need and the IEP requirement.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

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Committee Reports

Mr. Shuhi reported that the Facilities and Technology Committee discussed 3 issues including the bus building, windows at Center School and snow plowing assistance.

Ms. Carr reported that the Policy Committee will meet tomorrow night and proposed changes will be discussed regarding the policies to be covered.

MOTION made by Mr. Simone and seconded by Mr. Falcetti: to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

Respectfully submitted,
Tina Reardon, Secretary
Joanne Bertrand, Recording Secretary