

LITCHFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 17, 2010

A regular meeting of the Litchfield Board of Education was held on Wednesday, March 17, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. in the Litchfield Intermediate School art room.

Present were: Mr. Katzin, Chairperson; Ms. Carr; Mrs. Fabbri; Ms. Rosser; Messrs. Falcetti, Gorman, (tele-conference) Noone, Shuhi, Simone; Dr. Wheeler; Mr. Buccitelli; Ms. Della Volpe; Mrs. Longobucco, Ms. Marinelli; Ms. Kubisek; the public and the press.

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mrs. Fabbri: to approve the consent agenda with the following corrections (minutes of 3/3/2010), on page 2427 under Alexis should read “students will not” on page 2428 change name to “Butwill” and (special meeting minutes of 3/8/2010) on page 2435 change name to “Kuharich.”

- a. Approve the Minutes of Regular Meeting March 3, 2010, Special Meeting March 4, 2010 and Special Meeting March 8, 2010.
- b. Approve the payment of invoices for 2009-2010 budget as required.
- c. Out-of-State Field Trip Request (Music in the Parks: Agawam MA Grades 5&6, May 28, 2010.
- d. In-State Field Trip Request (State Leadership Conference: Wesleyan Univ. H.S. Student Council, March 19-20, 2010.

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

Public Comment and Correspondence

Mrs. Fabbri reported that the STPC just completed a very successful concession stand fundraising effort at the basketball games and thanked all those who volunteered over the season.

Mrs. Moore reported that the PTO will be hosting a family game night next Friday from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and invited all to participate.

Haley Didomizio reported on the Student Council activities at the high school.

Ms. Shipp distributed several articles for the Board to peruse and a list of reasons why the Board should support the swim program.

Ms. Morgan commented on keeping the Science teacher at Center School along with the supplemental skills support teacher at Center School.

Mrs. Maraia, Center School Science teacher, asked the Board to consider maintaining the very successful Science program at Center School and invited Board members to observe and enjoy the program any time.

Ms. Larrabee commented on her strong support of the Science class at Center School.

Litchfield Board of Education Regular Meeting, March 17, 2010

Ms. Tenney thanked the Board for doing such a thankless job asked that the Board maintain the Center School Science teacher and the supplemental skills teacher with reference to SRBI, disabilities, tax increase, and new ways to raise money to sustain us into the future.

Mrs. O'Leary, Center School teacher, commented on the importance of keeping the dedicated Science teacher at Center School and the Supplemental Skills teacher at Center School.

Mr. Dranginis commented that CJR has advised that the total for the pool rental fee for 2010-2011 will be \$52,000. The additional \$7,000 needed will definitely be raised through fundraisers and he will personally guarantee that amount.

Ms. Bozzuto commented that the dedicated Science teacher offers the enrichment spectrum for students and is especially influential for girls to continue in the Sciences.

Ms. Garden commented that the music teacher FTE should not be eliminated since schedule and responsibility will be too much for one person to handle. She questioned the budget process and the amount of funding for Special Ed.

Mr. Sandrib commented on support of the swim program and that the Board should start review of the next budget immediately after this budget is approved.

Mr. Maher, one of the founders of Team USA, commented that any shortfalls for the swim program will be considered by this program.

Ms. Damiani commented that the swim program has made a world of difference for her child and asked that the Board consider maintaining it.

Mr. Hatfield commented that the swim program, music and Science should be maintained and asked that the Board have a long range vision for the future and not just this year.

Ms. Dorosh commented that the regular education teacher does not have time in their day to cover Science the way the dedicated Science teacher does.

Mrs. Moore, library media specialist, commented that the Board should be admired for what they do and that they should have trust in the administrators and support what they are doing.

Mr. Kuegler commented that he appreciates the difficult decisions the Board has to make and he is willing to vote yes for a budget that has funding for all needed items.

Dr. Wheeler reported that a letter from All Star Transportation Co. was received covering their bus safety status and record as reported by the CSTA and that they are participating in the state legislature's seatbelt use hearings.

Litchfield Board of Education Regular Meeting, March 17, 2010

MOTION made by Mr. Simone and seconded by Mr. Shuhi: to add to the agenda as VI d. a discussion of the town's maintenance proposal.

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

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Wheeler reported on meeting with Litchfield Education Foundation. the LEF Polooza will be held on March 27th from 11-3 at L.I.S. This organization provides significant funding for our schools and the school community should support their efforts.

Old (unfinished) Business

The next Strategic Plan Discussion will take place on April 8th and these meetings are open to the public.

New Business

Dr. Wheeler reviewed the most recent recommendations from the special finance committee meeting held on Monday evening, and presented a 2.91% superintendent's proposed budget of \$16,377,604. She requested that the Board recognize that the administrators manage the buildings on a daily basis and base their recommendations on the needs that they encounter through their daily work. Rather than eliminating Science at Center School the program should be extended to L.I.S., next year if possible; The existing Supplemental Skills positions at C.S. are necessary. The results of the Fall 2009 Kindergarten Inventory shows the need for skills development in language and literacy among incoming students at C.S.

Board members discussed the following: congratulations to AFSME members who rose to the challenge and gave 2 furlough days to help the budget this year; stimulus fund usage; budget does maintain the integrity of our programs; confidence in the pool issue being covered; insurance savings; need for balance and equality; need for music position and athletic trainer; \$13,000 found by reviewing the budget books; need to start at end of budget process and begin on next year's budget review; need to review curriculum for the budget process; curriculum needs to be adjusted to support student needs; need to keep Litchfield a desirable town to live in; need for parents to support the budget throughout the budget process; assault of programs at C.S.; foundations built at C.S.; once cut, programs and positions are difficult to get back; need for strategic long term plan; .4 school psychologist is back due to a shift in use of the stimulus funds by not purchasing IEP Direct and using those funds for a one year continuation of the .4 position; stimulus spending to be discussed at the next Finance Committee meeting; and support administrators to do what is needed.

MOTION made by Mr. Shuhi and seconded by Mr. Falcetti: to restore the trainer and music position.

Litchfield Board of Education Regular Meeting, March 17, 2010

Board members discussed the following: could call 911; difficult year for academics; music can be tried for one year in a plan similar to Wamogo's very successful program; need for both academics and sports; \$67,000 for both; 3.02% with trainer; 3.33% for trainer and music; 3.23% for music only.

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

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mr. Noone: to approve the 2010-2011 operating budget at 3.33% increase.

Board members discussed the following: need to have Board of Finance input about the budget; and need for public to come out and support the new budget.

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

Dr. Wheeler presented a calendar for possible graduation dates. Board consensus was to go back to the administration and clarify if Friday, June 25, might be better for families than Thursday, June 24.

Dr. Wheeler noted that the town would like to take the maintenance of the schools as part of their budget responsibility. Mr. Healy was present to discuss this proposal.

Board members discussed the following: input from Rich Mills; responsibilities assigned; statutory responsibilities; memorandum submitted in February; minimum budget requirement statute; can lose funding; liability issues; ECS calculation; concerns about arrangements; input from Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance; different analysis is made by town than school's maintenance; business to educate, not to maintain; issue of suits; capital expenditures; public works; too complicated; contractual issues with custodians; difficult to see where costs are saved; possibly leave buildings short staffed; need to have buildings staffed when students are here; need for open discussion with all involved; timing is too short; details need to be worked out before enter into agreement; start the planning for next year; union contract issues; difficulties when people report to two entities; save on efficiencies and sharing equipment; need for people involved in this to express concerns; combine departments; co-ordinate activities; buying materials; preventive maintenance program; bid items out; don't see tremendous savings; proposal presented on February 11th; need to finalize a decision; and need to set up a joint meeting with Facilities Committee, Mr. Healy, Mr. Paul and someone from the Board of Finance.

Mr. Gorman and Mr. Noone left at 9:53 p.m.

Committee ReportsCurriculum

Mrs. Fabbri reported that at the last meeting Mr. O'Connell gave a presentation on ELL and on the new TEAM new teacher support program; and the committee discussed LAA memorandum of agreement, negotiations strategies and a request for retirement benefits.

Policies

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mrs. Fabbri: to adopt the following policies as submitted: Bylaw #9321 – Meetings, Time Place, Notification of Meetings; #9323 – Construction/Posting of Agenda; #9325 – Meeting Conduct; #9326 – Methods of Operation-Minutes; #9327 – Electronic Mail Communications; #9330 – Board/School District Records.

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

MOTION made by Mr. Simone and seconded by Mr. Falcetti; to adjourn the meeting at 9:55 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Donald Falcetti, Secretary
Joanne Bertrand, Recording Secretary