

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE NEXT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
DEEP RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BOARD OF EDUCATION
March 17, 2011**

The regular meeting of the Deep River Board of Education was held on Thursday, March 17, 2011. In attendance were Christine Daniels, Dave Berardis (arrival 7:50), Gale Dilger, Lauri Wichtowski, Art Robbins, Karen Nelson-Oliveria, and Liz Tracy-Montecalvo. Also in attendance were Dr. Ruth Levy, Superintendent, Ian Neviaser, Assistant Superintendent, Jack Pietrick, Principal, Mr. Garth Sawyer, Business Manager and Kelley Frazier, Clerk.

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Daniels called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

Ms. Daniels asked to move the student presentations to the first item after the Consent Agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

Lauri Wichtowski moved to approve the minutes from the January 20, 2011 meeting as amended and the Accounts Payable report. Gale Dilger seconded the motion which carried by a unanimous vote.

Other Items

PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE- Dr. Pietrick

Student Presentation

Dr. Pietrick introduced Cassidy Kehlenbach and Ethan Cost who gave the Deep River Elementary school update. Some of the highlights were that the school participated in a Dr. Suess celebration. The Art department has their "Under the Ocean" work on display. The sixth grade has published a sixth grade newspaper called the "Eagle Eye Newspaper". The sixth grade class is participating in DARE. The school completed the sock drive and is now working on a food drive for the Shoreline Soup Kitchen. Ms. Daniels thanked the children for coming and presenting to the Board of Education.

Due to the large number of citizens attending the meeting, Ms. Daniels reviewed the guidelines for speaking at a Board of Education meeting. She also briefly discussed the budgeting process.

Audience of Citizens

Tina Mackenzie has two children in school. Her greatest concern is the increase in class size. She feels if we do not give the kids what they need in the lower grades; it is hard to catch them up later. She noted that the demands on the teachers are high.

Paul Mackenzie said that when he was on the Region 4 Board many years ago, class size was a focus of the Board. He feels that these increases are drastic and could have a negative impact on the children.

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Doug Gingrave feels that small class size is very important. He would like to have the Board review the budgets and try to find another way rather than increasing the class size. He hopes the Board is looking for creative ways for funding such as grants.

Ms. Daniels noted that the The Board of Finance reviews and ultimately approves the school budget. The presentation to the Board of Finance will be on March 30th at the Town Hall. The majority of the budget is a contractual obligation. The discretionary funds are only 5 percent of the budget. Dr. Levy said that she is happy to have the citizens here voicing their opinions. They will try their very best to submit a budget that meets the needs of the children and works with the Town to meet their needs.

Doug Whittaker reinforced the Board Policy document stating that the district Boards agree with small class size especially in Kindergarten thru grade 3. He would like the Board to reconsider this increase.

Sage Novak feels that class size really needs to be focused on. She feels that 14- 16 students per class are reasonable but an increase to twenty is too large. She is also concerned about losing the enrichment program. She would like to preserve the class size and bring back enrichment.

Dan Morrissey is very disappointed of the proposed cuts and a large increase in class size. He is disappointed to go to the Board of Finance and presenting a budget with these changes already incorporated into the numbers. He noted that one of the reasons he moved to Deep River was because of the schools.

Chris Dobbs has a first grader and has been happy with the school and the teachers. He moved here because of the education system and feels that small groups work better in a daily classroom setting. He was concerned about the class size and the loss of Spanish. He feels Spanish is very important.

Amy Petrone submitted a letter and does not want 20 students per class. She questioned whether more work could be done with the PTO to raise money to support some things.

Miriam Morrissey noted she is a victim of large class size. She has dyslexia and worries that with a larger class size, students that may need additional help may not receive it. She noted that they are not only parents but tax payers. She urged the Board to not increase the class size.

Amy Forbes worries that her daughter, who has mild sensory issues, would have a difficult time in a larger class size because her needs may not be met.

Judy Roberts noted her appreciation to the school and staff for the experience her sixth grade daughter has had. She is concerned that her daughter in first grade may not have

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the same sort of experience if class size is increased. Her sixth grader has grown in so many ways and she attributes this to smaller class size.

Ms. Daniels noted that the most effective thing that the audience members can do is to come to the meeting on the 30th and explain your child's experiences if the Board of Finance allows you to do so. She will give copies of the emails she received to the Board of Finance members.

Mr. Morrissey also voiced concerns about taking this money out of the budget and the availability of getting it put back into the budget if needed. Ms. Daniels said the school and Board of Education is working well with the town and that the town has done many in kind services for the school this year.

Ms. Forbes asked if there are any other avenues to find areas to make cuts. Ms. Daniels stated that nothing has been finalized and that the Board will consider these concerns while finalizing the numbers in upcoming budget workshop.

Cindy Franz pointed out that this first grade class had a full year of 20 kids in kindergarten. She voiced concerns that increasing the class size again for her daughter in second grade may not be beneficial.

Ms. Roberts asked if the upper classes could be increased. Dr. Levy said that they look at enrollment and consider class size.

Ms. Daniels thanked everyone for coming and voicing their opinions.

Reports:

Financial Status Report

Financial Status Report – Mr. Garth Sawyer

Mr. Sawyer gave a brief update of the financial status. The deficit is approximately \$22,000 due to unanticipated special education costs for the 10-11 school year. Dr. Pietrick has placed a budget freeze on non-essential discretionary spending. He will remain vigilant of any unforeseen circumstances and will keep the Board informed of any developments as they arise. The deficit was out looked to be \$85,000, but after review and additional reduction, the deficit is now \$22,000.

Cafeteria Report:

Mr. Sawyer gave an update on the status of the cafeteria. He is still projecting to break even with the board subsidy. Mr. Sawyer is working with Mr. Peterlik to report on usage at the next meeting.

Joint PK-12 Committees

Finance Committee

Meeting on the 29th

Policy Committee

Several policies are being reviewed. These will be revamped and move forward to their second reading.

Curriculum Committee

- Civics textbook adoption- John Pote, VRHS Social Studies dept. chair introduced a new Civics textbook proposing it for adoption. Mr. Pote explained why department selected the book. After discussing and reviewing the book, the committee recommended a vote of approval at next R4 BOE meeting.
- Spelling Program Review- Ian Neviasher presented the results of the district's recent spelling program review. Various programs were discussed including a listing of the pros and cons of each. Mr. Neviasher will keep the committee apprised of any future steps in this review process.

Next Curriculum Committee Meeting on May 17, 2011

Supervision District Committee Update

Dr. Levy went to speak about tenure to the legislature. She was happy with the reception she received. She is hoping legislation may change to not penalize teachers from working in different schools in the same district. She noted that Shipman and Goodwin is reviewing and is confident that the language to meet our regional needs will be in the document.

DRES Facilities (Building and Grounds) Committee – C. Daniels

Ms. Daniels discussed the list of items needing attention and the long range plan for the next five years. The committee is working with the Town to prioritize this list. Dr. Pietrick feels that the most important issue is the cafeteria floor. Quotes are being pursued for this repair. Dr. Pietrick was surprised to find that a leak in one of the classrooms was a leak and not caused by an ice dam. This will need to be looked into more. Mr. Smith is aware of the issues with the roof. This may be able addressed this summer. Dr. Pietrick noted that things are going in a positive direction.

Other Committee Reports

Assistant Superintendent's Report – I. Neviasher

Mr. Neviasher noted that the Strategic School Profile is still not available. The schools are finishing CMT testing. This has gone well. He noted that a growing number of students have been able to use the online system. The first meeting of the Math Committee went well. This team will be moving our current standards to be in line with the new common core standards. He also stated that the TEAM program is going well. All teachers have been successful and moving towards the next phase. He noted that all schools grade 4-6

will be participating in the Civics Bee. The final competition will be at JWMS on April 14th. Summer School recommendations will be given to parents.

Superintendent's Report – R. Levy

District Update

They have been working on budgets.

On March 22nd at 4:30pm until 6:30pm there will be an art show of student work at the Central Office. This is PreK – 12. Dr. Levy invited everyone to attend. This event is open to the public. The High School will present “Chitty Chitty Bang Bang” on March 25th, 26th and 27th. April 8th and 9th the Middle School will present “Into the Woods”. The Boys Basketball team will be in the State Championship game at Mohegan Sun at 6:00pm on Friday. She asks everyone to support our students.

The district has been working to develop a brochure about our schools to provide information to the community.

The calendar changes have been approved at Supervision District. Dr. Levy noted that April 1st is a student day and not a professional day. The last day of school will be June 23rd.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sage Novak said that many parents of elementary kids do not know what is happening at the High School. She suggested this information be available on Facebook or placed on the board at the entrance of Devitt Field.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to move into Executive Session at 8:27 pm to vote on staff non-renewals. The motion passed unanimously. All Administrators present were asked to attend the Executive Session.

The Board Moved out of Executive Session at 8:31pm.

Motion was made and seconded that the contract employment of the faculty members presented not be renewed for the following year upon its expiration at the end of the 2010-2011 school year, and that the Superintendent of Schools is directed to advise such person(s) in writing of this action. The motion was approved.

On a motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 8:35pm.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- 8.1 DRES BOE 2011-2012 Budget Workshop (Mar 23)
- 8.2 Vote to Adopt DRES Budget for 2011-2012 (Mar)
- 8.3 Present DRES 2011-12 Budget at town meeting (TBD)

Respectfully Submitted,
Kelley Frazier, Board Clerk