

NEW SHOREHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Block Island School

August 17, 2009

7:00 p.m.

The New Shoreham School Committee met in open session on Monday, August 17, 2009, in the media center of the Block Island School. Chair William Padien called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following members were present: Shea Butcher, Annie Hall, Sean McGarry, William Padien, and Richard Tretheway. Mr. Hicks, Dr. Irving, and Dr. Anderson were also in attendance.

Approval of Minutes

A motion (McGarry, Butcher) to approve the minutes and the executive session minutes of the meetings held on July 13, 2009, as presented carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, McGarry) to change the order of the agenda so that Dr. Irving and Dr. Anderson can address the Title II, Part A Monitoring Report and the School Support System Report before leaving to get the last ferry carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (McGarry, Butcher) to address Dr. Irving's resignation first carried with a vote of 5-0.

New Business

Dr. Irving's letter of resignation from her position as the full-time principal was submitted for School Committee review. Sean McGarry stated that he was very disturbed with the resignation as he had put a lot of trust in her to help the district move forward. William Padien stated that he had been caught off guard, but moved beyond that. He felt that Dr. Irving had given one million percent while here and thanked her for all of her efforts. A motion (Padien, Butcher) to accept with regret the resignation of Dr. Davida Irving from her position as full-time principal carried with a vote of 4-1 with Sean McGarry voting in the negative. Dr. Irving stated that although she is leaving Block Island a part of it will remain in her heart. She has made many good memories with the people she worked with, but feels this is a positive move forward.

Reports

Dr. Anderson addressed the School Support System Report, stating that there were a small number of compliance issues. Block Island School needs to develop a structured Response to Intervention (RTI) process. There is a referral process in place, but apparently many of the special education teachers are unfamiliar with it. Block Island School must also ensure that all students are taught by teachers who are highly qualified in their respective areas, especially in the high school. The special education teacher should not be the teacher of record if not certified in a particular area, but should support the general education teachers. A student who receives adaptive physical education (APE) must receive it from an appropriately certified APE

teacher. Another area of concern was found during record reviews. Block Island School is becoming accustomed to the new IEP format, which includes inviting high school students to attend their IEP meetings and developing a structured system transition evaluation process. Block Island School has until December to report back to RIDE the steps being taken to address the compliance issues. Dr. Anderson feels that the school is 90 percent in compliance and most of the issues will be easy to remedy. School Committee members requested that Dr. Anderson give an update at the October meeting.

Mr. Hicks addressed the Title II, Part A Monitoring Report, stating that this report looks at compliance with the teacher quality provisions of No Child Left Behind, how well we are doing with highly qualified teachers, and how we assess our needs for professional development. The report stated that Block Island School's needs assessment for professional development is too informal and a systematic needs assessment process that uses various data to determine the appropriate use of Title II, Part A funds must be developed and implemented. This must be completed by the time the Title II application is submitted next year.

Annie Hall requested that the administration post summer hours of operation so the community is aware. Mr. Hicks agreed, stating this was a good idea.

Mr. Padien reported that the handicap ramp leading to the parking lot

has finally been finished. Signage will be installed shortly.

Mr. Hicks submitted a memo explaining the reconciliation of the pension and state aid changes made during the 2009 fiscal year. Earlier in the year RIDE stopped sending state aid payments and the districts were told to stop making contributions to the retirement system on behalf of teachers, although the pension money was set aside and held in reserve. We recently received a final accounting from the state. We owed the state \$35,749 in aid and the retirement system \$9,433 for a total of \$45,182. However, \$62,537 was held in reserve, which translates into a \$17,355 savings for Block Island School.

Mr. Hicks gave the fiscal report through June 30, 2009 (unaudited), stating it appears we received \$22,668 more than we should have for town support. Mr. Hicks is waiting for the auditor to work this out with the town. However, if this is correct, it looks as if the 2008-2009 fund balance will be approximately \$5400.

Old Business

According to School Committee bylaws, Policy ID: Extra-Curricular/Athletic Participation must be addressed at a second meeting because all five members of the committee were not in attendance at last month's meeting. A motion (Padien, McGarry) to approve Policy ID: Extra-Curricular/Athletic Participation as written carried with a vote of 5-0.

At the February 2009 meeting the School Committee approved Martha Velie-Gass' request for tuition reimbursement for the course Secondary Methods for Classroom Teachers. When Ms Velie-Gass tried to enroll the course was unavailable so she signed up for and took Cooperative Education Programs in Vocational/Technical Education. Ms Velie-Gass was now requesting that the School Committee approve reimbursement for the different course. A motion (Padien, Butcher) to approve Ms Velie-Gass' request for tuition reimbursement pursuant to the terms and conditions of the School Committee/Teachers' Contract, noting that approval is completely at the School Committee's discretion because the change should have been brought to its attention before rather than after the fact, carried with a vote of 4-1 with Sean McGarry voting in the negative.

A sheet listing the line items that went over budget for FY 09 and the line items where money could come from was submitted. Mr. Padien questioned how the committee could open a budget to transfer monies when the fiscal year has ended. He felt that the auditor has taken care of these types of overages in the past and could do so again. Mr. McGarry stated that, as a signer of the accounts payable checks, he reviews each check and refuses to sign any that exceeds the line item budget amount. Neither the secretary nor the chair has the right to sign checks that take an account over budget without the consent of the School Committee. Mr. Hicks stated that the committee was accountable to the bottom line and what happens

within that bottom line is at the discretion of the School Committee. It is not necessary to move money to balance each line item as long as you stay within the bottom line. A motion (Tretheway, Butcher) to have the auditor move money to cover the line items that are over budget and to authorize the chair and secretary to sign the checks carried with a vote of 5-0.

New Business

A motion (Padien, McGarry) to accept with regret the resignation of Donna Ortelli as the speech-language pathologist carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Tretheway) to accept with regret the resignation of Kelly Robertson as the food service director carried with a vote of 5-0.

Mr. Hicks reported that he would be willing to check into the possibility of tapping into the state awarded bid for the lunch program. In the meantime, the food service director position will be advertised.

A motion (Padien, Tretheway) to accept with regret the resignation of Greta Heinz as a teacher assistant carried with a vote of 5-0.

The re-appointment of Amy Doran Couet as the maintenance supervisor was inadvertently left off the list of appointments at the June School Committee meeting. Mr. McGarry feels there is a conflict of interest if the maintenance supervisor is also a member of the

custodial staff. It was stated that the maintenance supervisor reports to the superintendent, while the custodians report to the principal. The maintenance supervisor does not supervise the custodial staff. A motion (Hall, Padien) to consent to the re-appointment of Amy Doran Couet as the maintenance supervisor for the 2009-2010 fiscal year carried with a vote of 5-0. It was noted that the stipend for this position remains at \$10,000 per year.

A motion (McGarry, Tretheway) to consent to the appointment of Donna Smith as the full-time speech-language pathologist carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, McGarry) to consent to the appointment of Joshua Weisz-Smith as the full-time Spanish teacher for the 2009-2010 school year carried with a vote of 5-0.

Mr. Hicks was not ready to make a recommendation for the adaptive physical education position and requested that this be put on the agenda for the next regular meeting.

Mr. Hicks stated that in trying to find a replacement for Dr. Irving at this late date he learned that there are few principals with dual certifications to cover elementary and secondary. There is a lot of work to be done towards the Commissioner's PBGR review and he felt it was important to have someone with a lot of concrete experience in curriculum work to help us accomplish this. For these

reasons he requested that the position be split between John Canole (secondary principal) and Leslie Improta (elementary principal), both retired in Rhode Island. Each would work half the recommended days at a per diem rate of \$450, beginning August 24. A brief discussion was held on the educational philosophy of the principals and how issues would be handled. Mr. Hicks stated that on September 2 he plans to facilitate some training on how to build a common philosophy and handle particular issues. When asked how long the interim principals would be working, Mr. Hicks stated that it is open ended, but each has enough days to carry us through the school year if necessary. A motion (McGarry, Butcher) to consent to the appointment of John Canole as the interim secondary principal and Leslie Improta as the interim elementary principal carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Tretheway) to consent to the appoint of Kirk Littlefield as head coach and Rob Closter as assistant coach for junior high soccer carried with a vote of 5-0.

Mr. Hicks stated that before advertising for Dr. Irving's replacement he requested that the School Committee and community review the administrative structure of the district with the possibility of combining the superintendent and principal positions into one position. The New Shoreham School Department spends nearly twice the amount as other districts for their administrative leadership and he wondered if it should be this way. He feels that combining the two

positions would allow more money to be spent on support structures, such as facility infrastructure and technology. A meeting to begin this discussion was scheduled for Tuesday, September 29 from 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Calendar of Events

A calendar of events for the months of August and September were forwarded for School Committee information. The next regular School Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 21, 2009. A meeting may be scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on Monday, August 24 to discuss the lunch program and a meeting to discuss the administrative structure of the district is scheduled for Tuesday, September 29.

Correspondence

Correspondence was forwarded from Security-1 Inc. regarding the need to ensure that the school has an active phone line for the fire alarm system, as this is the only means of communication with Security-1 since the central receiver and computers were struck by lightning on July 12.

Executive Session

A motion (Padien, Hall) at 9:10 p.m. to go into executive session pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws 42-46-4, 5(a)(2) for contract negotiations carried with a vote of 5-0.

Open Session

A motion (Padien, Tretheway) at 9:18 p.m. to return to open session carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Hall) to seal the minutes of the executive session carried with a vote of 5-0.

Adjournment

A motion (McGarry, Hall) at 9:19 p.m. to adjourn carried with a vote of 5-0.

Marsha L. Gutierrez, Clerk

Date approved: September 21, 2009