

NEW SHOREHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
Block Island School  
January 24, 2011  
7:00 p.m.

The New Shoreham School Committee met in open session on Monday, January 24, 2011, 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: Elizabeth Connor, Patricia Doyle, Annie Hall, Sean McGarry, and William Padien. Robert Hicks was also in attendance.

**PBGR Update and Resolution**

Mr. Hicks reported that he attended one of the Board of Regents (BOR) hearings on the proposed changes to the graduation requirements. Overwhelmingly, the testimony was not favorable. People spoke about technical issues, changing in mid-stream, and not the right thing to do. Annie Hall attended the hearing as well and did not hear one person speaking in favor of the proposed changes. Mr. Hicks suggested that perhaps the School Committee would like to send a resolution to the BOR outlining its objections to the changes. It was suggested that the resolution state that the New Shoreham School Committee is opposed to the changes in the graduation requirements and information from Mr. Hicks' testimony, which showed statistics and kept emotions out of it, should be included. It was felt that the math scores from the NECAP should not be the sole means of determining eligibility for graduation. Mr. Hicks will draft a resolution and present it to the committee next week.

**Award of Bids**

Bids were solicited for propane gas, lawn maintenance, and freight delivery. A bid was received from Greenscape Mowing at \$250 per mowing. The bid from Hull Suburban Propane was received after the deadline and committee members thought it should be re-bid. Mr. Hicks disagreed, stating that because it was the only propane bid it would fall under the section in the request where "the School Committee reserved the right to...waive any informalities". A motion (Padien, Hall) to waive the deadline for the propane bid carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Connor) to accept the bid submitted by Hull Suburban Propane in the amount of \$3.25 per gallon fixed pending any unforeseen shortages or rationing, which would dictate a price spike state wide, carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Doyle) to accept the bid submitted by Greenscape Mowing in the amount of \$250 per mowing carried with a vote of 5-0.

**2011-2012 Budget Work Session**

Mr. Hicks' focus this evening was on expenditures. He explained that a teacher assistant's salary was covered this year by the REAP grant, but next year this salary would be placed back into the budget. The increase in teacher salaries, which is based on state mean, will be 0.46 percent with an additional 0.3 percent for longevity payments. However, there will be a slight decrease in the total teacher salaries because of staffing changes. The Town Employees are negotiating its contract and wages for them are unknown at this point. Mr. Hicks included \$72,000 for health and pension benefits, with an eight percent increase in health benefits (an average over the last several years) and pension costs for teachers and non-certified staff have increased. Utilities were budgeted following a trending analysis of recent year. Instructional materials/texts were increased by two percent and will be allocated on a per pupil basis. It is anticipated that the principals will work with faculty to determine and prioritize the needs. Mr. Hicks included mathematics support to enhance K-12 instruction, especially important with a new secondary math teacher next year; it will be similar to the literacy support being done by Ms Kurzman.

In the technology budget, which was developed in cooperation with the Technology Committee, Mr. Hicks stated that it includes the maintenance and operation of the school's network, software licensing, and equipment replacement, including replacing administrative computers that are outdated and purchasing a new printer for the high school. He is hoping to include new software to expand our web development capacity.

The increase in the special education budget was driven by two factors. The district will no longer receive federal stimulus funds that covered some of the expenses over the last two years. In addition, a student with significant needs was recently added to our roster and will require additional supports. It is hoped that the first Medicaid reimbursement will be made in February.

Mr. Hicks reported that the district will receive \$58,000 less in federal dollars next year because of the loss of the stimulus funds and the loss of the prior year's carryover funds expended this year.

In developing the maintenance budget, Mr. Hicks went through it line by line and did not make any substantial changes as he does not anticipate anything over and above this year's budget.

School Committee members did not see any "fluff" in the budget, but felt that the request to the town should be less than the \$155,000 proposed. Annie Hall stated that the maximum we could ask for is 4.25 percent, but this budget only shows a 3.65 percent increase. If this is what is needed, this is what should be requested. Pat Doyle felt it would be demoralizing to go line by line to identify something or someone that is not needed. Elizabeth Connor stated that the proposed budget is a good start, but she does not believe the town has the \$155,000 to give us. She is comfortable asking for it, but areas need to be identified to reduce the number if necessary. Mr. Hicks explained that last year the cuts were not made to the budget until May, which gave him time to review the line items before making suggestions of where to cut. When asked if he planned to reduce the budget now, Mr. Hicks stated that he felt it would be better to listen to the committee's concerns and requests at the next meeting before he made any changes.

#### **Executive Session**

A motion (Padien, Hall) at 9:24 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, Hall) at 9:31 p.m. to return to open session carried with a vote of 5-0.

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

#### **Adjournment**

A motion (Padien, Hall) at 9:31 p.m. to adjourn carried with a vote of 5-0.

Marsha L. Gutierrez, Clerk

Date approved: February 7, 2011