

NEW SHOREHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
Block Island School  
January 31, 2011  
7:00 P.M.

The New Shoreham School Committee met in open session on Monday, January 31, 2011, in the media center of the Block Island School. Chair William Padien called the meeting to order at 7:01 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 Resolution**

Mr. Hicks submitted a draft resolution regarding graduation requirements that he developed from comments made at last week's School Committee meeting. It was suggested that neither/nor in the first paragraph be changed to either/or to avoid a double negative. It was reiterated that graduation requirements should not include the use of NECAP results as the test was not designed for this use. Mr. Hicks reported that some of the testimony he heard at the hearing included the fact that NECAP questions did not align with the teaching standards. It was questioned whether the students were taught the concept, but in a different way than presented/asked on the NECAP. Patricia Doyle stated that she did not want to lower our standards and she was not faulting the teachers, but they must first be trained to teach math. After attending a Rhode Island Association of School Committees' workshop where RIDE provided information on the PBGR, Sean McGarry changed his opinion and stated he was not in favor of the resolution. He feels that until we can fill our classrooms with the most competent teachers possible we will not see any changes in the testing results. He questioned that if not now, when would we require students to be proficient before awarding them diplomas? He believes in RIDE's mission statement and especially in the commissioner's five bullet points, which include ensuring educator excellence and establishing world class standards and assessments. When Mr. McGarry stated there were many opportunities for students to prove proficiency, Mr. Hicks disagreed stating that the NECAP is given in the fall of a student's junior year. If the student shows little or no improvement, he/she would not be allowed to graduate. As an example, Mr. Hicks stated that in Massachusetts students have eight opportunities over three years to work on building skills required for graduation. Mr. McGarry stated there would be an appeal process in place, but Mr. Hicks reported there is no appeal process for state mandates. The other committee members were not opposed to testing for proficiency, but agreed that the NECAP was not the right instrument. A motion (Connor, Hall) to approve the resolution with minor typo changes carried with a vote of 4-1 with Sean McGarry voting in the negative.

**2011-2012 Budget Work Session**

At last week's meeting the amount to be requested from the town was \$154,937 or a 3.65 percent increase over last year. Approximately \$92,000 of the increase is due to the loss of state aid and/or federal grants and other fixed costs. Mr. Hicks has included a small allowance for coaches, which would raise the amount per point from \$244 to \$250. He was not ready to make any changes to the cultural enrichment program as there have been only two trips so far this year. School Committee members suggested that an increase of \$125,000 in town funding or just under three percent would be more palatable to the town. Elizabeth Connor felt it was important

to make sure the town understood what it would mean if more were cut from the school budget. Some areas suggested for cuts included supplies/texts, some salary adjustments, and reworking the capital line item. Mr. Hicks will work on some options with recommendations to reduce the budget to just below the three percent range.

**Executive Session**

A motion (Padien, Connor) at 8:09 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 8:18 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 (Hall, Padien) at 8:19 p.m. to adjourn carried with a vote of 5-0.

Marsha L. Gutierrez, Clerk

Date approved: February 7, 2011