

NEW SHOREHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Block Island School
May 16, 2011
7:00 p.m.

The New Shoreham School Committee met in open session on Monday, May 16, 2011, in the media center of the Block Island School. Chair William Padien called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. The following members were present: Elizabeth Connor, Patricia Doyle, Annie Hall, Sean McGarry, and William Padien. Robert Hicks was also present.

Approval of Minutes

A motion (McGarry, Hall) to approve the minutes of the meeting held on April 11, 2011, as presented carried with a vote of 5-0.

Reports

Patricia Doyle attended the public presentation of the senior projects. She found the students to be articulate and the projects, which reflected on the many benefits of growing up on Block Island, were fantastic. William Padien agreed and noted how relaxed the students seemed to be.

Mr. Padien reported that Rhode Island Commissioner of Education Deborah Gist visited Block Island School on May 10 for about six hours. She met and had lunch with students, attended a Field Biology class, held a meeting with the staff, and then held a well-attended public meeting. She talked about graduation requirements and provided a PowerPoint presentation on reading and math scores. Annie Hall asked about the new graduation requirements and was told that modifications can be made for students when taking the NECAP, but had not been aware of this. Mr. Hicks stated that modifications can be made for extended time, alternate settings, or the use of a scribe if necessary, but not for content. He is still waiting for RIDE to issue guidance on the requirements.

Kristine Monje submitted information on AIMSweb, a benchmark and progress monitoring system based on direct, frequent, and continuous student assessment currently being used with students in grades K-8. There are several components, but we are using the system for reading fluency and comprehension. Students are assessed three times per year, but those deemed in need of additional help are tested either monthly or weekly, depending on the need. Strategies, which can be changed if not effective, are used to improve reading skills. Computer generated charts show the weekly scores and whether a student is improving.

Mr. Hicks reported that the April finance report is slightly more positive than the March report and it still appears that we will finish positively. A motion (Padien, Connor) to approve the standing of accounts through April 30, 2011, as presented carried with a vote of 5-0.

Old Business

Policy HN: Substitute Teachers was posted for the required 30-day period and a few minor changes were made to the text by Attorney Myers. A motion (McGarry, Hall) to approve Policy HN: Substitute Teachers carried with a vote of 5-0.

Mr. Hicks provided the results from the most recent school calendar survey and thanked Julie Conant for her help with the design and getting the word out. The first question asked which calendar was favored: the current with February and April vacations, a single vacation in March with added days

elsewhere, or alternating the two as was done in the 1990s. The largest single choice was the current calendar, although a majority favored some type of change. The second question referred specifically to the calendar with a single March vacation and where a long spring weekend would best be placed. This was equally divided between Patriots Day (when most schools have vacation week) and a Friday. The last question asked whether the respondent was a parent/staff/both. Mr. Hicks also submitted information on the rates of absenteeism for students and staff for the week leading up to Thanksgiving, the weeks before and after the February vacation, and a random week in March. The Wednesday before Thanksgiving had a large percentage of students and staff absent. Staff attendance was good during the weeks before and after February vacation, but a large number of students were absent. Mr. Hicks recommended that the School Committee adopt the original proposed calendar for 2011-12 because he felt it was too late to make a significant change with no consensus to do so. He also suggested that the committee revisit the issue in the fall, particularly the viability of alternating calendars. After seeing the absenteeism rates, committee members were in favor of closing school on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and the Friday before the February vacation. A motion (McGarry, Padien) to approve the 2011-2012 calendar as amended: change November 23 to a day off (the day before Thanksgiving), change February 17 to a day off (include the Friday before in the winter recess), extend the school year to June 15 (the 180th day), and extend the make-up days through June 22 carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Doyle) to open the 2011-2012 budget for a discussion based on the actions not taken for the school at the financial town meeting so that we may come into balance carried with a vote of 5-0. Mr. Hicks reported that in order to balance the budget with available revenue \$37,955 must be cut and suggested the following: moving to a hosted web solution and include our on-site maintenance, network support contract, and software expense; level fund supplies; eliminate the sailing program; freeze coaches salaries; limit the technology expansion to what is deemed essential by the technology committee; and take the salary discount at 43 percent of the five-year average. A motion (Padien, Connor) to reduce hosted services/maintenance by \$8,862, hosted services/network support by \$4,000, hosted services/software by \$100, supplies by \$4,000 (level funded per pupil), activities by \$6,086 (eliminates sailing), salaries by \$1,369 (freezes coaching salaries), equipment by \$6,500 (limited technology expansion), and salary discount of \$7,038 for a total budget reduction of \$37,955 carried with a vote of 5-0.

New Business

Mr. Hicks reported that there were numerous applications for the Finance Director position and five were selected for interviews. He recommended the appointment of Renee Meyer as School Finance Director effective July 1, 2011, with a part-time assignment in July and full-time effective August 1. Both Ms Myers and Mrs. Martin will work part-time during July to allow for a smooth transition and allow us to stay on-budget. Ms Myer is a CPA with extensive experience and has taken the time to become well aware of the issues facing public education today. The salary is recommended at \$47,000 with benefits provided according to the job description and equal to employees working under the Council 94 contract. A motion (Hall, Connor) to consent to the appointment of Renee Meyer as the Finance Director effective July 1, 2001, at an annual salary of \$47,000 carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Hall, Padien) to consent to the appointment of Jaclyn Brannon as the extended school year teacher assistant carried with a vote of 5-0. Ms Brannon will be compensated at the rate of \$25 per hour.

A motion (Padien, Connor) to reappoint Patricia Balles – Administrative Assistant, Pamela Buol – Teacher Assistant, John Canole – Principal, Scott Comings – Educational Consultant, Lynne Cunningham – Office Manager, Amy Doran Couet – Custodian and Maintenance Supervisor, Amy Dugan – Teacher Assistant, Stacy Ferraro Henshaw – Teacher Assistant, Lynn Fletcher – Custodian, Betty Gomes – Guidance Counselor, Marsha Gutierrez – Administrative Assistant (per contract a longevity stipend will be received), Mark Hawk – Special Education Director, Bernice Johnson – Custodian, Karen Kurzman – Principal, and Lisa Robb – Teacher Assistant for the 2011-2012 fiscal year carried with a vote of 4-1 with Sean McGarry voting in the negative. It was noted for the record that the wages of these employees will be frozen for the 2011-12 fiscal year. Prior to the vote Mr. McGarry made a motion to remove Amy Doran Couet from the list, but it was not seconded. He is not in favor of one person holding two positions and feels it creates a lot of problems or opportunities for trouble. Mr. Hicks disagreed, stating that he sees the maintenance supervisor as the lead custodian.

A motion (McGarry, Hall) to approve the Employment Contract between the New Shoreham School Committee and Robert Hicks carried with a vote of 5-0.

Calendar of Events

The School Committee chose Tuesday, May 31 for the dinner with the senior class. The next regular meeting of the School Committee is schedule for Monday, June 13, 2011.

Executive Session

A motion (Padien, Hall) at 9:15 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. William Padien stated for the record that both the town employees and teachers contracts will be discussed.

Open Session

A motion (Padien, Hall) at 9:48 p.m. to return to open session carried with a vote of 5-0

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

Adjournment

A motion (Hall, McGarry) at 9:48 p.m. to adjourn carried with a vote of 5-0.

Marsha L. Gutierrez, Clerk

Date approved: June 13, 2011