

NEW SHOREHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Block Island School

September 26, 2011

(Rescheduled from September 19, 2011)

7:00 p.m.

The New Shoreham School Committee met in open session on Monday, September 26, 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, Ann Hall, Sean McGarry, and William Padien. Robert Hicks was also in attendance.

Approval of Minutes

A motion (McGarry, Hall) to approve the minutes of the meeting held on August 15, 2011, as presented carried with a vote of 5-0.

Reports

Mr. Hicks stated that one opportunity to recognize the teaching excellence at the Block Island School is to participate in the Teacher of the Year program. Deborah Hart was chosen as New Shoreham's Teacher of the Year. She was founding director and head teacher of the Block Island Community Center Preschool from 1976 to 1991 and has taught kindergarten here since 1991. He presented Mrs. Hart with a bouquet of flowers and commended her for her commitment and dedication to the education of young children, which has been a constant throughout her career. Her record of continuing education marks her as a professional constantly seeking growth. School Committee members congratulated Mrs. Hart and offered their moral support as her application continues through the process at the Rhode Island Department of Education. Ann Hall stated that her fourth child is now in kindergarten and her children have been very lucky to have Mrs. Hart as their kindergarten teacher.

Mr. Hicks submitted a memorandum highlighting the reasons why students chose to leave the Block Island School this year. Reasons for leaving included: to experience a more rigorous education in a selective private school; to attend a career and technical center because the students do not plan to attend college; to attend a boarding school for a more consistent, structured educational program instead of switching schools twice a year; to continue a family tradition of attending a specific boarding school; a change in family situation created a need to attend a mainland school; a different social milieu would be better for the student. Guidance Counselor Betty Gomes stated that the decisions to leave Block Island School took many months and were not made lightly. Parents were not dissatisfied with the education here, but they were doing what they felt was the right decision for their children.

Mr. Hicks reported that SORICO ceased operations on June 30 and will disband once the building is sold. An offer, which is more than what is owed on the mortgage, but less than the assessed value, was made on the building and accepted. It is hoped that the closing will be within the next month or two. Until the building is sold the member districts need to pay the mortgage and minimal utilities, insurance, and legal fees. Each district is being assessed \$4,000 to cover these costs, but the funds are expected to be returned when the sale is complete. The distribution of assets on dissolution is equal to all current SORICO members. A motion (Connor, Hall) to make the \$4,000 payment to protect the asset until the business is done carried with a vote of 5-0.

Old Business

A motion (Padien, Connor) to approve Policy DAA: Fiscal Management as written and posted for the required 30-day period carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Hall) to approve Policy GG: School Anti-Violence and Weapons as written and posted for the required 30-day period carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Hall) to approve Policy GI: Revised Field Trip Transportation as amended (change building facilitator to principal in #4) carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Doyle) to approve Policy GO: Self-Administration of Prescription Medication as written and posted for the required 30-day period carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Hall) to approve Policy HB: Reimbursement for Conferences as written and posted for the required 30-day period carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Hall) to approve Policy HIA: Student Activities Advisors as written and posted for the required 30-day period carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Hall) to approve Policy IK: Student Behavior Code as amended (Section B, #2 – change facilitator to principal; Section B, #9 – add “but not limited to” before the list of items) carried with a vote of 5-0. Mr. Hicks reported that Policy IK-1: Discipline will be addressed at the next regular meeting.

At last month’s meeting the review and approval of the solar panel RFP was tabled until more information could be obtained. Mr. Hicks submitted a memorandum addressing several of the committee’s questions. The installation of the new panels, which are updated for both efficiency and electricity costs, will be worth \$4757 annually, working out to a 5.4-year payback period. The proposed solar installation in the capital plan has a payback nearly twice that long. The new panels cannot be installed on the existing hardware because the original installation is not code compliant and will require the drilling of installation holes in each of the replacement panels. Mr. Hicks no longer supports the software training to support the monitoring system, which was optional and not required to benefit from the system. He spoke with several of the non-responders and found that Rhode Island’s solar market is minimal compared to neighboring states, so a small project in an isolated location was not attractive. Mr. Hicks learned earlier today, but has not been able to confirm, that Kyocera, the company that supplied the replacement panels, will reimburse us for labor costs, which brings the cost back down to our original estimate. A motion (Padien, Doyle) to accept the bid submitted by ENTECH Engineering, Inc. for the replacement of the solar panels in an amount not to exceed \$25,831 pending confirmation from Kyocera regarding reimbursement of labor costs carried with a vote of 5-0.

During the school calendar discussion at the May meeting it was suggested that the 2012-2013 school calendar be addressed earlier in the year to avoid last minute decisions. Last spring several Rhode Island districts discussed moving to a March vacation. The superintendents’ association conducted a brief poll and found that seven districts had discussed the idea and two more were planning to do so this fall. No districts have made the change and most indicated they would do so only if most other districts change. There is also an issue with inter-district programs such as Career and Technical Schools and cross-district employees, factors that are of less importance to us. Mr. Hicks conducted two surveys last spring and found that the plurality preferred staying with the current calendar, but

the majority preferred one of the two March vacation variants (either always March, or alternating with February/April). Mr. Hicks will draft a couple of calendars for the committee to review at next month's meeting, as well as submit the results from last year's surveys.

New Business

A motion (McGarry, Connor) to approve the request from Gail and Geoff Hall to home school their son, Griffen, from October 5-14, 2011, so he can participate in a rafting trip down the Snake River, carried with a vote of 5-0.

School Committee members are required to fulfill a six-hour training program as described in RIGL 16-2-9. The Rhode Island Association of School Committees provides training opportunities for its members, but it can be difficult for Block Island members to attend. The National School Boards Association (NSBA) offers numerous webinars that could be used to meet the six-hour requirement, which are free with a National Affiliate membership, and seems to be the most reasonable way to have access to relevant ideas. The annual cost of this membership is \$713. Pat Doyle felt it was important to attend workshops to meet new committee members from across the state so as not to be so insular. Elizabeth Connor finds it hard to get off-island and it is more productive for her to read the information instead of sitting at a workshop for several hours listening to a speaker. William Padien felt that having the affiliate membership would not stop anyone from attending mainland meetings, but having both avenues would be a plus. A motion (Padien, Hall) to approve the School Committee's membership in the NSBA as a National Affiliate carried with a vote of 3-2 with Pat Doyle and Sean McGarry voting in the negative.

A motion (Padien, Hall) to consent to the appointment of Tim Keane as the head coach for junior high soccer; Donald Parrott as assistant coach for junior high soccer, pending receipt of required paperwork; John Breunig as head coach for varsity soccer; and Becky Pappas as assistant coach for varsity soccer carried with a vote of 5-0.

Calendar of Events

A calendar of events for the months of September and October was submitted for School Committee information. The next regular meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on Monday, October 17, 2011. It was noted that an open house is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on October 18, 2011.

Correspondence

Correspondence was received from The Champlin Foundations stating that our application was not referred to the second round for further consideration this year.

Adjournment

A motion (Padien, Hall) at 8:35 p.m. to adjourn carried with a vote of 5-0.

Marsha L. Gutierrez, Clerk

Date approved: October 17, 2011