

NEW SHOREHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Block Island School
October 17, 2011
7:00 p.m.

The New Shoreham School Committee met in open session on Monday, October 17, 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 September 22, 2011, as presented carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (McGarry, Hall) to approve the minutes of the meeting held on September 26, 2011, as presented carried with a vote of 5-0.

Reports

William Padien reported that he had received an email that a purchase and sale agreement, in the amount of \$645,000, has been signed on the SORICO building; this is roughly \$200,000 more than the mortgage. The sale should be final within 90 days.

Sean McGarry reported that he had received an email from Tim Duffy, Director of RIASC, regarding the pension reform currently being addressed by the General Assembly and asking members to respond to an online survey. Mr. McGarry requested that the resolution on pension reform be included on the next agenda.

Mr. McGarry attended a RIPEC meeting where a lot of the discussion focused on the new teacher evaluation process and how concerned teachers are on the possible impact this system will have on their careers.

Mr. Hicks submitted the local results of the science NECAPs, which were taken by students in grades 4, 8, and 11 last spring. He explained that year-to-year moves should not be over-interpreted because of the very small numbers of students in each grade. No scores were received for 11th grade because last year there were fewer than 10 students. Scores for grades 4 and 8 were mostly positive. Mr. Hicks stated that a review of statewide results indicates that the districts making the most progress use a program targeting the ability of students to write in science. Karen Kurzman has acquired a program she plans to incorporate into her professional development with the teachers this year.

Mr. Hicks submitted a memo to the School Committee explaining PBIS, a systems approach to enhancing the capacity of schools to support and educate all students. He stated that this system emphasizes prevention over intervention and positive over negative. Locally designed actions use data to inform decisions and the program is then implemented school-wide. Dr. Antosh, Director of the Sherlock Center and a professor at Rhode Island College, has volunteered his

time while on sabbatical this year to facilitate our implementation. He will be out next week to work with administrators and teachers to establish our school-wide rules.

A standing of accounts through September 2011 was submitted for School Committee review. Mr. Hicks highlighted some of the areas that were over or close to being over budget, including a higher than anticipated property and liability insurance cost, which has been offset by a lower Workers' Comp payment. A motion (Padien, McGarry) to accept the fiscal report through September 30, 2011, carried with a vote of 5-0.

Old Business

Mr. Hicks reported that the memo he submitted to the School Committee was correct, but the wrong version of Policy IK-1: Discipline Policy was included in the packets. A motion (McGarry, Padien) to table the review and approval of Policy IK-1 until the November meeting carried with a vote of 5-0.

Mr. Hicks submitted two calendar proposals for the 2012-2013 school year; one was the current calendar rolled over to next year and the other has a vacation in March instead of the usual February and April. The vacation period in March is less than two full weeks, but includes seven week days and two weekends. If a March vacation is favored, there is always the possibility of alternating it with the February/April vacation calendar, which was done back in the early to mid-1990s. Mr. Hicks reminded the committee that the current calendar has no school the day before Thanksgiving and an extra day was tacked on to the February vacation. These days will be revisited after the attendance around those days is reviewed. Committee members were divided on which calendar they preferred. Mr. Hicks will develop a survey for more input from parents and staff before bringing it back next month.

New Business

Kirk and Laurel Littlefield were present to appeal the administration's decision denying their ninth grade son the opportunity to participate on both the varsity and junior high soccer teams. It was explained that Athletic Director Rob Closter had the ninth grade students play on the junior high soccer team this year to ensure there were enough students to field both the junior high and varsity teams. Playing on both teams would mean more instructional time would be missed. Mr. Hicks stated the AD's decision was reasonable and consistent with the need to balance participation in athletics and instructional time and felt it was important to support a reasonable rule. He recommended that the School Committee deny the appeal. Ms Littlefield explained that she first spoke with the AD on September 13 requesting that Mason be allowed to play varsity soccer, but her request was denied. She then spoke with Principal Karen Kurzman, who scheduled a meeting with the AD, parents, teachers, and principal, but this was canceled on the morning of the meeting. Nowhere in the Athletic Handbook does it state that participation on a team is driven by numbers, but that varsity soccer is open to students in grades 9-12. They were willing to compromise and have Mason, who has a good attendance record, play on both teams. This compromise was also denied. It was noted that Mason had participated on the varsity team when games were played at home or on Saturdays. School Committee members felt that the parents had come up with a good compromise and, at this point, there were only two varsity games remaining on the schedule. It was also felt that students shouldn't be penalized in order to balance the numbers on the teams and perhaps an educational plan could be developed that

would make the administration more comfortable with a student missing more class time. It was also noted that the Athletic Handbook did list grade 9 as being eligible for varsity sports. A motion made by William Padien to deny the appeal of the administration's decision regarding Mason Littlefield was not seconded. A motion (Doyle, Hall) to allow Mason Littlefield to play on both varsity and junior high soccer teams according to the compromise submitted by his parents carried with a vote of 4-1 with Bill Padien voting in the negative. Committee members felt that the athletic handbook should be revised to show that grade nine is a swing year and, depending on the number of students participating in a given year, those students could play at the varsity or junior high level.

A motion (McGarry, Padien) to award the copier lease to Docutech in the three-year amount of \$35,864 carried with a vote of 5-0.

Last spring a committee consisting of administrators, teachers, and parents met to review ways to reduce the amount of class time student athletes miss to attend games. One of the solutions was the possibility of restructuring the school day by lengthening the day Mondays through Thursdays and reducing the periods on Fridays to four or five. As many athletic events as possible would then be scheduled for Fridays and Saturdays, although some games would need to be played on other days. Mr. Hicks capped the number of school hours at seven. He does not see any impact to the budget unless there were separate schedules for the elementary and secondary, in which case an additional bus run would be needed. With several of our teachers teaching both elementary and secondary classes the restructuring would be for the entire school. The current off-season ferry schedule has the boat leaving Block Island at 10:30 on Friday mornings and a request to move this to 11:30 or 11:45 would be necessary. The district would have to seek a waiver from the commissioner before implementing such a change and the deadline for submitting the request is December 1. Mr. Hicks feels that the waiver request is different enough that it would not automatically be granted by RIDE as they would have to think about it. More feedback is needed before the School Committee makes a decision at next month's meeting.

Calendar of Events

A calendar of events for the months of October and November was submitted for School Committee review. The Open House is scheduled for October 18 from 6:30-8:00 p.m. The next regular meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Monday, November 21.

Adjournment

A motion (Padien, Hall) at 9:46 p.m. to adjourn carried with a vote of 5-0.

Marsha L. Gutierrez, Clerk

Date approved: November 21, 2011