

NEW SHOREHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Block Island School

April 23, 2013

(Rescheduled from April 8, 2013)

7:00 p.m.

The New Shoreham School Committee met in open session on Tuesday, April 23, 2013, 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, William Padien, and Christopher Willi. Robert Hicks was also in attendance.

Approval of Minutes

A motion (Hall, Willi) to approve the minutes of the meeting held on March 18, 2013, as presented carried with a vote of 5-0. Patricia Doyle explained her inquiry at the previous meeting regarding teacher attendance; she was not implying that Block Island teachers had a higher than normal rate of absenteeism.

A motion (Padien, Connor) to approve the executive session minutes of the meeting held on March 18, 2013, as written carried with a vote of 5-0.

Reports

William Padien asked everyone to attend the Financial Town Meeting on Monday, May 6 to support the school.

Mr. Hicks reported that the severance cost for health care for the two teachers retiring at the end of this school year is now included in the budget. He expects some savings in salary, health care, and professional development. In addition, we may receive \$9000 more than budgeted in Medicaid reimbursements. A motion (Padien, Connor) to accept the finance report through March 31, 2013, carried with a vote of 5-0.

Mr. Hicks reported that the attendance rates were more positive in the beginning of the year, but it seems they are settling into the same pattern as the previous year. It was mentioned that there has been a lot more illness this year.

At last month's meeting the School Committee, in response to enrollment projections that showed we could have fewer than 100 students within 10 years, asked Mr. Hicks to gather information on multi-age classes. He stated that Block Island School has a history with multi-age classes and he didn't want to start with people immediately choosing sides. He would like to broaden the task and have a community-wide discussion of what the school would be tomorrow, regardless of whether the enrollment grows or declines, so we aren't caught by surprise or seem to be ignoring an issue. He does not know what the end product will look like, but some things he feels should be included in the discussion would be how to provide breadth in our high school, how to improve programs to keep our students on-island, and making sure any decisions work with our policies and contracts. He is seeing a lot of new things in technology and there has been some experimentation in charter and smaller schools, with a lot of information available

on small schools west of the Mississippi. Mr. Hicks sees this as next year's project and will update the School Committee before the end of this year on where we are with planning.

Old Business

A motion (Padien, Connor) to approve Policy GS: Physical Restraint/Crisis Intervention as written carried with a vote of 5-0.

Mr. Hicks submitted information (portions of minutes and memos) regarding the school calendar discussions held during the previous two years in addition to three calendar options for 2013-2014: "A" had the school's traditional vacations; "B" had the traditional vacations, but extended the Christmas recess to two full weeks; and "C" had long weekends in February and April, but moved the winter recess from February to March. Also submitted was correspondence from the teachers' association with reasons why option "B" should be adopted. Mr. Hicks recommended that the School Committee approve option "B". It was mentioned that May 1st is the deadline for submitting next year's calendar to the Rhode Island Department of Education, but Mr. Hicks felt it could be amended, if necessary. Elizabeth Connor stated she did not like any of the calendars and felt it was worth trying a different calendar. She stated that a decision gets pushed off until the last minute and we are stuck with the same calendar year after year. If we try a different calendar and it doesn't work, we can stop talking about it. Ann Hall was uncomfortable choosing a calendar that didn't have the support of the staff, nor did she feel a different calendar was viable for the 2013-2014 school year. She would, however, be willing to explore a different option for 2014-2015. A motion (Padien, Hall) to approve the 2013-2014 school calendar option B carried with a vote of 3-2 with Elizabeth Connor and Chris Willi voting in the negative. The committee would like to address the calendar once more at the May meeting to discuss the possibility of moving the winter recess to the last week in February.

New Business

A motion (Padien, Connor) to approve as presented the 2012-2013 dental contract with Block Island Health Services, Inc. carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Hall, Connor) to consent to the appointment of Nathaniel Shaw as the assistant varsity softball coach carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Connor) to rescind the appointment of Nathaniel Shaw as the assistant junior high softball coach because this was done in error last month carried with a vote of 5-0.

On April 19 the principal search committee (Marlee Lacoste, Barbara MacMullan, Oliver Mott, Lisa Robb, Joanne Warfel, and Mr. Hicks) interviewed three strong applicants for the full-time position. The committee unanimously recommended Kristine Monje as the superior and best candidate. A motion (Hall, Connor) to consent to the appointment of Kristine Monje as the full-time co-principal at the Block Island School carried with a vote of 5-0.

Mr. Hicks reported that several years ago the School Committee approved a contract with CPI to administer the legal requirements related to 403(b) retirement plans. The amendment to our contract with CPI would cover Roth plans as well. A motion (Padien, Connor) to approve the amendment to the contract with CPI carried with a vote of 5-0.

New Shoreham currently purchases insurance from The Trust, which began offering health coverage when it took over a municipal health insurance purchasing collaborative. The amended agreement, presented this evening, updates the relationship because The Trust is no longer a purchasing collaborative. There were numerous changes in the document, but most notably it eliminates the upfront capital contribution (ours will be returned), reduces withdrawal charges, and changes the benchmark used to determine what equity members can receive if withdrawing. A motion (Padien, Doyle) to approve the new membership agreement with The Trust carried with a vote of 5-0.

Mr. Hicks reported that an agreement has been reached with the New Shoreham Employees' Association and the required cost analysis has been posted on the school's web site. A motion (Padien, Connor) to ratify the contract with the New Shoreham Employees' Association carried with a vote of 5-0.

Calendar of Events

The next regular meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on Monday, May 20, 2013.

Correspondence

A copy of the correspondence sent to Eva Marie Mancuso, Chair of the Rhode Island Board of Education, from Senator James C. Sheehan, Chair of the Senate Committee on Government Oversight, regarding the Commissioner's interpretation of RIGL § 16-13-6 as it relates to teachers' seniority with regard to lay-offs was forwarded for School Committee information.

Adjournment

A motion (Padien, Hall) at 8:43 p.m. to adjourn carried with a vote of 5-0.

Marsha L. Gutierrez, Clerk

Date approved: May 20, 2013