

NEW SHOREHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Block Island School
December 15, 2014
7:00 p.m.

The New Shoreham School Committee met in open session on Monday, December 15, 2014, 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.

Annual Pre-Budget Meeting with Town Council

Ken Lacoste, Norris Pike, Mark Emmanuelle, and Town Manager Nancy Dodge were in attendance for the pre-budget meeting between the School Committee and the Town Council. Committee members explained that a portion of the roof over the high school wing had to be replaced. A tear appeared in October and the insurance company was notified. Since another portion of the roof had to be replaced The Trust covered the cost of shipping all of the materials and bringing out a crane, but we paid for the additional labor and materials. The Trust paid to replace 30 squares and the school paid to replace 20 squares.

The school's capital projects were discussed. Stage 2 of RIDE's building/renovation projects requires the hiring of an architect. Mr. Saccoccio has completed his initial walkthrough and the plan he develops will be good for five years. The moratorium on building projects has been in place for several years, but we can receive 35 percent reimbursement through RIDE's health and safety exemption. This includes the chair lift, roof replacement, and water booster projects. It is hoped that the water drainage problem by the playground can be fixed. Kevin Hoyt will use his camera to see if there is a blockage.

Mr. Hicks stated that the teachers' wages are at state mean and currently at a one percent increase. However, there will be an increase in retirement contributions. Negotiations with the town employees' for wages and health benefits will start shortly. Mr. Hicks mentioned that The Trust will probably cap the amount allowed in each district's health care reserve fund and will be encouraging towns to use the money towards their premiums.

National Grid has agreed to send out an engineer to do an analysis of the school and town library even though we are not part of their rebate program. RIDE paid to install wifi in all of the school's instructional areas, but we paid to have it installed in the cafeteria, gymnasium, and the offices. There is a possibility that we will be reimbursed for the cost of the cafeteria and gym wifi installation. Mr. Hicks is assuming that if a facilities manager is hired it will be for the entire town, including the school. If that is the case, he plans to reorganize staffing at the school.

The enrollment projection from NESDEC was discussed. Mr. Hicks explained that we hit our lowest enrollment two years ago with 111 students and we are now at 117. We may peak at 124 in a couple of years and then come down from there. He has been watching the ratio of births vs. the number of students who enroll in kindergarten five years later. It has been a break even or a slight gain, but it appears we are not keeping young families on the island.

Approval of Minutes

A motion (Padien, Connor) to approve the minutes of the meeting held on November 17, 2014, as presented carried with a vote of 5-0.

Reports

Mr. Hicks reported that the standing of accounts as of November 30, 2014, is very similar to last month. A motion (Padien, Connor) to accept the finance report through November 30, 2014, as presented carried with a vote of 5-0.

The NESDEC enrollment projections were discussed earlier with the Town Council.

Old Business

A motion (Padien, Connor) to approve Policy IO: Confidentiality as posted for the required 20-days carried with a vote of 5-0.

New Business

At the last month's meeting the discussion regarding Policy IQ: Publication of Student Images indicated a desire to have this policy operate as an opt-out. Mr. Hicks found this to be fairly typical in schools and updated our policy to reflect the opt-out option. A motion (Padien, Hall) to post Policy IQ: Publication of Student Images for the required 20 days carried with a vote of 5-0.

Mr. Hicks stated that most of the senior privileges went away with the adoption of the "new" schedule. He revised Policy IF: Senior Privileges to allow students to sign out during lunch. A motion (Padien, Connor) to post Policy IF: Senior Privileges for the required 20-day period carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Connor) to approve the request from Augusta Rich to home school her daughter, Stephanie Grullon, from December 15-23, 2014, carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Connor) to approve the request from Zena Clark to home school her son, Fisher Johnston, from March 2-16, 2015, carried with a vote of 5-0.

A request for tuition reimbursement was received from Robert Closter, Jr. for two courses he plans to take during spring semester (Advanced Technology in Health, Physical Education, Recreation; Wellness Concepts and Prevention Strategies). A motion (Padien, Connor) to approve Mr. Closter's request for tuition reimbursement pursuant to the terms and conditions of the School Committee/Teachers' Contract carried with a vote of 5-0.

A list of proposed School Committee meeting dates for 2015 was submitted for review. Regular meetings are usually held on the third Monday of each month, but there are conflicts with Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in January, Presidents Day in February, and the spring recess in April. Those meetings will be held on the third Tuesday (January), and second Monday (February and April). School Committee members discussed moving the December meeting away from Christmas week. A motion (Padien, Connor) to change December's meeting from the 21st to the

14th carried with a vote of 5-0. A motion (Padien, Connor) to accept the 2015 meeting dates as amended carried with a vote of 5-0.

The school department budget is due to the Town Manager by March 1. Mr. Hicks suggested that a review of the revenue budget be presented at the January meeting. The expense budget would be reviewed at workshops on January 26 and February 2 with final adoption at the regular February meeting. A motion (Padien, Connor) to hold budget development workshops on January 26 and February 2 carried with a vote of 5-0.

Mr. Hicks submitted wording that had been suggested for the school's portion of the town's comprehensive plan. Committee members had no issues with SF3, which discussed reliable high-speed internet access. It was felt that SF4's first sentence (*Undertake efforts to maintain and improve the long term viability of the public school system in response to reduced enrollment, including a plan to expand education on the island.*) should not include declining enrollment but end at "public school system". The second paragraph (*A strong public school system educating grades K through 12 is critical to maintaining Block Island as a healthy and viable year-round community. Just as the community must make efforts in housing and economic development to provide opportunities for families to live and thrive year-round on the island, the school department must ensure the functioning and efficiency of the school by adjusting to declining enrollment. This includes classroom reorganization to allow multi-grade instruction and development of additional educational opportunities on Block Island to draw students from the mainland.*) should end at "...must ensure the functioning and efficiency of the school". Mr. Hicks will rework the information from the discussion this evening.

Calendar of Events

The meeting with the auditors has been scheduled for Monday, December 22 at 3:00 p.m. There will be a special financial town meeting on Wednesday, January 14, 2015. The next regular meeting of the School Committee will be held on Tuesday, January 20.

Correspondence

Correspondence was received on behalf of the New Shoreham Town Employees' Association from Council 95 asking to commence negotiations on wage and healthcare.

Adjournment

A motion (Padien, Connor) at 7:59 p.m. to adjourn carried with a vote of 5-0.

Marsha L. Gutierrez, Clerk

Date approved: January 21, 2015