

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17
BOARD OF EDUCATION -
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
February 7, 2023**

A meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on February 7, 2023, in the Haddam-Killingworth High School Auditorium. Board of Education Treasurer, Peter Sonski, called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Board Member Attendance:

Board Member	Present	Absent	Board Member	Present	Absent
Prem Aithal		X	Dr. Nelson Rivera (remote)	X	
Lisa Connelly	X		Corey Roberts	X	
Dr. Joel D'Angelo		X	Peter Sonski	X	
Jennifer Favalora	X		Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X	
Shawna Goldfarb (remote)	X		Suzanne Sack (remote)	X	
Hamish MacPhail (arrived 6:47 PM)	X				

Also Present: Superintendent of Schools, Jeffrey Wihbey, Assistant Superintendent, Jennifer Miller, Director of Fiscal Operations, David Solin, Board Administrator, Sarah Kaiser, Director of Operations, John Mercier, Principal Brienne Whidden, and Principal Dennis Reed

Visitors: approx 12

The Board meetings are videotaped and posted on the RSD17 Website under Board of Education, BOE Meeting Schedules & Minutes for public viewing.

<http://reflect-hktv.cablecast.tv/CablecastPublicSite/show/1471?channel=1>

1. Call to Order/Opening of Meeting

Board of Education Treasurer, Peter Sonski, called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Jennifer Favalora **MOVED** and Corey Roberts **SECONDED** a motion to move item 6.A. and 10.B. to 3.A. and 3.B.

Motion unanimously passed by Show of Hands.

2. Cougar Pride

a. Banner Presentations KES and BES

Superintendent Wihbey announced that there are two big honors this year as both Elementary Schools have been named Schools of Distinction by the Connecticut Department of Education based on their academic excellence. The schools achieved within the top ten percent of all schools in the state of Connecticut. Superintendent Wihbey recognized the Principals, Teachers, Staff, Parents, and Students in attendance. The Board members from Haddam and Killingworth along with Assistant Superintendent Miller and Director Solin presented the banners to the Principals, staff, parents, and students present.

3. Report from Student Representatives

Student representative Madison Moriarty reported that the senior meetings were going well on learning expectation number one for each senior's graduation portfolio. The High school is hosting a one act play titled "The Hallmarks of Horror". Madison also provided updates on the seasons for the High School winter sports: Hockey, Girls' basketball, Boys' Basketball, Winter track, and Boys' Swim Team.

Student representative Madison Moriarty left the meeting at 6:43 PM.

3.a HKYFS Search Survey

Jennifer Favolora, speaking as a representative of HKYFS, asked for Board approval of the Search Survey. HKYFS has had a partnership with RSD 17 to conduct these surveys since 2005. The survey is anonymous and completed every other year with 7th to 12th grade students. The responses received help with data HKYFS accumulates and used in terms of getting grants that help the schools. The survey also provides information that is in sync with the Strategic Plan and in particular Goal 1.

Lisa Connelly **MOVED** and Dr. Kathy Zandi **SECONDED** a motion to authorize HKYFS to perform the semi-annual Search Survey.

Motion passed from the following voice votes 7-0-1

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Prem Aithal	ABSENT	Dr. Nelson Rivera	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Lisa Connelly	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Corey Roberts	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A

Dr. Joel D'Angelo	ABSENT	Peter Sonski	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Jennifer Favalora	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO X A	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Shawna Goldfarb	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Suzanne Sack	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Hamish MacPhail	ABSENT		

The Principals and other banner recipient attendees left the meeting at 6:47 PM.

3.b Tecton Proposals Phase II and III

Peter Sonski provided information on Tecton's work that has been performed over the past two years. There was a comprehensive assessment of all facilities to assist in Capital Planning and projections for the needs of the buildings. There were recommendations that a demographic study of the communities as well as a Master Plan be created. The Board was to consider Tecton's proposal of the demographic study and the development of the Master Plan. The total cost will be \$66,300.00.

Hamish MacPhail **MOVED** and Jennifer Favalora **SECONDED** a motion for the approval of the Demographic study and Master Plan as presented.

Board Members discussed briefly before voting. Chair Sack discussed information on the discussions and steps that have taken place. She noted that this is the commencement of a large project that will be an investment for the Board and the community to be involved in.

Motion unanimously passed from the following voice votes 8-0-0

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Prem Aithal	ABSENT	Dr. Nelson Rivera	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Lisa Connelly	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Corey Roberts	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Dr. Joel D'Angelo	ABSENT	Peter Sonski	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Jennifer Favalora	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Shawna Goldfarb	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Suzanne Sack	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Hamish MacPhail	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A		

4. Superintendent's Report

a. Monthly Summary and Updates

Superintendent Wihbey provided information on his initial Budget recommendations and shared some Budget goals. He reported that the Budget presentation is scheduled for next month. There has been a significant inflationary estimated increase to fixed costs such as transportation, fuel, utilities, employee contracts, and health insurance. He also reported that the recommended Budget maintains services at their current level with savings and efficiencies where possible while addressing a number of the FY 2023-24 priority implementation steps that the Board will define in its Strategic Operating Plan (SOP).

- Student Learning & Well Being - Maintain student services at current levels (SOP Priorities 1 & 3)
- Enhance District Safety and Security, and plan for improvement of School Buildings (SOP Priorities 1 & 4)
- Educator & Leadership Development & Capacity - Instructional Capacity Growth and Improvement (SOP Priority 2)

Superintendent Wihbey spoke on the efforts of the Human Resources department in recruiting substitute teachers for the District. Through our social media push there were over 2,000 unique hits to our social media site and over 100 individuals directed to the application system and 7 new substitute teachers to the District.

5. Public Comment

a. None

6. New Business

Moved Agenda item 6.a. to 3.a.

7. Board Committee Reports and Future Meetings

a. Facilities-Finance Subcommittee

Peter Sonski reported that the committee met last month. The committee met with Tecton to discuss the Demographic study and Master Plan proposal. Mr. Sonski noted that there was conversation with STA on contract renewal negotiations. There was an update provided on the LED lighting project and an HVAC update. There is an upcoming Town of Killingworth meeting reported as well on February 22nd regarding PFAS impacting KES.

b. Policy-Curriculum Subcommittee

Dr. Zandi reported that the Middle School added Personal Finance and Wellness elective courses. There is a textbook pilot for K-12 health. There is a Curriculum Council of approximately 25 staff members being formed that will focus on the holistic view of the curriculum and will meet throughout the year. There was discussion on the feedback received from the Board on High School additional electives. There will be a review of the course options at the High School in the future. There was also a presentation on a new proposed procedure for review or reconsideration of instructional materials in the school at large.

c. Communications-Strategic Planning Subcommittee

Shawna Goldfarb reported that the agenda items regarding Communications were tabled until the committee's next meeting. Jennifer Favalora reported the committee is in the final Strategic Plan Goal 1 stages and will be working on Goal 2 in February. She noted that they are looking to bring all Goals to the Board in April for a first read and approval in May.

8. Board Liaison Reports

a. HK Youth and Family Services

No report

b. LEARN

No report

c. Haddam Killingworth Recreation Department

No report

d. Haddam Board of Selectmen

No report

e. Killingworth Board of Selectmen

No report but Dr. Zandi noted the meeting for the Killingworth Board of Selectmen that is scheduled for February 22nd on the topic of PFAS.

9. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of Minutes from the January 3, 2023 and January 4, 2023 Board of Education Meetings

- b. Enrollment Report
- c. Personnel Report
- d. Approval of a donation of \$158.10 from Box Tops for Education. This donation will be used to benefit the Student Activity Fund. Submitted by Brienne Whidden, Principal Burr Elementary School.

Dr. Kathy Zandi **MOVED** and Hamish MacPhail **SECONDED** with gratitude a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Motion unanimously passed by Show of Hands.

10. Old Business

- a. Middle School/Intermediate School Assessment

Superintendent Wihbey reported on the development of a study plan for the Middle School. There will be an outside independent study of HKIMS structures. The process timeframe will be done in approximately 6-8 weeks. The study will be conducted by Dr. Michael Wasta. He will also be interviewing teachers, parents, administrators and various community members as part of the process. Dr. Wasta will provide recommendations to the Superintendent for review. The Superintendent will share the results with the Board at that time. The next steps will be creating a Study committee task force that will redesign structures based on given objectives. The committee will consist of some teachers, parents, a Board member, and two administrators. Assistant Superintendent Miller will Chair the task force.

There was discussion on incorporating students' voices into the committee as well.

11. Board Discussion/News/Suggestions

None

Board Treasurer Sonski adjourned the meeting at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Kaiser

Administrative Assistant to the Board of Education

Approval: _____ Date: _____

Joel D'Angelo, Secretary