

Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting
February 24, 2014

The Webutuck Board of Education held their February 24, 2014 meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the Webutuck High School Library.

The following Board members were present:

William McGhee, President

Christopher Mayville

Judy Moran

Kristen Panzer arrived 7:50 p.m.

John Perotti

Also Present:

James Gratto Jr., Superintendent

Therese Trotter, District Clerk

Andrew Coon

Jon Zenz

Dale Culver

Rudy Eschbach

Bob Reimer

Aaron Howard

Al Barros

Bob Janks

Community Members

Absent:

Judy Westfall

1. PUBLIC HEARING – Veteran’s Tax Exemption (7:25)

Mr. Perotti made and Mr. Mayville seconded a motion to open the Veteran’s Tax Exemption Hearing.

Ayes 4 Nays 0 The motion carried.

Ms. Grden reported that there was a recent amendment to the Real Property Tax Law that allows school districts to offer an alternative veterans’ tax exemption. It would shift the tax burden from veterans to other groups. Ms. Grden explained it doesn’t reduce the tax burden. When a school district presents its levy it gets spread across the taxable property in the District. When you have a veterans’ or senior exemption it shifts that tax burden.

We do not know what the exact impact will be. It will change year to year depending on the number of people affected. She explained that there are 5 townships affected, 205 different exemptions, and the tax burden at this moment given the exemptions for veterans would mean a tax shift of \$46,621. The Board would have to act on this by March 1, 2014 for the 2015 tax year or it can be tabled until next year and voted on and then instituted for the following tax year.

Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting
February 24, 2014

President McGhee spoke about the importance of supporting veterans. He reminded the audience that although it doesn't sound like a lot of money he noted other areas where properties have received reductions in their taxes thus adding even more burden to our tax payers. He wanted everyone to be aware that if the tax exemption is given it will be added to other people's taxes.

President McGhee asked for comments from the public.

Bob Janks, Commander of American Legion Post 178 and Veteran Representative to the Town of North East stated he felt there was hostility in President McGhee's statement. He stated they have emergency funds that they exhaust it every year to support elderly veterans for a number of reasons. It is a small percentage of the population. President McGhee stated it wasn't his intention to be hostile. Mr. Janks reminded everyone that the veterans volunteered their services for our country and he asked the Board to pass the exemption. It is not a lot of money.

Mr. Barros suggested the Board look at the veterans' tax exemptions implementing them by parameters.

President McGhee stated that we have elderly residents that have to take out home equity loans to pay their taxes. He wanted everyone to be aware of the big picture. Ms. Moran figured it would be approximately a .3 percent increase in the tax levy. If your taxes were \$5000 it would be 15 dollar increase. She felt it isn't a huge burden and was in favor of approving it.

The 1st Vice Commander of the local Legion Post stated he was in favor of the exemption. He lives in Columbia County because the tax burden is significantly less up there. His own mother lost her home due to foreclosure so he understands what the burden is on the local residents but knows what local veterans on fixed incomes are going through also. He stated that historically veterans are cut first when cutting budgets. If there is anything that can be done at local level they would appreciate it. It's the right thing to do.

Aaron Howard, alumni of Webutuck, and resident of Amenia stated he wanted to hear what people would say against it. This is an opportunity to help the elderly veterans now on fixed income. He asked if the exemption is reviewed yearly. Ms. Grden stated it doesn't have to be reviewed every year but it can be. He stated we lose veterans every year.

Mrs. Panzer arrived 7:59 p.m.

Mr. Perotti made and Mr. Mayville seconded the motion to close the Veteran's Tax Exemption Hearing at 8:00 p.m.

Ayes 4 Nays 0 The motion carried.

Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting
February 24, 2014

CALL TO ORDER

President McGhee called the business meeting of February 24, 2014 to order at 8:00 p.m.

Ms. Moran made and Mr. Perotti seconded the motion to approve the Veteran's Tax Exemption.

WHEREAS, pursuant to Real Property Tax Law Section 458-a, the Board of Education of the North East School District desires to offer a school tax exemption on the primary resident of eligible veterans residing within the school district; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on this matter on February 24, 2014; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that pursuant to Real Property Tax Law Section 458-a, the Board of Education hereby adopts the Alternative Veterans Exemption, permitting exemptions of 15%, an additional 10%, and 50% of the veteran's disability rating as determined by the Veterans Administration or Department of Defense, for wartime veterans, combat veterans and veterans who sustained a service-related disability, respectively, pursuant to the following maximum exemption amounts

Wartime	\$12,000
Combat	\$ 8,000
Disability	\$40,000

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, this local law shall be effective immediately, available to eligible veterans for the upcoming school tax year and shall continue until rescinded or amended by resolution of the board of Education.

Ayes 4 Nays 0 The motion carried

Ms. Panzer abstained.

3. PRESENTATION

BOCES Report – Dale Culver

Mr. Culver passed out information to Board members about BOCES and stated he would like to have feedback on how BOCES could do a better job. He reported that the CTI Program is consistent from year to year in enrollment. Also, there have been 189 Webutuck professionals participate in Professional Development over the last couple of years. He noted that BOCES aid to Webutuck has decreased which coincides with the drop in enrollment. BOCES would like to have new guidance counselors out to the BOCES site to review what they offer so the counselors could bring that knowledge back to the students. He also would like to get Board members out to BOCES to tour the facility and see what is offered and how things are run. Ms. Moran suggested BOCES sending someone out during our career day and college day. Mr. Gratto stated his suggestion would be that it would be helpful to begin the BOCES CTI program in ninth grade. Discussion ensued.

Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting
February 24, 2014

4. STUDENT REPORT

Andrew Coon

Mr. Coon reported on school happenings at school. The Sectional Boys basketball game is tomorrow against S.S. Seward. The School musical is in two weeks. Tickets are on sale in the Guidance office.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

The following topics were commented on by the public:

- pot holes in front of school
- daughter went to BOCES it was great
- BOCES and Webutuck communication not good
- technology school graduate in audience, it was a good experience for her

6. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Possible Finance Committee meeting with BOCES technology staff.

Mr. Gratto reported that BOCES technology support office called and would be happy to meet with Finance/Technology Committee. Ms. Moran would like them to speak to the whole Board along with Reverse Polarity in attendance. Ms. Moran would like feedback on whether the District can move the servers off site. Discussion ensued.

7. CONSENT AGENDA VOTE

Mr. Perotti made and Mrs. Panzer seconded the following motion:

A consent agenda is a single vote, which approves all asterisked items. Board policy (#008a) prohibits discussion of consent agenda items. Asterisked* items can be pulled from the consent agenda for discussion by any one Board member.

Ayes 5 Nays 0 The motion carried.

8. DISTRICT CLERK'S REPORT

*A. Approval of Minutes for February 10, 2014 Board meetings.

Mr. Perotti made and Mrs. Panzer seconded a motion to approve the minutes as submitted.

Ayes 5 Nays 0 The motion carried.

B. Delegations – None

Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting
February 24, 2014

10. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

A. Recommended Technology Upgrades – Presentation: J. Gratto

Mr. Gratto presented the recommended technology upgrades previously presented to the Finance Committee as follows: upgrade 153 computer to windows 7, replace 174 computers, upgrade 49 laptops to window 7 and replace 60 laptops with 60 chrome Books. He reviewed the costs of the above recommendations and reviewed the technology requests of each building. Mr. Gratto explained the funding of the upgrades will come from New York State Technology Voucher Grant (NYS-STVP) for \$17,698, the Special Aid Account (Senator Leibell Grant) for \$158,715, the Budgeted District Funds (budgeted for server replacement) for \$40,000, State Aided Hardware for \$8,000 which would leave the District with a balance of \$14,060.

Ms. Moran questioned how we would buy licenses. Board members had other questions and it was decided to review those at the next technology/finance meeting. Mr. Gratto stated that the Board will continue to hear updates as the project progresses. Discussion ensued.

B. Approval of Technology Upgrades

Mrs. Panzer made and Mr. Perotti seconded the following motion:

Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education hereby approves the expenditure of the Special Aid Funds received on August 12, 2002 state-aided hardware funds, and budgeted district funds for the upgrade and purchase of computer equipment, not to exceed \$210,353.

Ayes 5 Nays 0 The motion carried.

11. BUSINESS and OPERATIONS

***A. Acceptance of Federal Single Audit**

Mr. Perotti made and Mrs. Panzer seconded the following motion:

Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education hereby accepts the June 30, 2013 Federal Single Audit.

Ayes 5 Nays 0 The motion carried.

***B. Acceptance of the Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley Donation**

Mr. Perotti made and Mrs. Panzer seconded the following motion:

Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education gratefully accepts the “The Shakers-Original American Innovators” grant made through Field Trip Fund from the Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley in the amount of \$690.00 to be used by John Rocanova for field trip enrichment purposes.

Ayes 5 Nays 0 The motion carried.

12. BOARD OF EDUCATION

A. Committee Reports

1. Policy

Mr. Gratto did send 9000s out to committee members to review. There will be a meeting in March.

Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting
February 24, 2014

2. Finance-Meeting scheduled for Monday, March 3, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.
The meeting has been rescheduled to Wednesday, March 5th at 6:30 pm.

B. Mrs. Panzer was pleased with the Webutuck Warrior. She asked if any member saw the article in the Poughkeepsie Journal on Hyde Park School District having a surplus building and not wanting to sell it in case of a future need. They are creatively looking to rent it out. It is similar to what we have now; a tenant who is paying rent and they are looking for similar tenants doing something in the public interest which would help shift the burden from the tax payer. Ms. Moran stated the building needs to be used for public interest and needs to charge what the public rate is for the lease. We would need an appraiser for fair market value.

13. PUBLIC COMMENT

The following topics were commented on by the public:
-don't forget pot hole

14. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Perotti made and Mrs. Panzer seconded a motion to adjourn to executive session at 8:58 pm for the purpose of discussing the employment history of a particular person or persons.

Ayes 5 Nays 0 The motion carried.

15. RECONVENE PUBLIC SESSION

Mr. Perotti made and Mrs. Panzer seconded a motion to adjourn the executive session and to reconvene the public session at 10:00 pm.

Ayes 5 Nays 0 The motion carried.

16. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Perotti made and Mr. Mayville seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting of February 24, 2014 at 10:01 pm.

Ayes 5 Nays 0 The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Therese M. Trotter
District Clerk