

4.4.1

Communications Committee Meeting Minutes

December 11, 2015

Attendees: Deirdre Burns, Deirdre d'Albertis, Laura Schulkind, Steve Jensen, Joe Phelan

District Website

Steve shared new photos for the main page slider. We discussed sourcing images from photographers who have for-profit businesses and what restrictions, if any, we had in crediting their work. On advice of counsel, we've learned that we are able to credit photographers, however no logos of for-profit businesses can be used on the site.

The Food Service section is still in development. Ultimately, it will include general nutrition information, My School Bucks links, menus that will re-direct to the specific school menu pages and free and reduced meal policies and forms. The translation function to Spanish will also be included.

Steve is pleased to report that there are fewer webmaster queries, and he and Ed Schindler are in the refinement and "clean-up" phase. Teacher-specific forms will be moved off the public site and moved to the teacher portal section, scholarship and chaperone sign-ups will sunset after prescribed deadlines and Steve will add a link on the BoE page for people to email the entire board with one click rather than copying and pasting all the email addresses.

For our January meeting, Steve will bring information regarding the "meta-data" on site usage, i.e. how many hits the site receives and most popular pages, teacher site activity and new PD videos for staff. Joe will write up a message from the Superintendent for the District page.

Advocacy

The committee then turned to communications with the Governor and our elected officials. In the context of the tax cap, we recommend our communications focus on 1. Full restoration of the GEA, 2. Increased Foundation Aid and 3. Equitable funding for all schools in New York State. As we finalize these letters and receive Board approval, Joe will share them via email with our parent community. Joe shared that, given our most recent Audit and the limitations of the tax cap, the Comptroller may rate RCSD as a medium-risk district for the 2015-16 school year. Rhinebeck has never been anything other than a low-risk district which serves to highlight how restricted schools have become in their ability to continue delivering a strong educational program.

We discussed ways to best engage and inform our community about these issues and how to encourage people to share their voices. We considered providing an online petition or draft letter that people who feel inclined can customize for our state government. Is the Board comfortable with this type of advocacy? If so, the committee will seek input from other coalitions who promote parent and educator advocacy.

Joe will draft the initial letter from the Board and bring it for approval at our December 22 meeting. Once approved, it will be sent to the Governor, our 3 legislators and the community. We are mindful that the Governor's State of the State address on January 13 will inform how we move forward with our advocacy work. We will review the Rollover Budget at our December 22 meeting, the First draft budget on January 12 and hopefully have an understanding of funding after the Governor's address on January 13.

We will set up meetings with District partners (PTSO, RSF, Young Rhinebeck) in early February to review our financial outlook and advocacy efforts for the balance of the year.

January 8, 2016 Agenda

- Review website meta-data
- continued advocacy discussions

Respectfully submitted by Laura Schulkind

4.4.2

Audit Committee Meeting Minutes

December 9, 2015

Attendees: Deirdre Burns, Laura Schulkind, Rick Walker, Tom Burnell

Invited Guest: Tim Thomas of Toski & Co.

Internal Audits

The Payroll Audit has been conducted by Vanacore. The information is being compiled now and a full report should be available in the new year.

The State Comptroller has been conducting state audits of NYS school districts. Generally speaking, districts are asked to answer a laundry list of questions and the Comptroller's office will determine where their time would best be spent. In recent months, focus seems to be on Information Technology. Tom shared Onteora School District's audit to give the committee a sense of the types of areas the state is looking at, and suggests that this be the next priority for our budgeted 2015-16 internal audit. This area was called out in our 2013 Risk Assessment and has been on our laundry list of Audit options. In particular, Tom suggests a review of our policies regarding computer security (including cloud based data security), disaster recovery, disposal of equipment and employee security awareness.

Vanacore is not particularly geared to this type of audit, so Tom is reaching out to potential vendors and will report back to the committee in January.

External Audit

Tim Thomas joined the meeting to review the 2014-15 Audit with the committee. Overall, it is a clean audit and Tim complimented Tom, Christine and the business staff on providing excellent information to Toski for their report.

Of particular note, NYS schools have been grossly over-billed for their Teacher Retirement System (TRS) contribution. To date, we have been over-billed by \$8.7 million. The TRS has more assets than liabilities which accounts for the reduced contribution rate we are seeing for the 2016-17 school year. This is no fault of NY school districts as the money gets swept directly into the fund from the state. Tim suggests that we reach out to NYSSBA to advocate for more appropriate funding levels.

Due to the unforeseen addition of \$500,000 in Special Education costs for SY 2014-15, our unrestricted Fund Balance is very low moving forward. With the tax cap in place and our lean budget development, Tim recommends that we develop a 5 year spending plan for budgeting purposes. This way we will be able to forecast better, develop budgets from a proactive position and better withstand unforeseen expenses.

Tim will finish up the final letter to the Board that accompanies the Audit and present it in full at a Board Meeting in January or February.

January 6, 2016 Meeting Agenda:

- Continue discussions re: IT Audit and potential Auditors
- Tom to present Corrective Action Plan based on Toski letter to the Board

Respectfully submitted by Laura Schulkind

School Start Time Committee minutes - December 15, 2015

Present: Deirdre d'Albertis, Laura Schulkind, Joe Phelan, Tom Burnell, Diane Lyons

The committee used this meeting to debrief the December 8th public meeting and to decide next steps.

The group felt that the meeting went very well with good public attendance. Joe informed the committee that since the information was recently made available to the public, there have been 52 views on you-tube, 120 views of the presentation on the website, and the presentation material has been downloaded 80 times.

The group feels that the three options that would cost additional money are still not viable, given the financial climate this year. The group would like to suggest that the shift option continue to be worked on with the possibility of little or no change to the CLS schedule. The committee will reach out to Mr. King to get some input from him on the CLS schedule. Tom provided the group with the bus by bus trip time for review. The committee was asked by a parent who wrote an index card at the December 8th meeting about the importance of looking at the number of students in before and after school care. Joe had already reached out to the day care provider for that information. The committee discussed the possible dilemma for working parents with a schedule change. Because the school day is not the same in length or schedule as a "typical" work day, it is impossible to account for every scenario. The committee discussed the importance of recognizing the effect any change may have on working families. The committee will also look at the BOCES schedule and how that looks with a possible shift to the high school schedule.

Next steps: The committee proposes putting together a minute by minute schedule using the shift option to work through a very detailed schedule. The committee had another index card question asking how we will assess the success or failure of the one year pilot and what factors we would consider. The group began discussing this important question and a few initial thoughts were to look at: tardiness, discipline, visits to the nurse, follow up surveys, and after-school activity participation. The group will consider this further at future meetings. Joe will be reaching out to other schools that have changed the start time.

The committee would like the full board to weigh in about the information they have been given and the direction they would like the committee to go from here. The committee is mindful of a February deadline for making a recommendation to the full Board for any changes to the school start time for secondary students due to the scheduling of interscholastic athletics for Fall 2016-17.

Respectfully submitted by Diane Lyons

4.4.4

Facilities Committee minutes - December 18th, 2015

Present: Joe Phelan, Tom Burnell, Mark Fleischhauer, (via phone) Diane Lyons, Sheldon Tieder

Guests: Garrett Hamlin & Kristen Bouffard (Tetra Tech Architects & Engineers)

The committee spent the meeting reviewing the priority list line by line from the draft Building Condition Survey with the Tetra Tech engineers. This was helpful for the committee to understand each of the 60 items in detail.

Tetra Tech will be making revisions to this list and send it back to Sheldon for review at our next meeting. Mr. Hamlin explained that several of the items that are listed as code violations may be grandfathered because they were not code requirements when the building was built. However, if work is done in the same area, grandfathered status may be lost.

We will be looking at the lighting needs to see if there is a possibility for doing the work through an energy efficiency project rather than through a capital project. The current draft list has a rough estimate of just over ten million dollars.

Tom will be working with with the staff from our fiscal advisors, Bernard P. Donegan and Associates, on potential bond referendum numbers for the committee to review to see how this would look to the District's taxpayers. SED has extended the BCS submittal deadline from Jan 15, 2016 until June 15, 2016, but we are currently on track to submit in January. Mr. Hamlin thanked Sheldon for all his work in making this a very smooth process.

Respectfully submitted by Diane Lyons