

ROCKPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING
Wednesday, September 3, 2014

Chairperson Michael Kelley called the regular meeting of the Rockport School Committee to order at 7:01 p.m. in the MS/HS Library. Members present were Susan Brisson, Colleen Coogan, Michael Kelley, Martha Morgan, and Tracy McLaughlin-Volpe. Also, present were Superintendent Robert Liebow, and Recording Secretary Ingrid Keating.

I. A. Approval of Minutes

Motion: Susan Brisson motioned to approve the regular minutes from August 20, 2014.
Seconded: Martha Morgan seconded the motion.
Vote: The motion carried 4-0. Tracy MacLaughlin-Volpe abstained.

B. Personnel Actions

Karen Harvey has been appointed to the position of .45 FTE Middle School Spanish Teacher.

II. Community Participation

A. Superintendent's Report/FundFlow

Superintendent Liebow reported that he had a successful Administrative Retreat last week. He mentioned his opening day powerpoint, the new math training, the PTO meeting was successful in gaining interest and tri-chairs, Susan Collins, Jen Padre and Rebecca Sly, Rockport High School is again in the top 50 schools, and retired SPED Director Manny DeCruz will help cover the SPED department while Jennifer Jones is recovering from an injury. Elementary Principal Shawn Maguire reported that the first day of school went smoothly, new Asst. Principal Heather Castonguay and service dog Billy were introduced to staff and students, the staff had good training and have contacts and videos available for the new math program and there will be a parent's night to introduce the program in October.

Superintendent Liebow explained the unofficial FundFlow report for the end of last year's school year. He explained the funding of the SPED Special Fund and that he is required to report to the town twice a year with a once a year Spring correction.

B. RHS Student Advisory Council Representative N/A

C. Public Participation

RMHS Principal Philip Conrad reported that a letter went out to parents/guardians at the end of the summer requesting their assistance by asking that they not send peanut, tree nut, or sesame products to school with their child since the schools have students who suffer from life threatening food allergies. He also explained the difficulties in eliminating these products completely due to the use of the building and with continued awareness he is more confident that there will be less peanut products brought into the building. Mr. Conrad has met with the students explaining the situation and he says "they get it". Signs have been posted, hand sanitizers installed and EPI-PENS distributed. Jude Stearns of 18 Haven Ave. is concerned, the issue is cut and dry, no peanuts no peanut butter, this is life threatening and does the school committee want to be responsible? Chairperson Kelley tried to explain the process of policy development and open meeting law requirements. MaryBeth Murphy of 21R Pleasant St. said that there is very contentious and varying information on food allergies and that she is not trying to minimize the seriousness of the matter. She has two concerns: one is that nuts are a great source of protein and second that there could be a false sense of security, for students, with a "peanut free" policy. There was discussion of getting medical advice from the district doctor, board of health and/or an allergist. RMHS Nurse Jeanne Pratt stated that the schools are using federal guidelines. Bonnie Scatterday of 11 Phillips Ave. stated that her children eat peanut butter sandwiches every day. Through research she has found that peanuts do not have to be eliminated totally and as the child gets older they need to be more responsible for themselves. Mrs. Stearns says that federal law states a child has the right to learn, this is a matter of life and death. Chairperson Kelley explained that it is the school committee's role to allow the public to voice their opinion and that at times those involved will differ and that no one wants to put a child at risk. Mrs. Stearns said "yes you are" and wanted immediate

changes in the school and told the committee she would control what happens outside in the real world. Chairperson Kelley said that the committee has heard her and hopes she feels she has been heard. Superintendent Liebow feels that the schools should be able to work it out with awareness. After more committee discussion they decided to collect more information and decide what changes to the policy, if any should be made, develop possible procedures and protocols, and consider holding a parent/guardian information night with speakers.

III. Discussion and Recommended Actions

A. First Day Update

Superintendent Liebow reported the enrollment numbers for the first day of school. Currently there are 968 students K-12, which is the same as last years first day, but there are more school choice students.

B. Superintendent's Goals

Superintendent Liebow presented his 14 goals for FY15. He explained how these goals are tied to the Strategic Plan and the school committee's evaluation of him. Are they smart, measurable, action oriented, realistic and are they timed? The school committee asked that the mentoring program, implementation of a substitute mentoring program, and support the new Director of Student Services in her first year be considered for future goals.

Motion: Martha Morgan motioned to approve superintendent's goals as presented.

Seconded: Susan Brisson seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion carried 5-0.

C. Policy Review/revise

The policy sub-committee will meet to finalize the "Animals in School" policy. The committee discussed the food charge and debt collection policy and procedures. The committee feels that the parents/guardians receive adequate notices regarding low and negative balances from Food Service Director MarthaJo Fleming. The committee agreed that when a student reaches a \$25.00 debt they will only be able to charge one breakfast and one lunch, no a la carte. The committee also discussed creating a positive end-of-year letter from the school committee/central office reminding parents/guardians to clear up outstanding balances. The committee will also review when action should be taken by the central office regarding collection notices and when to file a small claim.

IV. Information and proposals

A. School Council Update

N/A

B. Donations

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Cannon made a donation in memory of Phyllis Moore to be used to support the music program.

Noel & Alison Joyce Donated a Coda Drum Kit to be used in the RMHS music program.

C. Updates

V. Correspondence

N/A

VI. Future Agenda Items

A. User Fee Review (9/17)

VII. Calendar

September 17, 2014 regular meeting

September 30, 2013 Joint Meeting with Selectmen

VIII. Executive Session

N/A

Motion: Colleen Coogan motioned to adjourn the regular meeting at 10:04 p.m.
Seconded: Martha Morgan seconded the motion.
Vote: The motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Liebow, Superintendent of Schools