

**RENSELAER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
25 Van Rensselaer Drive  
Rensselaer, New York 12144  
February 14, 2018**

The President, Mr. John Mooney, called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. John Mooney, Mrs. Dana Endres and Mr. Tim Spath were present. Mr. Ed Burns was absent from the meeting. Mr. Ken Pratt is expected to arrive shortly.

**ROLL CALL**

Ms. Jennifer Leonard (on behalf of the RTA), Mr. Jeffrey Palmer, Ms. Karen Urbanski, Ms. Meghan Heimroth, Mrs. Teri Hopper, Mrs. Colleen Multer, Mr. Charles Thomas, Ms. Jamie Heimroth (PTA President), Dr. Gladys Cruz, Mr. Harry Hadjioannou and Superintendent Sally Ann Shields were also present. There were no others in attendance.

By Mr. Spath:

**RESO #1-02/14/2018  
Approve Minutes**

“RESOLVED, the Board approves the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education dated January 24, 2018.”

Second: Mrs. Endres

Ayes – 3      Nays – 0

Motion Carried  
Unanimously

District Superintendent Dr. Gladys Cruz and Deputy Superintendent Harry Hadjioannou of Questar III BOCES were present to provide an overview of our BOCES program and to address the topic of Mental Health.

**Questar III BOCES  
Presentation**

Questar III BOCES delivers more than 275 educational and administrative services to 23 school districts in Rensselaer, Columbia, and Greene counties. Questar III also provides statewide services to more than 640 school districts in New York State. In the past five years, we have seen 10 new superintendents (including 5 in the past year), 88 new board members, 11 new business officials, 12 new CSEs, 56 new principals and assistant principals, 20 new school counselors and 18 new librarians.

Dr. Cruz gave an overview of the ESSA – Every Student Succeeds Act, the bipartisan bill to fix the No Child Left Behind Act, and an overview of the Board of Regents recent adoptions of the Next Generation ELA, Math and Art Standards.

She then reviewed the first year accomplishments of The Leading Edge – a strategic plan developed to guide the organization’s planning and communication.

Deputy Superintendent Harry Hadjioannou stated that Rensselaer City School District currently purchases \$2.1 million in BOCES services. \$1.1 million of that is for special education. The District receives \$0.62 on the dollar in BOCES aid for the majority of the services purchased.

Questar continues to work on finding a replacement for the Rensselaer Education Center in Troy. We continue to explore new instructional initiatives for students including Heavy Equipment, Human Services, Coding/Robotics and Health Technician/Services.

Mr. Hadjioannou explored the topic of mental health issues and how school districts are addressing the crisis. 1 in 5 students struggle with mental health disorders. Mental health disorders can manifest as early as 3 years old and can continue throughout a person's life. Depending on how these disorders are treated, they can become larger problems as the child ages.

The Rensselaer County Department of Mental Health is a huge resource to our area schools. Other resources include the START Center, Mobile Crisis Unit and the local Mental Health Clinic on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.

School district must work on how to create an environment where mental health issues are accepted with no stigma attached. We can provide families with education on mental health awareness and support. We must provide our teachers with training on mental health and perhaps consider developing an in-district Mental Health Clinic while utilizing the Questar III Community Schools CoSer to reduce fiscal burden on the district.

By Mr. Spath:

“RESOLVED, the Board hereby approves the second reading and adopts revised RCSD Policy #6900 – Substitute Teacher Pay Rates.”

**RESO #2-02/14/2018  
Adopt Revised Policy  
#6900**

Second: Mr. Pratt

Ayes – 4      Nays – 0

Motion Carried  
Unanimously

By Mr. Spath:

“RESOLVED, the Board hereby accepts and orders filed the January 2018 account reconciliation of the Extraclassroom Activity Fund submitted by Central Treasurer, Michael Toney.”

**RESO #3-02/14/2018  
Accept & File Account  
Reconciliation**

Second: Mr. Pratt

Ayes – 4      Nays – 0

Motion Carried  
Unanimously

By Mr. Spath: **RESO #4-02/14/2018  
Accept & File Claims  
Audit Report**  
“RESOLVED, the Board hereby accepts and orders filed the January 2018  
Claims Audit Report submitted by Michael Wolff.”

Second: Mr. Pratt Ayes – 4 Nays – 0 Motion Carried  
Unanimously

By Mr. Spath: **RESO #5-02/14/2018  
Accept & File  
Treasurer’s Report**  
“RESOLVED, the Board hereby accepts and orders filed the January 2018  
Treasurer’s Report submitted by the District Treasurer.”

Second: Mr. Pratt Ayes – 4 Nays – 0 Motion Carried  
Unanimously

By Mr. Spath: **RESO #6-02/14/2018  
Accept Resignation –  
Nicole Spath**  
“RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board  
hereby accepts the resignation of Nicole Spath, senior typist, effective  
February 9, 2018.”

Second: Mr. Pratt Ayes – 4 Nays – 0 Motion Carried  
Unanimously

By Mr. Spath: **RESO #7-02/14/2018  
Approve Leave of  
Absence – Heather  
Jenner**  
“RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board  
hereby approves the request of Heather Jenner for a leave of absence using  
accumulated sick time with the remainder as unpaid leave, commencing on  
or about May 15, 2018 and ending June 22, 2018.”

Second: Mr. Pratt Ayes – 4 Nays – 0 Motion Carried  
Unanimously

By Mr. Spath: **RESO #8-02/14/2018  
Appoint Supervisor of  
Buildings & Grounds –  
Charles Thomas**  
“RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board  
hereby provisionally appoints Charles Thomas as Supervisor of Buildings  
and Grounds with a one-year probationary period at an annual salary of  
\$57,000 pro-rated effective February 20, 2018 with a benefits package  
aligned with administrative personnel not covered by a negotiated  
bargaining agreement.”

Second: Mr. Pratt Ayes – 4 Nays – 0 Motion Carried  
Unanimously

By Mr. Spath:

**RESO #9-02/14/2018  
Appoint LTS – Alicia  
Edick**

“RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board hereby appoints Alicia Edick as a long-term substitute teacher, at the daily rate of \$140, to fill the position held by Medea Jones who has been granted a leave of absence. Ms. Edick’s appointment will begin on or about March 5, 2018 and is intended to continue for the term of Mrs. Jones’ leave, but no later than June 1, 2018.”

Second: Mr. Pratt

Ayes – 4      Nays – 0

Motion Carried  
Unanimously

By Mr. Spath:

**RESO #10-02/14/2018  
Appoint Spring  
Coaches**

“RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board hereby appoints the following coaches for the 2017-2018 at stipends as per the negotiated agreement between the RTA and the RCSD Board of Education:

Varsity Baseball	Robert Stranahan
Modified Baseball	Ryan Debrosky
Varsity Softball	Ronald Wilson
Modified Softball	Kimberly Mooney
Boys Track & Field	William Spath
Girls Track & Field	Jessica Mouawad

Second: Mr. Pratt

Ayes – 4      Nays – 0

Motion Carried  
Unanimously

By Mr. Spath:

**RESO #11-02/14/2018  
Approve Uncertified  
Substitute Teacher**

“RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board hereby approves Racoutyah Jordan as an uncertified substitute teacher (Bachelor’s rate) effective January 29, 2018.”

Second: Mr. Pratt

Ayes – 4      Nays – 0

Motion Carried  
Unanimously

By Mr. Spath:

**RESO #12-02/14/2018  
Approve Substitute  
School Bus Driver –  
Leigh Banister**

“RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board hereby approves Leigh Banister as a substitute school bus driver at the hourly rate of \$19.00.”

Second: Mr. Pratt

Ayes – 4      Nays – 0

Motion Carried  
Unanimously

By Mr. Spath:

“RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board hereby declares as surplus, and allows for disposal and/or sale, all excess kitchen equipment as recommended by the School Cafeteria Manager.”

**RESO #13-02/14/2018  
Declare Surplus  
Kitchen Equipment**

Motion Carried  
Unanimously

Second: Mr. Pratt

Ayes – 4      Nays – 0

By Mr. Spath:

“RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board hereby approves a Foreign Language Translation Service Contract with All Language Translations for the 2017-2018 school year.”

**RESO #14-02/14/2018  
Approve Contract**

Motion Carried  
Unanimously

Second: Mr. Pratt

Ayes – 4      Nays – 0

By Mr. Spath:

“RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board hereby approves a Health & Welfare Contract, in the amount of \$7,776.00, for 12 Rensselaer City resident students attending a private/parochial school in the North Colonie Central School District.”

**RESO #15-02/14/2018  
Approve Health &  
Welfare Contract**

Motion Carried  
Unanimously

Second: Mr. Pratt

Ayes – 4      Nays – 0

By Mr. Spath :

“RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board hereby approves an Agreement with On-Site Testing Services, Inc. for drug and alcohol testing [in accordance with DOT Regulations] effective January 10, 2018.”

**RESO #16-02/14/2018  
Approve Agreement**

Motion Carried  
Unanimously

Second: Mr. Pratt

Ayes – 4      Nays – 0

By Mr. Spath:

“RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board hereby accepts a \$38.84 donation from The Benevity Community Impact Fund for the Van Rensselaer Elementary School; and authorize adjustment to the school district budget.”

**RESO #17-02/14/2018  
Accept Donation**

Motion Carried  
Unanimously

Second: Mr. Pratt

Ayes – 4      Nays – 0

Assemblyman John McDonald stopped by for a brief update on the status of the State's Budget. The State is fiscally struggling. Recent changes from Washington may drive the wealthy out of New York. That is not good for us as personal income tax makes up 75% of our operating budget.

## REPORTS

We know that most schools in the Capital District are underfunded and we are working hard to provide more for them. Education is our focus. The Assembly will be putting forth a balanced budget on March 12<sup>th</sup> and it will be passed on March 14<sup>th</sup>. We do not foresee the State's Budget being passed before April 1<sup>st</sup>.

### Business Office Announcements by Ms. Heimroth:

- The Board was provided with a preliminary 2018-2019 budget. As it stands, utilizing the tax cap formula, we are looking at a -1.91% tax levy decrease. This includes keeping all current programming and all current instructional and non-instructional positions.
- There was some discussion on current PILOTS. They are not helping the School District in relation to budget calculations. If others arise in the future, it would be best if we went to the IDA and asked that they not be established. It is better for the District to have those properties stay on the tax rolls.
- Meghan will work with Christina to set up a Budget Workshop within the next few weeks.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### JSHS Announcements by Ms. Urbanski:

- Thanks extended to Pam Goodwin and Kate Foley for working with 10 students who participated in the Science Olympiad. We did not prepare for this in last year's budget, so a special thanks is extended to the Alumni Association for supporting our students in this endeavor.
- Ed Bryden and Karl Kunker will be taking students tomorrow to participate in the Bridge Builders Competition.
- Our girls made it to sectionals. First games are Friday.
- Thanks extended to Jen Haggerty and our SAPEP Counselor for coordinating a workshop for parents tomorrow evening on talking to your kids about drugs and alcohol.
- Winter Break is next week.
- Odyssey of the Mind competition will be held at RCSD on Saturday, March 10<sup>th</sup>. Annemarie Spencer and Rita Fisher will have a team competing.

### VR Announcements by Mr. Palmer:

- Mr. Palmer was very moved that he received 100 hearts from the Kindergarten students for Valentine's Day. He also received 100 Hershey kisses that they counted together.
- Patty Baumeister, Amy Mooney, and PTA President Jamie Heimroth went to a lobbying conference last week where they heard from the

Commissioner. One statistic the Commissioner pointed out was that 52% of Superintendents in the state indicate their main concerns right now are mental health issues.

Cafeteria Announcements by Mrs. Hopper:

- The elementary cafeteria furniture has been ordered and will be delivered the week of Spring Break.

News from the RTA:

- The 8th grade team will be having a reward party this week for those students who had good behavior and passed their classes for the 2nd quarter.
- Mrs. Crouch's class skyped with Laura Shovan (author of *The Last Fifth Grade of Emerson Elementary* & upcoming novel *Takedown*) for World Read Aloud Day on February 1st.
- Student Council will be working with Ms. Connor and other teachers on spirit week activities and are still looking at starting a school store.
- The English department took high school students to see the play *Paris Time* at Capital Rep last week.
- Playwright Judith Leora, worked with Mrs. Wright's Creative Communication class.
- Kieran Teator placed 4th in the English Speaking Union's Shakespeare competition.
- Mrs. Deso and Mrs. Lane's class made 100 Valentines for Mr. Palmer for the 100th Day of school, and have displayed the 100 chart out of valentines in front of the office for other students to count and use for learning. The students will be presenting Mr. Palmer with 100 chocolates for Valentine's Day to show how much they appreciate him!
- On Thursday, March 8th at 5:30 Kelly Thomas and Tessa Sedlar will be at the Empire State Plaza in the South Concourse for an Art Show and reception that they have worked on with their classes. The show is an abstract interpretation of the permanent Plaza Art Collection pieces, and they will be representing our district with work from grades 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8.
- The high school art classes are working on a project based on the Four Freedoms set out by F.D.R in his 1941 State of the Union Address, in conjunction with the Four Freedoms paintings by Norman Rockwell from 1943. This student work will be showcased in the Norman Rockwell Museum in Massachusetts in the spring.

By Mr. Pratt:

“Motion to adjourn at 7:40 p.m.”

Second: Mrs. Endres

Ayes – 4

Nays – 0

**RESO #18-02/14/2018**  
**Adjourn**

Motion Carried  
Unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Williams  
Clerk to the Board of Education