

1 **Shaker Regional School Board**  
2 **Meeting Minutes**  
3 **March 12, 2009**  
4

5 IN ATTENDANCE:

6 **School Board:** Bill Hart, Diane O'Hara, Roy Roberts, Tom Goulette, Preston Tuthill,  
7 Heidi Hutchinson, Sumner Dole

8 **Administration:** Superintendent Michael Cozort; Business Administrator Debbie Gay;  
9 Principal Russ Holden; Vice Principals: Tim Saunders, Dan Clary; Athletic Director  
10 Rick Acquilano; School Resource Officer Richy Bryant  
11

12 CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

13 Superintendent Mike Cozort called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.  
14

15 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

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17 *A motion was made by Pret Tuthill, and seconded, to nominate and elect Bill*  
18 *Hart as School Board Chair. The motion passed unanimously.*  
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20 *A motion was made by Sumner Dole, and seconded, to nominate and elect*  
21 *Diane O'Hara as School Board Vice Chair. The motion passed unanimously.*  
22

23 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

24 The Board discussed minutes from several meetings. The Board meeting minutes from  
25 February 12, 2009 and the meeting from March 6, 2009 held before the Annual Meeting  
26 were accepted as presented. Annual Meeting minutes from March 6, 2009 were tabled to  
27 a later meeting.  
28

29 FINANCIAL REPORT

30 The financial report was included in the Board Packet. The Board had no questions  
31 regarding the report.  
32

33 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

34 **BHS Girls Basketball Team:** Parents and members of the Girls Basketball Team from  
35 BHS spoke in support of Coach Jeri Blair. The Board stated that the public could voice  
36 their opinions on the situation, but since it was an employee issue and had not come to  
37 the Board level, the Board would be unable to answer questions about the situation.  
38

39 Dave Guyer asked the Board several questions, but the Board was unable to answer. Mr.  
40 Guyer expressed his frustration with the situation, asking why Coach Blair had been  
41 terminated and if the issue was age related. The Board responded that Coach Blair had  
42 not been terminated. Bill Hart stated that specific questions could not be answered at this  
43 time, but that the residents present were welcome to express their concerns, and that these  
44 would weigh in should the situation escalate to the Board level.  
45

1 Wendy Parent asked several questions regarding the employment status of Coach Blair,  
2 and what the proper avenue for expressing disappointment would be. Mike Cozort stated  
3 that Coach Blair was still an employee of the District, and that the situation was at the  
4 administrative level with the principal and athletic director. Mrs. Parent stated that she  
5 publicly supports Coach Blair for his accolades and records. She said that entertaining  
6 thoughts of eliminating him from the program would be ridiculous.

7  
8 Dave Guyer questioned if the position of athletic director were an elected or appointed  
9 position, and the Board stated that this is a hired position. Mr. Guyer stated that everyone  
10 present was in favor of keeping Coach Blair.

11  
12 Leon Parent stated that he has known Jeri Blair for over 25 years. Coach Blair has built  
13 this program, knows how to keep it growing with long term coaching staff at all levels.  
14 Mr. Parent stated that Coach Blair is committed to these programs year round, and has  
15 given everything he has to this program. He informed the Board that Coach Blair will  
16 pay out of pocket to help players who otherwise may not have the opportunity to play  
17 sports, and that if the Board removes him from this coaching position, they will harm the  
18 entire program.

19  
20 Gail Price requested that everyone consider all of the factors of the situation before  
21 making a decision. She stated that her daughter was privileged to play on the varsity  
22 team as a freshmen, under the coaching of Jeri Blair. Coach Blair pushes both the players  
23 and the parents, beginning with the program at the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade levels up through  
24 varsity. She stated that players look forward to playing on his team.

25  
26 Donna Robarge asked what needed to be done to get this situation resolved. She  
27 understands that he can be a tough coach at times, but that his style brings out the best in  
28 the girls and pushes them to try harder. He does a good job as coach and needs to remain  
29 in this position.

30  
31 Leon Parent stated that he understands that the School Board does not make the  
32 decisions, but the rumors floating around are what has drawn supporters of Coach Blair  
33 to this meeting.

34  
35 Kristy Parent, a former player for Coach Blair, stated that she has benefited greatly from  
36 her experience, and is confident that the current basketball team will as well.

37  
38 Chelsea Cooper stated that she has read online in the School Board minutes in regards to  
39 the Board's position that sports need to have an increased focus on fun and fundamentals.  
40 She stated that his methods can be hard, but that you are able to learn from his tough  
41 approach, pushing yourself to be the best in all areas. She said that not everyone may  
42 agree with his methods, but the proof is in the success of the program.

43  
44 The Board took a brief recess at 6:25 p.m., reconvening at 6:39 p.m.  
45  
46

1 REPORTS

2 *Administrators:* Administrators’ reports were included in the Board Packet. Russ  
3 Holden added to his report, stating that second year math teacher Scott Currier has been  
4 awarded the Ferd Prevost Math Award. Mr. Holden distributed handouts to the Board  
5 with the proposed itinerary for the Senior Class Trip. He explained that due to lack of  
6 participation due to the cost of the original trip, the destination had been changed from  
7 New York City to Boston. It will consist of two day trips, one to play paint ball and the  
8 other for dinner and a show at the Blue Man Group. The Board thanked Mr. Holden and  
9 members of the Senior Class for working to create a trip that would allow more students  
10 to participate.

11  
12 *Superintendent’s Report:* Mike Cozort reported that Gerri Harvey had been awarded the  
13 NH School Nurse of the Year award, which would include a nomination for the national  
14 award.

15  
16 *Board Member Reports:* Bill Hart welcomed Heidi Hutchinson to the Board. Roy  
17 Roberts stated that he was thankful that the SB2 issue had failed at the School District  
18 level a year ago, particularly in light of its effect at the town level for Belmont. He stated  
19 that town proceedings were a disaster under SB2, and he would be one of the originators  
20 of a petition to remove SB2. Pret Tuthill stated that he had been reviewing the findings  
21 of the most recent Demographics Report. He asked the administration to review further  
22 the statement on page 6, paragraph 2 of the report, which refers to the loss of students at  
23 the Middle School level.

24  
25 OLD BUSINESS

26 *On the Horizon:* The Board reviewed the “On the Horizon” Calendar. Mike Cozort  
27 stated that the agenda was on track, and asked the Board if they would like to continue  
28 the process of using the second monthly meeting to address retreat items. The Board  
29 decided to continue with this method unless items fell behind. Bill Hart charged the  
30 Building and Grounds Committee with beginning work on the Sustainability and  
31 Alternative Energy Sources Study as voted on at the Annual Meeting.

32  
33 NEW BUSINESS

34 *Debrief From Annual Meeting:* Bill Hart thanked members of the administration for their  
35 hard work in preparing for the Annual Meeting. Sumner Dole expressed his thanks for  
36 all of the work that went into negotiations for a collective bargaining agreement with the  
37 teachers.

38  
39 Tom Goulette stated that concerns with taxes, state funding, and the federal stimulus  
40 package were a sign of the times. He provided a handout to the Board with suggestions  
41 to better serve the community, based on comments that he had received. Mr. Goulette  
42 reviewed the handout, which focused on increased communication with residents about  
43 the budget content and preparation process and the impact of possible stimulus funds on  
44 the District. He suggested that a month by month progression report be included on the  
45 District’s website, which would help to increase communication and better relay

1 information to the residents. This would serve to inform residents of stimulus funds, their  
2 impacts, and Board decisions for expending funds.

3  
4 Roy Roberts suggested using District technology, such as a SmartBoard, at the hearings  
5 and annual meeting to help the audience locate the areas of the budget being discussed.  
6 He stated that this may help the budget to not seem as overwhelming to the voters.

7  
8 Tom Goulette requested that his comments regarding the proposed budget committee be  
9 notated in detail within the minutes of the Annual Meeting. He clarified that it was not  
10 his intent to insult anyone, and felt that a full text of his comments would clarify that he  
11 did not do so. Mike Cozort praised Mr. Goulette for his remarks at the meeting and felt  
12 that they were responsible for helping the public to better understand this issue.

13  
14 The Board discussed several areas and explanations that should be included for the next  
15 annual meeting. These include the addition of the functions for each code, allowing  
16 Board members to only refer to the same documents as the public has, and including  
17 current fund balances within the warrant articles.

18  
19 Bill Hart thanked the negotiations committee for all of their work, stating that from what  
20 he had read, no other District had had as easy of a time with negotiations as Shaker. Roy  
21 Roberts thanked all of the taxpayers and residents for their support.

22  
23 Sumner Dole commented that there was a need for more transparency. He stated that the  
24 Board cannot force attendance at meetings and hearings, but that they should continue to  
25 extend the invitations. Tom Goulette suggested inviting voters to provide input, and to  
26 provide several avenues to allow for this. Sumner Dole stated that this should be taken  
27 into consideration before expending surplus funds.

28  
29 *Committee Assignments:* The Board discussed keeping the same committee assignments,  
30 with Heidi Hutchinson to take over committees previously assigned to Carolyn French-  
31 Witham. Mike Cozort stated he would email the listing of current assignments.

32  
33 *Federal Stimulus Bill:* Mike Cozort distributed a handout depicting the breakdown of  
34 funds and categories estimated to be released as part of the federal stimulus package. He  
35 stated that the purpose of the plan for education is to spend funds quickly, create or keep  
36 jobs, and improve student achievement, while tracking progress. Mr. Cozort reviewed  
37 the handout, stating that Title 1 and IDEA programs have a history of being under  
38 funded. He explained each of the categories, noting the state fiscal stabilization funds  
39 that were referenced at the Annual Meeting. This is the area where Governor Lynch has  
40 flexibility to use funds to address adequacy, freeing up budget funds to make the  
41 communities whole for the room and meals taxes.

42  
43 The Board discussed the implications of spending these funds. Mike Cozort believed that  
44 the District would have a 27 month period to spend any received funds. He explained  
45 that while we know how much New Hampshire is getting, we do not yet know how much  
46 will be coming to Shaker. Mr. Cozort addressed four areas that could utilize these funds.

1 These areas include Title 1, technology, capitol projects and special education. He stated  
2 that the rules and regulations were still in development, and the District would need to  
3 wait to find out the estimated amounts that would be received and how they could be  
4 spent.

5  
6 *Snow Days:* Mike Cozort requested the permission of the Board to utilize March 20<sup>th</sup>, a  
7 scheduled professional development day, as an instructional day. Utilizing this day  
8 would keep the calendar on track for graduation on June 12<sup>th</sup> and a day of classes on the  
9 19<sup>th</sup>.

10  
11 ***A motion was made by Roy Roberts, and seconded, to authorize March 20, 2009***  
12 ***as an instructional day. The motion passed unanimously.***

13  
14 Mike Cozort stated that one more cancellation would push back the date for graduation.  
15 Russ Holden stated that if necessary, seniors had stated that they were willing to attend  
16 classes on Saturdays to make up missed time. He noted that this had been done in a  
17 previous year, and was very successful.

18  
19 *At 7:33 p.m., Bill Hart adjourned the meeting, accompanied by a motion by Pret Tuthill,*  
20 *and, by unanimous roll call vote (6-yeah, 0-nay), entered into non-public session, in*  
21 *accordance with RSA 91-3:II(c).*

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23  
24 Respectfully Submitted,

25  
26  
27 Robin M. Schofield  
28 School District Clerk