

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT #10
Special Meeting of the Board of Education
Lewis S. Mills High School
Auditorium
26 LYON ROAD, BURLINGTON, CT 06013
Monday, May 21, 2018
7:00 p.m.

Board Members Present:

Thomas Fausel, Chairman
Bruce Guillemette, Vice Chairman
Eleanor Parente
Wendy Darasz
John Goodno
Paul Omichinski
John Vecchitto
Brooke Joiner
Phillip Penn

APPROVED

*pmg
6/11/18*

Absent:

Assuntina (Susan) Baccaro
Savanna Arcuri, Student Representative
Samuel Dorman, Student Representative

Also Present:

Alan Beitman, Superintendent
Susan Laone, Director of Finance and Operations
Patricia George, Recording Secretary

I. Call to Order:
Board Chairman Thomas Fausel called to order the special meeting of the Board of Education at 7:00 p.m.

II. Mr. Fausel led the pledge of allegiance

The purpose of the meeting was to provide a public hearing with members of the Region 10 community to present their thoughts on the recently approved decision by the Board of Education to switch athletic conferences from the Berkshire League to the Central Connecticut Conference (CCC).

The meeting was called as a result of a petition that was circulated in Region 10 and which met the requirements of state law and mandated that the Board of Education hold such a meeting.

The Board of Education was there to listen, the meeting is not intended to be a debate, nor an interactive session; no action by the Board will be taken. The rules of the meeting were outlined and a brief history of the process to move to the CCC or remain in the Berkshire League was provided.

III. Public Participation

Kirsten Bergstrom

Currently has three children in the district. Athletics are a big part of the educational process at Mills. Sports enhance the academic experience and she urged the Board to listen to the speakers with an open mind.

Sam Buchanan

The scheduling in the Berkshire League allows students to participate in other activities outside of athletics. The CCC has much more rigorous schedules.

Timothy Mischke

Originally thought the move to the CCC was a good decision. Which league is a better fit for the student athletes? He believes the Berkshire League is where Region 10 belongs. Not proper size school to fit into the CCC. Wants children carefully considered in the decision and all data taken into account.

Jay Pelchar

The issue has an enormous impact on the lives of the student athletes. Moving to the CCC is an enormous challenge. When he spoke at the April meeting, he recognized that the Board was given the information that the coaches were overwhelmingly in favor of the move. He provided a petition signed by over 50% of the district's head coaches to remain in the Berkshire League Conference.

Rob Martinotti

Thanked the Board for hosting the meeting. His family of six moved to Harwinton 12 years ago because the education fit the needs of the family perfectly. Again, thanked the Board because, under their leadership, his children were steered in a positive path.

Prepared a budget that would occur if the district moved to the CCC, which would ultimately increase the district's budget.

Jim Barone

Originally, he was a huge proponent of the district moving to the CCC. He currently coaches both boys' basketball and boy's volleyball at Mills and felt that the CCC would benefit boys' volleyball. He has also coached girls' volleyball in Farmington for nine seasons in the CCC.

He later learned of the communities' displeasure with the move and took time to think about the entire school rather than only the two sports he coaches. His original thoughts were not what is best for the community.

Al Ciarlo

Currently coaches at Mills. The last time he spoke to the Board, he indicated that he was against the move, but was torn because he liked the scheduling concept offered by the CCC for girls' basketball. Since that time, however, he spoke to three coaches currently in the CCC and they indicated that the present schedule is currently in jeopardy because many of the coaches are unhappy with it.

He firmly believes that a restructured Berkshire League would be a benefit to Mills. A monumental move, such as this, has to benefit the majority of the districts' sports - it will not.

Steve Mills

A year ago he would have supported this move, but his perspective was based on emotions, not facts. He was unaware that the Berkshire League Athletic Directors were on record and committed to making changes to address competitive issues. He incorrectly assumed the significant impact the move would have on the budget.

He is not worried about the student athletes taking on the challenge, rather that the system and facilities around them, putting them at a significant disadvantage.

Wants budget predictability. He is against the move to CCC.

Steve Schibi

Not a proponent of the move to the CCC, he shared some quotes from the Berkshire League Athletic Directors, Principals, and Superintendents, that were shared with him.

Knowledge that should have been shared with the Board back in March included that the Athletic Directors have been studying the status of the Berkshire League for several years. A committee of the Berkshire League's Athletic Directors are going to meet this summer to discuss way to create

two divisions within our league to allow schools to go out and pick up non-league opponents. The conversation about divisions has been on the table for some time.

We want to keep our student athletes lives balanced and keep the competing in the competitive Berkshire League and keep them studying at home, not on a bus stuck in traffic on I-84.

Hunter Cowger

Currently, he is a senior at Lewis Mills and wished to address some inaccurate statements made at the April board meeting about how the CCC will improve the student athletes' exposure to collegiate athletic programs. College coaches do not attend high school games to recruit. Most recruiting is done through the web, mostly through the exchange of game film highlights. Moving to CCC will hurt students to be recruited.

Dan Buchanan

Lewis Mills has a winning tradition that begins with home field advantage in the CIAC tournament. Increased competition will make it challenging to even make the tournament, never mind securing a home field advantage. He went on to provide facts regarding the 2017 season.

School spirit is the best in the state. When teams win, students want to be a part of it and that causes a positive environment.

Asked the Board to reconsider their decision.

Melanie Mills

Ms. Mills has four daughters in the school district. She chose to live in the Region 10 school district for the academics and athletic programs. She attended the April Board meeting and did not hear any mention of the Unified Sports team, a team for special need students of which her daughter is a participant.

Athletes will have to travel long distances with too much time on the bus.

The move to the CCC will have a negative impact on the special needs children. Asked Board to reconsider their decision.

Jennifer Bylykbashi

The Region 10 School Board is elected to represent the people who live in the Burlington and Harwinton school communities and that it is important that the Board know the opinions of the people that they represent. After the

board meeting in April, there was an outpouring of public shock about the decision to move to the CCC.

In 72 hours, over 360 signatures were obtained from those community members that are opposed to the move. The Board was asked to reconsider based on the information they are given tonight.

Dylan McCall

Spoke about soccer. He continually has people congratulating him; how proud they are that their town has won a state championship. Losing game after game after game will bring moral down.

Joe Neary

Spoke for the student body who are not in favor of moving to the CCC.

He, along with 365 student athletes, signed a petition stating that they do not agree to move to the CCC and wish to explore other options from the NVL. He asked that the Board not ignore the student body and provided Principal Rau with the petition.

Ben Kulas

Not afraid of the move – for him, he hasn't been sold. The arguments to leave the Berkshire League, he doesn't buy. Region 10 is smaller than the CCC. He has a lot of questions on why to go. He asked for a good reason, to sell him on it.

Colt Waldron

Spoke for girls' soccer team. Encouraged the Board to take a step back and take a bigger look. Most people like where the district is in the Berkshire League. Teaching the kids the wrong lesson.

Terry O'Connor

Most of the issues this evening encompass numbers, whether it's the number of students, number of teams, or the number of dollars the school spends on its athletic programs. There would be major increases to the Region 10 budget, which may even cause the cancellation of the sports offered at Mills.

He still was waiting to hear what the plan was for the swim team.

Beth Fournier

Has two daughters at the high school, both are athletes and the athletic program has been a big part of their lives. Her family is a proponent of the Berkshire League.

Three main takeaways, (1) majority of coaches are not in favor of this move, (2) any move to the CCC will increase expenses and (3) the people who voted for you are against this move. The impacts will be long lasting.

Respectfully asks the Board to reconsider the move to the CCC.

Kathryn Bergstrom and Aidan O'Connor

Asked the Board to reconsider the decision on the league change. She is a member of the swim team, which is co-ed. All the other leagues that she swims against, are co-ed as well, which makes a great competition for all team members.

The teams in the CCC are almost all boys' only teams and she feels it would be a great disadvantage, especially for the girls, to swim against these teams.

A move to CCC would destroy the sense of unity in and out of the pool.

Karen Bentley

Tired old Region 10 mom, but still involved. Was shocked when she heard about the move to the CCC.

Doesn't buy that the kids need increased exposure to diversity - feels it's the parent's job.

Also shocked that this came up 17 months ago and even more so, to hear that the Berkshire League wasn't interested in working it out.

Moving to the CCC only benefits an elite group. Said that the Board needs to take parents thoughts into consideration, not just their own.

Michael Barney

Supports the move to the CCC. His daughter played soccer at Har-Bur; didn't get much of an experience, other than the camaraderie.

When the Board began the process of considering the feasibility of a league change, the Board was not in favor of the move. However, after many months

of exploring the viability of the CCC, the members changed their minds. They looked at the move from a logical and fact based decision process.

Told the Board to base their decision on the information that they have now.

John Bergstrom

Was personally in favor of the move from day one.

A dream without actions, is just a dream. If moving to the CCC, need a plan Based on the information thus far – feels that the right decision was made - Now need a plan.

Chris Loomis

Coached in the CCC. The Berkshire League does not provide the same diverse experience as the CCC. Being part of the CCC allows for higher participation percentages and allows for programs to engage more student athletes to compete at a higher level of competition. A move to the CCC will push the coaches and athletes, no doubt. Change is difficult, but should be embraced together. Thanked the Board for holding the meeting and honoring all viewpoints.

Alycia Fournier

Was a 2017 girl's volleyball captain and involved in six clubs and two volunteer associations at Mills. Her experiences as a student athlete in the Berkshire League are ones that will not be forgotten. This season, after many tough battles, they won the Berkshire League title. She, herself, Berkshire League all conference letter this year. Hasn't always been easy. Berkshire League is where volleyball fits best.

Asked that the Board please listen to the student body.

Steve Gorman

He and his family moved to Burlington and they love it here. Lot of data and important information has been put out by people present this evening.

In favor of moving to the CCC, not from data point of view, but rather an experience point of view. Coached at all levels. Winning is memorable, but his greatest lessons came from the adversity of getting beat.

The CCC is going to increase opportunities for non-varsity athletes and give them a chance to be engaged at school. As a counselor, he feels this is very important. Not data, but critically important to the future of our children.

Jane Pallok

Read a letter she sent to the Board and was asked to share at the meeting. The letter notes that she was disappointed at the Board's decision to leave the Berkshire League. The move will kill sports and school spirit at Lewis Mills High School. None of the sports have been dominate winners through the years, indicating that the Berkshire League is where they belong.

Has not seen any efforts to brainstorm on ways to make the Berkshire League more palatable to the minority of dissatisfied parents. Felt the effort would have been much more appropriate than to vote for a league change.

She asked the Board to reverse their vote to leave Berkshire League.

Joanne Neuhausser

She is the varsity field hockey coach at Mills and her comments are specific to that program. Not in favor of the move to the CCC, that it is too big of a jump. The Berkshire League is strong for field hockey. She also expressed concerns about transportation. Berkshire League is their family.

Riley O'Connor

She wanted to share her thoughts that moving to the CCC was a mistake. As a current grade eight student, who will be a freshman next year, said the move would have a greater impact on her, than perhaps, anyone else in attendance this evening.

The girls' field hockey team will have to be bussed half-way across the state which will put them at a severe disadvantage to get their studies done in a reasonable amount of time and in a conducive environment. Additionally, their families and friends would have difficulty navigating through the gridlock of Hartford.

Chloe Waldron

Chloe will be graduating from Lewis Mills this year. There is no disagreement that the Berkshire League needs fixing, but to make a rushed change that will impact so many sports, does not make sense.

What she finds most troubling was the complete lack of the process and disclosure. The coaches and community were a not part of the process, nor were the students.

Recruiting exposure does not emanate through high school programs, whether it be the Berkshire League or the CCC. Her opportunity to play soccer in college did not happen through the high school process whatsoever.

Elizabeth O'Connell

An Alum of Lewis Mills, she has three children in the school district. Loved being a part of the Berkshire League.

She paid homage to Coach Mischke, not only as a fine coach, but also as the recipient of the Youth and Community Development award. When Coach Mischke says that the move is not the right thing for his team, is compelling to her. She doesn't need to have the right answer, she has the right answer from somebody who knows.

Matt Mooney


Matt is a teacher at Avon High School and is also a coach. Avon was invited into the CCC about three years ago and there were many meetings similar to the one being held this evening. Worries and concerns were expressed, not only by players and parents, but by the coaches, as well.


In the three years that they have joined, if you were to ask, the overwhelming majority of coaches and student body and parents would say that they support the move to the CCC and have been very happy with it.

IV. Adjourn:

A motion was made by Phillip Penn and seconded by Bruce Guillemette to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m.; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,


Eleanor Parente, Secretary


Date

Board of Education Meeting Minutes are placed on our web page (www.region10ct.org) within seven (7) work days following the Board of Education Meeting.

The minutes are marked as DRAFT, pending Board of Education approval at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

When participating in or attending a Board of Education meeting or reviewing minutes, please note that the Board of Education uses formats prescribed by Robert's Rules of Order for conducting meetings and publishing minutes.

Robert's Rules state, "Minutes are a record of what was done at a meeting, not a record of what was said." [RONR (11th ed.), p. 468, ll. 16-18] which is the standard for which board minutes strive. For this reason the minutes will typically not reflect the discussion surrounding a motion, only its outcome.

Additionally, Robert's Rules in brief advises "The name and subject of a guest speaker or other program may be given, but no summary of the talk." [RONRIB page 149]

Both books can be found at our local libraries for anyone interested in more information.

RSD10 Chair