

WCSD Core Value:

“We believe that the collaboration needed for meaningful change is built on honestly, trust and respect.”

3/7/17 CCC Meeting Minutes:

Members Present of the Community Communications Committee

Barbara Goodman
Marie Johnson
*Peggy Kellan
Daren Lolkema
Rob Rubin
Maureen Ryan
Deborah Torres Henning
Amy Watkins

Members Unable to Attend

Alicia Alfred
Kathleen Spinella

Meeting was called to order at 6:18 pm

- Minutes from February 3 were accepted. Ms. Torres-Henning abstained.

Mr. Rubin opened the meeting welcoming Mr. Shinske.

Mr. Shinske shared that he was in the newsroom environment for 30 years. He worked at the Poughkeepsie Journal from 1989 to 2016. He had a column in the Sunday paper, WAMC public radio and worked at News Day. He covered education for a school district in Marion County, Florida. The parent company of the Poughkeepsie Journal asked him to provide training to other newsrooms across the country.

He shared that journalism continuously changes. Now what is written is in real-time. Speed counts. He introduced social media at the Poughkeepsie Journal with an emphasis on accuracy.

Poughkeepsie Journal is getting 6.5-8 million views per month on their web page. Referrals from Facebook back to their web page.

His current position is with Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress. He deals with community engagement. They look to solve community issues and offer solutions. He is currently analyzing the infrastructure in the Hudson Valley.

Mr. Shinske shared that Wappingers CSD can be a target because of its size. He asked the CCC, “How would you assess what the District is doing with communication?”

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EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION NORMS AND GUIDELINES

Suspend Certainty:

- Remain open minded.
- Commit to big picture, not personal interest. Inquire into the ideas of others before advocating for one’s idea.
- Putting all ideas on the table, this creates meaningful dialogue and discussion.
- Presume positive intentions of each member, this can prevent unintentional put-downs.

Respectful Responses:

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- Pause before responding to enhance dialogue and decision making.
- Pay attention to self and others; be aware of what you are saying and how it is said as well as how others are responding.
- Paraphrase to indicate that you are an active participant and understand the conversation.
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Mr. Lolkema suggested everyone introduce themselves and share their role on the committee.

Barbara Goodman shared she ran for the BOE because she felt the District could do more to communicate and be more transparent, explain why decisions are made and share the good things that are happening in the District. She shared that several of the suggestions she had Mr. Carrion has already implemented.

Ms. Torres-Henning shared that the problem with the communication is that the District talks at the public and surprises them with things without the opportunity to give feedback.

Ms. Kelland shared that she ran for the BOE to find out more what is happening in the District.

Mr. Lolkema shared that WCSD is a large District and we have many good things happening in the District. He shared that we do many great things in our District. The District sometimes fails to anticipate what decisions may cause angst among the community.

Ms. Kelland added that some of the problem is that the stack of notices her daughter receives she can't find what information is important and what isn't. She shared the report card has improved, but sometimes there is information going home that may not be clear.

Mr. Shinske shared this is a key point. He said that educators and police officers are the worst communicators because of the jargon their profession entails. One thing that could work is a survey [the community] to ask people what type of communication they would like to receive. They reviewed the types of communication to expect.

He added that Communication Plans can help to find out what our audience wants and how do they want it.

Ms. Torres-Henning said that The Rewind is all about warm and fuzzies.

Ms. Ryan suggested each building have their own newsletter.

Ms. Johnson shared we reach the staff and families, but how many people of those who should be involved in, are included in the communication. She asked how can we get could the press involved in reaching those not in the District.

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Mr. Shinske shared that the era that newspapers grew up in is dead. The Poughkeepsie Journal is read, even though it is traditional. He suggested a staff member writing an op-ed piece or column, or a student or staff member tell that story to get it in the paper. Anyone can be a writer of news through social media.

For the traditional media, the way in the door is to tell your story and send it to them. He said to submit photos with stories.

The Poughkeepsie Journal is just one component of a communication plan.

Ms. Torres-Henning brought up an issue that she does not like how public comment questions are answered.

Regarding Social Media- Mr. Shinske shared the number of Twitter followers, Facebook Likes and Instagram followers.

Different messages with different tools.

Mr. Shinske shared that the road the District is on is good, but it will only get more complex as we move on. Technology changes frequently. The concern to address is what is your content? This is why the survey is so important. The survey should ask demographic information, etc.

Mr. Lolkema asked how we could increase the number of responses. Mr. Shinske asked how the survey would be deployed. He asked what percentage [of return] would be good. Mr. Shinske said he would need to know more information. He said it depends on the breadth of the survey. Length may matter.

Mr. Shinske suggested contacting Lee Miringoff from Marist.

Ms. Goodman shared that one danger of surveys is that they self-select negative experiences. She shared that Newburgh used Survey Monkey geared toward different constituents and it was successful.

Mr. Shinske said bad news should be shared immediately to get ahead of it. Then have a positive story behind it. Need to have a point of transparency. Sometimes bad news is judged by how long the issue lives.

Ms. Goodman asked if it would be helpful if the communication included information with the constraints of the District.

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Mr. Shinske shared it’s about audience. ‘Who are your constituents? How do they want to be educated? What do they want to be educated about?’

Ms. Torres-Henning said we need to know the goal of the survey. Mr. Shinske said the goal might be the different techniques [of communication] and how to get there. Interaction with social media helps people to feel they were heard.

Ms. Kelland shared that people like to see their name and people they know in the paper.

Mr. Shinske reiterated that it is about the people you are communicating to, not the people communicating. Everyone has to understand the message.

Ms. Goodman asked what we are doing right. Mr. Shinske said we are doing many things correctly. For example, we are graduating kids in an era that it is not easy. He also said we are talking. We are also asking what we do with this information once it is collected. What’s working? What’s not working?

Next Meeting will be April 5 confirmed for CCC in Roy C. Ketcham Library from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

7:00 Meeting adjourned

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