



**Minutes**  
**THOMASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Regular Meeting**  
Thomaston Town Hall – Meeting Room One  
Date: Monday, April 12, 2010  
7:00 p.m.

**Members: Laurie Barrett, Chair; Beth Yaffe, Vice Chair; Lucy Santopietro, Secretary; Laura Rieley, Treasurer; Joanne Gilland, Holly Herbert, Roxy Fainer, George Counter and Steve Catania, Members**

**Minutes**

**Present:** Laurie Barrett, George Counter, Beth Yaffe, Lucy Santopietro, Roxy Fainer, Steve Catania, Holly Herbert, Joanne Gilland, \*Laura Rieley (arrived 7:02 p.m.)

**Absent:** n/a

**Also Present:** Superintendent, Lynda Mitchell; Board Clerk, Patricia George; Pupil Services Director, Nancy Schnyer; Thomaston Center School Principal, James Diorio; Black Rock School Principal, Paul Johnson; High School Principal, John Perrucci; Business Manager, Sue Laone; and School Board Representatives, Alexander Lee and Leah Miller

**I. Establishment of a quorum and call to order:**  
Chairperson Laurie Barrett established a quorum and called to order the Regular Meeting of the Thomaston Board of Education at 7:00 p.m.

**II. Pledge of Allegiance:**  
Board Chair Laurie Barrett deferred to Leah Miller and Alex Lee to lead the pledge of allegiance.

\*Laura Rieley arrived 7:02 p.m.

**III. Approval of Agenda:**  
On a motion made by Steve Catania and seconded by Beth Yaffe to approve/accept the agenda with the following amendments:

Under VIII. Superintendent’s Report, subsection C. Adoption of the 2010 Common Core Teaching (CCT) move to G. Correspondence

Under VIII. Superintendent’s Report, eliminate subsection E. Mentor Program

Under VIII. Superintendent’s Report, Subsection F., include discussion on Black Rock School/Thomaston Center School Administrative Structure Update

No further discussion, motion carried unanimously

**IV. Approval of Minutes:**

On a motion made by Lucy Santopietro and seconded by Holly Herbert to approve/accept the Special Meeting minutes dated Monday, March 8, 2010 at 6:30 p.m., Beth Yaffe and Steve Catania abstain, no further discussion, motion carried unanimously.

On a motion made by Lucy Santopietro and seconded by Roxy Fainer to approve/accept the Regular Meeting minutes dated Monday, March 8, 2010 at 7:00 p.m., Beth Yaffe and Steve Catania abstain, no further discussion, motion carried unanimously.

On a motion made by Lucy Santopietro and seconded by Roxy Fainer to approve/accept the Special Meeting minutes dated March 22, 2010, Laurie Barrett and Laura Rieley abstain, no further discussion, motion carried unanimously.

On a motion made Lucy Santopietro and seconded by Beth Yaffe to approve/accept the Special Meeting minutes dated April 5, 2010, Steve Catania abstains, no further discussion, motion carried unanimously.

**V. Student Representatives' Reports:**

Board members Leah Miller and Alex Lee highlighted an upcoming fundraiser, Mr. T.H.S., and the implementation of a high school panel formed to assist students transitioning into their freshman year.

**VI. Public Participation:**

Teressa Bocci  
12 Ridgewood Acres

- Reiterated some of the information discussed at the Special Meeting of Monday, April 5, 2010 relating to budget cuts
- Felt the district would be better served if cuts were made to support staff rather than teachers

Tim Scatena  
67 Patricia Lane

Asked the Board if further discussions were taking place in the event that art and music were not cut, adding that the money has to come from somewhere.

Other members of the audience brought forward their ideas on saving dollars including utilizing e-mail as an avenue of communication with parents as opposed to paper.

## **VII. Communications:**

On a motion made by Beth Yaffe and seconded by Lucy Santopietro to approve/accept all communications as presented,

### Further Discussion:

The Board recognized Principals Jim Diorio and Paul Johnson for their years of service to the Thomaston Board of Education, Mr. Diorio with 41 years and Mr. Johnson with 13 years. Both administrators will be retiring in June. They also recognized Mrs. Kearns, a Foreign Language Teacher at the high school, who will also be retiring in June.

Board member Joanne Gilland asked a question regarding the Talented and Gifted information contained in the Board packet. She wondered if this was the first time that the district was identifying those students.

Superintendent Mitchell responded by saying she felt it was important to share with Board members the process in identifying students who are talented and gifted. She indicated that districts are mandated by the state to identify those students, however; they are not responsible for providing resources or a support program.

Motion carried unanimously.

## **VIII. Superintendent's Report:**

### A. Student of the Month for March – Lizzie Eberhardt

Superintendent Mitchell said, "Every student who comes forward as student of the month has an outstanding resume, served the community, received scholarly grades and have gone beyond." She then read from Lizzie's resume highlighting her involvement in athletics, academics, and various clubs.

### B. Student of the Month for April – Gabe Olsen

Ms. Mitchell read from Gabe's resume highlighting his involvement with Varsity Cross Country, State Champion Team, Varsity Indoor and Outdoor Track and several service community projects to name a few.

### C. Relay for Life

Superintendent Mitchell reviewed the particulars of the event from last year, what worked and what needed further evaluation. She indicated, with a few minor changes, the event will be held on June 26<sup>th</sup>. Last year the event raised \$55,000.

### D. High School Assistant Principal/Black Rock School and Center School Administrator Structure Update

Superintendent Mitchell explained the hiring process of the Assistant Principal at Thomaston High School which began with a committee comprised of several board members, teachers, parents and administrators. The new Assistant Principal will be on a reduced time frame, partially for budgetary reasons. The hiring

committee forwarded the names of the top three candidates to Mrs. Mitchell, who again interviewed each of them. She said that the top contender is an excellent choice and a very good match for the district.

The second piece for discussion involved the future administrative positions for Black Rock and Center Schools. The hiring of these individuals will keep with the nature of the two schools mission and will encompass a budgetary piece as well.

Superintendent Mitchell will be meeting with several teachers from both Black Rock School and Center school on April 15<sup>th</sup>, to discuss the two new administrative positions, an Assistant Principal (reduced time) and a Principal. Plans are still in the early stages and under consideration are, a plan of action, who will handle what, and what will be the home base for each. A hiring committee comprised of teachers from the district, approximately 4 parents, several Board members and the Superintendent will meet to review applicants and hold interviews.

#### E. Board Member/School Liaisons' Reports

Superintendent Mitchell explained that Beth Yaffe, the Board liaison to the high school and Lucy Santopietro, the Board liaison to Black Rock and Center schools meet with teams of people in the school to discuss issues and concerns. Ms. Mitchell felt that time should be made available to them to share their information at subsequent Board meetings.

### **IX. Business Manager's Report:**

As stated at Monday's Special Meeting, Ms. Laone indicated that there was \$160,000 in budget cuts that she felt were final reductions. An additional \$187,000 of provisional reductions were still under consideration. Those reductions included the elimination of art and music instruction, the realignment of social studies classes for grades 7 and 8 and the addition of a business teacher.

Earlier in the day, the Building Administrators, Superintendent Mitchell and Ms. Laone met to discuss other possible budget reductions from those named above. As an administrative team, they were able to establish, what they deemed to be, an additional three items to apply to the \$187,000 as firm reductions. They consisted of \$81,000 in early retirements, \$3,000 in AARA funds (left over funds which were applied to after school programs), and \$10,000 in employee benefits.

Items in discussion, not finalized, include the elimination of adding a business teacher. The justification is no one is currently in the position; it would make sense not to hire for the position in order to save a current teaching position. Monetarily, this could save the district approximately \$43,000.

Additional reductions still outstanding and under consideration include:

AFSCME Union concessions  
Possible bus route consolidation  
Increasing lunch prices  
Cuts in non-instructional support staff  
Special Education Transportation (going out to bid)

Ms. Laone went on to address some of the audience members' concerns relating to the utilization of e-mail. Currently, the district has a Code Red emergency notification system which is shared with the town. The school district will be moving to a new system that is just for education. Ms. Laone is hopeful that the system can be used for parental communication.

**X. Administrators' Reports:**

- A. Pupil Services Director, Nancy Schnyer  
Written report as it stands
- B. Thomaston High School, Principal John Perrucci  
Mr. Perrucci highlighted some of the information provided in his written report:
- Civics courses are now project-based.
  - The NEASC strongly recommends the development and implementation of a Student Advisory Program. Mr. Perrucci asked if the Board would consider lengthening the school day by eliminating homeroom, extending the school day or both. If the program were implemented under the current schedule structure, it would further reduce instructional time.
  - Separated Physical Education from Health
  - The NEASC has placed Thomaston High on a probationary status due to the fact that they do not have a full-time media specialist. Mr. Perrucci feels that without the addition of a full time business teacher, he cannot reduce Ms. Dayton's course load to allow her to only assume the duties of a media specialist.
  - A new grading policy was presented
- C. Thomaston Center School, Principal James Diorio  
Written report only
- D. Black Rock School Principal, Paul Johnson

- Mr. Johnson added the following information to his written report:
- Approximately 40 parents participated in Noah Rogozinski playground clean up day at Black Rock School;
- The P.T.A. is sponsoring a “Two Schools – One Breakfast” at Applebees in Torrington on May 8<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.,;
- Presented the Board with numbers representing “state” Kindergarten Entrance Inventory Results from the fall of 2009.

**XI. Standing Committee Reports:**

- A. Budget:  
On a motion made by Steve Catania and seconded by Lucy Santopietro to approve/accept the budget expenditures as presented, no further discussion, motion carried unanimously.
- B. Curriculum and Instruction: n/a
- C. Maintenance/Facilities: n/a
- D. Technology: n/a
- E. Personnel: n/a
- F. Transportation:  
On a motion made by Beth Yaffe and seconded by Lucy Santopietro to approve/accept the Worhunsy Bus Contract for the period of July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2013, no further discussion, motion carried unanimously.
- G. Athletics: n/a
- H. Long Range Task Force/Building Committee: n/a
- I. Policy:
1. Mission Statement/Philosophy  
Last summer Superintendent Mitchell met with several teachers and Board members. The purpose of the meeting was to establish a means of communication. The implementation of Board liaisons was one product of this meeting.
  2. Community Relations/Programs  
The above discussions led into the community relations piece. Superintendent Mitchell noted that she would like to expand the internal plan of open communications to now reach the community. She asked that the Board provide their input.

J. Government Relations: n/a

K. Affiliations: n/a

**XII. Old Business:** n/a

**XIII. New Business:**

A. District Goals

At a meeting held on Saturday, March 6, a committee comprised of

Faculty members, the Superintendent, along with representation from CABE generated district goals.

**XIV. Items for Future Agendas:**

**XV. Executive Session:** n/a

**XVI. Adjournment:**

On a motion made by Lucy Santopietro and seconded by Beth Yaffe to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education at 8:45 p.m., no further discussion, motion carried unanimously.