

Minutes
THOMASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Meeting

Thomaston Town Hall – Meeting Room One
Date: Monday, April 8, 2013
7:00 p.m.



Members: Lucy Santopietro, Chair; Roxy Fainer, Vice Chair; Kathleen Freimuth, Secretary; Holly Herbert, Treasurer; Rebecca Guay, Member; Alexander Lee, Member; Anne Petrucci, Member; Joanne Gilland, Member; Debra Schriver, Member

Minutes

Present: Lucy Santopietro, Roxy Fainer, Kathleen Freimuth, Holly Herbert, Alexander Lee, Becky Guay, Debra Schriver, and Anne Petrucci

Absent: Joanne Gilland and Student Representative Phil Sechow

Also Present: Superintendent, Lynda Mitchell; Business Manager, Nancy O'Dea-Wyrick; High School Administrators, John Perrucci and Jonathan Kozlak; Center School Administrator, Anne Uberti; Black Rock School Administrator, Alisha DiCorpo; Pupil Services Director, Nancy Schnyer; Student Board Representative, Sarah Guay and Board Clerk, Patricia George

I. Establishment of a quorum and call to order:

Board Chair Lucy Santopietro established a quorum and called to order the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education at 7:02 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance:

Lucy Santopietro led the pledge of allegiance.

III. Approval of Agenda:

On a motion made by Becky Guay and seconded by Anne Petrucci to accept/approve the agenda with the following amendments:

Under VII., Communications, Subsection A., New Hires/Rehires/Replacements,

Add an item 1, New Hire, Robert Milius, Middle School Softball Coach;

Add an item 2, New Hire, Joe Aniki, JV Baseball Coach;

Add an item 3, Margaret Stager, Interim Varsity Boys' Tennis Coach;

Under VII., Communications, Subsection B., Resignations/Exit Interviews,

Add an item 1, Resignation, Michael Herschenfeld, effective April 3, 2013 for personal reasons;

No further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

IV. Approval of Minutes:

On a motion made by Holly Herbert and seconded by Alexander Lee to accept/approve the minutes from the Regular meeting of the Board of Education dated Monday, March 11, 2013; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

On a motion made by Holly Herbert and seconded by Kathleen Freimuth to accept/approve the minutes of the Special meeting of the Board of Education dated Monday, March 25, 2013; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

V. Student Representative Reports: Phil Sechow and Sarah Guay

Sarah Guay's report included information on the following:

The Girls' Basketball finals where held at Mohegan Sun; they lost to Capital Prep but the support was amazing;

Tony Turina, from Tony's coffee shop, has named iced coffee flavors after each of the team members and is donating the proceeds to the team;

The team will be throwing out the first pitch at one of the Torrington Titan's upcoming baseball games;

The second annual faculty basketball game between Thomaston and Terryville was held last month; the current record is 1-1;

National Honor Society Inductions were scheduled for Tuesday evening;

Tennis Teams are holding a fundraiser (Retail 101) to raise money for the courts.

VI. Incredible Classroom/Student Presentations/Recognitions: n/a

VII. Communications:

1. New Hires
2. Resignation

On a motion made by Kathleen Freimuth and seconded by Anne Petrucci to accept/approve the new hires and resignation as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

1. Athletics:
 - i. Field Update

Superintendent Mitchell explained that the district has a signed contract and that Mr. Marty Egan will be continuing to service the fields.

1. Transfers: n/a

1. Leaves of Absence

On a motion made by Alexander Lee and seconded by Kathleen Freimuth to accept/approve the leave of absence as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

1. Field Trips

On a motion made by Holly Herbert and seconded by Kathleen Freimuth to accept/approve the field trips as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

1. Correspondence

Informational, as presented

H. Healthy Food Certification

Section 2 - Certification

On a motion made by Kathleen Freimuth and seconded by Anne Petrucci to accept/approve Section 2 - Healthy Food Certification; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

Section 3 – Exemption Statement

On a motion made by Holly Herbert and seconded by Kathleen Freimuth to accept/approve Section 3 – Exemption Statement as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

Section 4 – Amendment to Agreement for Child Nutrition

A motion was made by Anne Petrucci and seconded by Kathleen Freimuth to accept/approve Section 4 – Amendment to Agreement for Child Nutrition; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

VIII. Superintendent's Report:

1. Student-of-the-month – Nicole Charbonneau

Superintendent Mitchell said that Nicole follows suit with all the other students who attend the Rotary in that they are community activists, very good students and justified in receiving the honor. Nicole, who ranks 5th in her class, participates in a long list of activities including the Interact Club, National Honor Society and volunteering at St. Mary's hospital. Ms. Mitchell explained that Rotary gives \$10,000 to Thomaston High School every year.

1. Survey on Safety and Security Measure – CAPSS

The survey, which was included in the Board packet, emanated from Governor Malloy after the Sandy Hook tragedy occurred. There are a series of questions and recommendations that the district will need to review.

1. Emergency Planning

Mr. Ken Koval, along with a member of the Thomaston Fire Department, met with Superintendent Mitchell. Until recently, if a major emergency took place in the town, Center School was going to be the place where the community would gather and there would be services offered there, however, because there is a generator being installed at the high school, the emergency site has been changed to that venue. They continue to actively work on this.

1. *D. Connecticut Center for School Change*

Informational, as presented.

IX. Business Manager's Report:

1. Expansion/Consolidation update

Superintendent Mitchell began the conversation by stating that there have been a lot of discussions, many questions and much confusion regarding consolidation. Even if a consultant were to be hired, she felt that the initial piece would have to begin internally. A meeting was held offsite at Education Connection in Litchfield where Administrators brought their floor plans and ideas. They took into consideration the educational component as well as space and dollars. Ms. Mitchell felt that the opportunities for students were the most important element in her opinion.

Business Manager Nancy O'Dea-Wyrick provided a handout to the Board and members of the audience. One of the assumptions that was made was that enrollment would continue to decline through the next decade. She said this is something that would need to be reviewed on an annual basis because enrollment is the variable and will drive what can be done when.

Looking at the enrollment projection and where it is today, in the year 16/17 the district could possibly move grade 4 to Black Rock School and the 5th and 6th grades to the high school and close Center School. A scenario that was discussed previously was housing the preschool at the high school but when they took a closer look at the facility, there was not going to be a space that would be appropriate to move them into or to modify so the idea was ultimately abandoned. She said that the district needs to continue to look for potential partners for regionalization if the state continues to shrink with enrollment.

A review of the enrollment scenarios noted on the handout indicated that Pre-k to grade 5 could all be housed at Black Rock School but not until 2017/2018. Transitioning would occur the year before so there would be no disruption with the third graders moving into fourth grade.

In their administrative discussions, they felt they would not be able to save quite as much financially simply from consolidating buildings. As enrollment declines, there could be academic positions that would be lost, but the mere fact of closing a facility is what was driving the numbers noted on the handout. The savings would be approximately \$550,000 minus some initial expenses for such items as increasing the parking lot at Black Rock School and for moving expenses.

1. Consultant for Consolidation Discussions

When asked about the status of securing a consultant, Board Chair Lucy Santopietro indicated that she had corresponded with the Board of Finance Chair, David Colavecchio and asked if they would provide the funds for such a service. She said that Mr. Colavecchio thought his Board would not mind funding the study since they were the ones driving the discussions. They would like to have an outside independent evaluation versus an internal one. He asked that the Board of Education investigate prices for consultant work and asked that BoE bring those numbers to the next Board of Finance meeting for consideration.

Board member Kathleen Freimuth asked the Board if they could make a decision on consolidation based solely on the information provided by Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick. She was grateful for the report, but felt the Board needed more information. Some board members inquired as to how much more information could a consultant provide above and beyond what was already offered by Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick and the administrative team.

It was the consensus of the Board to investigate the cost of securing a consultant and to bring that information to the Board of Finance. Once they know how much the Board of Finance is willing to pay, then they can vote on whether or not they want to utilize a consultant.

1. *Three Essential Shifts in Learning* – Informational Article, as presented.

1. School Roof Project

A handout was provided to the Board members which depicted the financial implications to the town with regards to the school roof project. It also represented the numbers that were used in the pay back to state piece of the consolidation analysis.

Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick also included a financial summary in the board packet. It noted how the district is doing, projections, as well as encumbrances.

X. Administrators' Reports:

A. Black Rock School, Alisha DiCorpo/Thomaston Center School, Anne Uberti

Building Principal Alisha DiCorpo said the backside of Black Rock School has lost an additional 8 feet of soffit, exposing the building to inclement weather and animals.

The Black Rock School Book Fair earned \$8,000 of which \$900 went back to classroom libraries. Ms. Dicorpo also noted for the first time at Black Rock, nurse Doreen French headed up "Pennies for Patients" which earned \$1,304.51 for the leukemia and lymphoma societies.

Board member Roxy Fainer asked what was being done to temporarily fix the soffits at Black Rock since the roofs weren't getting done theoretically until summer. Ms. DiCorpo indicated that nothing has been done to date but temporary repairs could be made by her custodial staff. Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick indicated that the roof at Black Rock is the first to be addressed as part of the town roof project.

B. Thomaston High School, John Perrucci

An indoor beautification project was recently held at the high school with over 70 students and several faculty members participating in the event. Principal Perrucci encouraged the Superintendent and Board members to visit the school to view what had been done.

Referring to Principal Perrucci's written report, Board member Alexander Lee inquired about the masonry issues at several stairwells on the exterior of the building. Principal Perrucci expressed his repeated concerns and asked if the Board of Finance might consider paying for the project this year as opposed to next year as submitted in the capital plan. Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick indicated that she would follow up with Principal Perrucci.

C. Pupil Services, Nancy Schnyer

Nothing to add to her written report

XI. Standing Committee Reports:

1. Budget

- i. On a motion made by Holly Herbert and seconded by Anne Petrucci to accept/approve the Summary-by-Budget-Line Y-T-D expenditures in the amount of \$11,239,989.19; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.
- ii. A motion was made by Holly Herbert and seconded by Kathleen

Freimuth to accept/approve the transfers for the month of March 2013 in the amount of \$68,783.00; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

1. Curriculum/Instruction:

On a motion made by Debra Schriver and seconded by Kathleen Freimuth to accept/approve removing three of the four half-days normally scheduled for mid-term exams at the high school commencing with the 2013/2014 school year, which will result in increased instructional hours and greater instructional consistency.

Further Discussion:

Alexander Lee asked Principal Perrucci to describe how a student's day would function given his proposal. Mr. Perrucci stated that the day would be like any other day except the long block would be their exam period. Students have 6 courses, maybe 7 and would have a maximum of one exam a day during the "B" Block with regular instruction for the remainder of the school day.

Mr. Lee felt it would be very overwhelming for students to take an 80-minute exam in addition to completing all their course work for the remaining classes.

Mr. Lee asked Principal Perrucci what the motivation was for the change. Principal Perrucci indicated that the motivation was instructional time.

Alexander Lee opposed, motion carried.

C. Maintenance/Facilities: no report

D. Technology: no report

E. Personnel:

A motion was made by Kathleen Freimuth and seconded by Anne Petrucci to accept/approve the receipt of and action upon recommendations of the Superintendent of Schools concerning the institution of teacher non-renewals pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-151 (due to budget constraints); no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

F. Transportation: no report

G. Athletics: no report

1. Long Range Task Force/Building Committee: no report

I. Policy:

On a motion made by Holly Herbert and seconded by Kathleen Freimuth to accept/approve the Purchasing Policy 3320 (a) and (b) as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

J. Government Relations: no report

1. Affiliations: no report

1. Legislation: no report

XII. Public Participation:

Kathy-Jo Butkevicius

Ms. Butkevicius wanted to publicly thank Black Rock and Center School for participating in the 30th year of “Think Pink” day. She said unfortunately, the high school was not able to accommodate Ms. MacDonald on that day.

Trisha Brody

Ms. Brody thanked the administrators for working with the SEND Group, reviewing the budget with them which ultimately helped them to answer many questions.

She has been asked by Principal Perrucci to shadow for a day at the high school and is excited about the opportunity.

She also asked if there could be no homework during exams. Principal Perrucci said that was already part of discussions. She also asked if there were exemptions in place for exams.

Ms. Brody was curious as to why some Board members were bulking the utilization of a consolidation consultant.

Doreen French

With regards to consolidation, Ms. French asked if the cuts in personnel were taken into consideration in direct alignment with the number of students that would be housed in each of the schools.

Julie Ingham

Her question addressed Special Education teachers and if the district consolidated, would there be cuts to Special Ed staffing.

Pupil Services Director Nancy Schnyer indicated that the needs still remain; the staff would be reallocated depending on the needs of the buildings.

She asked if the district could develop programs to bring students into town to boost the Pre-k and Autism programs which would increase revenue. Is the potential there?

Doreen French

Where would the money saved from consolidating schools be allocated? It would be her expectation that the money would be returned to the Board of Education to use for the students in Thomaston.

XIII. Old Business:

1. Internet Safety/Cyber Bullying Presentation – Detective P. Morgan
No update at this point in time. Board member Debra Schriver will attempt to follow up.
1. Superintendent Search Update

Board Chair Lucy Santopietro indicated that the Board met with a consultant who was secured for NESDEC for a cost of \$4,900. He has established a timeline and questionnaire for community, students, parents and staff. The questionnaire will be posted on-line and it can be completed anonymously.

XIV. New Business:

XV. Items for Future Agendas:

1. Board meeting structure
2. Start time for 2014 BoE meetings
3. Field Trip to Greece, Spring 2014

Board member Anne Petrucci received an e-mail from a concerned parent regarding safety with the Greece portion of the field trip scheduled for the spring of 2014. She asked that the Board review the safety carefully before approving the Greece portion of the trip.

XVI. Executive Session:

A motion was made by Anne Petrucci and seconded by Kathleen Freimuth to enter into executive session at 8:48 p.m. to discuss strategies with regards to cafeteria personnel compensation; no further discussion; motion carried. The Board invited Business Manager Nancy O'Dea-Wyrick and Superintendent Mitchell into Executive Session.

Public Session:

A motion was made by Kathleen Freimuth and seconded by Anne Petrucci to move to public session at 8:56 p.m.; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

Board Motion:

On a motion made by Kathleen Freimuth and seconded by Holly Herbert to accept/approve the 2% salary increase for school cafeteria employees. Insurance change for eligible cafeteria employees to \$2,000/\$4,000 HDHP fully funding deductible year 1. Fund deductible 75% year 2, then 50% year 3 and going forward. All other terms of insurance remain the same.

No further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

XVII. Adjournment:

A motion was made by Kathleen Freimuth and seconded by Holly Herbert to adjourn the Regular meeting of the Board of Education at 8:57 p.m.; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.