

Minutes
THOMASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Meeting

Thomaston Town Hall – Meeting Room One
Date: Monday, March 11, 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, Joanne Gilland, Anne Petrucci

Absent: Black Rock School Principal, Alisha DiCorpo; Student Representative Sarah Guay

Also Present: Superintendent, Lynda Mitchell; Business Manager, Nancy O'Dea-Wyrick; High School Administrators, John Perrucci and Jonathan Kozlak; Center School Administrator, Anne Uberti; Pupil Services Director, Nancy Schnyer; Student Board Representative, Phil Sechow 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 7:00 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance:

Lucy Santopietro led the pledge of allegiance.

III. Approval of Agenda:

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

Under VI., Incredible Classroom, make subsection A. St. Jude's Telethon (presented by faculty members Kristin Raymond and Kate Boyles). All subsequent subsections will move down one position;

Under VIII., Superintendent's report, add a subsection E. Field Report Update and a subsection F., S.E.N.D. Group

No further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

IV. Approval of Minutes:

On a motion made by Holly Herbert and seconded by Kathleen Freimuth to accept/approve the minutes from the Special Meeting dated Thursday, February 14, 2013; no further discussion; Roxy Fainer and Joanne Gilland abstained; motion carried unanimously.

On a motion made by Holly Herbert and seconded by Kathleen Freimuth to accept/approve the minutes from the Special Meeting dated Monday, February 25, 2013; Alexander Lee, Becky Guay, and Anne Petrucci abstained; motion carried unanimously.

V. Student Representative Reports:

Student Representative Phil Sechow was on hand and provided the following information to the Board:

- The Girl's Basketball team has made it to the State Championships which will be held at Mohegan Sun. Two busloads of students traveled to the semi finals at New Britain High School and qualified for Channel 3's "Student Section Award", for the most athletic fans and school spirit;
- The Boy's Basketball team qualified for States but were defeated by St. Paul's;
- Baseball begins next week;
- Rigon Gilani placed 2nd in the Class S State tournament;
- Sabrina Olsen ran in the Class S State Championship 3200 meter run. Her time qualified her to run in the New England's. She also qualified for the Nationals.
- CAPT testing underway;
- Course selection is also underway;

VI. Incredible Classroom/Student Presentations/Recognitions:

A. St. Jude's Telethon

Superintendent Mitchell deferred to Kristin Raymond, a teacher at Black Rock School, and asked that she explain her involvement with St. Jude's, a facility for those fighting catastrophic diseases. Kristin's family has been associated with St. Jude's for 34 years. She recruited music teacher Kate Boyles to assist with the annual telethon which was recently broadcasted on Channel 5. Kate assembled students from Black Rock School and Thomaston Center School who performed several music selections. A short video of the students' performances was shown. The teachers recognized the students who were in the audience and applauded their efforts. The telethon raised \$53,000.

B. Black Rock School/Center School Mission and Belief Statements

Principal Uberti talked about the creation of a Leadership Team, who ultimately decided its goal would be to look at what commonalities the two schools had in terms of their beliefs and their vision for the schools, and ultimately their mission statements. Ms. Uberti gave credit to Kristin

Raymond, Gail Nelson, Gail Lascko, Tammy Dayton, Debra Gritt, Corrine Wong, Melissa Saramandidis, Julie Hood, Kathy Valla, and Sue Root for their time and efforts.

Kristin Raymond of Black Rock School provided a brief overview of the process explaining that it was a "school wide" initiative. The final beliefs include Home/School Communication, Curriculum, Technology, and Global Society around us. Short videos highlighting students in grades K-6 were created and shared with the Board. The videos for both schools will eventually be put on the respective school web pages.

Ms. Wong of Center School said it was a very personal process and will serve as a reminder as to what will be put into action in the classroom everyday.

Drew Gagne, Abby Dupont, Karely Conway, Julia Gibson and Michelle Dayton were publicly thanked for their help in producing the video presentations.

1. Board Member Recognition

Superintendent Mitchell recognized the Board members for their service to education. She presented each member with a proclamation that was generated by First Selectman Ed Mone.

1. TEAM Mentor Recognition

Informational- Thank you letters were sent to staff members who participated in a series of support programs working with new teachers.

VII. Communications:

1. New Hires/Rehires/Replacements:

On a motion made by Joanne Gilland and seconded by Becky Guay to accept/approve the new hires as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

1. Resignations/Retirements/Exit Interviews:

On a motion made by Holly Herbert and seconded by Anne Petrucci to accept/approve the resignations as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

1. Athletics: n/a

1. Transfers: n/a

1. Leaves of Absence:

On a motion made by Holly Herbert and seconded by Anne Petrucci to accept/approve the leave of absence as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

1. Field Trips: n/a

1. Correspondence:

Honor Roll Letter - Informational, as presented.

1. 2012/2013 School Calendar Adjustments

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

VIII. Superintendent's Report:

1. Student-of-the-month: Christopher Zebrowski

Superintendent Mitchell indicated that all of the students who pass through Rotary have phenomenal resumes.

Christopher's resume notes that he takes challenging courses, receives excellent grades, was the recipient of the LCSA award, is a Voice of Democracy, an honor roll student since 2009, is Senior Class President, and a member of Interact, High School Bowl, and the Math league.

1. Consolidation Discussion Group

Ms. Mitchell felt it was a good time to bring forward the whole consolidation concept to, "clear the air and get some direction from the Board of Education". The process for consolidation consideration was based on declining enrollment realized by Thomaston as it is in many other schools in neighboring districts. "Declining enrollment translates to financial considerations", she said. The Board of Education recently presented a respectable 1.9% increase to the Board of Finance in order to maintain the programs that are currently in place. She said that, "Administrators have whittled back programs that are important to them".

When the word consolidation is used, people are frightened and feel that the district is moving in that direction, "We are not", she said, "No decisions have been made at this juncture".

Ms. Mitchell explained the two types of consolidation, external consolidation, with other districts, and internal consolidation, doing something different in our district and how we utilize the buildings. She said she was looking for direction, consensus, or comment on how the district should move forward.

Business Manager, Nancy O'Dea-Wyrick put together some information to orient the Board members and to get the conversations started - Consolidation, Regionalization or Expansion. She said, "Perhaps there are programs that can be expanded in Thomaston, such as the PreK program which would bring additional revenue to the community, or perhaps start a STEM program at the high school". Feedback from the Board is critical.

Uncertain of state mandates and funding based on enrollment; Board Chair Lucy Santopietro said the Board is still gathering information. They continue to research, stating that, "The process is long and that nothing is going to happen in the immediate future. We will continue to collect information and would never make a decision without involving the parents, students and community. It's too early to make decisions yet".

Kathleen Freimuth took a moment to recognize all the good things that are coming out of the district citing the belief statements and mission statements that were presented earlier. She said, "She would do everything to make it a thoughtful decision".

1. Common Core State Standard

Common Core Standards workshop to be held on April 2, registration information included in the Board packets.

1. *Harvard Education Letter* – Common Core/Deeper Learning

Informational – as presented

1. Field update

Superintendent Mitchell said that there has been a lot of concern and controversy surrounding the fields, who takes care of them and what is the schedule. She said the issue has been resolved in a positive manner, and it was brought to a close in the same financial place that it was left in. She recently met with Recreation Director Marty Egan and put together a standard contract that would represent both Marty and the BoE. Athletic Director Bill Ryan generated a "process" to do work on the field and created an alternate entrance through the high school area. She said she should have resolution within a number of days.

1. S.E.N.D. – Sharing Education News and Data

Ms. Mitchell recognized several members of the newly formed S.E.N.D. group (Sharing Education News and Data) who were present and part of the audience, Carol Cervellino and Julie Ingham. The group created a Facebook account to connect with the community on budget issues. They touch base with Central office on a regular basis to gather information in order to provide informative and accurate answers to the inquiries generated by the public on their account. Ms. Mitchell said they made one of the first real connections with the community, one of the Board's goals and feels they are an asset.

IX. Business Manager's Report:

A. *The Journal – Connecticut Association of Board of Education – Article,*

"New Rules for Communicating when Connected 24/7"

The Business Manager included the article in the Board packet as it runs the gamut from the Superintendent who shuts off their device when they go home and turns it back on Monday morning, to the Superintendent who is plugged in 24/7. Since embarking on a new superintendent search, she thought it might be an interesting conversation to have going forward with the Board and prospective candidates.

B. Igniting Creative Energy Program (ICE)

A representative from Johnson Control's was on hand to explain the rollout of a program for the students. The initiative called I.C.E, is a creative challenge for the three schools. Its purpose is to think about energy and the different ways the students can come up with their own ideas to make a difference. At the local level, each participating student would receive a recognition certificate, and three winners would receive a \$500 Apple gift card. The winners would then

move to the national level with three winners at that level would participate in a forum in Washington D.C. in the fall.

X. Administrators' Reports:

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

Ms. DiCorpo was not present at the meeting. Principal Uberti had nothing to add to her written report.

B. Thomaston High School, John Perrucci

Principal Perrucci is working on a co-op with Watertown for wrestling and ice hockey. Watertown and Pomperaug currently comprise the coop which will lose students next year in both schools. He is currently in the investigative stages and will have additional information at a later date.

Mr. Perrucci's written report notes that the cost to replace the cooling unit for the high school server room exceeded \$10,000. Board member Alex Lee asked where the \$10,000 originated from. Mr. Perrucci's response was line 725. He said they were, "way over on that line."

Board Chair, Lucy Santopietro indicated that several parents of grade eight students had e-mailed her regarding ninth grade math selections. She questioned why those students, who are performing at 87 and above, will take two math courses, Alegbra I B and Geometry?

Principal Perrucci said that in order to keep students on track, there will be a year or two of growing pains as far as how they will transition those students from the old state core standards. Common core has shifted everything downward to increase rigor. Several options were on the table- all students take algebra - an honors class and a mid-level class would be offered. However, the students at the top would be at a disadvantage because they would not be eligible to take AP Calculus BC prior to graduating. The next option was to allow the "high" functioning group to double up on their math. While inconvenient, in the long run it will provide them the most potential to take both AP courses by the time they graduate. Mr. Perrucci said they don't have to take both, they can opt out."

Board member Becky Guay questioned Mr. Perrucci regarding the revisions in the mid-term exam schedule as noted in his written report. He is asking that the Board consider doing away with the four half-days during mid-terms, only one would be required and that would be for make-ups. This would begin with the 2013/2014 school year. Further discussions to follow – scheduled for April Board agenda.

C. Pupil Services, Nancy Schnyer

Ms. Schnyer has been working on the Community Foundations grant report which was due to the state last week and yields about \$10,000 for the community. She is also working on the School Readiness grant which is \$107,000, monies for programs and equipment at the library, Black Rock School and at Play-n-Learn. She is confident that the grant will go through.

D. Superintendent Search – update – Chair, Lucy Santopietro

The Board met earlier in the evening to interview a potential consultant for the Superintendent search and our currently negotiating a price. Plans are to meet again to investigate the possibility of a lower fee.

Board Chair, Lucy Santopietro did note that no decisions have been with regards to whether or not the district will utilize an interim, or whether or not the district will have enough time to find a Superintendent prior to Ms. Mitchell's departure.

XI. Standing Committee Reports:

1. Budget

- i. Summary-by-Budget-Line Y-T-D expenditures in the amount of \$9,644,992.31

On a motion made by Holly Herbert and seconded by Kathleen Freimuth to accept/approve the y-t-d expenditures as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

1. Transfers for the month of February/March 2013 in the amount of \$115,337.45

On a motion made by Holly Herbert and seconded by Kathleen Freimuth to accept/approve the transfers for February and March as presented; no further discussions; motion carried unanimously.

1. Curriculum/Instruction: no report

- C. Maintenance/Facilities: no report

- D. Technology:

Ms. Deb Sanford, the district's Senior Support Tech, stated that she is still in the process of researching companies for wireless access points throughout the district. To date she has received one quote back from a vendor who will be returning this week to narrow the scope of their job. She also met with two other vendors and a third company is expected to present this week. To lessen the blow of the costs, she will be limiting the wireless access points to "hot spots" where testing would occur initially and then add on in subsequent years.

- E. Personnel: no report

- F. Transportation: no report

- G. Athletics: no report

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

- I. Policy:

Purchasing Policy – first read

J. Government Relations: no report

K. Affiliations:

CABE Student Forum - Informational piece for administrators – as presented

1. Legislation: no report

XII. Public Participation:

Julianne Ingham (S.E.N.D.)

At what point does a decision have to be made with regards to consolidation?

Do any of the Board members have feelings on what direction the Board will take?

It cost approximately \$8,000 per student, plus transportation to attend Wamogo. Does the district pay the full amount?

Ray Taylor

Mr. Taylor said the, "Schools are getting hit hard." His opinion is we shouldn't hurt our children that we raise here in our home town. Suggested that everyone go to Mohegan Sun and support the Girl's Basketball team. Turn the wheels and start offering to our children in our own towns.

Ed Mone

First Selectman

Would like to know what the sense of direction is for the Board of Education regarding the schools' futures. He is not certain the Superintendent was given a direction on which way she should go looking at the process moving forward. Will there be a formation of a committee to begin to investigate the possibility of consolidating to two schools in town? Secondly, his opinion, to do a thorough job, all aspects and options need considerations. He feels the Board needs to provide some direction; that the Board needs to move forward. Unless all the options and information is made available, we can't possibly make a good decision.

Gail Lascko

As a property owner in Thomaston, she was very interested in Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick's idea regarding expansion. She would like to keep the community as a whole. She graduated from Thomaston High School and wants the same for her grandson. She said the town just spent millions of dollars

in all the schools, keep them all open and look at a way to bring people and the programs and make them bigger and better.

Phil Sechow

Wanted to confirm whether or not the mid-term exam, half-day proposal is on the table currently.

Carmela Daddona

Did the BoE discuss safety measures in the schools? Son attends Black Rock School.

XIII. Old Business:

XIV. New Business:

XV. Items for Future Agendas:

1. Board Meeting Structure
2. Start time for 2014 B.o.E Meetings
3. Field Trip to Greece Spring 2014
4. Internet Safety

Board Member Debra Schriver indicated that Detective Morgan recently spoke at Rotella regarding internet safety, bullying, web activities, sexual predators, etc. She thought it would be great to have him speak in Thomaston. There is a little bit of red tape to work through and hopefully an update can be provided at the April Board meeting.

XVI. Executive Session:

XVII. Adjournment:

On a motion made by Kathleen Freimuth and seconded by Anne Petrucci to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education at 9:10 p.m.; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.