

**Thomaston Board of Education  
Regular Meeting  
Thomaston Town Hall, Meeting Room One  
October 20, 2008  
7:00 p.m.**



**Minutes**

**Present:** Laurie Barrett, Deborah April, Beth Yaffe, Lucy Santopietro, Joanne Gilland, Holly Herbert, and Laura Rieley

**Absent:** Steve Catania and Cheryl Roberts

**Also Present:** Superintendent, Lynda Mitchell; Business Manager, Susan Laone; Board Clerk, Patricia George; High School Principal, James Wenker; High School Vice Principal, John Perrucci; Black Rock School Principal, Paul Johnson; Thomaston Center School Principal, James Diorio; and Pupil Services Director, Nancy Schnyer

**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 led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. Approval of Agenda:**

On a motion made by Lucy Santopietro and seconded by Beth Yaffe to approve/accept the agenda with the following amendments:

- **Move XII. Standing Committee Report, subsection F. Transportation to VII. Communications, subsection H.**
- **Under VIII. Superintendent's Report, add subsections F: CABE Policy Letter and G: Student Board Representatives**

Motion carried unanimously.

**IV. Approval of Minutes:**

**Regular Meeting of the Board of Education dated Monday, September 8, 2008:**

On a motion made by Beth Yaffe and seconded by Joanne Gilland to approve/accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education dated September 8, 2008. Lucy Santopietro abstains; motion carried.

**Special Meeting of the Board of Education dated Wednesday, October 1, 2008:**

On a motion made by Deborah April and seconded by Holly Herbert to approve/accept the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Education dated October 1, 2008. Laura Rieley, Joanne Gilland, Lucy Santopietro, Beth Yaffe, and Laurie Barrett abstain; motion carried.

**V. Teacher of the Year/CAPT Student Recognition:**

The Board recognized Thomaston's 2009 Teacher of the Year, Gail Lascko and the 2008 CAPT Advanced Level Performers, Rachel Fairchild and Matthew Dwan. Missing were Connor Roman and Michael Giapponi.

**VI. Public Participation:**

**Alice Leonard**

**1977 Weed Road  
Torrington, CT 06790**

Ms. Leonard gave a brief summation of the Relay for Life event that she would like to host in Thomaston. Relay for Life raises cancer awareness in our society and funds for the American Cancer Society.

**VII. Communications:**

A-G:

On a motion made by Deborah April and seconded by Lucy Santopietro to approve/accept Communications A-G as presented; motion carried unanimously.

H. Transportation: Rotella/WAMS Bus

The Board heard from several audience members who expressed their concerns regarding the bussing of WAMS and Rotella students. (Currently, these students are sharing a bus due to budget constraints. Most felt that it is a time issue; students are arriving home too late.

**Pam Murphy**

77 Julia Lane  
Thomaston, CT 06787

Ms. Murphy requested two separate buses, a bus for WAMS and a bus for Rotella. She also questioned the feasibility of eliminating bus monitors in order to provide dollars for the additional bus.

**Janet Keefe**

111 Edwin Lane  
Thomaston, CT 06787

Ms. Keefe said that it was “Not about how many kids are on the bus at all; it was about the time”. She asked the Board what made it different from last year to this year because last year they had a bus.

Board Chair, Laurie Barrett, explained that the budget this year was very difficult to pass and that the Board was trying to be conservative.

Business Manager, Sue Laone, explained how dollars are appropriated.

**Sarah Yenkelun**

174 Edgewood Avenue  
Thomaston, CT 06787

Sarah questioned if high school students needed to be seated in emergency seating. She also wanted to know if there should be an empty row between the WAMS students and Rotella students. Lori Foley, a representative for Worhunsky Bus Company, indicated that it was recommended that high school students be seated in emergency exit seats to assist the little ones as they would do in emergency drills. (Older students assist the younger students). She also said it was recommended that there be an empty row between the Rotella students and WAMS students but, if the seats were needed, they would be utilized.

Sarah also stated that she is getting home too late. It is difficult for her to participate in sports, do homework, etc. due to the late hour she arrives at home. She offered her

ideas on how the situation could be rectified including having the Rotella students picked up first.

**Susan Tanguay**  
162 Bayberry Drive  
Thomaston, CT 06787

Ms. Tanguay said that she could no longer schedule appointments after school because there is simply not enough time. She also told the board that she didn't feel it was appropriate for preschoolers to ride the bus with high school students. She defined the situation as a hardship and not in the best interest of the students.

**Claire Gaudette**  
29 Edwin Lane  
Thomaston, CT 06787

Claire questioned the importance of bus monitors. She also asked if an alternate route could be used other than I-84.

**Katie Kelly**  
318 Fenn Road  
Thomaston, CT 06787

Ms. Kelly attempted to shed light on how monitors came to be. A former bus driver and parent of a child who had attended Maloney, she explained that the bus ride was simply too long for the little ones not to have a monitor in place. She said it was difficult for a four year old to sit for an hour and twenty minutes.

Principal Paul Johnson indicated that the monitors assist with getting the students on the correct connecting bus once they arrive at Black Rock School

**Chris Gaudette**  
29 Edwin Lane  
Thomaston, CT 06787

Mr. Gaudette had a few observations he wanted to share. He said that we are asking our children to put up with nine and a half hour days, which are a lot longer than any of us work as adults. He said he was surprised that parents who have younger children were not present to ask why their children are put on a bus with high school students. He felt that there are discussions that go on that he would not be comfortable with. Mr. Gaudette said that we want our children to be active in other activities in town and in order to do so they should be brought back at a proper time.

Board member, Laura Rieley, noted that the calculation for an additional bus was inclusive of morning and afternoon transportation, but the need is only for an afternoon bus. She asked what the cost would be for this scenario.

Business Manager, Sue Laone indicated that she would have to work that out.

Chairperson, Laurie Barrett tabled the item for the November 10, 2008 Board of Education Meeting.

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

- A. Employee of the Month: Cynthia Scheppard  
Superintendent Mitchell deferred to Principal Paul Johnson to provide words on her behalf. Mr. Johnson indicated that Ms. Scheppard works 15 hours a week in Mrs. Finn's kindergarten class. He added that she does a wonderful job; he works very closely with her and sees her in action on a daily basis. He was pleased to recommend her.
- B. Student of the Month: September: Nick Guertin and October: Tim Johnson  
Superintendent Mitchell noted that both young men are leaders in their class and have high academic standing. She read from their individual resumes and shared some of their accomplishments with the Board.
- C. Resource Officer  
The Superintendent generated a letter to the Chief of Police qualifying the loss of the resource officer in the Thomaston Schools. She mentioned that everyone is struggling with budgetary constraints but hopes that the possibility exists for the district to continue to work with the police department through a resource officer in the schools.
- D. Relay for Life  
Superintendent Mitchell reiterated some of the information provided earlier in the evening regarding the Relay for Life. She added that a date would need to be secured which does not conflict with athletics and student activities. The Relay for Life event would require use of the field, cafeteria, locker rooms (men and women) and gym if the walk were to happen indoors. Mrs. Mitchell also felt that the event would be beneficial for the students of Thomaston.
- E. Guidelines for in-school and out-of-school suspensions  
A packet was distributed to each board member. Mrs. Mitchell asked the board members to review the material at their leisure.
- F. CAFE Policy Letter  
The Superintendent received a congratulatory letter from CAFE on completion of district policy. She publicly thanked Business Manager, Sue Laone, for the work she had done.
- G. Student Board Representatives  
Superintendent Mitchell deferred to Principal James Wenker for comment. Mr. Wenker feels that the idea of student board representation is a good one if they could make it work. He noted that students did not show much interest in the past and felt that he would like to interview a pool of interested candidates.

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

- A. Quarterly Financials: Business Manager, Susan Laone, highlighted expenses that she felt would be problem areas as the district moves forward.
- B. Specimen Resolution for a 501 (c)(3) Organization to adopt a written plan for its 403 (b) Tax Deferred Annuity Programs.  
On a motion made by Lucy Santopietro and seconded by Deborah April to approve/accept the Specimen Resolution as presented; motion carried unanimously.

### **X. School Principals and Pupil Services Director's Reports:**

- A. **Black Rock School Principal, Paul Johnson:**

- Mr. Johnson thanked Mr. Wenker for recruiting high school students in study hall to assist with the students at Black Rock School.
- He thanked PTA President, Laura Rieley, for providing money which helped to salvage a program.
- Mr. Johnson provided the Board with information on a recent workshop he attended regarding RTI (Response to Intervention) adding that he felt that the workshop was very informative.

**B. Thomaston Center School  
Principal, James Diorio:**

- Mr. Diorio noted that his recent open house was a success.
- He thanked faculty members Linda Francis, Robert McMahan, Jennifer McAtee for their efforts in keeping the Student Council going.
- Mr. Diorio noted that the reduction in staff would have an adverse effect on Red Ribbon week as there are less people to run the program.
- He also noted that the reduction in staff makes covering crisis situations more difficult.

**C. Thomaston High School Principal, James Wenker:**

- Principal Wenker provided the Board with a packet of information and an oral presentation on the topic of high school reform.

**D. Pupil Services Director, Nancy Schnyer:**

- Her office attended State SEDAC to learn the new requirements.
- Noted that ECHO reporting has been completed.
- Special Education teachers along with Tim Polowy, Deborrah Sanford and her office staff received training on IEP Direct which is a web-based data management system.
- Destruction of records is taking place for all special education students who have graduated or moved over six years ago or more. The process is done annually with letters being mailed home to those individuals and a notice is also placed in the newspaper.
- The Executive Director of the Central Naugatuck Valley Regional District and Rose McLaughlin will be administering an 8 to 10 week curriculum for addiction/prevention groups at Thomaston High School called "A Path to Healthy Choices."
- The CMT/CAPT (MAS), Modified Assessment System, will be beginning this year for a certain percentage of special education students who qualify to take this modified assessment. The information is being sent to all district special education teachers to determine who those students are.

**XI. Student Representatives' Reports: n/a**

**XII. Standing Committee Reports:**

**A. Budget:**

On a motion made by Lucy Santopietro and seconded by Beth Yaffe to approve/accept the budget expenditures and monthly transfers as presented; motion carried unanimously.

B. Curriculum/Instruction:  
Vice Principal, John Perrucci addressed the Board regarding the English/Language Arts Curriculum. He hopes to have the curriculum to Board members for their review in a timeframe that would allow for their approval at the November 10, 2008 Board meeting.

C. Maintenance/Facilities: n/a

D. Technology:  
On a motion made by Lucy Santopietro and seconded by Deborah April to authorize a subcommittee of the BOE to receive and approve the July 2009- June 2012 district technology plan and to select two Board members to serve on this subcommittee with the Superintendent and District Technology Chair; motion carried unanimously.  
Board members Joanne Gilland and Lucy Santopietro volunteered.

Principal Johnson noted that the time required would consist of 2 - 1 ½ sessions.

E. Personnel: n/a

F. Transportation: n/a

G. Athletics: n/a

H. Long Range Task Force/Building Committee: n/a

I. Policy: n/a

J. Government Relations: n/a

K. Affiliations: n/a.

**XIII. Old Business:**

On a motion made by Joanne Gilland and seconded by Deborah April to approve/accept the Superintendent's "Resolution of the Thomaston Board of Education and Superintendent's commitment to Student Achievement"; motion carried unanimously.

**XIV. New Business:** n/a

**XV: Items for Future Agendas:**

- o Rotella/WAMS Bus issue tabled from October 20, 2008 meeting

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

**XVII. Adjournment:**

On a motion made by Beth Yaffe and seconded by Lucy Santopietro to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education at 9:49 p.m.; motion carried unanimously.