

**Thomaston Board of Education
Regular Meeting
Thomaston Town Hall, Meeting Room One
November 10, 2008
7:00 p.m.**



Minutes

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

Absent: Steve Catania, Cheryl Roberts, Beth Yaffe

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 7:03 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance:

Board Chair Laurie Barrett led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Approval of Agenda:

On a motion made by Deborah April and seconded by Lucy Santopietro to approve/accept the agenda as presented, motion carried unanimously.

IV. Approval of Minutes:

Regular Meeting of the Board of Education dated Monday, October 20, 2008:

On a motion made by Deborah April and seconded by Lucy Santopietro to approve/accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education dated October 20, 2008. Motion carried unanimously.

V. Student Presentation: n/a

VI. Public Participation: n/a

VII. Communications:

A-H:

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

VIII. Superintendent's Report

A. Employee of the Month: Sarah Morehouse

Superintendent Mitchell noted that Ms. Morehouse is a wonderful young woman and a very conscientious worker. Mr. Diorio added that Ms. Morehouse is a strong child advocate who has gained the admiration of parents and students.

- B. Student of the Month: Lizzie Mendola
Superintendent Mitchell read from Lizzie's resume highlighting some of her accomplishments and awards. She added that Lizzie is a very impressive young woman.
- C. Mobile Dentists:
Superintendent Mitchell deferred to Nancy Schnyer, Director of Pupil Services, to provide additional information on mobile dentists. Ms. Schnyer explained that the service provides free dental care for those who can not afford it; however, they do accept insurance. She said they are currently looking at dates in January. The program would be available to students attending Black Rock and Center Schools. She was not clear about the high school.
- D. Strategic School Profiles:
The Final 2007- 2008 Strategic School Profiles were included in the Board members' packets. The Superintendent asked the Board to review the material presented. A discussion on this issue will continue at the December Board meeting. She took a few minutes to highlight some of the information included in the report.

IX. Business Manager's Report:

Utilities Update for 09/10:

Business Manager, Sue Laone reported that she recently attended a Business Manager's consortium meeting where they had agreed collectively to put a strike price out for oil and diesel for the 2009/2010 school year. She reported that if oil prices should fall between \$2.50 and \$2.70 a gallon, the consortium agreed to lock in. The same would hold true if diesel should fall between \$2.70 and \$3.00 a gallon. She is hoping to be locked in before the budget process so she would have a better idea of the expenditures.

Budget:

Ms. Laone provided a follow-up to what she had reported last month regarding potential deficits for 08/09 budget. After reviewing grant dollars, she noted that several salaries which are covered through the Title I Consolidated grant will not be covered in their entirety; some of the money had to be set aside for supplemental educational services. At this point in time, she is projecting a \$26,500 deficit in the operating budget. She noted that she had to allocate approximately \$26,000 for supplemental educational services. Currently, only \$10,000 has been allocated because that seems to be the need at this time, however, if additional services are required, the deficit could grow.

With regards to Special Education, Ms. Laone and Ms. Schnyer are currently trying to minimize the impact to the operating budget. She is predicting a deficit range in the area of \$3,000 to \$15,000.

Ms. Laone also discussed the projected deficit in the outplacement line. Currently, there is a regular education outplacement which was budgeted at \$15,000. She predicts a \$35,000 deficit in the line by year end. The Board questioned the regular education outplacement to which Principal James Wenker replied that the outplacement is a court appointed placement at Connecticut Junior Republic and that it is out of our hands.

On the positive side, she added that the district will continue in the utility program at the high school which will yield between \$13,000 to \$15,000 worth of revenue.

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

A. Pupil Service Director, Nancy Schnyer

Ms. Schnyer talked regarding NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards stating that there are 10 standards they have to meet for their accreditation.

Principal Wenker, Vice Principal Perrucci, Tammy Dumas and Ms. Schnyer reviewed the afternoon Paths Program regarding the out-of-district student's referral intake form. Before tuition students from surrounding towns could attend the program, it would require Board approval.

B. High School Principal, James Wenker

Principal Wenker spoke on some of the events that took place during the month specifically the homecoming activities, Veterans' assembly, and fall sports celebration.

C. Thomaston Center School Principal, James Diorio

Written, as presented

D. Black Rock School Principal, Paul Johnson

Written, as presented

XI. Student Representatives' Reports: n/a

XII. Standing Committee Reports:

A. Budget:

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

Business Manager Sue Laone noted that the budget "balance" of \$8,200,143.07 was inadvertently reported and approved as the year-to-date expended amount. The actual year-to-date expended dollars is \$4,088,455.81. On a motion made by Lucy Santopietro and

seconded by Deborah April to approve/accept the amended actual year- to- date expenditures, motion carried unanimously.

B. Curriculum/Instruction:

English/Language Arts Curriculum

On a motion made by Deborah April and seconded by Lucy Santopietro to approve/accept the English/Language Arts Curriculum, motion carried unanimously.

C. Maintenance/Facilities: n/a

D. Technology: n/a

E. Personnel: n/a

F. Transportation:

History: During the last several Board meetings, it was discussed whether separate afternoon Rotella and WAMS buses could be instituted for the remainder of the 2008/2009 school year. The buses were combined as part of a \$500,000 budget cut. The Board, after hearing from several concerned parents and students, asked that the Superintendent and Business Manager research several options that were asked of them. Options included reversing the bus routes so that Rotella students would be picked up first and the feasibility of Waterbury Arts students utilizing the school's atrium to do homework while waiting for the bus. The Business Manager was asked to research the cost for an afternoon bus.

Meeting Minutes:

Subsequently, Superintendent Mitchell made phone calls to both WAMS and Rotella building administrators regarding the practicality of the options presented. The response from Rotella was with the timeframe involved, that reversing the bus route would not be an option. The administrator of WAMS noted that the issue of students remaining later at school would then put the burden on them.

Business Manager, Sue Laone reported to the Board her findings. The cost of an afternoon bus would total \$15,005 for the remainder of the 2008/2009 school year. A start date would have to be worked out with the bus company and parents would need to be notified. She also noted the dollars would not affect the current operating budget but would be covered through the Magnet School transportation grant.

Pam Murphy
77 Julia Lane
Thomaston, CT 06787

Ms. Murphy asked if there could be an additional bus for the Rotella students in the morning as well. Business manager, Sue Laone,

noted that this was not the issue and the Board agreed. Ms. Murphy continued by asking if it could be looked into.

Business manager, Sue Laone, went on to explain the process of obtaining the grant dollars, reporting actual costs to the state and the difficulty in predicting the number of students who may attend magnet schools.

Tina Arcangeli
89 Treadwell Avenue
Thomaston, CT 06787

Ms. Arcangeli stated that it's a very long day for the WAMS students. The kids are on the bus at 7:00 a.m. and getting back sometimes at 4:00. She said that the kids are packed on the bus. The high school backpacks are huge and then to have 2 to 3 kids in a seat, she said it's ridiculous. She feels it is really burdening the kids who go to WAMS right now.

Gina Yenkelun
174 Edgewood Avenue
Thomaston, CT 06787

Ms. Yenkelun said that this year by picking up the Rotella students at the end of the day has added an additional 40 – 45 minutes onto the day. This added time takes away from homework time, afternoon activities and part-time jobs.

Board Chair, Laurie Barrett asked that the minutes reflect the Board's decision to move forward with an additional afternoon bus for the Rotella students for the remainder of the 2008/2009 school year.

- 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:

Relay for Life: On a motion made by Deborah April and seconded by Lucy Santopietro to approve/accept the building use and event dates of June 26, 2009 and June 27, 2009. Motion carried unanimously.

XIV. New Business:

- A. Data and Resource Book (update from Carolyn Morrison)

XV: Items for Future Agendas:

A. Rotella/WAMS Bus issue tabled from November 12, 2008

XVI. Executive Session: n/a

XVII. Adjournment:

On a motion made by Deborah April and seconded by Lucy Santopietro to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education at 8:04 p.m.; motion carried unanimously.