

East Haddam Board of Education  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Nathan Hale-Ray High School Cafeteria  
January 11, 2005  
7:00 P.M.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Pamela Gourlie-Chairman, Everett Herden, Nick Iacovelli,  
Bob Mather, Tom Mielt, Manny Misenti, Melissa Ziobron

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Dora Lyman, Steve Quinn

**STUDENT COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:** None

Five staff members were present at the meeting.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Gourlie called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. in the Nathan Hale-Ray High School cafeteria.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. REPORT OF THE BOARD CHAIR

Mrs. Gourlie had no report tonight. The student council representatives were not present to report.

IV. ACTION ON THE MINUTES

**MOTION:** Mather, Mielt; to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on December 14, 2004 as presented.

**FAVOR:** Herden, Iacovelli, Mielt  
**OPPOSED:** NONE  
**ABSTENTIONS:** Mather, Misenti, Ziobron  
**MOTION CARRIED**

V. REPORT OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEES

A. 4-8 Middle School

Mrs. Gourlie informed the Board that Mrs. Ziobron attended the Long Range Planning meeting, and this report could be given during the Long Range Planning discussion.

B. Middle and Elementary Schools' Capital Improvements

Mr. Quinn was not present, but Dr. Durham stated there was nothing new to report.

VI. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

A. Edline

Dr. Durham informed the Board that he sent each member a letter regarding a new initiative called Edline. This on-line project will give parents an opportunity to get information regarding their child's academic program. He stated that the project is being used first at the high school and middle school, but he anticipated by the end of the year, the elementary school would be brought on-line as well.

Dr. Durham introduced Nancy Allison to present the program. Mrs. Allison stated that teachers have been given access and passwords have gone out to students. She stated she has received positive comments about the program thus far.

Mrs. Allison presented what students would see once logged-in. A main page would be displayed, customized to each student. All classes in which the student was enrolled would be displayed to the left of the screen, and the student has the ability to click on any of those classes and obtain information. Mrs. Allison explained that general school information was also available, such as the handbook, principal newsletters, the school calendar, and the cafeteria lunch menu.

Mrs. Allison stated that students could access this information from home via the Internet to obtain information regarding homework assignments, the course syllabus, lectures, etc. She noted that each teacher would customize this information for his/her class. Mrs. Allison stated that the students could click on the combined calendar to see what assignments were due on any given day.

Mrs. Gourlie inquired about email. Mrs. Allison noted that as long as the student's computer was set up for email, they could click at the bottom of a class page to the teacher's email.

## VI. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS (Cont'd)

### A. Edline (Cont'd)

Mrs. Allison logged into the parent page. This page allows parents to view general information, as well as the ability to click on the student's page. In addition, parents could ask for email notification whenever new information was available. Responsive to inquiry by Mr. Iacovelli, Mrs. Allison stated that teachers could specify that certain information was only available to the students.

Mr. Iacovelli stated this seemed to be a significant amount of information to maintain, and he questioned if it would present a time issue for teachers. Mrs. Allison responded that it could be time consuming for teachers. Mrs. Gourlie noted this could also take the place of photocopying and distributing copies of assignments to each student, with a note on the blackboard to check email.

Mrs. Allison logged onto the teachers page. This page listed all classes for which a teacher was responsible. Sign-in sheets were available from this page. Mrs. Allison explained that information created on the teacher's page could be copied to several classes at once, rather than re-doing information several times.

Mrs. Ziobron stated this was a great opportunity for parents to really be aware of what was going on at school, and to check on their child's progress. Mrs. Gourlie stated this would be a community-wide endeavor, and would be one way for parents to see where some of their taxes were being put to work.

Mr. Iacovelli questioned if the school administration, superintendent, and guidance would have access to the accounts. Mrs. Allison stated that the system was not set up for guidance to have access; however, it could be if needed. She noted that the normal set up would include access to the students, parents, teachers, and administration.

Mr. Iacovelli believed this was a powerful tool that would have many positive attributes; however, he cautioned that there could be some drawbacks as well. He voiced concern about access to on-line grades. Mrs. Allison stated grades would only be available if the teachers put them on the students' pages.

Mrs. Gourlie questioned if there was data on the number of homes without Internet access. Dr. Durham did not have the numbers, but he stated traditional methods of giving assignments, etc. would still be used, as there are houses without Internet access.

Dr. Durham stressed that there would be some glitches to work out in the coming months, and he asked for everyone's patience. He stated while some teachers were comfortable with the computers and the processes, others were less comfortable, and this would take some time. Dr. Durham hoped everyone would

## VI. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS (Cont'd)

### A. Edline (Cont'd)

be up to speed in the near future, as he viewed this as an important tool to promote parental involvement.

The Board thanked Mrs. Allison for her presentation.

### B. Technology Opportunities for Community

Dr. Durham informed the Board that he had written a letter to the Consumer's Union regarding a possible donation for opening the media center to the public. Last Friday, Dr. Durham received a telephone call from the Consumer's Union informing him that the project had been funded, and they were forwarding a check to the Town Hall.

Dr. Durham advised that with this money, they plan to open the high school media center to the community two nights per week and on Saturdays. He noted that once the details were finalized, it would be publicized to the community. Although the donation would fund the project for this year, Dr. Durham stated if the program works and is used, it would be in next year's budget.

Mrs. Ziobron believed this was a great initiative, particularly for senior citizens. She questioned who would help the public with questions. Dr. Durham explained there would be one staff member and one student.

Mrs. Ziobron suggested that information on the number of users and frequency be kept for future documentation to the Board of Finance. Mrs. Gourlie agreed that data should be tracked for budgets.

Mrs. Ziobron questioned how the townspeople would be notified of this new service. Dr. Durham believed the Board would have to prepare a town-wide mailing to disseminate this information.

## VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### A. Long Range Planning

Mr. Iacovelli reported that the Long Range Planning Committee met earlier this evening. Since Mrs. Ziobron attended this meeting, he asked her to report on the 4-8 school progress at this time.

## VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS (Cont'd)

### A. Long Range Planning (Cont'd)

Mrs. Ziobron stated the Building Committee had signed a contract with Kaestle Boos Associates. The fees were set at 6.75% of the overall budget of the project. Mrs. Ziobron gave a copy of the contract to Dr. Durham earlier tonight. Mrs. Ziobron noted that no contract had been signed yet with the construction manager. The Building Committee is continuing negotiations with Newfield Construction, but no firm numbers have been received.

Mrs. Ziobron spoke with Mr. Parker today regarding the properties, but there was no definitive data yet. One issue is whether State reimbursement money will be available. Mrs. Ziobron advised that Mr. Parker spoke with the DEP, and they were not certain that the spring round of funding would occur. Mrs. Ziobron noted that all of the surveys should be complete by the end of next week, and she hoped to have more information to report by next month's meeting.

Mrs. Ziobron informed the Board that Todd Moss, chairman of the Building Committee, attended last month's Open Space meeting, during which he asked the Open Space Committee to work with the Building Committee to submit grant applications, etc. for possible State funding.

Mrs. Ziobron stated the next Building Committee meeting was scheduled for January 26, 2004 at 7:00 p.m. in the High School Home Economics room. She encouraged attendance at this meeting. She added that there had not been much public input recently.

Mr. Iacovelli stated the Long Range Planning Committee discussed the 2005-06 school calendar. He stated there were mixed feelings about the starting date before or after Labor Day. He personally believed that student's were more ready to learn at the beginning of the year, rather than at the end of the year. He asked for input from the Board. There was considerable discussion on this topic. Dr. Miett asked when school was proposed to begin before Labor Day, to which Mr. Iacovelli responded it would be the last week of August, and likely either Tuesday or Wednesday. Mrs. Ziobron stated she would vote against a pre-Labor Day start. She believed the children should enjoy their summer vacation through Labor Day. Mrs. Ziobron suggested the professional development days could be moved to the scheduled school vacations. Dr. Miett and Mrs. Gourlie had no strong feelings either way.

Mrs. Gourlie asked the purpose of the half days at the end of June. Dr. Durham explained that this schedule facilitates the high school exam schedule, as well as busses. He added that these half days still count toward the 180 school day requirement. Dr. Durham stated the half days could be changed to full days, with

## VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS (Cont'd)

### A. Long Range Planning (Cont'd)

busses running once. High school students could be released early if they had transportation home.

Dr. Miett questioned the monthly early dismissal days. Dr. Durham stated these days were used for curriculum development, and they were critically important, especially going into the self-evaluation year.

Mrs. Gourlie asked if the Long Range Planning Committee discussed start times. Mr. Iacovelli stated it had not made changes to the daily start times. Dr. Durham stated there was available information regarding times in other areas, but as of yet, few have chosen to pioneer this initiative. Mrs. Ziobron suggested this would take considerable involvement from the community.

Mrs. Gourlie asked if the Long Range Planning Committee discussed building snow days into the calendar. Dr. Durham stated this had been attempted a couple years ago, and was not well received.

Mrs. Gourlie asked if the Board should conduct a survey regarding the starting date. Mr. Iacovelli preferred making a decision and moving forward with it.

Mr. Herden hoped that everyone would consider serious innovative changes to the school calendar in future years. Mr. Misenti added that several complaints were made regarding the earlier start dates in recent years, and they were told it was due to the CMTs. Mrs. Gourlie opined she would like to have a radical change to the school calendar, but it would take a great deal of community support.

Mr. Herden reiterated his hope that discussions regarding inventive changes to the calendar would continue. He asked Dr. Durham to find schools that use such calendars for possible site visits. Dr. Durham stated he would check into this.

Mrs. Ziobron stated she would prefer to move the October professional development day to October 11, 2005 in order to coincide with the long weekend. Dr. Miett suggested the January 6, 2006 professional development day also be moved to January 17, 2006.

Mr. Iacovelli advised that the Long Range Planning Committee discussed a cross-country team at the request of Mr. Herden. The Committee supported the club concept. It was decided that the club would run at the middle school on a one-year trial basis, to see if there was sustained interest. The cost to start the project would be approximately \$7,300.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS (Cont'd)

A. Long Range Planning (Cont'd)

Mr. Iacovelli stated the next Long Range Planning Committee meeting would be held on February 3, 2005.

B. Finance

Mr. Quinn was not present to give a report. Dr. Durham reported that he hoped to have the budget presentation during the February meeting. He indicated the budget must be submitted to the Board of Finance by March 13, 2005, with the presentation to the Board of Finance on March 16, 2005. Dr. Durham expected to have the budget sent to the Board members sometime next week for review.

Mrs. Gourlie asked that this presentation be scheduled during the regular meeting. She stated any questions about the budget should be addressed to Mr. Quinn or Dr. Durham. It was decided that this presentation would be added to the February agenda. Mrs. Ziobron suggested that Mr. Meade, the Board of Finance liaison, be invited to the meeting.

C. Policy

Mrs. Gourlie reported that this committee has not met.

D. Personnel and Negotiations

Nothing was presented.

E. Transportation

Dr. Durham stated the hearing for the Hedlund Road resident was postponed at the applicant's request, and has not been rescheduled yet. Mrs. Ziobron stated she has heard that this parent was being very aggressive with attempting to have this decision overturned.

F. Ray Board Liaison

Mr. Iacovelli reported that this board has not met. He stated at the last meeting, he did not have the exact amount that the Ray Board funded. The amount was \$293,000, of which \$194,000 would go to the General Fund Revenue to offset educational costs, and the remainder would go to fund Agricultural Science and Tech Ed. at the high school.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS (Cont'd)

G. LEARN

Mrs. Gourlie had nothing new to report.

H. Curriculum Council Liaison

Mr. Herden informed the Board that he was conducting AARP classes and not able to attend the Curriculum Council. He invited anyone aged 50 or older to attend a class. Attendees could save five percent on their auto insurance rates.

Dr. Durham stated the Curriculum Council met yesterday and discussed the active committees. He indicated the new science curriculum was due to him in February, and he hoped to present it to the Board in the spring.

Dr. Durham stated the Language Arts committee was collecting data, and will revise the curriculum based on the data. They are also compiling reading materials for the elementary school. He advised the Board that the new reading program would be a large budget item next year.

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS AND AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

None

IX. OLD BUSINESS

A. Strategic Plan

Dr. Durham stated he would have an annual progress report and recommendations by May 2005.

B. 2005-06 School Calendar

Previously discussed tonight.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Acceptance of Consent Agenda

1. Warrant

- a. To approve the warrant for 2003-04 in the amount of \$1,921,237.34.
- b. To approve the warrant for 2004-05 in the amount of \$1,395,250.33.

Mrs. Ziobron wished to remove Item 2 for discussion.

**MOTION:** Ziobron, Iacovelli; to approve Item 1 of the Consent Agenda.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT  
MOTION CARRIED**

2. Acceptance of Resignations

- a. To accept the resignation of Mrs. Sarah Leone, math teacher at the Nathan Hale-Ray High School, effective December 15, 2004.
- b. To accept the resignation of Mr. John Salbinski, American History teacher at Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School, with intent to retire at the end of the 2004-05 school year.

Mrs. Ziobron stated as a former student of Mr. Salbinski, she appreciated his years at Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School. She commented that he was a wonderful teacher and would truly be missed.

Mrs. Ziobron questioned the reason for Mrs. Leone's resignation, as she was a relatively new teacher. Dr. Durham explained that Mrs. Leone was on maternity leave, and decided to stay home with her child.

Mrs. Gourlie acknowledged that Robert's Rules do not require items to be removed for this type of discussion. They can be approved with the discussion.

**MOTION:** Ziobron, Iacovelli; to approve Item 2 of the Consent Agenda.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT  
MOTION CARRIED**

XI. OTHER

Mrs. Ziobron stated she was not at the last meeting, but she did read the minutes. She stated she spoke with a high school cheerleader, and that some of the cheerleaders felt pressured into attending the invitational. Mrs. Ziobron noted that the article in the Regional Standard was filled with inaccurate information.

Mrs. Ziobron questioned when the next Policy meeting would be held. Dr. Durham stated it would be held on February 3, 2005.

Mrs. Ziobron inquired about the policy for athletic coaches. Dr. Durham indicated this policy would be before the Board at the next meeting as a second reading.

**MOTION:** Ziobron, Mather; to adjourn at 8:30 p.m.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT  
MOTION CARRIED**

Respectfully submitted,

Dora Lyman  
Board Secretary