

East Haddam Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes
Nathan Hale-Ray High School Cafeteria
November 14, 2006
7:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tracey Gionta, Everett Herden, Pamela Gourlie, Alan Hyla,
Nick Iacovelli, Robert Mather, Manny Misenti, Mary-Beth Mordecai

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tom Miett

STUDENT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT: Kevin Staehly

STUDENT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ABSENT: Anne Durfee

OTHERS PRESENT: Dr. Durham and approximately 17 people including staff were present.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. by Mrs. Gourlie.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. REPORT OF THE BOARD CHAIR

A. Introduce New Board Member

Mrs. Gourlie introduced Mr. Alan Hyla as the new Board member, replacing Mrs. Ziobron. Mrs. Gourlie indicated that Mr. Hyla has two children in the middle school. She stated that Mr. Hyla would serve on the Policy and Finance subcommittees, but he had declined the Open Space liaison position.

B. Liaison to Open Space Committee

Mrs. Gourlie recalled that Mrs. Ziobron had asked the Board to allow her to continue as the liaison to the Open Space Committee. This item had been tabled until a new Board member was appointed. Since Mr. Hyla declined, she asked if any Board member was interested in being the liaison. Mr. Misenti volunteered as the Board's liaison to the Open Space Committee.

III. REPORT OF THE BOARD CHAIR (continued)

C. Report from Student Council Representatives

Mr. Kevin Staehly stated that Miss Durfee was visiting Reed College in Clinton, Oregon. Mr. Staehly read a brief note from Miss Durfee which stated that the Honors Committee has been reviewing several topics and they were working with Mrs. Dadona.

Mr. Staehly informed the Board that several seniors had been accepted to colleges already. He stated that the choir recently performed at the elementary school. The Art Department just visited the New Britain Museum of Art. Among the many works of art, they saw a Walter Wick exhibit.

D. Awards and Recognitions

Mrs. Gourlie announced that Mrs. Pattavina had decided to leave her position as Recording Secretary and that Mrs. Ruth Ziobron would be taking over effective with the next meeting.

Mrs. Gourlie recognized Mrs. Margaret Stahl for her recent K-4 Outstanding Reading Educator Award. Mrs. Stahl was not present at this meeting. Mrs. Gourlie stated that Mrs. Stahl finds novel approaches to inspire reading in children. She embraces her work with teachers and Mrs. Gourlie stated she was proud of Mrs. Stahl's accomplishment and recognition by the Connecticut Reading Association.

IV. ACTION ON THE MINUTES

MOTION: Mather, Iacovelli; to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 10, 2006 as presented.

FAVOR (5): Gionta, Herden, Iacovelli, Mather, Mordecai
ABSTENTIONS (2): Misenti, Hyla
ABSENT (1): Miett
MOTION PASSED

MOTION: Herden, Misenti; to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of October 24, 2006 as presented.

FAVOR (4): Gionta, Herden, Iacovelli, Misenti
ABSTENTIONS (3): Mather, Mordecai, Hyla
ABSENT: (1) Miett
MOTION PASSED

IV. ACTION ON THE MINUTES (continued)

MOTION: Mather, Iacovelli; to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of October 26, 2006 as presented.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT
MOTION PASSED**

V. REPORT OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEES

A. 4-8 Middle School

Mrs. Mordecai reported that the bids opened today for the construction on the school. The prices will be officially given to the SBC on November 29, 2006; however, they learned that the bids were very encouraging. There were a total of 83 bids. Mrs. Mordecai stated she would have additional information for the December meeting.

Mrs. Mordecai stated that they recently received information that there would be ample water supply with the two wells, so there would be no need to drill a third well for the school.

Mrs. Mordecai indicated that at this point, the schedule remained the same with town acceptance on January 15, 2007 and construction mobilization in February 2007. She stated that everyone should have received in their packets a draft informational packet on the new school overruns. A similar packet was prepared for the Town of Avon when their school project went over budget. She stated this packet would have information from the BOE, SBC, BOF, and BOS. Mrs. Mordecai stated she would work with Dr. Durham to prepare the final documents. Once completed, she would email the document to the Board. She asked for acceptance of this document via email, as they were working on a tight schedule. She asked if the Board was amenable to this.

Dr. Durham asked Board members to email Mrs. Mordecai or him with anything else they would like to have included in the letter. Mrs. Mordecai added that this informational packet would be mailed to all households in Town.

Mr. Iacovelli read a question from Mr. Misenti which asked if the Board was getting legal advice on what the Board could legally do for advocacy. Mrs. Mordecai responded affirmatively and commented that there was no decision yet on if the Town acceptance would be by referendum or town meeting. She stated that anything they put out would be strictly factual.

Dr. Durham advised that until the referendum date was set, the Board has the ability to advocate for the school.

V. REPORT OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEES (continued)A. 4-8 Middle School (continued)

Mr. Iacovelli read a comment from Mr. Misenti, which stated that it was time for limitation. Dr. Durham stated that we needed to get going with this project. Mrs. Mordecai stated this was why she requested a consensus by email. She did not want to wait until the next Board meeting. She noted that the last time they went to referendum, they did it in three weeks.

B. Middle and Elementary Schools Capital Improvements

Mr. Mather stated this committee had not met.

VI. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLSA. Senior Class Trip Request

Dr. Durham stated this was the time of year that the senior class trip was typically discussed. He asked Mrs. Dadona to present. Mrs. Dadona stated that this year's graduating class was very small, with only 78 seniors.

The senior class was preparing for the senior trip. She introduced Miss Erin Toolan, Miss Monica Tung, Ms. Ali Wasley, and Miss Whitney Meade. Miss Toolan, class president, informed the Board that the senior class planned to leave for Walt Disney World on Thursday, April 26, 2007, at 12:30 p.m. They would arrive in Orlando, Florida at approximately 7:00 p.m. and then a bus would take them to the Disney All Star Resort.

Miss Tung and Miss Toolan reviewed the planned events for each day of the trip and for Disney's grad night. On the first full day, they would attend MGM studios and an extreme sport/stunt show. Activities for the second day would include a visit to Disney's Animal Kingdom and the new Everest Expedition. All seniors would meet at the resort at 6:00 p.m. for a class dinner. On the third day, they would visit Blizzard Beach, Typhoon Lagoon, and Epcot Center. The last day would include a visit to Disney's Magic Kingdom. They would have lunch at the Crystal Palace and would leave Orlando at 7:00 p.m., arriving in Hartford at 10:00 p.m.

Miss Toolan stated that they plan to have all seniors attend school the following day.

Mrs. Gionta inquired about Disney's Grad Night. She asked if other schools attended this event as well. Mrs. Dadona stated that approximately 15,000 to 20,000 high school seniors attend this event. She stated that Florida uses this as an alcohol and drug free event and they send their high school students to Disney instead of to a prom.

VI. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS (continued)A. Senior Class Trip Request (continued)

Mrs. Gourlie stated that trips are typically scheduled during vacations. She asked why this trip was not scheduled during April vacation. Mrs. Dadona stated that it was cost-prohibitive to book this trip during April vacation.

Miss Wasley and Miss Meade discussed the students' general fund. Bake sales, football games, etc. contribute to this fund. This fund can be used if a student could not afford to go on the trip otherwise.

Miss Wasley and Miss Meade explained that each student also has an individual account for fundraising. Students are encouraged to raise funds to offset the cost of the trip. One student actually raised \$100 more than the trip cost. If a student chose not to participate in the fundraising programs, there was a six-month payment plan for the trip.

Miss Wasley and Miss Meade informed the Board that the cost of the trip would be \$700 per student. This included the flight, hotel room, park passes, and banquet meals.

Mrs. Gourlie asked how many students planned to attend. Miss Wasley stated that 43 students have confirmed. Mrs. Gourlie thanked everyone for their presentation. She stated the vote on this trip would be held during tonight's Consent Agenda.

Mr. Mather asked how the 43 students of the graduating class of 78 compared to previous years. Mrs. Dadona stated they usually try to have two-thirds of the class attend. She believed the final number would be in the range. Mr. Mather asked Mrs. Dadona to make sure that all of the students realized that the Board held the right to cancel this trip at any time if world events necessitated it.

Mr. Herden asked if any student would not participate in the trip for financial reasons. Mrs. Dadona explained the fundraising process and stated that there were funds, as Miss Wasley and Miss Meade had outlined, to help students who could not afford the trip.

B. Strategic School Profile Report 2005-06

Dr. Durham stated that each Board member recently received the 2005-06 Strategic School Profile Report. Although this report is prepared each year, he explained the various sections for newer Board members.

The first section included demographic information, testing data, CAPT and CMT results, drop out rates, etc. They are periodically required to submit this data to the State. Dr. Durham reviewed the District's revenue and expenditures, as outlined on page 5 of the report. He discussed the total

VI. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS (continued)B. Strategic School Profile Report 2005-06 (continued)

amount spent on instructional staff and services, as well as the amount spent per student. In this category, East Haddam was significantly lower than the State's average per student. In supplies and equipment, East Haddam's per pupil expenditures were significantly higher than the State average.

Dr. Durham informed the Board that if anyone had questions on this data to please contact him.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTSA. Long Range Planning

Mr. Iacovelli stated that the Long Range Planning subcommittee met on November 2, 2006. Among the topics discussed was the continued review of the long-range maintenance plan. Mr. Carroll planned to make revisions to this plan for further review at the December meeting.

The Long Range Planning subcommittee also discussed the yearly update on the long range facilities plan. If there were any comments on this plan, Board members were encouraged to contact Dr. Durham or Mr. Iacovelli.

Mr. Iacovelli stated that the Long Range Planning subcommittee discussed a flu planning initiative. Mr. Brad Parker and Dr. Durham are the two main contacts for this initiative. As they continue to work on this plan, they will provide further updates.

Mr. Iacovelli indicated that the Long Range Planning subcommittee was also reviewing the district's strategic plan. He would update the Board on this progress during the January 2007 meeting.

The next Long Range Planning subcommittee meeting was scheduled for December 7, 2006.

B. Finance

Mr. Mather reported that this committee met. They were still in the very early stages of forming the budget. Mr. Mather stated that Mr. Carroll attended this meeting and had stated that salaries and utilities would comprise approximately 5% of the budget increase. The administration is working on the budget and updates will be provided as they move closer to the budget.

The next Finance meeting was scheduled for January 11, 2007.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS (continued)C. Policy

Dr. Miett was not present to give a report. Mrs. Gionta stated that Dr. Miett was not present at the last Policy meeting, but they met and discussed three items. The first item discussed was the Wellness Plan. Mr. Scata has been attending meetings to discuss the program. Although they like the plan, Mrs. Gionta stated they were not ready to bring it to the Board yet.

Mrs. Gionta stated the Policy subcommittee discussed cyber-bullying. The committee has a draft, but they would like Dr. Miett to review it before bringing it to the Board.

Mrs. Gionta stated the third item discussed was the policy on naming of facilities. They removed the language for "need". This revision was being presented to the Board tonight as a first reading.

D. Transportation

Mr. Mather reported that this subcommittee met to discuss Nichols Bus Service's request to extend their contract for another two years. During the discussion, Mr. Nichols offered to provide East Haddam a \$2,000 credit for non-athletic field trips for each year of the extension, resulting in a cost savings of \$4,000 over the two-year extension. Mr. Mather stated that the subcommittee recommended that the Board extend the contract with Nichols Bus Service for two years.

Dr. Durham stated that the Board had approved a five-year contract with Nichols Bus Service initially. There was a clause in the contract that allowed Nichols Bus Service to ask for one two-year extension and Mr. Nichols asked for the extension. Dr. Durham clarified that if the Board approved the two-year extension, there would be no re-negotiation of the transportation contract until 2011.

E. Personnel and Negotiations

Mr. Misenti deferred to Dr. Durham to report. Dr. Durham advised that the binding arbitration concluded yesterday. Both sides now have to submit briefs to the arbitration panel. He did not anticipate any decision until March 2007. Although this will make it difficult to build next year's budget, any changes to salaries can be made during the current school year.

F. Ray Board Liaison

Mr. Iacovelli stated the Ray Board was scheduled to meet on Tuesday, November 28, 2006.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS (continued)G. LEARN

Mrs. Gourlie stated the regional multi-cultural magnet school recently published its CMT data. She was not in attendance at this meeting; therefore, she did not have further information on the data.

Mrs. Gourlie reported that LEARN had conducted a self-evaluation. Virtual high school now serves 120 students in 9 districts, which saves approximately \$40,000. The E-waste program saves approximately \$20,000 per district per year. In addition, there is a virtual learning academy, which differs from the virtual high school. The virtual learning academy was designed for students who could not be in school for various reasons. New London uses this program quite a bit and the cost is approximately \$400 per student. New London has a space for students to use the program in a supervised area. Mrs. Gourlie stated this program was much more cost effective than tutors.

Mr. Iacovelli asked if it would be more cost effective to use the program online from the student's home. Mrs. Gourlie stated it would be more cost effective, but this was more of a classroom experience and it was apparently quite rigorous.

Mrs. Gourlie stated that LEARN held a negotiation roundtable, although she did not have specific information on this discussion. They were offering web-based training for teachers on OSHA, blood-borne pathogens, etc. LEARN also had a cooperative purchasing program. This state-wide initiative included an electricity consortium. Their goals included cooperative purchasing, customer service, and marketing and sponsorships. Mrs. Gourlie stated she would try to get more information on this.

Mr. Iacovelli read a note from Mr. Misenti asking if the Board was aware of and was participating in any of these programs. Mrs. Gourlie stated the Board was aware of all of the programs and East Haddam participates in the virtual high school and E-waste programs, as well as the web-based training for teachers. East Haddam does not participate in the virtual learning academy, as this was a new program this year.

H. Curriculum Council Liaison

Mr. Herden stated this committee met yesterday, at which time they approve the master curriculum calendar for 2006-2011. He distributed copies of this calendar to the Board.

Mr. Herden reported that the Developmental Guidance subcommittee was writing instructional objectives. The Language Arts subcommittee was investigating different forms of reading instruction in response to the reading scores. The Science subcommittee was focusing on the CAPT test and

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS (continued)H. Curriculum Council Liaison (continued)

the changes to the test. The Differentiation subcommittee is scheduled to hold a meeting on December 11, 2006 to define the term and to set a work schedule for the committee. Mr. Herden will provide an update on this at a future meeting.

Mr. Herden indicated that the Curriculum Council will examine the curriculum to determine if they were accomplishing the goals. They would also look at teacher training and methods.

Mr. Herden stated that the Curriculum Council discussed the structure of the Council and subcommittees. Dr. Durham has been the chairman of this committee and Mr. Herden has been the liaison. They discussed whether they should keep the existing structure and the Curriculum Council members unanimously agreed to keep it as it is. Mr. Herden believed this spoke directly to Dr. Durham's qualities and he encouraged the Board to consider this when selecting Dr. Durham's replacement.

Mr. Misenti asked if the recommendations for the new high school frameworks would affect the curriculum planning. Dr. Durham stated this was not discussed with the Curriculum Council yet. He believed it would have some impact, but they should not delve too deeply into this until the State writes the high school Frameworks. He believed the high school was in good shape and that this would be reflected in the NEASC evaluation report. Mr. Misenti stated it seemed like they were putting increased emphasis on assessments. Dr. Durham believed this would continue to be addressed.

Mrs. Gourlie excused Mr. Staehly at this time.

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS AND AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

None

IX. OLD BUSINESSA. Strategic Plan

Dr. Durham stated that the Long Range Planning subcommittee was working on a community survey for dissemination.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Acceptance of Consent Agenda

Mrs. Gionta asked to have Item 3 removed for discussion.

- 1) Warrant
 - a. To approve the warrant for 2005-06 in the amount of \$2,367,282.50.
 - b. To approve the warrant for 2006-07 in the amount of \$1,190,731.90.
- 2) To accept the resignation of Mrs. Joanne Maynard, remedial reading teacher at East Haddam Elementary School, effective January 1, 2007.

To accept the resignation of Mr. Kevin Maynard, physical education teacher at Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School, effective January 1, 2007.
- 4) To approve Policy 7551 (Naming of Facility) as a first reading.
- 5) To approve the senior class trip request to Disney World in Orlando, Florida from April 26, 2007 through April 30, 2007.
- 6) To approve the 2007 Board of Education meeting schedule.

MOTION: Mather, Mordecai; to approve Items 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 of the Consent Agenda.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT
MOTION PASSED**

- 3) To approve an unpaid leave of absence beginning January 6, 2007 to the end of the 2006-07 school year for Mrs. Nancy Hanks, Reading Consultant at East Haddam Elementary School.

MOTION: Gionta, Mordecai; to approve Item 3 of the Consent Agenda.

Mrs. Gionta asked where this would leave the Board, with two of the reading teachers leaving. Dr. Durham stated they have advertised for a Language Arts consultant. In addition, they have two teachers due back from maternity leave in January. One of these teachers has a reading background and would be assigned to the position for the remainder of the year.

X. NEW BUSINESS (continued)A. Acceptance of Consent Agenda (continued)

Dr. Durham stated they were reviewing the resumes from the advertisement now and he hoped to find a suitable candidate. However, he stated if they could not find the right candidate, they would fill the position with someone with a reading background. He was confident that they would manage.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT
MOTION PASSED**

B. Transportation Contract

MOTION: Mather, Iacovelli; to extend the current contract with Nichols' Bus Company for an additional two years as recommended by the Transportation Committee.

**FAVOR (5): Gionta, Hyla, Iacovelli, Mather, Mordecai
OPPOSED (2): Misenti, Herden
ABSENT (1): Mielt
MOTION PASSED**

C. School Safety

Mrs. Gourlie noted that Mr. Misenti had asked at last month's meeting to have a discussion about school safety. She stated she mentioned this to the LEARN board. They conducted a very brief survey of board members with three questions: 1) Are all doors locked at all times; 2) Do they have a school Resource Officer; and 3) Do they have metal detectors. Mrs. Gourlie noted that none of the schools in this region have metal detectors. Four schools do not have a Resource Officer and seven schools have a Resource Officer with some qualifications. Regarding the locking of all doors, four schools did not and four schools responded with a variety of "yes".

Mr. Herden stated that East Haddam was doing basically the same as all of the other schools in southeastern Connecticut.

Mr. Misenti submitted a document to Mrs. Gourlie. Mrs. Gourlie read the document, but noted these were Mr. Misenti's words. In his letter, Mr. Misenti wrote that there have been a number of school violence issues over the past several weeks. He believed East Haddam was vulnerable due to the isolated area in which our schools are located and the delayed police response time.

He believed there were low-cost alternatives and he requested an ad-hoc committee be formed to research grants, etc. for school safety.

X. NEW BUSINESS (continued)C. School Safety (continued)

Mrs. Gionta stated she could see Mr. Misenti's point about school safety. She stated at the elementary school, visitors must sign in and get buzzed into the school. However, people could walk into the other schools. She believed this needed to be addressed.

Mrs. Gourlie stated she was not inclined to put together an ad-hoc committee to have the town look at our security. She stated East Haddam was doing at least as much as other schools in our area.

Mr. Herden stated that Bacon Academy requires all of their staff to wear identification. He stated this would be an easy way to recognize anyone who did not work there. He believed this was a better alternative for East Haddam than metal detectors.

Mrs. Gourlie stated not to diminish Mr. Misenti's concerns, but she asked if any Board members had people bring this issue up to them, and she received no response; therefore, she believed that people feel our children are safe. Mrs. Gionta stated any of these towns in which the violence occurred would have likely not felt there was an issue a week before the incidents. She stated no one ever knew when something like this would happen.

Dr. Durham stated that the administration and the schools are concerned; however, they have limited resources with which to work. He stated he came to East Haddam shortly after the Columbine incident. He worked with the State police to develop an emergency management procedure manual. This manual covers intruders, bomb threats, etc.

Dr. Durham stated that the administration recently reviewed these procedures with staff and the schools have conducted drills in the event of an emergency. He stated they have more security at the elementary school because the students are younger and are more vulnerable, and because the layout of the school allows this. He stated this would be very difficult to do at the middle school without major changes and restructuring. He stated that the middle school and high school both have a hall monitor.

Dr. Durham stated he just attended a session with the State police to review the emergency plans. They discussed alternate gathering places, bus rosters, etc. East Haddam has a Resource Officer here two days per week. New Britain has two full-time Resource Officers. He stated we would love to be able to lock the school doors at all times, but they simply could not. He stated it would not be a problem to have everyone wear name tags. He stated they take this issue seriously, but he did not want to panic about it.

X. NEW BUSINESS (continued)C. School Safety (continued)

Mrs. Gourlie asked Mrs. Mordecai what plans were in place for the new 4-8 school. Mrs. Mordecai stated there were no plans for metal detectors, but the entrance was similar to the elementary school. Dr. Durham stated that security would be in the design. Mrs. Gionta asked if there would be cameras, to which Mrs. Mordecai responded there would not. Dr. Durham stated they could have some security measures at the middle school, but there were many doors with which to be concerned.

Mr. Misenti submitted a note to Dr. Durham. In his note, Mr. Misenti believed East Haddam's potential issues were not so much violence, but disgruntled parents, kidnapping, etc. Dr. Durham stated he did not profess to be an expert in this area and he welcomed any ideas and/or input.

Mr. Mather asked if there had been lockdown drills at all of the schools, to which Dr. Durham responded affirmatively.

Mr. Iacovelli suggested the schools ask the Student Council if they had any ideas. Dr. Durham believed this was a good idea. He asked the principals of each school to address this. Mr. Iacovelli added that the principals should let the students know that the Board requested this. Mrs. Gourlie asked Mrs. Dadona to ensure that Miss Durfee and Mr. Staehly were involved and to report back to the Board.

Mr. Hyla asked if the Board collected any incident data. Dr. Durham stated to the best of his knowledge, there had been no intruders.

They only incidents were occasional teenagers in the high school parking lot who were not students at Hale-Ray.

Dr. Durham stated he did not want to wait until something bad happened. He wants to be proactive in this approach.

MOTION: Gionta, Mordecai; to enter Executive Session at 8:35 p.m. for the purpose of discussing personnel.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT
MOTION PASSED**

The Board returned to Regular Session at 9:20 p.m.

MOTION: Mordecai, Gionta; to adjourn at 9:21 p.m.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT
MOTION CARRIED**

Respectfully submitted,

Nick Iacovelli
Secretary