

East Haddam Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes
Nathan Hale-Ray High School Cafeteria
April 10, 2007
7:00 p.m.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Nick Iacovelli

STUDENT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT: Anne Durfee and Kevin Staehly

OTHERS PRESENT: Dr. Durham and approximately 20 people including staff were present.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Mrs. Gourlie.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. REPORT OF THE BOARD CHAIR

A. Correspondence

Mrs. Gourlie stated a letter from Jordon Humble dated March 17, 2007 requesting a donation from the Board of Education for tuition for attending the National Youth Leadership Forum on Medicine was included in the Board member's packets. Mrs. Gourlie asked Dr. Durham to inform Mr. Humble that funding cannot come directly from the Board of Education for non-school sponsored student activities.

Mrs. Gourlie shared a letter from Teresa Govert. Ms. Govert's letter thanked the Board for allowing her to be a student representative to the Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership Conference.

B. Report from Student Council Representatives

Mr. Staehly reported the 3rd quarter had ended this week and that next week was April vacation. The trip to China will leave April 13, 2007.

III. REPORT OF THE BOARD CHAIR (continued)

B. Report from Student Council Representatives (continued)

Ms. Durfee reported the senior class trip was to take place the week after spring vacation. Ms. Durfee stated AP exams would start soon. Ms. Durfee reviewed a long list of college acceptances reported to the guidance office. Twelve students have reported being accepted into UConn, 17 students have reported being accepted into State Universities as well as 28 other universities inside and outside of the United States. Ms. Durfee stated students had gotten into much more competitive colleges than previous years and that a lot of students were getting into their first and second choices.

Mrs. Gourlie stated the Board of Education was proud of the list of colleges which had accepted students from Hale-Ray High School.

Mr. Staehly was excused.

IV. ACTION ON THE MINUTES

MOTION: Gionta, Herden; to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 13, 2007 as presented.

FAVOR (6): Gionta, Herden, Mather, Mordecai, Hyla, Mielt

OPPOSED (0): None

ABSTENTIONS (1): Misenti

ABSENT (1): Iacovelli

MOTION PASSED

MOTION: Mather, Gionta to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of March 14, 2007 as presented.

FAVOR (5): Gionta, Herden, Mather, Hyla, Misenti

OPPOSED (0): None

ABSTENTIONS (2): Mordecai, Mielt

ABSENT (1): Iacovelli

MOTION PASSED

V. REPORT OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEES

A. 4-8 Middle School

Mrs. Mordecai reported there was a delay obtaining the discharge permit. Mrs. Mordecai informed the Board that a seven day extension had been granted to Newfield Construction. Mrs. Mordecai stated all delays to the project had been due to permitting issues. Mrs. Mordecai reported that the progress of

V. Report of the School Building Committees (continued)A. 4-8 Middle School (continued)

the project would be as follows: E (two story building), A (administrative area), C (cafeteria, kitchen and gymnasium) and ending with B (one story classrooms). The foundations are scheduled to start on May 1, 2007.

Mrs. Mordecai informed the Board that the ball fields would be planted in the spring of 2008 and the soccer fields would be planted in the fall of 2007. First Selectman Parker has been advised by counsel against allowing people up to the site due to insurance liability; therefore, students will not be taking pictures of the progress of the school. Mrs. Mordecai stated that Newfield Construction would provide monthly photographs of the site. Denise Gable and Nancy Allison are developing a website which will display pictures of the project.

Mr. Misenti questioned if the injunction on the land prohibited the issuance of bonding for the project. Mrs. Mordecai replied bonds could not be issued but that the Board of Finance had approved the issuance of BANs, which is a short term interim loan, which would be transferred into bonds upon the completion of the project. The BAN application will be submitted in May. Mr. Misenti questioned the projected date for settling the property issues. Mrs. Mordecai replied in August and that it would not delay or hinder the project. Responsive to a question by Mr. Misenti, Mrs. Mordecai replied the Board of Finance had transferred enough money into the school project until the BANs are issued.

B. Middle and Elementary Schools' Capital Improvements

Mr. Mather reported they had not met.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLSA. NEASC Report and Presentation

Mrs. Dadona and Mr. Rinaldi presented the major commendations and recommendations from the October 2006 NEASC Visitation Committee. A copy of the entire report was included in Board member's packets. An overview of the report was presented with a PowerPoint presentation.

The final assessment of the Commission is expected in a few weeks.

Mrs. Gourlie questioned if there was ongoing communication with the Visitation Committee. Mrs. Dadona replied affirmatively. Dr. Mielt commented that some of the recommendations were vague. Mrs. Dadona stated they were intended to be vague and that the final assessment letter may bring clarity to some of the recommendations. Mrs. Dadona stated Janet Allison was their liaison and another resource for clarification.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS (continued)A. NEASC Report and Presentation (continued)

Mr. Hyla questioned if there were any disputed findings. Mrs. Dadona replied herself, Dr. Roark, Mrs. Mathewson, and Dr. Durham had read the report when it came in before it was edited and asked for clarification on some items. Mr. Mather stated he was pleased with the report.

Mrs. Gourlie questioned who would get the report in the community. Dr. Durham replied the Board of Selectman, Board of Finance and copies would be available at the Town Hall and Board of Education Office. Dr. Durham stated Penny Overton from the Hartford Courant was present and an article would be published in Thursday's paper as well as in the quarterly newsletter.

Mrs. Mordecai stated she was pleased with the report and that the report was so positive about the students and hoped that the message would be relayed to the students.

Responsive to a question by Mr. Mather, Dr. Durham replied that quality education was not a direct function of how much money was spent per pupil but how the money is spent. Dr. Durham stated the district was average each year for per pupil expenditure. Dr. Durham stated the Board re-allocates resources in the direction of individual plans from year to year and not necessarily spends more. Dr. Durham gave credit to the elementary and middle schools' well articulated programs, in the development of the students for high school. Dr. Durham stated the strategic plan had been mainly focused on the high school primarily due to the 1996 findings. Dr. Durham recommended continuing with academic seminar and portfolio despite the lack of clarity. Dr. Durham stated he was pleased with the findings of the committee because it validated what the Board had been working on.

Mr. Misenti congratulated the administrators, staff, and students on the report. Mr. Misenti requested that when they had refined the collection and analysis of data, he would like them to report to the Board the percentage of students in each class for meeting academic expectations. Dr. Durham stated some things could be quantitatively defined but that it depended on the nature of the internal assessment. Dr. Durham stated not everything could be quantified. Dr. Durham stated that the percentage of students who meet the curriculum benchmarks should be able to be quantified.

Mr. Herden questioned Mrs. Dadona if she was surprised the report did not make mention of the number of students in advance placement courses. Mrs. Dadona replied they had reviewed it, but that there was no recommendation or commendation and that they must have met what they were supposed to, but was not extraordinary. Mrs. Dadona stated NEASC was not about standardized test scores.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS (continued)B. Facilities Request

The Plymouth Fife and Drum Corps from Plymouth, Michigan has requested permission to use the gymnasium, locker rooms, shower facilities, and kitchen facilities at Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School from July 20, 2007 through July 23, 2007 during their annual East Coast tour. As per Policy #1330, Board approval is required. Mr. Carroll has been in contact with a representative from the group and is willing to accommodate them. Dr. Durham recommended that the Board approve the request.

Mr. Mather questioned how it would benefit the residents of East Haddam. Dr. Durham responded it was sponsored by Ron Pieler, East Haddam Fife and Drum corps. Mr. Pieler introduced himself and stated the participants would be accompanied by adults. Dr. Durham stated there would be at least a monetary benefit. Dr. Durham stated it was an extension of the Board's civic outreach to accommodate and allow them to participate. Mr. Carroll commented that if there is a project going on at the high school, then they would stay at the middle school and he agreed to coordinate and be responsible for the visit. Approval is included on the Consent Agenda.

C. Graduation Date

By statute, the Board of Education may, after April 1st, establish a date certain for graduation. Since there were three snow days this winter, graduation should occur on June 20th. Action on this topic establishes June 20th as the date of graduation. Inclement weather could change the last day of school but not the graduation date. Approval is included on the Consent Agenda.

D. CMT/CAPT Improvement Plan

The CMT/CAPT Improvement Plan had been revised and was made available to all Board of Education members for review.

E. Field Trip Request

A field trip request to Canada is scheduled for November 8, 2007 through November 11, 2007 for high school French students. Approval is included on the Consent Agenda.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTSA. Long Range Planning

Long Range Planning, Policy Committee and the local Prevention Council had a joint meeting on April 5, 2007. Mr. Herden stated the meeting was well represented by the Board. Mr. Herden stated a major theme from the meeting was when it comes to substance abuse, it is a community problem. Mr. Herden suggested the Board appoint a liaison from the Board to the Local Prevention Council. Mr. Hyla has volunteered for this position. Mr. Herden stated the Board should consider implementing a late bus for students to keep them engaged in school activities. Mr. Herden suggested that the Policy Committee devise some policies which allow the use of breath analyzers and the use of a drug sniffing dog in the school.

Mrs. Gourlie requested that the recommendations go back to committee because it was the first time it was being mentioned and needed to be included in a formal Long Range Planning meeting speaking about these recommendations for input by committee members. Mrs. Gourlie requested that the Policy Committee also address the issues.

With regards to the implementation of a late bus, Dr. Durham stated it had been discussed in the past and that there were financial issues involved. Dr. Mielt questioned if the busses could make central stops to which Dr. Durham replied affirmatively. Mr. Herden commented that the busses would allow students needing additional help to stay after school.

Mr. Misenti requested for the record that Long Range Planning investigate the feasibility of instituting full day kindergarten after the new middle school opens. Mr. Misenti requested that the committee consider cost, cost benefit and long term effect expected from academic achievement.

B. Finance

Mr. Mather stated they had not met. Mr. Mather stated they had not received a report from the Board of Finance. Mr. Mather informed the Board that the town budget would be presented to the town on April 30, 2007.

C. Policy

Dr. Mielt reported this Committee had not met.

D. Transportation

Mr. Mather reported this Committee had not met.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS (continued)E. Personnel and Negotiations

Mr. Misenti suggested the Board go into Executive Session at the end of the meeting for discussions of the binding arbitration with the non-certified personnel.

F. Ray Board Liaison

Ray Board had not met.

G. LEARN

Mrs. Gourlie reported that the next LEARN meeting was scheduled for April 12, 2007. The meeting's educational perspective will be presented by the Groton Board of Education demonstrating a means of assessment of student learning other than through test scores.

H. Curriculum Council Liaison

Mr. Herden reported Curriculum Council had met April 9, 2007. Discussions continued with regards to the evaluation process. They are continuing their search to develop and decide upon some evaluative criteria which will be used to evaluate changes made to the curriculum over the last 5 years.

The Differentiation Subcommittee met and submitted a report. Mr. Herden stated the information may be used for a professional day for the teachers. Mr. Herden reported the Curriculum Council desires to have Dr. Durham evaluate the materials and develop a template before he leaves.

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS AND AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

A member of the audience stated people were shocked at the Local Prevention Council meeting at the type of packaging alcohol is sold in.

Brian Parady stated he was impressed with the NEASC report and recommended that the information get sufficiently distributed throughout the public.

IX. OLD BUSINESSA. Strategic Plan

Dr. Durham informed the Board that the annual progress report would be sent to them prior to the May meeting for review. At the May meeting it will be presented.

X. New BusinessA. Acceptance of Consent Agenda

- 1) Warrant
 - a. To approve the warrant for 2006-07 in the amount of \$1,806,738.38.
- 2) In accordance with CGS §10-16, to establish Wednesday, June 20, 2007, as graduation day for the Class of 2007.
- 3) To approve an unpaid leave of absence for Mrs. Carol Parker Sprankle, special education teacher at East Haddam Elementary School, to the end of the academic school year for child rearing purposes. A copy of Mrs. Parker Sprankle's letter is attached.
- 4) To approve the request from the Plymouth Fife and Drum Crops to use the middle school facilities from July 20, 2007 through July 23, 2007 during its annual East Coast tour.
- 5) To approve the field trip request to Canada scheduled for November 8, 2007 through November 11, 2007.

MOTION: Mordecai, Mielt; to approve items 1 through 5 of the Consent Agenda.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT
MOTION PASSED**

B. Personal Leave Request

Mrs. Gourlie shared an email correspondence by Mrs. Fastaia to Dr. Durham. Mrs. Fastaia requested an amendment of personal days requested to four personal days.

MOTION: Gionta, Mordecai; to approve Mrs. Jackie Fastaia's request for additional personal days under Article XIX of the teachers' contract. A copy of Mrs. Fastaia's letter was attached.

Responsive to a question by Mrs. Mordecai, Mrs. Gourlie replied in the past, the Board had voted both ways on this issue. Dr. Durham stated he had included the teachers' contract in the Board's packets for review, stating the decision was at the discretion of the Board. Dr. Durham informed the Board that because it was at their discretion, their decision would not set precedent.

X. New Business (continued)

B. Personal Leave Request

Mr. Misenti requested a recommendation from the Superintendent. Dr. Durham stated the contract permitted six personal days and that was what the Board should grant. Dr. Durham stated that any extra days did not allow for payment within the contract. Mrs. Gourlie explained that a yes vote in favor would allow payment for the extra days not worked. Dr. Durham recommended the Board adhere to the contract, permitting teachers to have six personal days. Responsive to a question by Ms. Mordecai, Dr. Durham responded that Family Medical Leave was unpaid time off and that the contract allowed for teachers to accumulate their personal days for medical leave in which they would be paid.

**FAVOR (4): Gionta, Mordecai, Mather, Mielt
OPPOSED (3): Misenti, Herden, Hyla
ABSTENTIONS (0): None
ABSENT (1): Iacovelli
MOTION PASSED**

Mr. Mather questioned if the Board would need to evaluate the Superintendent, although he would be retiring. Dr. Durham replied affirmatively, based on statutory requirements.

MOTION: Mordecai, Hyla; to go into Executive Session at 8:54 p.m. for the purpose of discussing the binding arbitration with the non-certified personnel.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT
MOTION PASSED**

The Board returned to Regular Session at 9:25 p.m.

MOTION: Mordecia, Gionta; to adjourn at 9:27 p.m.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT
MOTION PASSED**

Respectfully submitted,

Nick Iacovelli
Secretary