

East Haddam Board of Education  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Nathan Hale-Ray High School Cafeteria  
October 9, 2007  
7:00 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Pam Gourlie, Nick Iacovelli, Tracey Gionta, Robert Mather, Alan Hyla,  
Tom Mielt, Mary-Beth Mordecai

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Manny Misenti, Everett Herden

**STUDENT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:** Kevin Staehly

**STUDENT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ABSENT:** Joseph Weaver

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Ellen Solek, Bob Carroll, Linda Dadona, Chuck Rinaldi, Cindy Mello,  
Mary Beth Havens, Jason Peacock, Bonnie Butsch, Dave Scata,  
Pete Govert, Ruth Ziobron and approximately 6 other staff and citizens

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Pam Gourlie.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. REPORT OF THE BOARD CHAIR

A. Communications

Mrs. Gourlie announced the CABA/CAPSS convention will be November 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> at the Mystic Marriot. Interested members may register on line. Mrs. Gourlie reviewed the convention format and presenters.

B. Report from Student Council Representatives

Kevin Staehly reported on the following activities at the high school:

- The Sergeant of Arms will be nominated at the next Student Council meeting, scheduled for October 16<sup>th</sup> ;
- Triad will host a fall festival including a taco dinner fundraiser, October 18<sup>th</sup> ;
- PSP testing for sophomore and juniors will be held October 17<sup>th</sup>;
- Homecoming activities will be held October 16<sup>th</sup> (dance) and 17<sup>th</sup> (game);
- Student Council representatives sponsored a bake sale and raised \$225.00; and
- Progress reports have been distributed.

Mr. Staehly excused himself from the meeting.

IV. ACTION ON THE MINUTES

**MOTION:** Mather, Iacovelli; to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 12<sup>th</sup> as presented.

**FAVOR (6): Iacovelli, Mather, Mordecai, Hyla, Mielt, Gionta**

**OPPOSED (0): None**

**ABSTENTIONS (0): None**

**ABSENT (2): Misenti, Herden**

**MOTION PASSED**

V. Report of the School Building Committees

A. 4-8 Middle School

Ms. Mordecai reported the Topping Off Ceremony was successful with over 300 signatures on the beam. There will be an article published in the Fishwrapper.

There were lengthy discussions at the last meeting with Scott Brooks, Fire Marshal, regarding an automatic re-fill of the sprinkler system tank. The fire code has changed since the drawings were bid on. The committee discussed having an additional score board in the gymnasium and are awaiting prices before making a final decision. The drawings indicate one score board. Mrs. Mordecai explained the displeasure of the committee discovering items which were not included in the bid packages. Mrs. Mordecai assured the Board that the School Building Committee was constantly determining accountability for the items omitted in the bid packages.

Mrs. Mordecai will arrange for Board members to tour the site with Al Howat-Newfield Construction.

Responsive to a question by Mrs. Gionta about the state bonding package issue, Mrs. Mordecai replied there was enough funding available without bond monies for the project until February.

Responsive to a question by Mr. Mather, Mrs. Mordecai will provide the alarm/fire system specifications at the next meeting.

Mrs. Mordecai showed the Board a sample engraved brick for a proposed community-wide fundraiser. Mrs. Mordecai suggested using the funds raised from the sale of the bricks for enhancements to the site. Each brick will cost approximately \$50 and Mrs. Mordecai is determining if it can be considered a tax deductible donation with the Finance Director.

B. Middle and Elementary Schools' Capital Improvements

Mr. Mather stated there was nothing new to report.

## VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Dr. Solek acknowledged Mr. Misenti stating this would have been his last meeting, but that he was struggling with personal issues and could not attend. Dr. Solek stated Mr. Misenti had served the Board of Education for a number of years. Dr. Solek stated Mr. Misenti had held everyone accountable and was a leader on the Board of Education and that he required excellence from everyone. Dr. Solek stated the Board, staff, and community honored his work and membership and thanked him for his service.

### A. High School Baseball Teams' Field Trip Request

Mr. Gable was unable to present due to knee surgery.

Mrs. Dadona introduced Jason Hendry, Andy Parker, Jeff Ventres, and Nate Michowski. Mrs. Dadona stated the trip supported the education of the student's civic and social realm. Mrs. Dadona explained this trip was unable to be made during vacation because league games would be missed. Unlike the softball team, this trip would not be made with other shoreline towns in which league games could be played. Time out of class will be limited. Students have agreed to do homework while on the trip. Students must have permission from their teachers to miss classroom time. Additional educational components to the trip include the Kennedy Space Center, Navy Seal Museum, and Cocoa Expo Baseball. Mr. Iacovelli, Mr. Parker, Mr. Ventres, and Mr. Michowski spoke in favor of the field trip.

Responsive to a question by Mr. Mather, it was explained the trip was unable to be taken during scheduled vacation time because league games, which could not be made up, would be missed.

### B. CMT/CAPT Presentation

Mr. Scata reviewed a slide presentation of the 2007 CMT/CAPT annual testing report. Data results were reviewed by the Board.

Responsive to a question by Mr. Hyla, Mr. Scata explained the increase in math scores could be contributable to the new math curriculum.

Mr. Hyla questioned if individual student's progress (baseline data) was measured from year to year to which Mr. Scata replied affirmatively.

Mr. Iacovelli stated using the CMT/CAPT testing grades for the determination of the best town to live, or for basing teacher performance, was not a fair benchmark. Mr. Iacovelli reiterated proper interpretation of the scores.

Responsive to a question by Mrs. Gourlie, Mr. Scata replied comparisons were made to other town scores.

Mr. Hyla spoke favorably of the administration implementing planned interventions which proved evident in the scores.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS (continued)B. CMT/CAPT Presentation (continued)

Dr. Solek stated at the Superintendent and State Department level; questions have arisen with the CMT/CAPT scoring guidelines. Dr. Solek stated interpretation of the data has helped to improve overall performance and made the district accountable. Dr. Solek stated review of overall scores for the district and similar districts has indicated a slight variance in scores and that the overall test scores indicate improvement overall. Dr. Solek informed the Board that AYP is requiring unattainable improvement by all districts. Dr. Solek stated the Federal Government is requiring a quantum leap in improvement of scores by the years 2013 and 2014. Dr. Solek explained many districts in the state will be hugely challenged to meet these guidelines. Dr. Solek stated the State is requiring, without any fiscal support; to take these quantum leaps.

Dr. Solek informed the Board that Superintendent groups in conjunction with the State Department of Education will be reviewing the CMT/CAPT scoring guidelines and implications. Dr. Solek stated through the strategic plan, trends were being reviewed between grade levels and individual students for the better implementation of the curriculum, to raise performance levels. Dr. Solek stated the strategic plan was also implementing technological improvements which should increase CMT/CAPT scores. Staff initiatives have been implemented to meet the individual needs of students. Dr. Solek suggested defining other measures of assessment besides the CAPT/CMT testing.

Mr. Mather questioned if some students were incapable of meeting the required CMT/CAPT testing scores. Dr. Solek replied affirmatively because the expectation disregards all of a student's ability by assessment through one test. Dr. Solek stated the CMT/CAPT testing requirements by the year 2013 is unrealistic. Dr. Solek added the goal is to get as many students as possible to the CMT/CAPT testing requirements.

Mrs. Mordecai stated each student's potential is different and it is important to use different educational and assessment tools to best serve students. Mrs. Mordecai stated the CMT/CAPT testing scores should not be the only assessment tool used. Dr. Solek stated benchmark assessments and student portfolio were being used in this manner.

Mrs. Gionta commented the data was impressive when special education students were not included. Dr. Miett voiced concern with having to include special education students in the overall data results.

C. ALERTNOW

The Alertnow system is a computerized system which will allow for efficient dissemination of information via the phone, i.e. snow delays, early dismissals, class trips, emergency information. Training will be held October 17<sup>th</sup> followed by the distribution of a letter requesting primary contact information.

Mr. Iacovelli questioned if the district would still use the news, etc. to broadcast snow days to which Dr. Solek replied affirmatively.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS (continued)D. Transition Task Force Update

The Transition Task Force, composed of administration, teachers, staff, parents and Board members met September 24<sup>th</sup>. Long Range Planning has requested that the Transition Task Force propose names for the middle school for consideration by the Board. The next meeting will be October 29<sup>th</sup> at the elementary school.

**MOTION:** Miett, Hyla; to approve the High School Baseball Team's field trip request to Florida from March 26, 2008 through March 30, 2008.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT  
MOTION PASSED**

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTSA. Long Range Planning

Long Range Planning met October 4<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Iacovelli briefly reviewed discussions as documented in the Long Range Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.

Long Range Planning discussed having a signage policy. A three tiered system was suggested in which proposed signs would come to Long Range Planning, followed by Policy and then proposed to the full Board. Dr. Solek distributed draft copies of the proposed sign by Marty Ryczek for a new sign honoring the participants in the lighting project. Policy will review the sign and bring it back for consideration at the next meeting. Long Range Planning's next meeting is November 1<sup>st</sup>.

B. Finance

Mr. Mather stated they had not met. The subcommittee attended the Board of Finance meeting which was held on Monday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007. The Board of Finance has approved for the Board of Selectman to request a Town Meeting to allocate the funds necessary for the noncertified union payments.

C. Policy

Policy met October 4<sup>th</sup>. Policy #5113 (Attendance and Excuses), Policy #5131.6 (Student Possession or Use of Illegal Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco), and Policy #6172.12 (Magnet Schools) were presented as first readings. Dr. Miett briefly reviewed discussions as documented in the Policy Meeting Minutes.

Mrs. Dadona stated the importance of tightening up the wording of the attendance policy guidelines to eliminate loopholes, hold students accountable and to link attendance to credit. The attendance policy guidelines were reviewed.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS (continued)C. Policy (continued)

Responsive to a question by Mr. Iacovelli, Dr. Solek replied the Transition Task Force would be responsible for generating three proposed names for the new middle school for Board consideration. Students and alumni will be added to the Transition Task Force.

Mrs. Mordecai commented that the Transition Task Force members were not appointed but volunteers who attended the meetings.

Dr. Solek will draft a letter to Mr. Ryczek indicating the Board has no objections to the proposed lighting sign and thanking him for bringing it forward for their consideration.

D. Transportation

Mr. Mather reported this committee had not met because there were no problems. It was decided to keep Transportation on the agenda due to the transition into the new middle school this fall.

E. Personnel and Negotiations

Dr. Miett requested the Board go into Executive Session at the end of the meeting for discussions of Personnel and Negotiations.

F. Ray Board Liaison

Mr. Iacovelli reported Ray Board had not met since the last meeting.

G. LEARN

Mrs. Gionta has volunteered to be the LEARN liaison.

H. Curriculum Council Liaison

Mr. Herden was unavailable to report. Mrs. Mordecai reported the sections of the Plan for Developing Curriculum was reviewed.

I. Open Space Committee Liaison

Mr. Misenti was not available to report.

J. Local Prevention Council

Mr. Hyla reported the Local Prevention Council met September 19<sup>th</sup>. The survey results from the Development Assets report were reviewed. There were improved scores from the 2003 survey. There will be a presentation at an upcoming Board meeting.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS (continued)

J. Local Prevention Council (continued)

Mr. Hyla informed the Board that Selectman Govert was a member of the council and would be drafting a letter to the Board of Education in support of drug sniffing dogs and alcohol breath analyzer testing to be used in the school.

VIII. Communications and Audience of Citizens

There were no communications or Audience of Citizens at the time it was offered.

IX. Old Business

None noted.

X. New Business

A. Acceptance of Consent Agenda

- 1) Warrant
  - a. To approve the warrant for 2006-07 in the amount of \$1,654,878.90.
  - b. To approve the warrant for 2007-08 in the amount of \$1,530,105.18.
- 3) To accept the resignation of Chuck Harpin, School Social Worker at East Haddam Elementary School, effective December 21, 2007.
- 4) To approve Policy #5113 (Attendance and Excuses) as a first reading.
- 5) To approve Policy #5131.6 (Student Possession or Use of Illegal Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco) as a first reading.
- 6) To approve Policy #6172.12 (Magnet Schools) as a first reading.

**MOTION:** Miett, Iacovelli; to approve the Consent Agenda items 1,3,4,5 and 6.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT  
MOTION PASSED**

**MOTION:** Miett, Iacovelli; to go into Executive Session at 9:21 p.m. for the purpose of discussing personnel and negotiations.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT  
MOTION PASSED**

The Board returned to Regular Session at 9:30 p.m.

**MOTION:** Mather, Gionta; to adjourn at 9:31 p.m.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT  
MOTION PASSED**

Respectfully submitted,

Nick Iacovelli  
Secretary