

East Haddam Board of Education
Special Meeting Minutes
Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School Media Center
March 8, 2011
7:00 p.m.

BOE MEMBERS PRESENT: Nancy Haslam-Chair, Bryan Perry-Secretary, Tracey Gionta, Deborah Fiala, Amalia Apostoleris, Susan Taylor, Everett Herden, MaryBeth Mordecai

BOE MEMBERS ABSENT: Brian Pear

STUDENT COUNCIL REPS. PRESENT: Joshua Rivera, Caley Millen

STUDENT COUNCIL REPS. ABSENT: Madeline Cahill, Austin Brasile

OTHERS PRESENT: Dr. Ellen Solek, Jason Peacock, Mary Beth Havens, David Scata, Joanne Collins, First Selectman Mark Walter, Bob Carroll, Sue Link, Alison Akehurst, Tina Mackenzie, Deanna Tart, approximately 6 audience members, Ruth Ziobron-Recording Secretary

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. REPORT OF THE BOARD CHAIRPERSON

A. Communications

Mrs. Haslam stated that this evening's meeting was changed from a regular meeting to a special meeting due to the change in location of the meeting and advised Board members that any new agenda items could not be added.

She asked Bryan Perry to give the Board a brief overview of meetings that occurred with New England Energy Controls (NEEC)-a company in the industrial park, and the Economic Development Commission (EDC) Coordinator.

Mr. Perry stated that Dr. Solek responded to a request in a letter sent by the EDC Coordinator on February 17 for a follow-up meeting to a meeting that the EDC Coordinator previously had with the Board's business manager regarding the Board's purchasing process. This meeting was held on February 25. Attending the meeting were Ellen Solek, Robert Carroll, Nancy Haslam, Bryan Perry, David Scata, Mark Walter, Melissa Ziobron, Ed Odell, Deb Mathiasen, and Cindy Varrichio.

III. REPORT OF THE BOARD CHAIRPERSON (continued)

A. Communications (continued)

During the February 25th meeting, a question was raised as to whether or not the Board's business manager followed proper purchasing procedures. Concerns of qualifications of local businesses were addressed and discussed. Local business, NEEC, was confirmed as DAS qualified through certification. The EDC Coordinator stated that local businesses were concerned that the bid was written to limit certain qualifications.

In the meeting the EDC Coordinator asked who wrote the RFP to which the business manager responded that a template from TRANE was used. The EDC coordinator stated that local businesses could not find the legal notice and requested that the Board of Education add a clause to its policy for local business to conduct contracting for future projects. The EDC coordinator stated that the current policy was not followed and no effort was made to find a local business. The coordinator asked about the status of the project to which the business manager responded that the contract was signed before he and the EDC coordinator had their meeting.

The Board chair stated that the bidding process issue would be discussed at the Board of Education's next Policy Subcommittee meeting.

Bryan Perry further stated that on February 24, the BOE chair, BOE secretary, first selectman, and Dave Carpenter from NEEC meet to further resolve the situation. NEEC reviewed their company performance and several projects that they have done throughout the State of Connecticut as well as for the East Haddam School District. NEEC further verified that they are DAS certified. NEEC discussed their past working relationship with the business manager in a 2003 project and asked to be given the opportunity to participate in future projects. Mrs. Haslam stated that any past situations has been long forgotten and that they are more than qualified to bid on East Haddam School District projects.

Mrs. Haslam stated that she contacted Policy Subcommittee chairperson, Tracey Gionta, to have this issue discussed at the next policy meeting. Mrs. Gionta stated that it was discussed and that she will be reporting on it later in tonight's Board meeting.

Mrs. Haslam suggested a short-term ad hoc committee be created to articulate the Board of Education's bidding process and procedure. Mrs. Haslam stated the Board of Education wanted to have a good working relationship with town businesses. First Selectman Walter stated the Economic Development Commission had formed a business association group to educate its members as to where to go look for bids.

Mrs. Haslam asked if it would be beneficial to have a local business owner on the ad hoc committee. First Selectman Walter suggested inviting Melissa Ziobron (Economic Development Coordinator) or the new chair of the business association group.

III. REPORT OF THE BOARD CHAIRPERSON (continued)

A. Communications (continued)

Ms. Mordecai questioned if there had been complaints from other businesses regarding the Board of Education's bidding process as she has never heard of any complaints before regarding the Board of Education's bidding process and procedures nor has she ever heard of complaints with the Board's business manager, Mr. Carroll. There was no response to her question.

Ms. Mordecai asked Dr. Solek if the town's attorney felt that the Board of Education's bidding procedure was followed properly. Dr. Solek stated that the town's attorney had reviewed the process followed as aligned with BOE policy.

Mr. Perry stated that the attorney reviewed the process before the February 25th meeting and thought an ad hoc committee would be a good committee for further investigation of bidding practices and procedures. Mr. Perry said that the business manager did respond in the February 25th meeting that he used TRANE's template. Mr. Perry further stated that TRANE was one of the bidders – the awarded bidder.

Ms. Mordecai asked if the town's attorney saw anything wrong with that to which Mr. Perry replied that the town's attorney did not know about it.

Ms. Mordecai stated that in previous school district projects that she has been involved in over the years with Mr. Carroll, there were no complaints whatsoever with the bidding process nor with Mr. Carroll.

Mr. Perry stated that the same bidding process may have been followed in previous projects but he couldn't be sure and stated that it needs to be investigated. He further stated that he and Mrs. Haslam are not looking at Mr. Carroll's past performance.

Amy Apostoleris asked if the town had ever had an EDC coordinator to which First Selectman Walter responded that this position is a new position. She stated that therefore it made sense that there wouldn't have been a previous individual looking at the bidding process of prior projects.

Mrs. Haslam stated that most of the bidding process concern came from NEEC because they were one of the companies that claimed they had the certification to bid on the project. Other companies are concerned about the Board's bidding process but they do not have the State of Connecticut credentials.

B. Report from High School Student Council Representatives

The High School Council Representative reported on the following:

- CAPT testing for Sophomores and some Juniors are being held March 7th through March 11th;
- Progress reports will be issued this week;

III. REPORT OF THE BOARD CHAIRPERSON (continued)B. Report from High School Student Council Representatives (continued)

- Mr. Hale-Ray Pageant (Senior Project) will be held on March 18th;
- (Senior Project) Talent Show, date to be determined;
- Dillon Carter placed 1st in the 160 pound State Weight Division Wrestler's Class and placed 2nd in the New England Division;
- Samantha LeMire placed 2nd in the State Open Gymnast Competition;
- Baseball and Softball season starts soon.

Responsive to questions, Mr. Rivera replied Hale-Ray High School did not offer wrestling or gymnastics programs. These students received training outside of the district.

C. Report from Middle School Student Council Representatives

The Middle School Council Representatives reported the following:

- The Invention Convention was held March 3rd, there were 2 winners and 2 alternates which will advance to the State competition;
- 4th grade assembly sponsored by Millstone regarding static electricity was held this week;
- Winter Sports Banquet was held February 24th;
- State Cheerleaders' competitions;
- St. Patrick's Day MPAC sponsored dance will be held on March 12th;
- CMT testing;
- There will be an 8th grade writing essay contest. Winners will have the honor of laying the wreath at the Arlington Cemetery during the 8th grade Washington trip;
- 8th grade Pie Day on March 14th;
- 6th, 7th and 8th Grade Progress Reports will be distributed March 15th;
- Drama Club will be presenting "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" on March 18th, 19th and 20th;
- 6th Grade Blood Drive will be held on March 21st;
- Basketball Bash, Faculty verses Students will be held on March 25th;
- 8th Grade students will be creating 3 dimensional models of Washington, DC;
- MPAC Book Fair will be on April 6th.

D. Report from the First Selectman

First Selectman Walter noted this was the least stressful budget season in many years and thanked the Board of Education for their efforts. There will be a joint budget presentation held March 14th at the Town Grange at 7 p.m.

IV. ACTION ON THE MINUTES

MOTION: Fiala, Gionta; to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 8, 2011.

FAVOR (7): Gionta, Perry, Fiala, Apostoleris, Herden, Mordecai, Taylor
OPPOSED (0)
ABSTENTIONS (0)
ABSENT (1): Pear
MOTION PASSED

MOTION: Mordecai, Taylor; to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting held on March 1, 2011 with the following correction:

- change the figure amount of the 2011-12 Board of Education Budget motion amount to reflect "\$18,374,094".

FAVOR (6): Gionta, Perry, Fiala, Apostoleris, Mordecai, Taylor
OPPOSED (0)
ABSTENTIONS (1): Herden
ABSENT (1): Pear
MOTION PASSED

There was a brief recess for celebratory refreshments in honor of Board of Education month.

V. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLSA. Rave-O Overview

David Scata, Alison Akehurst, Tina Mackenzie and Deanna Tart reviewed the Rave-O program currently being used at the elementary school. It is a fluency reading and comprehension program that addresses the multiple components of reading. This is a pilot program which was implemented in October 2010 and is receiving positive feedback from students and faculty.

B. Elementary School Water Well Project

Mr. Carroll reported the elementary school well water was fully operational. Water testing has indicated excess iron and magnesium. State water approval is pending. The old well will be abandoned during Spring Break. Mrs. Gionta questioned if there were filters on the drinking fountains to which Mr. Carroll replied no.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTSA. Policy

Policy met March 7th. Mrs. Gionta reviewed meeting minutes. Mrs. Gionta noted Policy #7551 had been reviewed and suggested approval of the Charles Boynton Athletic Complex proposal during the Long Range Planning report. Responsive to a comment by First Selectman Walter regarding “Little Noises”, Mrs. Gionta stated nothing had been found regarding policy on school mascots or names.

B. Finance

Finance met February 23rd. Mrs. Fiala had nothing new to report.

C. Long Range Planning

Long Range Planning met March 2nd. Ms. Mordecai reviewed meeting minutes.

Mrs. Taylor stated the Personnel and Negotiations Subcommittee should be reviewing the Connecticut Superintendent Contract Revision, not the Long Range Planning Subcommittee. Mrs. Gionta and Mr. Herden agreed.

Dr. Solek reviewed the following documentation:

- Charles Edward Boynton’s East Haddam School System Application for Professional Appointment dated August, 17, 1965;
- Letter from Superintendent of Schools Edmund J. Gubbins dated March 7, 1968 requesting an occupational deferment for Mr. Boynton;
- Letter from Mr. Boynton dated June 1, 1983 to Richard B. Nabel, Hale-Ray High School Principal;
- Letter from Richard B. Nabel dated June 14, 1983 to Charles Boynton;
- Letter from Richard Nabel to Charles Boynton dated September 13, 1984;
- Letter from Samuel A. Roth, Superintendent, dated February 24, 1987 to Charles Boynton.

These documents are filed at the Board of Education Office.

MOTION: Herden, Mordecai; to accept the recommendation of the Long Range Planning Subcommittee to honor Charles E. Boynton for his outstanding work both inside and outside the classroom at the High School.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT
MOTION PASSED**

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS (continued)D. Personnel and Negotiations

Mr. Perry had nothing new to report and requested to go into Executive Session at the end of the meeting.

E. Transportation

Transportation met February 9th. Mr. Herden reviewed meeting minutes. He thanked the committee members and non-committee members who helped with negotiations with the bus company and stated that a motion to approve a new contract appears under New Business.

F. LEARN Liaison

Mrs. Gionta reported there would be a LEARN meeting on March 10th.

G. Ray Board Liaison

Ray Board had not met. Mrs. Fiala had nothing to report.

H. CIA Liaison

CIA had met. Mrs. Apostoleris reported they had worked on Core Subject documentation and Curriculum Guides. CIA meets again on March 28th.

I. Middle School Conversion Liaison

Mr. Perry had nothing to report. Mr. Perry stated BOE items needed to be moved out of the old middle school.

J. Local Prevention Council Liaison

Local Prevention Council met February 16th. Mrs. Haslam stated they started reviewing the 7th thru 12th grade student survey which had been distributed regarding habits, healthy living, and drug and alcohol use.

K. Open Space Liaison

Mr. Herden reported there would be a referendum on March 10th to vote on the purchase of the Harris, Dean, and Bogan properties.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS AND AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Denise Felecio requested that the Board keep the multicultural magnet school bus in the budget, noting she would be attending the Transportation Subcommittee meeting.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Acceptance of Consent Agenda

- 1) Warrant
 - a. To approve the warrant for 2009-10 in the amount of \$3,066,256.27.
 - b. To approve the warrant for 2010-11 in the amount of \$1,827,582.66.
- 2) Mrs. Nicole Yenter, school counselor at Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School, is requesting an extended unpaid leave of absence from the end of her FMLA to the end of the 2010-11 school year for child-rearing purposes.
- 3) To approve Bylaw #9321 (Time, Place and Notification of Meetings) as a second reading.

Mr. Perry requested that item 2 be removed from the motion.

MOTION: Fiala, Gionta; to approve the Consent Agenda items 1 and 3.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT
MOTION PASSED**

Mr. Perry questioned the authenticity of the signature on Mrs. Yenter's request for a leave of absence. Dr. Solek stated Mrs. Medling had verified the signature.

MOTION: Perry, Mordecai; to approve the Consent Agenda item 2.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT
MOTION PASSED**

- B. **MOTION:** Gionta, Herden; to approve a new five-year contract between the East Haddam Board of Education and Nichols Bus Service, Inc. as recommended by the Transportation Subcommittee.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT
MOTION PASSED**

MOTION: Fiala, Gionta; to enter into Executive Session for purposes of personnel and negotiations at 9:15 p.m.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT
MOTION PASSED**

The Board returned to Regular Session at 9:31 p.m.

MOTION: Fiala, Taylor; to approve the 2011-12 East Haddam School District's retirement proposal.

FAVOR (6): Apostoleris, Taylor, Mordecai, Fiala, Gionta, Perry
OPPOSED (1): Herden
ABSTENTIONS (0)
ABSENT (1): Pear
MOTION PASSED

MOTION: Mordecai, Fiala; to adjourn at 9:32 p.m.

FAVOR: ALL PRESENT
MOTION PASSED

Respectfully submitted,

Bryan Perry
Secretary