

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENWICH BOARD OF EDUCATION

DATE: April 3, 2008, 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: Havemeyer Building

PRESENT:

Board: Mrs. Nancy Weissler, Chairman
Mrs. Leslie Moriarty, Vice Chairman
Mr. Steven B. Anderson, Secretary
Mr. Michael Bodson
Mr. Jonathan Cohen
Mrs. Marianna Ponns Cohen
Dr. Susan S. Ellis
Ms. Natalie Queen

Administration:

Dr. Betty J. Sternberg, Superintendent of Schools
Mrs. Kathleen Greider, Deputy Superintendent
Dr. Susan Wallerstein, Asst. Superintendent, Business

Operations

Mr. John Curtin, Asst. Superintendent
Mr. Chris Winters, Director, Curriculum & Professional Learning
Ms. Kim Eves, Director, Communications

Other:

Mrs. Julie Faryniarz, Mrs. Sue Rogers, Mrs. Kristin Kratky, PTA Council; Mrs. Cathy Delehanty, GEA; Mrs. Rose Furano, Mrs. Dawn Nethercott, Hamilton Avenue School; Mrs. Sally Young, Old Greenwich School; Mr. Jason Foster, Western Middle School; Mrs. Paige Davis, Greenwich High School; Mrs. Rosa Fini Sullivan, Mrs. Paula Bleakley, Parkway School; Mrs. Terri Ricci, International School at Dundee, representatives from Greenwich Time, Greenwich Post and Greenwich Citizen and other members of the public. An attendance list is on file in the Board of Education office.

The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Weissler, Chairman at 7:02 p.m.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Cohen and seconded by Mrs. Moriarty to accept the revised Agenda.

1. **Update on Hamilton Avenue Schedule of Completion and Current Relocation Plan**

Mr. Bodson began the discussion of the Hamilton Avenue Schedule of Completion, advising that there was a meeting this week at Hamilton Avenue School and significant progress has been made on the interior work. They are working on the garage leak and the expectation is that it will be solved shortly. They are also working on the steel panels on the outside of the building, but advise that the building is currently watertight and the installation of the steel panels will not be a problem. Regarding the air floor, steps are being worked on to get Town sign-off. It is doubtful that the target the builder has set for the end of May will be met. Progress is continuing and the Building Committee continues to believe that a time frame of June/July is still very reasonable. Staffing levels are currently 60-70 men during the week and 20 on Saturdays.

Dr. Sternberg provided an update on the Hamilton Avenue student relocation. She discussed the information update sheet, bus stops, and the possible relocation of crossing guards. All of these items are being worked on. The Administration is working on a weekly communication vehicle for the Hamilton Avenue community and making sure that the bus company provides proper signage.

Mrs. Moriarty gave a status report regarding the work of the Advisory Committee on Facilities. There is a meeting planned with First Selectman Peter Tesei next Friday to try to make a decision regarding the viability of Western Greenwich Civic Center. At this point, they are investigating the number of classrooms that can be generated in that building. Regarding new modulars, estimates are due to the committee by next Monday night from Turner Construction. Estimates are in the neighborhood of \$3.7 million to replace the modulars with a delivery time of 20 weeks.

All current options were discussed.

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Moriarty and seconded by Mr. Bodson to remove Item 6 (Glenville moves to WGCC and Hamilton Ave. moves to Glenville) from the list of possible relocation options.

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Moriarty and seconded by Mr. Anderson to remove Item 19 (Glenville placed by grade levels in other schools) from the list of possible relocation options.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

It was decided that the full Board will meet on Friday, April 11th at 3:00 p.m. for further discussion on this topic.

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Moriarty and seconded by Mrs. Ponns Cohen to have the Board of Education hire Navigant Consultants to determine the causes and contributing factors to the mold at the Hamilton Avenue modulars. The amount of the contract will be a maximum of \$50,000.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mrs. Weissler to move Item 4 to be discussed now.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

4. **Discussion and Possible Action on Adjustment to 2007-2008 School Calendar**

Dr. Sternberg reviewed the status of the request to the State Commissioner of Education to excuse the time lost by Hamilton Avenue students due to their school closing. Since our school year contains 182 days, instead of the mandated 180 days, the decision was made to have Hamilton Avenue make up one day this year. In conjunction with next year's 182 day schedule, this will satisfy the State requirement. She advised that there would be some special activities/celebration taking place for the Hamilton Avenue school on that day.

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Moriarty and seconded by Mr. Anderson to change the 2007-2008 calendar to indicate that June 18th would be the last day for students, June 19th would be the last day for Hamilton Avenue students, and graduation will be on June 18th.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

3. **Discussion of PPS Report**

Mrs. Forde, Director of PPS, presented an update on the District's Special Education program, including demographics, trends, Excess Costs reimbursement, No Child Left Behind, evaluations and eligibility, and litigation. Extensive discussion was largely related to excess costs being a problem and their impact on the budget, litigation, settlements, IDEA mandated testing of private school students, OT/PT staffing needs, the Gold report, and the service delivery model. Mrs. Forde advised that there will be a Special Education forum on May 22nd to gather input from people in the community.

5. Discussion on Monitoring Report E-040, Effective Learning Environment

Mrs. Greider, Deputy Superintendent, presented this report addressing instructional management. Topics covered included monitoring classroom instruction, school leadership, electronic media and Internet, parental involvement and information, SIT review team, the pilot of the new elementary report card, exploration of a parental electronic notification system, edited class size procedures, the need to be consistent in using either caps or guidelines, racial balance, and breakthrough coaching.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Cohen and seconded by Mrs. Moriarty to extend the meeting by 20 minutes.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Bodson and seconded by Dr. Ellis to extend the meeting by 15 minutes.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed

MOTION CARRIED

6. Discussion of Monitoring Report E-004, Graduation Requirements

Mr. Curtin led a discussion on the Graduation Requirements Monitoring Report. Specific Board questions focused on the Bridge to Algebra course at the high school and the increased number of courses that students are taking in 2007 compared to 2000.

7. Discussion of Improvements to Budget Process

Dr. Wallerstein discussed the budget process and the main focus areas of looking at three years' worth of budgets at a time (retrospectively, current and prospectively), the ability to prioritize questions and feedback and an increased attention to variances. Additional questions revolved around the collection of comments on budget improvement from the Board in time for the May 1st

meeting, and understanding and reviewing what we are changing. The Board will review this item again at their May 1st Work Session.

MOTION: It was moved by Ms. Queen and seconded by Mrs. Ponns Cohen to extend the meeting by five minutes.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed

MOTION CARRIED

8. Agenda Planning

A suggestion was made to hold a Saturday or extra session to discuss the budget. There was no support for this from the rest of the Board.

It was decided that the budget discussion would take place at the May 1st Board Work Session and we would start at 6:00 p.m. to allow time to include the discussion.

The Community Forum on Special Education will be held on May 22nd, immediately preceding the May Board Meeting at North Street School.

There will be a Board Work Session on April 11th at 3:00 p.m. to discuss and possibly take action on relocation options.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven B. Anderson
Secretary