

REGULAR MEETING OF THE GREENWICH BOARD OF EDUCATION

DATE: December 20, 2007, 7:06 p.m.

PLACE: Greenwich High School

PRESENT:

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

Administration:

Dr. Betty J. Sternberg, Superintendent of Schools
Mrs. Kathleen Greider, Deputy Superintendent
Dr. Susan Wallerstein, Asst. Superintendent
Mr. John Curtin, Asst. Superintendent
Ms. Mary P. Forde, Director, Pupil Personnel Services
Ms. Kim Eves, Director, Communications
Mr. Richard Calcavecchio, Director, Budget & Systems
Mr. Anthony Byrne, Director, Facilities
Mr. Christopher Winters, Director, Curriculum, Instruction
and Professional Learning

Other:

Mrs. Julie Faryniarz, Mrs. Sue Rogers, PTA Council; Mrs. Cathy Delehanty, GEA; Mr. Al Capasso, GHS Headmaster, Mr. Gus Lindine, GHS Athletic Director; Mrs. Genevieve Krob, Mrs. Debbie Finkelstein, FHSPA; Ms. Dawn Nethercott, Ms. Rose Furano, Hamilton Avenue PTA Co-Presidents; Mr. Alex Capozza, Hamilton Avenue PTA; Ms. Alicia Budkins, Glenville Co-President; Mr. Tom Conelias; Ms. Debbie Castleman, Parkway PTA; Mr. Robert Brady, RTM Education Committee; Mrs. Paige Davis; Mrs. Gerri Fleming; Mrs. Anna Saras; Mr. Andy Shaw, Greenwich Time; Mr. Ken Borsuk, Greenwich Post; Ms. Anne Semmes, Greenwich Citizen and various members of the community. An attendance list is on file in the Superintendent's Office.

The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Weissler, Chairman at 7:06 p.m.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Dr. Ellis to accept the Agenda.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: It was moved by Dr. Ellis and seconded by Mrs. Ponns Cohen to adjourn to a reception at 7:23 p.m.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC HEARING

Mrs. Julie Faryniarz, PTA Council President, commented on the holiday concerts she attended and the enthusiasm from the students which tied into her comments on the auditorium and music program. She urged the Board to keep the future of the Havemeyer Building separate from the high school project to ensure the needs of the student population.

Completion of Hamilton Avenue School remains a priority for the PTA Council and Council will continue to support the Superintendent and the BOE when meeting with the building committees. There is a strong desire to complete the Hamilton Avenue project and start Glenville by this summer.

The Council thanked the administrators for the many hours devoted to preparing this year's budget and for answering the budget questions. It also supports the general distribution of resources among the schools and understands that different funding levels are necessary to target specific areas of educational enrichment.

The Council also expressed concern regarding the draft versions of the school calendar and CMT preparation time prior to scheduled testing period.

Ms. Cathy Delehanty, GEA President commented on the need for child care in Greenwich as an incentive regarding attracting and retaining teachers. GEA supports the use of Parkway School. Although it is not a central location it will serve as a pilot program and she asks the BOE for its full support. The program is designed to be self-sustaining with funds being raised for start-up costs and contributions from GOSA and GEA.

She mentioned their concerns regarding dropping to 180 days from 182 in the school calendar. The teachers want the calendar to stay at 182 days to help complete the curriculum.

AGENDA ITEMS

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Moriarty and seconded by Mr. Cohen to limit the time for speakers to two minutes each.

VOTE: 8 favor, none opposed **MOTION CARRIED**

Mrs. Genevieve Krob Co-Chair of Friends for High School Performing Arts stated that an online petition to their website was added and has picked up enough resident signatures to cross the 4,000 mark in favor of an enlarged high school auditorium.

Mrs. Alicia Budkins Co-President of Glenville PTA. Urged the Board to keep the Glenville school community together by adding additional modular facilities at WMS if needed. She requested that all options make it possible for renovations to begin at Glenville on July 1, 2008.

Mrs. Anna Saras Parkway parent, spoke on the budget. She stated that her questions were not answered although she submitted them in a timely fashion. Also commented on the budget book and said it does not address all the students, especially those struggling.

NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Aaron Hull Social Studies Teacher at GHS. Spoke in support of the Child Care Center. Thanked the Board for approving the year-long A.P. U.S. Government &

Politics Class. Also informed the Board of the “We the People Program” Competition; for the first time Greenwich High School will represent the State of Connecticut when they compete at the Nationals.

- Ms. Susie Ponce** Hamilton Avenue School Parent. Concerned about the nationwide epidemic of childhood obesity and urged the Board not to reduce the Physical Education classes at the school from their current levels.
- Mrs. Paige Davis** Thanked the Administration for initiating a dialogue with parents on the topic of Reading. Expressed a desire to have the Board address Reading with a research-based system.
- Mrs. Gerri Fleming** Cos Cob Parent. Would like the Board to consider bringing in the Haskins Lab to engage GPS on our Reading system.
- Ms. Dawn Nethercott and Ms. Rose Furano** Hamilton Avenue PTA Co-Presidents. Emphasized the importance of the P.E. magnet program. Asked that P.E. be kept at current levels.
- Ms. Alex Capozza** Hamilton Avenue Multicultural Liaison. Supported the current P.E. program, especially for parents who do not have the ability to send their children to outside facilities.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT/SHARING INFORMATION

Mr. Bodson reported that the Hamilton Avenue Building Committee will be going to the BET and RTM for an additional funding in the amount of \$550,000. The appropriation is needed to continue support from the architect, project manager and URS. Because of the delay, the contingency built in was not enough. Also, the building inspection is due any day and heat is expected to come on next week so that interior work can commence. After some discussion regarding the fuel bill with Worth Construction, the Building

Committee agreed to pay for the fuel. URS estimated a completion date of May 2008 instead of the projected date by Worth of March 2008.

Mr. Bodson also reported that the Glenville bids are in and are being reviewed. The Committee has a goal set for a 7/1/08 construction start date.

Mr. Anderson reported that the Negotiation Team continues contract negotiations with little LIUNA (paraprofessionals & GHS security staff). The team has one more scheduled mediation session on January 28th.

Mrs. Weissler thanked the administration and staff for their hard work this year and for the continued focus on the academic achievement of all students. She also reported that she will serve in an ex-officio capacity on the C.I.P. committee and will represent the Board of Education. She and Mrs. Moriarty met with two members of the BET Budget Committee to discuss a preliminary review of the financial plan underlining the Town's 15-year Capital Plan. Mrs. Weissler also attended the public hearing of the Plan of Conservation and Development that focuses on community facilities and infrastructure.

Dr. Sternberg reported receiving official written notification from the Commissioner of Education regarding the State Board's vote on the diversity plan. Copies were given to Board Members. She also acknowledged the tremendous amount of work that went into this month's performances by our youngsters in the music program. Dr. Sternberg also expressed her appreciation to the staff for their hard work in addressing approximately 263 questions from the Board during this budget session.

BOARD ACTION ITEMS

a. Action on Approval of the 2008-09 Board of Education Budget

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Cohen and seconded by Mr. Bodson to approve the 2008-2009 Board of Education Budget in the amount of \$125,179,096 and the Food Services Budget in the amount of \$4,093,497.

Superintendent Dr. Sternberg opened the discussion by explaining our sources of funding based on 2006-07 numbers. Ninety-five percent of our budget is from Greenwich sources and 5.5% comes from other sources: 2.5% from State and Federal grants; 1.3% from Special Education reimbursement; 1% from cash donations; .2% from rental revenue; .4% from interim appropriations; .1% from mini-grants and donations plus a small percentage from other sources.

Indicated allocation of the 2008-2009 Budget by Location was explained by Dr. Wallerstein in detail.

- 74.1% for Schools
- 21.2% for Shared Services
- 3.2% for District Leadership and Operations
- 1.5% for Pre-School

The 2008-2009 pie chart concerning the Shared Services Budget is allocated as follows:

- 85.4% Services to Schools
- 14.6% Administration Overhead/Staffing

Mr. Curtin then described the difference in expenditures by explaining the Elementary Per-Pupil Allocation Chart. The schools that have the most factors driving costs up determine where the funds are allocated. Based on where the student need is, additional staff is assigned.

MOTION TO AMEND:

After initial discussion and clarification, it was moved by Mrs. Moriarty and seconded by Mr. Bodson to reduce the budget by \$189,250 per the Superintendent's recommendations as detailed on the cover page of the December 20, 2007 Budget Action Request (attached):

VOTE: 7 in favor,
1 abstained (Mrs. Ponns Cohen)

MOTION CARRIED

Mrs. Weissler stated the budget is now at \$124,989,846, which is within the BET adjusted guideline.

MOTION TO AMEND:

It was moved by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Bodson to increase the budget by \$48,500 in the Research and Evaluation area to be used for the initialization of a Centralized Residency Verification process.

Discussion followed. Mr. Anderson stated having a centralized residency verification process take place before a student is allowed to register for school will help to provide a more consistent role of application, accountability and responsibility as compared to our current decentralized school-by-school process. It would allow the Administration and Board to see trends in concerned areas quicker and act accordingly. Once this is implemented in 2008-2009, he suggested expanding the program the following year and have students re-verify residency eligibility at the fourth, seventh and tenth grade levels.

He also encouraged the administration to use existing resources to begin implementation before July 1, 2008 if possible

MOTION TO SUBSTITUTE:

Mrs. Ponns Cohen moved to substitute the pending Motion to Amend on Centralized Residency Verification with a written proposal (Ponns Cohen Motion to Substitute attached).

Discussion on the Motion to Amend and then the Motion to Substitute followed. The full Board was polled on their thoughts and consensus was that the Administration's proposal (as expressed on pages 20-21 of the December 20, 2007 Budget Action Request, pages attached) was generally consistent with their thoughts, although consensus was to also plan to establish in 2009-2010 a Central Residency Re-Verification for all students at various grade levels (for example: Grades 4, 7 and 10)

MOTION TO SUBSTITUTE:

Mrs. Ponns Cohen withdrew her substitute motion to Mr. Anderson's Motion to Amend.

MOTION TO AMEND:

Mrs. Moriarty moved and it was seconded by Ms. Queen to amend Mr. Anderson's amendment to indicate that the \$48,500 would be to cover the items referenced in the proposal for Centralized Residency Verification on pages 20 and 21 in our budget document of December 20, 2007 (attached).

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed AMENDMENT CARRIED

VOTE on Mr. Anderson's Amendment (as amended) to the budget as amended.

8 in favor, none opposed AMENDMENT CARRIED

AMENDMENT: It was moved by Mr. Bodson and seconded by Dr. Ellis to decrease the budget with a series of reductions listed below in the amount of \$48,500.

- | | |
|---------|--|
| \$7,500 | Decrease number of university interns who serve as school substitutes by one |
| 5,000 | Reduce BOE use of consultants |
| 10,000 | Reduce the scope of the childcare consultant's work |
| 3,350 | Reduce the scope of the GPS brochure |

10,000	Explore alternatives to settlements (in district resource/services)
10,000	Reduce the scope of the secondary review
<u>2,650</u>	Reduce the scope of the magnet consultant's work
48,500	

The Board sought clarification that these reductions came from the Administration and verified that the Administration believes that all of the work indicated to be completed can still be done. Dr. Sternberg assured them that it can be done.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed AMENDMENT CARRIED

Mrs. Weissler stated that this leaves the Board of Education Budget at \$124,989,846.

VOTE : In favor of the Board of Education Budget as amended at \$124,989,846 and the Food Services Budget at \$4,093,490

7 in favor, 1 opposed (Mrs. Ponns Cohen) MOTION CARRIED

Mrs. Ponns Cohen felt that the budget does not show how the schools and their programs are funded. She also felt that the budget does not provide for equitable allocation of resources among schools.

Mrs. Weissler summarized the budget process by stating that she believes it provides the funding necessary to comply with Board policy “to deliver an excellent education to all Greenwich students at a reasonable cost to the taxpayer.” Per pupil costs reflect the commitment to ensuring that all students across the spectrum can achieve whether through advanced learning, special education, English language learning or intensive reading programs. She believes it is a fair and thoughtful budget that provides funding necessary to support academic achievement for all of our students in a fiscally responsible manner.

Dr. Sternberg stated she felt confident in November when the Administration presented a fiscally sound budget to the Board that fell within the BET guidelines and most importantly addressed the educational needs of all students in Greenwich; those who achieved at advanced levels, those who were in the middle and those whose achievement must be significantly accelerated. The Administration is excited about this detailed budget that will support all learners.

Mrs. Weissler said one of the Board's goals is to increase communication with the public and she will be issuing a press release to summarize the Board's vote and reflect on comments made this evening. She stated that the District will have a post-mortem on the

budget as it did last year. The Board is committed to continuous improvement and she asked Dr. Wallerstein to send the Board a few questions to frame that process. She also asked for Board comments to be sent to Dr. Wallerstein by the end of January.

b. Approval of Greenwich High School Auditorium/Music Educational Specifications.

MOTION: It was moved by Dr. Ellis and seconded by Mrs. Ponns Cohen to approve the Educational Specifications and to set in place the approval process to ask for a Building Committee to be established by the Board of Selectman at the appropriate time.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

c. Discussion of Hamilton Avenue School Schedule of Completion and Possible Action on Glenville School Relocation Options.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Bodson and seconded by Mr. Anderson to accept the possible action on Glenville School Relocation Options.

Concern was expressed regarding the capacity of the modulars for the Glenville student population. The Board has requested the Administration to prepare a rough schedule of what a school day will look like with regards to the limited space in the modulars. Dr. Wallerstein advised the Board that a transition committee has already been formed and is working on these areas.

MOTION TO POSTPONE:

Following discussion it was moved by Mrs. Weissler and seconded by Mr. Bodson to postpone this item for reconsideration in January.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

d. Approval of Monitoring Report E-003 Academic Mastery – Writing

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Moriarty and seconded by Mrs. Weissler to approve the E-003 Monitoring Report on Writing.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

e. **Action on School Calendar for 2009-2010**

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Moriarty and seconded by Mr. Cohen to accept Draft #2 of the 2009-2010 school calendar.

Polling the Board showed that they favored Draft #2 after moving the Spring Recess to the week of April 12th and moving the last day for students to June 29.

MOTION: To accept Draft 2 of the 2009-2010 school calendar with the abovementioned changes.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

f. **Action on Revision to Board Meeting Calendar for 2007-2008**

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Cohen to approve the Revised Board Meeting Calendar for 2007-2008.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

g. **Action on Board Meeting Calendar for 2008-2009**

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Cohen and seconded by Mrs. Moriarty to approve the Board Meeting calendar for 2008-2009.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

h. **Action on Transfers of \$10,000 or More**

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Bodson and seconded by Ms. Queen to approve the budget appropriation transfers.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

i. **Approval of Monthly Financial Report**

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Bodson and seconded by Mr. Cohen to accept the financial statements for the period ending 11/30/07.

A question was raised regarding an increase in Student Activities of approximately \$200,000. Although Mr. Calcavecchio states that it is probably due to high school fall sports playoff and tournament expenses; he is investigating further. He was asked to report his findings to the Board at a later date.

A brief discussion centered on electricity consumption resulting in efficiency rebates of approximately \$30,000 from CL&P that will be given to us as a credit on a bill.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed **MOTION CARRIED**

BOARD CONSENT AGENDA

- a. **Approval of Minutes of November 20, November 29, November 30, December 4 and December 6, 2007**
- b. **Approval of Revision to 2008-2009 Budget Limitations**
- c. **Action on Revision to Fifteen Year Capital Plan**

MOTION: It was moved by Dr. Ellis and seconded by Mrs. Moriarty to approve the following on the Board Consent Agenda:

Approval of Minutes of November 20, November 29, November 30 (2) *with technical adjustment to send Dr. Ellis a copy of Decision omitted from her November 30 minutes*, December 4 and December 6, 2007;

Approval of Revision to 2008-2009 Budget Limitations; and

Action on Revision to the Fifteen Year Capital Plan.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed **MOTION CARRIED**

BOARD OPERATIONS PLANNING

a. Agenda Planning – Discussion of 2007-2008 Agenda Plan

Add the following to the January 24, 2008 Agenda:

1. Bring back for discussion and possible action **the Hamilton Avenue School Schedule of Completion and Possible Action on Glenville School Relocation Options** item including a rough schedule of what a school day looks like as well as providing a timeframe to respond to various parent concerns.
2. Mrs. Ponns Cohen would like to add to the Agenda an item regarding discussion and possible action on the Agreement of the Interdistrict Environmental School in Stamford. An agreement was signed by Dr. Leverett, former Superintendent of Schools, in June, 2004 committing Greenwich to participate in the Stamford Interdistrict Magnet School Program. According to minutes reviewed by Mrs. Ponns Cohen, it was not approved by the Board.

b. Meeting Debriefing

There was no discussion.

Upon motion duly made by Mrs. Moriarty and seconded by Dr. Ellis, the meeting was adjourned at 9:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Anderson
Secretary