

REGULAR MEETING OF THE GREENWICH BOARD OF EDUCATION

TIME: December 14, 2006, 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: Greenwich High School

PRESENT:

Board: Mrs. Colleen Giambo, Chairman
Mrs. Leslie B. Moriarty, Vice Chairman
Mrs. Nancy Weissler, Secretary
Mr. Steven B. Anderson
Mr. Michael C. Bodson
Dr. Susan S. Ellis
Ms. Virginia L. Gwynn
Mr. William G. Kelly
Mrs. Nancy Weissler

Administration:

Dr. Betty J. Sternberg, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Mary Capwell, Deputy Superintendent
Mr. John P. Curtin, Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Susan O. Wallerstein, Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Ellen Flanagan, Director of Human Resources
Mr. Anthony Byrne, Director of Facilities
Mr. Richard Calcavecchio, Director of Budget
Ms. Mary P. Forde, Director, Pupil Personnel Services
Ms. Kim Eves, Director of Communications

Other:

Mrs. Janice Richards, President, Mrs. Anne Miller, Mrs. L. B. Savitz, Mrs. Nancy Chapin, PTA Council; Mrs. Laura O'Connor, Mrs. Darlene Angotto, Mrs. Carol Chila, Mr. Noel Jameson, Mrs. Damaris Rau, Mr. & Mrs. Vincent DeMartis, Dr. & Mrs. James Brunetti, Mrs. Louise Bavis, Hamilton Avenue School; Mrs. Cathy Delehanty, GEA; Mr. Jim Himes, Mr. Larry Simon, BET; Mr. Tom Conelias, Mr. Bob Tuthill, Mr. Randall Huffman, Mr. Bob Brady, Mr. Bob Lardon, RTM; Mr. Nino Sechi; Mr. Bill Robins, Mrs. Stacy Loveless, ALP; and representatives from Greenwich Time and Greenwich Citizen. An attendance list is on file in the Superintendent's Office.

The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Giambo, Chairman, at 7:05 p.m.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Moriarty and seconded by Mr. Kelly to nominate Mrs. Colleen Giambo as Chairman of the Board and that the secretary cast one ballot indicating the vote of all Board Members.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: It was moved by Ms. Gwynn and seconded by Dr. Ellis to nominate Mrs. Leslie Moriarty as Vice Chairman of the Board and that the secretary cast one ballot indicating the vote of all Board Members.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Kelly to nominate Mrs. Nancy Weissler as Secretary of the Board and that the secretary cast one ballot indicating the vote of all Board Members.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Dr. Ellis to adjourn to reception at 7:20 p.m.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Bodson and seconded by Mr. Kelly to return to conduct the business meeting at 7:46 p.m.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC HEARING

The following people spoke at the Public Hearing:

Mrs. Janice Richards, PTA Council President, expressed PTAC's concern about the First Selectman's comments in Wednesday's **Greenwich Time** regarding the possibility of school closings and redistricting. PTAC believes that any decision regarding the issues of declining enrollment and racial balance require a comprehensive discussion and review among the school community. She acknowledged the complex financial and academic implications of this review and offered PTAC's support to work with the Administration on such a review. She supports Option 2 (\$119.9 MM) of the proposed budget, even though it exceeds the BET guidelines. She addressed the Success System

and the need to provide a brief explanation as to how the rubric works for the categories marked intervention through vision.

Mrs. Cathy Delehanty, GEA President, indicated the support of the GEA for hard caps on class size. She requested, in reviewing the 2008-2009 school calendar, that the Board consider making December 23rd a half day so that teachers can make travel plans.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Anderson, to limit the time for each speaker to two minutes.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

Mrs. Anne Pfetsch, Co-President of the North Mianus PTA, spoke in support of reduced class size. She provided the Board Secretary with a petition signed by approximately 110 residents supporting the reduced class size.

Mr. Toufic Wakim, a North Mianus parent, spoke in support of reduced class size.

Mrs. Darlane Angotto, a teacher at Hamilton Avenue School, spoke in support of the budget for Hamilton Avenue School and reduced class size.

Ms. Faith Sweeney, a teacher at Hamilton Avenue School, spoke in support of the budget and reduced class size.

Mr. Bob Tuthill, Chairman of RTM District 3, spoke to support the proposed expansion of the preschool program at Hamilton Avenue School.

Mr. Vincent DeMartis, a Hamilton Avenue parent, expressed his support for Hamilton Avenue School's proposed budget.

Mr. Tom Conelias spoke on the need for a K-1 class size cap at 15 students to address the achievement gap at Hamilton Avenue School. He stressed his support for the proposed preschool program.

Ms. Alex Capozza, a Hamilton Avenue parent, expressed her support for the Hamilton Avenue School budget and a class size cap of 15.

Mrs. Laura Ryan, a Hamilton Avenue parent, expressed her satisfaction with the preschool program and smaller class sizes.

Mrs. Kathy Fiorito-Brunetti, a Hamilton Avenue parent, spoke in favor of smaller class sizes and the Hamilton Avenue School budget.

Mr. Bill Bambrick, discussed safe passage to school at ISD and the McArthur Drive area specifically. He showed photographs of a trailer parked at the entrance to the school, obstructing the view of incoming and outgoing cars, thereby posing a potential hazard to children en route to school.

Mrs. Jen Kannengeiser described the Girls, Inc. program

BOARD DEVELOPMENT/SHARING INFORMATION

Reports of Officers, Committees, Liaisons, and Superintendent

Mr. Bodson reported that the Glenville project is on schedule. The committee is working on final development plans. It has hired Turner Construction for construction management. He also reported that the Hamilton Avenue construction is approximately one month behind schedule, but they expect to get the project back on schedule.

Ms. Gwynn noted that the Pedestrian Safety Committee had recently issued its report, which includes a review of safe routes to schools. She would like the Board to consider supporting the Mallard Drive sidewalk project at the January Board Meeting.

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Moriarty and seconded by Dr. Ellis to revise the agenda to include consideration of an interim appropriation for architectural and engineering services and to request the full amount for all projects approved by the Capital Improvement committee.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

Mrs. Giambo thanked Mrs. Mary Capwell for her time and dedication to the district over the past several years. Mrs. Giambo advised that in light of the elections this evening, Mrs. Weissler would be added to the Executive Committee. She also advised that there would be a new Community Engagement Committee formed, which would be composed of Mrs. Weissler, Dr. Ellis and Mr. Bodson, to solicit feedback from the community on the issues of racial balance, declining enrollment, and facility utilization. She will advise on assignments for other committees at a future meeting.

She advised the Board about ongoing meetings with the BET regarding the reporting of budget transfers among Major Object Codes of the Board of Education. She explained that a six month trial is beginning during which budget transfers among Major Object Codes that are greater than \$10,000 will be reported to the BET Budget Committee, which then has five days to review and approve them. We will be reviewing this process over the next few months to determine the feasibility and costs associated with it.

Dr. Sternberg began her presentation with a thank you to Mrs. Mary Capwell, who is retiring, for her service to the Greenwich Public Schools as Deputy Superintendent and for her assistance in helping her during her transition to the District. She advised the Board that our biggest upcoming challenge is to develop an effective strategy for

declining enrollment, racial balance and facility utilization. A special meeting of the Board has been scheduled for Thursday, January 18th at 7:00 p.m. in the Media Center at Greenwich High School for initial discussions of these issues.

BOARD ACTION ITEMS

a. Actions on 2007-2008 budget

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Moriarty and seconded by Ms. Gwynn to approve the 2007-2008 Board of Education budget of \$119,787,607.

As part of the budget deliberations, there was a lengthy discussion of the proposed merits of a cap versus a guideline of 15 students for Hamilton Avenue School’s K-1 classes. It was agreed that it is the Board’s responsibility to set the cap. Mrs. Capwell recommended that the Board adopt a cap, as opposed to a flexible guideline, for the following reasons: 1) it minimizes the amount of unproductive Administrative time that can be required for negotiations about guidelines; 2) caps have been used successfully in other districts; and 3) magnet schools can manage voluntary enrollment to optimize class sizes. It was also discussed and agreed that the decision as to how Hamilton Avenue School should adjust its programs for the proposed \$50,000 reduction in its magnet budget should reside with the Administration and Magnet Committee.

A Board member requested that the Administration review during the course of the next year those classes at Greenwich High School that fall below the recommended minimum size of 15 students to determine whether there are potential cost savings. Another Board member suggested that we house our two alternative programs, which are currently in rented space, in school facilities to save on rental expense.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Moriarty and seconded by Ms. Gwynn to approve the 2007-2008 Food Services Budget.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

b. Action on Final Fifteen Year Capital Plan

The Board engaged in a lengthy discussion regarding the fifteen year capital plan, including a discussion about the music facility at the high school, and the costs of architectural and engineering services related to the plan.

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Moriarty and seconded by Mrs. Weissler to authorize the Superintendent to seek an interim capital appropriation in the

amount of \$465,850 for architectural and engineering services related to anticipated 2007-2008 capital projects.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Bodson and seconded by Ms. Gwynn to approve the 15 Year Capital Plan in total, acknowledging that it includes an Interim Appropriation of \$465,850 which will be funded in this current fiscal year, and the funding requested for the music facility feasibility study is \$100,000.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

c. Approval of Month End Financial Report – November 30, 2006

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Dr. Ellis to approve the Month End Financial Report – November 30, 2006.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mrs. Moriarty to request an Interim Appropriation to cover the costs of electricity.

The Board indicated to the Administration that it would be more appropriate to submit an interim appropriation for electricity costs after the amount of the request has been determined.

VOTE: 0 in favor, all opposed MOTION FAILED

d. Approval of Transfers Exceeding \$10,000

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mrs. Weissler to approve the Transfers Exceeding \$10,000.

It was noted that new transfers over \$10,000 will require BET approval.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

e. Action on Board Meeting Calendar for 2007-2008

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

After discussion, it was decided that the Board would like to have an additional budget meeting included in the calendar. The adjustment will be made and the calendar will be brought back to the January Meeting.

MOTION WITHDRAWN

f. Approval of the 2008-2009 School Calendar

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Dr. Ellis to approve the 2008-2009 School Calendar.

After discussion, and in light of the request of Mrs. Delehanty for a half day on December 23rd, this item was tabled until the January Meeting to enable Administration to review past practices.

MOTION WITHDRAWN

g. Action on Submittal of Hamilton Avenue School Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment Plans to State Department of Education.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mrs. Weissler to approve the submission of Hamilton Avenue School Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment Plans to the State Department of Education.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Discussion of Formation of Building Committee for the New Havemeyer Administrative Offices

Mrs. Giambo advised that there has been some discussion about whether or not a building committee of the Board is required or advisable for this project. She also advised that Mr. Lash, First Selectman, had suggested that the Board of Education consider moving into the Senior Center; and Mrs. Giambo wanted to know how the Board feels about that possibility. In discussion, Board members generally supported this recommendation. It was decided that this item should be brought back to the Board when a clearer understanding of the makeup and necessity for this committee was determined.

b. Discussion of Revised Success System-Overview and Achievement Arena

In reviewing the revised Success System for Student Achievement, the Board raised the following questions and issues:

- Given that there have been questions raised in academic circles about the consistency and validity of the SAT Writing Test, should it be included as one of the indicators?
- Should a combination of CAPT scores be included instead? Dr. Sternberg indicated that research has shown that CAPT scores correlate with success in college.
- Is there a way to eventually incorporate measurements of academic achievement in other disciplines (e.g., social studies, world languages, art, and music), for which we do not currently have standardized national or state tests against which to benchmark?
- How can we incorporate academic growth measures in the Success System for this arena? Dr. Sternberg indicated that the State will be providing comparative information for student academic growth on the CMTs for this year's tests.
- The Board has strived to increase student participation in AP courses. How do we select an indicator that incorporates both growth and a reasonable standard of performance on the AP tests?

MOTION: It was moved by Mrs. Moriarty and seconded by Mrs. Weissler to extend the time of the meeting until 10:30 p.m.

VOTE: 6 in favor, Dr. Ellis abstained and
Mr. Kelly against

MOTION CARRIED

The Board discussed the appropriate level for the “vision” targets for each indicator (which are intended to represent where the District would like to be in the next three to five years) and raised the following points:

- To the extent that the targets are set in reference to current DRG A levels, are these too low—given that the DRG A districts are likely to continue to improve their performance in the next three to five years?
- How do we set the targets high enough to challenge the District and reflect academic excellence for all students that are, at the same time, realistic?

The Success System will be reviewed, revised and brought back to the Board at the January meeting.

c. Review of the Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) Report

The Board posed the following questions regarding the PPS Report:

- There seems to be a lot of staff development on specific strategic initiatives. What percentage of teachers are participating and how long will this training take?
- What is the scope of the proposed annual report on Special Education, which will come to the Board this April? Will it address our progress on issues identified in the MGT Report? What is the ratio of aides to students? It was explained that the report would include data and analysis of the following: IEP mastery, CMT scores, suspension and expulsion data, and postsecondary plans and activity.
- What is the format for a PPT meeting?

d. Update on the Data Dashboard

Due to time constraints, the presentation on the Data Dashboard was deferred. Board members were encouraged to set up individual meetings to familiarize themselves with the Data Dashboard.

BOARD CONSENT AGENDA

a. Action on Secretary’s Request to Approve Minutes of November 2, November 16, and November 28, 2006.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Dr. Ellis to approve the minutes of November 2, November 16, and November 28, 2006.

VOTE: 8 in favor, none opposed MOTION CARRIED

A Board member requested that Board members provide feedback to the Administration about the recent budget process and recommendations for improvements to it.

Upon motion duly made by Mrs. Weissler and seconded by Dr. Ellis, the meeting was adjourned at 10:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Weissler
Secretary

