

Superintendent – Thomas W. Abraham
Elementary Principal – Bethellen Mannix
High School Principal – Andrew Cook

HARTFORD CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Hartford, New York

Minutes of Regular Board of Education Meeting October 18, 2010

Board Members Present: – President Brian Getty, Vice President Mrs. Janine Thomas, Philip Jessen, Mrs. Beth Steves and Adam Fish

Board Members Absent: – None

Guests: – Mr. Gibson and Donna Cater

1.0 Call to Order – Board of Education President Brian Getty at 7:03 pm

2.0 Prayer – Mr. Getty

3.0 Welcome – Mr. Getty

***3.1 Board of Education Recognition** – By proclamation, the Governor has announced that the week of October 25th will be Board of Education Recognition Week. Since the board will not be meeting that week, each board member will receive a certificate and a small token of appreciation which is a thumb drive for computer use tonight.

3.2 Public to be Heard – The 25th Annual Spud Run was successful – Mr. Jessen presented a check for \$150 to the senior class. Thank you to Ed and Ms. Andrea. Also, Mr. Jessen confirmed that there was a change as to when the Retirement party for Mr. Abraham would be – the new date will be Saturday, May 7, 2011 at the Queensbury Hotel.

4.0 Review and Approval of Minutes

***4.1 Minutes from the September 20, 2010 Regular Board of Education Meeting** – The Board of Education approved the minutes from the September 20th Board of Education Meeting. Motion made by Mrs. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Jessen. Approved 5-0

5.0 Review and Approval of Financial Reports

***5.1 Treasurer's Report**

***5.2 Warrants**

***5.3 Cafeteria Report** – The Board of Education approved the financial reports. Motion made by Mr. Jessen and seconded by Mr. Fish. Approved 5-0

***5.4 Budget Summary** – This summary is presented for you review and inquiry. – No Action Necessary.

6.0 Superintendent's Report

***6.1 Race to the Top** – As the board is aware, New York State was awarded approximately \$755 million by the federal government. The funds were awarded based on New York State's application and outline of proposed educational reforms.

Many people wrongly assumed the funds would be used to offset cuts to education or to help with property tax issues. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

The funds were divided in the following manner: 50% to the state education department, which will use the funds to develop a new set of assessments and to assist in costs associated with curricular reforms; 50% of the funds will go to schools in NY, with 70% of that amount targeted for NYC.

Hartford's share of the race to the top is \$26,330, however, the money will be divided over a four-year period with 5-15% coming in year one, 20-30% in year two, 20-30% in year three and the final 20-30% in year four (contingent upon all requirements being finished at the end of year three). What this breaks down to is \$1,216 to \$3,950 in year one and \$5,266 to \$7,899 in each of the final three years of the project.

In addition, the funds have to be spent per guidelines established by SED. This involves the District hiring of teams to monitor assessments, curriculum and instruction. The commissioner openly admits the amounts allocated to the schools is not enough to meet all of the requirements so the Districts (should they chose to participate) have to pool their funds through the local BOCES, which will hire the required teams. Even with the pooling of funds, it could still be necessary for local districts to include some local funds.

Therefore, you can see, the funds will not help offset cuts in school aid, nor will it help with property tax issues.

6.2 Report on Conference with the Regent and Commissioner – I attended a conference at the Minnowbrook Conference Center located in Blue Mountain Lake, October 3-5. While there were presentations on legal issues facing Districts, the majority of time was dedicated to a meeting with Commissioner Steiner and our Regent, James Dawson.

The Commissioner outlined Race to the Top which I outlined earlier. In addition he talked about the issues surrounding the change in cut scores on the state assessments. Commissioner Steiner stated there seemed to be data indicating that scores on assessments were not accurately reflecting student performance. This led to an exchange between Jim Dawson, our regent, and the Superintendent from Hartford Central School. I challenged Regent Dawson by asking: if the scores being reported in previous years were not accurately reflecting student progress, then the previous commissioner perpetrated a fraud and if true, where was the Board of Regents in their oversight responsibility. No accurate response was forth coming.

There was some discussion regarding the looming deficit in the secondary testing bureau at the State Education Department. The Department is anticipating a \$15 million gap next year. As the regent explained, the testing must go on and someone else will have to pay for the tests – read into this another unfunded mandate for local taxpayers.

There was also another exchange with the regent, when he indicated there are many students entering college that need remediation in order to succeed and this means schools are not doing enough to prepare students for college. I could not let the statement go by so again I challenged the regent on the college process for accepting students and the fact being colleges are accepting more students who in the past would not have gotten into college. He stated with the shrinking demographics of the college aged student, colleges had to dip lower into the pool.

The commissioner also chose to share news that was not new or earth shaking when he indicated students seem to have trouble when they enter middle school; however, he was non-committal on reducing middle school mandates which hindered more appropriate instruction at the middle level.

The Commissioner reiterated an earlier theme that he believes the state should begin the process of instituting an on-line high school, thus allowing students to receive a diploma via the internet.

There was one final exchange with the regent when he indicated he did not understand why students were unsure of a career path even as late as their sophomore year in college, he was asked if that is true then why are eighth graders subjected to developing a career plan. No response to the question.

6.3 Financial Outlook for the State – The financial outlook for the state of New York is bleak, which translates into tough times for school districts. Schools have already lost .65 of one percent of their state aid effective this September and 1.1% reduction in STAR reimbursements effective September as well. Both of these reductions have occurred after budgets were approved and tax levies calculated. It is also anticipated there will be a mid-year reduction in state aid that could be significant.

The race for governor will not bring about a sigh of relief either as both individuals are toting reducing all state agencies by 20%. You can also anticipate a reduction in expense driven aids (that would be BOCES, library books, textbooks and special education formulas) and the implementation of a property tax cap. The next two to three years will be a challenge as we have to implement new curriculum, prepare for new assessments and do it all with less funding from the state while meeting increased costs associated with health insurance (actuaries have calculated that Obama Care will add 5 to 6 percent to the cost of premiums), a double digit increase in TRS and ERS (the latest estimates for ERS call for an 11.9% increase this year and a projected 16.3% for 2011-12) and the usual negotiations with the various employee entities.

In addition, Race to the Top will require the District to negotiate with the Association a set of guidelines for the new evaluation processes that the state agreed to implement.

All of these issues are significant and will create labor relations issues as well as financial issues. The fiscal outlook will require a complete review of programmatic offerings and staffing.

Having said all of that 2011-12 Budgeting will be a challenge, but not undoable.

***6.4 Informational Packet** – There are several items for your review this month.

Item #1 – Legal Newsletter – This is a newsletter from the firm of Girvin and Ferlazzo.

Superintendents received this as part of a packet received during the Minnowbrook Conference.

Item #2 – News Article on Advanced Placement Courses – The Post Star recently published an article on what schools are offering in the way of advanced placement courses. As you can see from the article, Hartford is mentioned.

Item #3 – Revised Graduation Rate for Hartford – The state recently revised graduation rate calculations and as you can see Hartford's rate is significantly above the state benchmark.

Item #4 – School Law Bulletin (2)

Item #5 – Pamphlet from New York State School Boards – Not sure what is in the pamphlet since it is sealed and addressed to board members.

Item #6 – Legal Opinion – This particular opinion is published by the Open Government Bureau. It is only an opinion and is not legally binding. Mr. Freedman tends to tell people what they want to hear.

Item #7 – Employee Forum – This is the monthly newsletter from the Comptroller's Office.

Item #8 – Alert From the State Education Department – This memo outlines the change in Commissioner's Regulations requiring the second language proficiency exam.

Item #9 – Power Point Presentation from Adirondack Area School Boards Dinner – Apparently a Hartford Board member requested a copy of the power point that Jim Dexter used at the AASBA Dinner. He could not remember which board member so in keeping with tradition I have made a copy for all board members.

Item #10 – Legal Notes for Education

Item #11 – Guidelines for Schools regarding Students and Technology – This was presented to superintendents at the Minnowbrook Conference and is a valuable guidelines for schools and administrators.

Item #12 – Guidelines and Policies for Sex Offender Notification – This was also received at the Minnowbrook Conference. I will review our current policy on this topic to insure we are in compliance with all of the regulations (which seem to change daily).

Item #13 – Policy Guidelines for Cell-phone Use by Students and Staff

Item #14 – Concussion Information – At the last board meeting I believe a question was raised about the school's response to student concussions. We do not have a policy governing concussions

nor has the state established legal guidelines/regulations regarding this issue. However, at the Fall Affinity Group Meeting sponsored by Utica National Insurance Company, there was a presentation on concussions and information regarding policy and procedures should a student suffer a concussion. The information came from two different sources: a doctor from Syracuse Medical Center who specializes in concussions and from an official from the New York State Public Schools Athletic Association.

Item #15 – Fiscal Outlook – This is a copy of a power point presentation from the New York State Council of Superintendents. This overview was given to Superintendents who attended the Minnowbrook Conference. It is a clear indication as to what has happened to state aid, what is happening to state aid and by all accounts what will happen to state aid.

6.5 Board of Education Questions, Comments, and/or Concerns – Beth Steves asked why there was a deficit in the yearbook account, maybe there should not be color this year.

7.0 Principals' Reports

7.1 Elementary Report – Mrs. Mannix – Alma Mater is sung by elementary students over the loud speaker every Friday morning. 10/12: 1st Grade Reading Night - see Sue Matthews' write-up. PTA Halloween Dance/Activity afternoon is scheduled for Thursday, October 28th from 2:30-4:30. Tricia Stewart is decorating pumpkins with elementary students one day after school this week. (Thursday, Oct. 21st). 10/15: 4 firefighters gave a fire safety presentation – Pre K-5th grade. Week of 10/18 is National Bus Safety Week: Mark Miller and Connie Knights are doing bus safety presentations for K-5 students this week. Week of 10/25 is Red Ribbon Week: Promoting a Drug-Free Life. Unfortunately, grant money from Safe and Drug Free Schools expired at the end of last school year. Therefore, we are unable to have the Council for Prevention come into our K-5 classes this year. We will still have daily themes promoting living drug-free. 10/5: Open House attendance was okay at the elementary level. Our Harvest Fest planning is well underway for November 22nd. We have many new vendors coming in for student enjoyment and learning. We have 5 Junior Achievement volunteers to start the program. Training was held on October 7th, although volunteers probably will not go into classes until January. JA enhances the Social Studies curriculum by incorporating hands-on activities into each of the 5 lessons. Barbara Miner is doing well and hoping to return to work sometime in November. On Tuesday evening, October 12th, Kerry Babson, first grade teacher, and Sue Matthews, Literacy Specialist, presented the third annual 45-minute parent workshop for first grade parents on "*READING TIPS AND STRATEGIES*." The presentation began with a discussion of how parents get their children involved in a story; and then followed with a short video of how two families develop literacy with their children in daily activities and with read aloud stories. Read aloud tips were then discussed. Reading as a "process" was discussed using an audience participation reading passage about a crocodile. Reading strategies and tips were discussed including prompts on how to help a child when they are stuck on a tricky word. Then, ELEPHANT words, reading words that cannot be sounded out, were shown and ways to learn and retain these words were discussed - salt trays, shaving cream, memory game, flashcards, etc. The workshop ended with parents participating in three different home "center" reading activities in which the parents were given materials and supplies to make these centers at home and use with their children. Books were given to each parent, and raffle prizes were given away throughout the presentation. Home-made goodies were offered for refreshments. Eleven parents attended the workshop. Their comments at the end of the evening were very positive. Many stayed after the presentation to ask questions in regard to their own child's reading. We would like to thank the custodial staff for preparing Mrs. Babson's classroom so quickly upon dismissal and providing the needed chairs. Respectfully Submitted, Sue Matthews and Kerry Babson

7.2 Secondary Report – Mr. Cook – Sunday, October 10th was the Senior Classes' Annual Car Show: thank you for Ms. Stoddard, Donna Petteys, Kim Reynolds, and Duane Flower for all their help organizing and running this event for the students. Thursday, Oct. 14th was Open House. We had a good turnout for the MS/HS. This year we followed a different format that went away from the abbreviated schedule to a more traditional style of "open house." Saturday, Oct. 16th was the annual SPUD RUN. Thank you to Mr. Jessen for all his hard work in organizing this event for our senior students. We had a great turnout of

participants, including Mrs. Cosh, Ms. Donahue and Mr. Fish. Congratulations to Jay Lawrence, Allison Parrott and Winston Getty for their participation. September 28th the Hartford Volunteer Fire Department toured the facilities. I like to thank Brian Jones and Dave Swezey for arranging this very important safety precaution. October 18th (tonight) was the Senior Soccer Game vs. Fort Ann. Tuesday, October 26th is the Senior Volleyball Game vs. Fort Edward. November 3rd is the annual WSWHE BOCES Student Leadership Conference. I am proud to announce that Hartford's Christina Petteys is the Chairperson for this year's conference. Friday, November 5th is the first parent-teacher conference for students in grades K -8. Saturday, November 6th is the homecoming dance. Friday, November 12th is the annual 6th grade pig-roast and silent auction event. Tuesday, November 16th is the Fall Sports Dessert Night. Thursday, November 18th is the annual Turkey Trot event. I would like to thank Mr. Capone and Mr. Jones for their help hanging our scholar-athlete team plaques in the cafeteria corridor. The FFA BBQ sold 143 dinners. There were 12 students for the Pumpkin Painting. Economic Forum will be held this month.

8.0 Old Business – No Old Business to Conduct

9.0 New Business

***9.1 CPSE/CSE Recommendations** – There are a number of recommendations for your review this month. As always if there is a question concerning any of the recommendations, the item or items should be tabled for discussion in Executive Session. – The Board of Education accepted the recommendations from the CPSE/CSE Committee. Motion made by Mr. Jessen and seconded by Mr. Fish. Approved 5-0

***9.2 Appointment of Cleaner** – The District received several applications for the position of cleaner. Interviews were conducted and a candidate is being recommended to you this evening. – That, the Board of Education appointed Mr. Andrew Kubricky as a cleaner effective October 20th. Salary for Mr. Kubricky will be \$10/hour, which will be pro-rated to reflect the October 20th start date. Benefits will be based on board policy and the terms and conditions of employment for cleaners. Motion made by Mr. Jessen and seconded by Mrs. Thomas. Approved 5-0

***9.3 Request for Non-Resident Student Attendance** – Mr. and Mrs. Josh Warner have submitted a request for Board of Education consideration to allow their children Michael (grade 5), Haley (grade 3) and Kaydon (grade 1) to attend Hartford as tuition paying non-resident students.

I have attached a copy of the state guidelines for tuition for elementary students at Hartford. It is estimated the total tuition for the three children will be approximately \$16,549. – The Board of Education approved the request of Mr. and Mrs. Warner to allow their children to attend Hartford. Approval is based upon meeting the required tuition payments and that the District not providing transportation (which it is not allowed to provide under regulations). Motion made by Mr. Jessen and seconded by Mr. Fish. Approved 5-0

***9.4 Approval of Woodchip Proposal** – The District posted a request for proposals regarding woodchip supply. We received one written proposal and one verbal proposal. The proposal from SM Gallivan L.L.C. was for \$37/ton. The verbal proposal from Galusha Inc. was \$44/ton. I am not necessarily convinced that Galusha was interested in providing the chips to us and thus the verbal quote. – The Board of Education accepted the proposal for woodchips from SM Gallivan and as a backup approve using Galusha in the event that Gallivan cannot provide chips. Motion made by Mr. Jessen and seconded by Mr. Fish. Approved 5-0

***9.5 Appointment of Substitute Cleaner** – The Board of Education appointed Kris Gibson as a substitute cleaner. Ms. Gibson will be called on an “as needed” basis by Mr. Jones. Hourly rate will be per previous board action. Motion made by Mr. Jessen and seconded by Mrs. Steves. Approved 5-0

***9.6 Appointment of Special Education Department Chairperson** - As the board is aware; Barbara Miner resigned as special education department chairperson prior to the start of the school year. As per Contract of Agreement with the Faculty Association, the position was posted internally. Two individuals applied. Mrs. Mannix met with both individuals to ascertain whether they would be

interested in a shared position. The response was negative. Following interviews of both candidates, Mrs. Mannix has recommended Mrs. Sue Brown for the position. – The Board of Education appointed Mrs. Sue Brown to the position of Special Education Department Chairperson for the 2010-11 School Year. Stipend will be per Contract of Agreement and be pro-rated to reflect the October start. Motion made by Mr. Jessen and seconded by Mrs. Thomas. Approved 5-0

***9.7 Acceptance of Auditors Report** - The external audit for the 2009-10 School Year has been completed. The management letter at the end of the report, lists only one item of concern and that deals with the reserves the District has. I have to send a letter to the Comptroller's Office addressing the concern. In the letter, I will stress the uncertainty of state finances and the September reduction in aid as well as the potential for a mid-year reduction as the rationale for the reserves. – The Board of Education accepted the 2009-10 external audit of the District. Motion made by Mr. Jessen and seconded by Mrs. Steves. Approved 5-0

10.0 Executive Session – Recommend the Board of Education adjourn to Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. Motion made by Mrs. Steves and seconded by Mrs. Thomas. Approved 5-0 at 8:13 pm.

11.0 Adjournment – Board returned to open session at 8:50 pm on a motion from Mr. Jessen second by Mrs. Steves. Approved 5-0. Mr. Getty indicated while in Executive Session, the Board of Education discussed matters pertaining to litigation and personnel issues. No further action taken. Board adjourned at 8:51 pm on a motion from Mr. Jessen seconded by Mr. Fish. Approved 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Marjorie M. Durling
District Clerk