

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 17, 2011

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

Board Members Absent: – Mr. Philip Jessen

Guests: – Sean Farley, Phil Gibson, Amber Lynch, Mr. and Mrs. Combs, Mr. Keeley, Chip Baker, Mrs. Giblin and Mrs. Surething.

1.0 Call to Order and Pledge – Mr. Getty, Board of Education President

2.0 Prayer – Mrs. Thomas

3.0 Welcome – Mr. Getty

3.1 Public to be Heard – When will the new web page be ready? Mr. Abraham said that there should be something in the next few days. What types of issues are discussed in Executive Session? Mr. Abraham responded with the following: matters which will imperil the public safety if disclosed; any matter which may disclose the identity of a law enforcement agent or informer; information relating to current or future investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense which would imperil effective law enforcement if disclosed; discussions regarding proposed, pending or current litigation; and collective negotiations. If any discussions are made, they are acted upon in open session. Mrs. Combs wanted to know how taxpayers could have input with the teacher's negotiations, could the dates of these meeting be posted and who are on the committees? Mr. Abraham replied that suggestion could be directed to the school and the dates would be posted. The committee members from administration were: himself, Mr. Cook and Mrs. Searles, from the faculty: Ms. Kelleher, council, Mr. Farley, Mr. MacDougall, Mr. Flower, Mr. Cournoyer and Mrs. Lawrence.

4.0 Review and Approval of Minutes

***4.1 Minutes from the September 19, 2011 Regular Board of Education Meeting** – The Board of Education approved the minutes from the September 19, 2011 Regular Board of Education Meeting. Motion made by Mr. Fish and seconded by Mrs. Thomas. Approved 4-0

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 as presented. Motion made by Mr. Fish and seconded by Mrs. Thomas Approved 4-0

***5.4 Auditor's Report** – As the board is aware, each year the District is required to undergo an audit, which is done by an independent outside auditor. The audit of the 2010-11 School Year has been completed and is in your packet for review. – The Board of Education accepted the auditor's report. Once accepted, the report will be filed with the Office of the State Comptroller. Motion made by Mrs. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Fish. Approved 4-0

6.0 Superintendent's Report

6.1 Enrollment Update – At the start of the school year, Pre-K enrollment was 18 and K-12 Enrollment was 486. Both of these numbers have increased. As of this past week, Pre-K is at 22 and K-12 Enrollment is 498.

6.2 Follow-up to Minnowbrook Conference – Each year the Superintendents from the WSWHE BOCES and the HFM BOCES meet at Blue Mountain Lake. The conference this year included meetings with the Deputy Commissioner, Executive Officer from the New York State Council of Superintendents, Regent James Dawson and Attorneys from Girvin and Ferlazzo.

The majority of the meetings with the individuals mentioned centered on two key issues facing education in New York State: the status of APPR and State funding of education.

APPR is currently in litigation due to the State Education Department's appeal of the Supreme Court Judge's decision ruling portions of the regulation unconstitutional. The prognosis of the appeal is that it will fail and districts will be required to negotiate key parts of APPR under the rules of collective bargaining.

The conversations regarding state funding for education were more disturbing and somewhat expected. Every one of the invited guests indicated the state is still having problems with finances and schools should not expect increases in state aid. The property tax cap tied to reduced aid will create a financial nightmare for most districts across the state.

Based on the statements by the Deputy Commissioner, the state wants there to be a crisis in funding, which will then force the issue of restructuring of the education within the state. Admittedly, the state does not want to take the political risk of announcing mandated restructuring and re-organization so by allowing schools to become insolvent, restructuring will occur without being mandated.

The study of how to restructure and eventual implementation will take approximately five years. Sadly, many small districts will face financial bankruptcy within two to three years. The Deputy Commissioner's response to that problem was predictable – "we understand the problems, we know the need to restructure, but we will not be able to assist those schools so we are sorry for what will happen."

The additional information gleaned at the conference on this subject is that by most estimates approximately 200 of the 741 central school districts in the state will cease to exist as they are currently structured within five years.

The Regent indicated the Board of Regents will be supporting the Governor's Aid to Schools Proposal this year because and I quote – "the board does not want to piss off the governor."

He also indicated the Regents will continue to pass on costs regarding outside examinations to the schools because the Department does not have the funds necessary to do all it wants to do.

6.3 Possible Change In Regent Examination Schedule – The State Education Department has been reviewing the possibility of changing the examination dates for the June 2013 Regent Exams. Apparently, with the Race to the Top reporting requirements and the changes in the Annual Performance Review for teachers relying on assessment results, the department has come to the realization that the mandated scanning and scoring procedures will delay the reporting of the results by the department. The Department's solution to the issue would be to rollback the examinations schedule back so the regent examinations are given in mid-May or the end of April.

When the department began the process of data warehousing and processing of exams they were told there would be problems for the department meeting reporting times. Did they listen? ***NO!*** Then when they indicated they were tying AAPR to assessments, the department was asked did they

realize with their inability to report assessment results in a timely manner what that would mean for APPR decisions. Again they refused to respond to the concerns. Now they realize they have a problem.

There solution to the problem is to create a bigger problem. Curriculum requirements cannot be met by the end of April. Student performance will suffer, which means state assessment scores will be in the trash, and most students will view the exams as a termination point for the course and stop attending school for the last month.

These concerns are also falling on deaf ears.

***6.4 Tax Cap Ramifications** – As the board is aware, the State Legislature adopted Chapter 97 of the Laws of 2011. This particular law modified the amount a district can raise its property tax levy with a simple majority of yes votes. It has been erroneously identified as the 2% Tax Cap. In actuality, it is not a simple process by which you tax last year's tax levy and increase it by two percent (simple two step process: Tax Levy X 2% = Levy for simple majority); instead, it is an eight step calculation that could lead to a tax levy in excess of 2% or in some cases actually less than two percent. The eight steps must take into consideration Tax Base Growth Factors (determined by the state), capital expenditure exemptions, PILOT payments, and specified pension exemptions. A sample has been provided in your packet for you.

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

Item #1 – Governor's Executive Order – The Governor signed an executive order extending the time for paying school taxes for specific areas of the state that were hit by the hurricane. School districts had to agree to be added to the order. On behalf of the District, I had Hartford added to the list. A copy of the Executive Order is included.

Item #2 – School Law Bulletin (2)

Item #3 – Financial Outlook for Education – This power point presentation was developed by the New York Council of School Superintendents and reviewed at Minnowbrook.

Item #4 – Statewide School Finance Consortium – This organization is headed by a former BOCES Superintendent, Rick Timms. The organization is studying the issue of school finance and as you can see believes the state is destroying small schools through financial hardship.

Item #5 – Legal Notes for Education

Item #6 – New York Times Article on School Lunches – This article concentrates on the issue of mandated changes in school lunches and economic pressures that are forcing school lunch prices higher.

Item #7 – Letter From Greg Loan – Mr. Loan is a representative from Utica National that works with Hartford.

Item #8 – Announcement on Concussion Law – There has been a great deal of concern in professional sports regarding athletes suffering concussions and what the long term effects can be on an individual. This topic has long been a concern, but never really addressed. With all of the press coverage of professional sports adopting strict concussion regulations, New York State has acted on behalf of school athletes and passed legislation regarding treatment of concussions and when athletes can be allowed to resume participation. The legislation was signed by Governor Cuomo and has become law.

Item #9 – Commissioner's Regulations – There were five decisions heard by the Commissioner this month. Four dealt with residency and only one was sustained.

Item #10 – Federal Regulations on Homeless Youth

6.6 Board of Education Questions, Comments, and/or Concerns

7.0 Principals' Reports

7.1 Elementary Report – Mrs. Mannix – September Citizens' Assembly: Seth Sharp article in the chronicle, Bus Riders of the Month: Tarina Hunt, Kenneth Fuller, Cassandra Wade, Alysa Freegaard, Rylie Liebig, Madison Hitchcock, Hannah Monroe, Natalie Keeley, Isha Rane, and Hannah Mitchell. October 6th Open House: 84% attendance rate (2 classes with 100%!!), Very positive evening, 4th grade held 30 minute informational sessions for parents. Amy Thomas – students created “students” to represent themselves sitting at their desks (with their own clothes). October 11th: NED Assembly (**N**ever Give Up, **E**ncourage Others, **D**o Your Best). Students were a wonderful audience and listened intently to NED's message, including filling buckets. October 11th: PTA Meeting. Reminder – 2nd Tuesday of the month at 5:00 in the Tech Building. October 13th: FFA with Tricia Stewart decorated pumpkins with 1st graders after school. October 14th: Fire Prevention grades Pre-K – 5. Thank you to Michelle Morrow for coordinating this day, along with volunteers Tim Shields, Robert Petit, Harrison Cornell, Sean Goodell, Zachary Barber. Week of October 17th is Bus Safety: Thank you to Connie and Chip for organizing these presentations, along with volunteers Mark Miller and Randy Rieckel. Thank you to Monica Pollack for sharing her knowledge of BOCES Overdrive and Symbaloo program with our special education staff today and elementary teachers next Monday (use of audio and e-books through BOCES). Playground Sign and Trash Receptacle Quotes. Mike MacDougall: Intramural participation and pictures. Maggie Donohue: Grade 4 Science Unit – Animal Studies Kit. Observing/studying dwarf African frogs, millipedes and fiddler crabs. Students have created habitats for these animals and care for them daily. Upcoming Events: 10/21 – 11:30 dismissal for Superintendent's Day; 10/28 – PTA sponsored Halloween Activity Night after school; 11/10 – Emergency Release Day (dismissal 15 minutes earlier); 11/17, 11/21, 11/22 – Parent Teacher Conferences – 11:30 dismissal; 11/18 – Harvest Fest ***Need volunteers

7.2 Secondary Report – Mr. Cook – It has been an extremely busy month at the Middle/High School: Friday, September 30th was the third annual FFA Chicken BBQ. Thursday, October 6th was Open House and I am pleased to report that the Middle/High School saw a very large parental turnout. Sunday, October 9th was the annual Senior Class car-show. Saturday, October 15th was the 26th annual SPUD Run. I would like to thank Mr. Jessen for all his hard work organizing the race and the following faculty and staff members for their participation: Mrs. Cosh, Ms. Donahue, Mrs. Pollack, Vicki Pollock, Mrs. Howe, Mrs. Durling, Mrs. Emblidge, Mrs. Jones, Mr. Abraham and Mr. Fish. This afternoon was the Varsity soccer teams' senior game. Thursday, October 19th will be the Varsity volleyball teams' senior game vs. Corinth. Wednesday, November 2nd is the annual WSWHE BOCES student-leadership conference. Homecoming is scheduled for Saturday, November 5th. The fall sports awards night is scheduled for Wednesday, November 9th. The annual Turkey-trot will be held Monday, November 14th (that evening HCS is hosting the Adirondack League Senior Volleyball match). The annual 6th grade pig-roast and silent auction is scheduled for Friday, November 18th.

8.0 Old Business

***8.1 Second Reading Revised Board of Education Policy #600 School Facilities use by Non-School Organization** – The Board of Education approved the second reading of the revised policy without further revision. Once approved, it will supersede all other policies regarding this matter. Motion made by Mrs. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Fish. Approved 4-0

***8.2 Second Reading Proposed Board of Education Policy #128 Social Networking Sites Guidelines** – The Board of Education approved the second reading of the proposed policy. Once approved, it will go into effect immediately. Motion made by Mrs. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Fish. Approved 4-0

***8.3 Second Reading Proposed Board of Education Policy #129 Email** – The Board of Education approved the second reading of the proposed policy. Once approved, it will go into effect immediately. Motion made by Mrs. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Fish. Approved 4-0

9.0 New Business

***9.1 CPSE/CSE Recommendations** – There are a few recommendations for your consideration this month. As always if there are questions concerning one or more items, 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 Mrs. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Fish.
Approved 4-0

***9.2 Appointment of Substitute Teacher Aide/Office Assistant** – The District has received an application from an individual wishing to be considered for substitute aide or office help. – The Board of Education approved the application of Ms. Terri Lynn Kingsley as a substitute aide and office support personnel. Ms. Kingsley will be called on an as needed basis. Her use as a substitute in the district is subject to fingerprint clearance by the State Education Department. Motion made by Mrs. Thomas and seconded by Mrs. Steves. Approved 4-0

***9.3 Appointment of Title I Reading Teacher** – Due to the resignation and departure of Sue Matthews, the District had an opening for a literacy specialist for the Title I Reading position. Mrs. Mannix has recommended a replacement to me. – The Board of Education appointed Mrs. Amber Lynch to the Title I Reading Position effective 10/11/11. The appointment will be in the Tenure Area of Reading and the Certification Area of K-12 Literacy. Salary for Mrs. Lynch will be \$39,488 Step I plus Masters Degree plus 39 graduate hours) through January 31st pro-rated to reflect the October 11th start and increase to an annual salary of \$40,376 (Step 1 plus Masters Degree plus 39 graduate hours) effective February 1, 2012. The appointment for Mrs. Lynch will be a three year probationary appointment effective 10/11/11 and terminating on 10/10/14. Motion made by Mrs. Thomas and seconded by Mrs. Steves. Approved 4-0

***9.4 Excess Surplus Property** – As you can see from the enclosed memo, Mr. Capone has been doing some fall cleaning in the storeroom and has come across uniforms and warm ups that are no longer used or can be used. – The Board of Education declared the set of home and away girl's basketball uniforms and girl's warm-ups as excess surplus property. Motion made by Mr. Fish and seconded by Mrs. Steves. Approved 4-0

***9.5 Extra-Curricular Appointments** – Mr. Cook is recommending two extra-curricular appointments for your consideration. – The Board of Education appointed Mr. Robert Leise as boy's modified basketball coach and Ms Tiffany Dufour as cheerleading advisor for the 2011-12 School Year. Stipend will be per Contract of Agreement. Motion made by Mrs. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Fish. Approved 4-0

10.0 Executive Session – Recommend the Board of Education adjourn to Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. Motion made by Mrs. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Fish. Approved 4-0 at 7:50 pm.

11.0 Adjournment – Board returned to open session at 8:40 pm on a motion from Mrs. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Fish Approved 4-0. Mr. Getty indicated the board had discussions regarding two specific personnel issues and a possible issue on litigation. No further action taken by the board. Board adjourned at 8:42 pm on a motion from Mrs. Steves and seconded by Mrs. Thomas. Approved 4-0

Respectfully submitted,

Marjorie M. Durling
District Clerk