

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 December 19, 2011

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

Board Members Absent: – none

Guests: – Sean Farley, Susan Readon and her mother Kathy, Mrs. Combs, Mr. Gibson, Girls' Volleyball team and parents.

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

2.0 Prayer – Mr. Getty

3.0 Welcome – Mr. Getty

***3.1 Student Recognition** – This year's Girl's Varsity Volleyball Team was extremely successful in team and individual accomplishments. This evening we will recognize their accomplishments. The team was co-champion of the Adirondack League, Section II Class D Champion, NY State Regional Champion and Final Four Representative in the State Tournament. I would ask the following individuals come forward to receive a certificate and medal: **Brittany Brayman, Aron Galusha, Gwenn Harsha, Jaclyn Lavin, Rachel Liebig, Alison Parrott, Morgan Wicks, Katherine Frye, Sara Godnick, Heather Lacross, Charissa Lewis, Morgan Mercure, Molly Spear, Cailyn Harrington** and **Coach Wendy Harrington**.

A number of the squad members also achieved individual honors for their performance this year and I would ask they come forward as their name is called to receive a certificate: **Brittany Brayman** Adirondack League First Team Selection, NYS Class D First Team and Post Star First Team Selection. **Gwenn Harsha** Adirondack League First Team, Post Star Second Team selection. **Rachel Liebig** Adirondack League First Team. **Morgan Wicks** Adirondack League First Team Selection. **Morgan Mercure** Adirondack League Second Team Selection. **Molly Spear** Adirondack League Second Team Selection.

Not only could members of this team perform on the volleyball court, but in the classroom as well. Based on the academic performance of the following individuals, the team received NYS Scholar Athlete Recognition: **Brittany Brayman, Gwenn Harsha, Rachel Leibig, Morgan Wicks, Sarah Godnick, Heather Lacross, Charissa Lewis, Morgan Mercure, and Molly Spear**.

3.2 Public to be Heard – Mrs. Combs said that she was pleased to see the new web site being populated. She had trouble finding the School Board portion. Mrs. Combs still feels that there is a perception in the community of a "conflict of interest" with the administration parties on the negotiation panel and the teachers with regards to the contract negotiations. She suggested that a board member be on the negotiation panel. Mr. Abraham and the entire board again reassured her that any tentative contracts were always reviewed and discussed in great detail with the entire board of education before any agreement is put up for vote. Not one of the board members felt that there was any concern regarding a "conflict of interest" and that having a board member on the panel would not serve any purpose as Mr. Abraham brings any tentative proposals to the entire board of education where it is reviewed and discussed in great detail before any agreement is put up for vote. They also were adamant that Mr. Abraham has always kept them well informed as to the status of any and all happenings in the District, whether it is minor or involved. A long discussion ensued. After the

discussions, several members of the board suggested that any concerned community member come to the board meetings.

4.0 Review and Approval of Minutes

- ***4.1 Minutes from the November 21, 2011 Regular Board of Education Meeting** – The Board of Education approved the minutes from the November 21, 2011 Regular Board of Education Meeting with one change as to the name of Mr. Calhoun instead of Mr. Emery . Motion made by Mr. Jessen and seconded by Mr. Fish. 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 Mrs. Thomas. Approved 5-0
- ***5.4 Tax Collection Report** – Mrs. Searles gave a short report as the full numbers have not come in.
- ***5.4 Budget Summary** – This summary is presented for your review and inquiry. – No Action Necessary.

6.0 Superintendent's Report

- ***6.1 State's Fiscal Outlook** – When the state passed the current year's budget the projection was the budget would be balanced. However, revenue has not come in at the projected amount and the state is facing a \$350 million deficit this year and a projected \$3 billion deficit for the upcoming fiscal year. The Governor has presented a plan to the legislature that would bring in an additional \$1.9 billion per year over the next three years. The state may also have to adjust some of its expenditures this year to address the shortfall.

On the positive side, the Finance Committee has indicated it will continue to support the \$850 million in additional state aid for schools for the 2012-13 School Year. A portion of this aid will go to areas that are subject to automatic increases under the regulations such as special education reimbursements, building aid and transportation. Once that amount is subtracted, approximately \$500 million will be left to distribute across the state. However, in the state of New York, there is also the Gap Elimination Formula which calculates how much comes away from school districts. I cannot accurately predict what the two opposing concepts mean for state aid to Hartford. (I can give it my best guess).

- ***6.2 Gap Elimination Formula Inequities** – As I mentioned above, the state uses a formula to reduce state aid to the various school districts as one of the instruments used to reduce projected deficits. For example, if you look at the chart that has been provided you can compare Hartford to the school district listed just above Hartford. The District has almost 100 students less than Hartford, has a free and reduced lunch percentage of 7% compared to Hartford's 33% and yet when you look at the amount per student in Gap Elimination, the comparable school is reduced just over \$600 per student while Hartford has a reduction exceeding \$2,000 per student. I probably failed to mention that the comparable school is on Long Island and when you consider the majority of the legislature is from Westchester County and Long Island it becomes obvious they protect their own.

- ***6.3 Passing of Former Board Member** – As most of the board is aware, former Board of Education Member Thomas Fessenden passed away over the Thanksgiving vacation period. A memorial mass has been scheduled for Thursday December 22nd at 11am. The mass will be held at the Hartford Methodist Church.

- ***6.4 Projected Revenues for 2012-13 School Year** – The Governor will announce his budget plan in January. It would appear he will not reduce State Aid to education. Last year, the legislature and governor developed a two year proposal regarding aid to education. The preliminary indication from Albany is there will be approximately \$805 million additional for education in the 2012 Budget. However, roughly 300 million of the amount will go to categorical expenditures (e.g. building aid, special education, transportation). How the remaining aid will be divided up has yet to be developed.

If previous formulas are used, approximately 60% of the remaining aid will go to the big five and Long Island. The remaining 40% will be sprinkled throughout the remainder of the state.

Of greater concern is the one-time revenue we used in this current year. \$221,000 of revenue came from the Federal Jobs Ed. Funding and \$240,000 of revenue came from interest from the building project. The Jobs Ed. Funding will not be renewed (or at least the indications are it won't) and the interest from the building project cannot be matched.

Once the Governor releases his budget, I will be able to develop a comprehensive revenue projection and a clearer picture on how the District will have to proceed for next year.

6.5 Energy Symposium – On December 12th, Congressman Chris Gibson sponsored an energy symposium on alternative energy sources. The symposium was held at the Tech Valley Hudson Valley Community College Campus at Luther Forrest. I was asked to do a case study presentation at the symposium, which went fairly well other than the technical failure of my iPad.

As a follow-up to the symposium, the Congressman will visit Hartford on January 10th to tour the energy plant.

***6.6 Tax Levy Cap** – As the board is aware, legislation changes how districts can calculate their tax levy and to what percentage a levy must be approved by voters. I have included in your packet a copy of what is thought to be the final draft of how the tax levy cap is calculated. You can see it is a several step process. If the amount of tax levy to be raised is at or below the tax levy limit plus exclusions, voter approval is one vote more than 50%. If the levy exceeds the calculated limit, the approval rate must be sixty percent.

***6.7 Informational Packet** – There are a number of items for your review this month.

Item #1 – Announcement from Governor Cuomo

Item #2 – Announcement of the Deputy Commissioner's Resignation – Deputy Dave Abrams resigned from his position as Deputy Commissioner after an ill advised release of a field memo announcing the decision to move to a four hour assessment in ELA for elementary students. Since the decision had not been finalized, there was a degree of embarrassment at the department and the Deputy Commissioner took the fall. There have been no tears shed in the field with his departure.

Item #3 – The Statewide School Consortium Report – This organization and the enclosed report exams the inequities of educational funding faced by small schools.

Item #4 – Let NY Work – Recommendation on how to reduce mandates and costs to schools.

Item #5 – School Law Bulletin (2)

Item # 6 - Health Insurance Announcement – The Governor announced a 114.5 billion dollar refund associated with health insurance over billing. The refund does not affect Hartford or the Consortium because we are not a community rated institution.

Item #7 – AASBA Power Point Presentation

Item #8 – Employer Forum – Newsletter from the State Comptroller's Office

Item #9 – Legal Notes for Education

Item 10 – Commissioner's Appeals – only one of seven appeals to the commissioner was sustained.

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

7.0 Principals' Reports

7.1 Secondary Report – Mr. Cook – It has been an extremely busy month at the Middle/High School. I would just like to again congratulate the members of the volleyball team on an excellent season. They were an outstanding representation of the Hartford Central School District. On Friday, the Town Supervisors provided the team with an official proclamation recognizing their accomplishments. On Saturday, January 21st the team will be hosting a "thank-you" dinner for all their fans and supporters. Winter sports are now in full-gear. Monday, December 12th was the Jr./Sr. Band and Chorus Concert; which was very well attended. Congratulations to Mr. Nerp, Mrs. Dougher, and all our student performers on an excellent job. A number of our organizations have continued to provide assistance to the flood victims in Middleburgh: The Middle School

Student Government - Made baked goods to be handed out to flood victims at the Miracle on Main Street; the Art Club - donated gifts to a flood victim that lost her art studio in the flood who will be receiving the gift for a Christmas present; and the faculty & staff donated cookbooks. This is just a small example of the wonderful generosity of students, faculty and staff. On January 5th and 6th New York State Trooper George Murphy will be presenting to our students on Cyber-bullying and Sexting. In addition, I had a meeting this morning with a Senior Investigator from the State Police who is preparing a program on the dangers of "posh" and other synthetic drugs for a student presentation possibly in early February. I have the opportunity this week to attend a mandatory program at BOCES in properly storing Regents Exams - I am very excited for this opportunity! And last, but certainly not least, this is Chris Jones' last week, I would just like to congratulate her on her retirement and years of service to the district.

7.2 Elementary Report – Mrs. Mannix Harvest Fest 11/18: Janine Thomas – Cornhusk dolls; Mr. and Mrs. Rane – Paper Quilling demonstration; Abby Foster and Chrys Nestle – Felting; Mary Urbielewicz – Soap making process; Jim McRae – Sheep shearing demonstration; Heather Bartos – Drumming Circle; Helpers: Mary Stewart, Sheila Kowalski, Jodi Robbins, Michelle Williams, Hilary Oreschnick and Fred Nestle – time and sheep. Elementary Concert 12/15 - Tanager Voices performance of “Flakes” - 5th Grade Recorders - Piano Solo – Logan Smith (grade 3) - Classroom Activities: Simmons: in place of a gift exchange they are collecting supplies for troops. Third graders have been learning about the Solar System in both reading and Science. Student have been reading and researching the planets of our solar system using our reading series and the internet on a web site called facts4me.com. We have used both the computer lab and the mobile cart and have had much success. Third graders were also excited about the newly found planet Kepler 22b researchers discovered in another solar system. The planet is thought to be similar to Earth and boy did third graders have questions. In Social Studies third graders are learning about the major countries of North America. We studied Canada and are now reading about Mexico and their language, culture and traditions. Students are trying to find similarities and difference between themselves and Mexican traditions. The third grade has also begun our Multiplication challenge. Students are working on learning their facts through memorization and hands on activities. 4th grade and 1st grade (at different times) saw a Christmas Traditions presentation from Fort Edward Historical Association. Fourth grade brought in contributions for this presentation and the Iroquois presentation from last month. We were able to present Elizabeth O’Leary with a \$50 check for these free presentations. I’m not sure what 1st grade did. Gavon Darfler was also featured in the Chronicle for favorite computer site. Alexis Sesselman in Mrs. Vanier’s class was also featured.

8.0 Old Business – No Old Business to Conduct

9.0 New Business

***9.1 CPSE/CSE Recommendations** – There are a few recommendations for your consideration this month. As always, should there be a question or questions regarding any of the recommendation the issue 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 Probationary Appointment – Secondary English** – The Board of Education appointed Mrs. Susan Reardon to a three-year probationary appointment retro-active to September 1, 2011 and terminating on August 31, 2014. Salary for Mrs. Reardon will be Step 2 with a Masters Degree and forty-six graduate hours (\$36,445 + 1,100 + 2,760 = \$40,305). The salary will be adjusted to reflex the Mrs. Reardon’s substitute status from September 1 –October 31. Motion made by Mr. Jessen and seconded by Mrs. Thomas. Approved 5-0

***9.3 First Reading Proposed Board of Education Policy #445 – Bullying** – As part of the Dignity for All Students Act, all school districts are required to have a policy in place by July 1, 2012 specifically addressing the issue of bullying. – The Board of Education approved as the first reading, with revisions, the proposed Policy #445. Motion made by Mr. Jessen and seconded by Mr. Fish. Approved 5-0

***9.4 Awarding of Bid on Surplus Bid** – At the last board meeting, the board declared bus # 60 as excess surplus property. The District received two bids one from Lutz Sales in the amount of \$1,859 and one

from Brown Bus Sales in the amount of \$1,800. – There was a question, from Mr. Fish, as to how much could be gotten if the bus were sold for scrap. After discussion, the Board of Education accepted the bid of \$1,859 from Lutz Sales and award Bus 60 to the company. Motion made by Mr. Jessen and seconded by Mrs. Thomas. Approved 4-1

***9.5 Revised District Code of Conduct** – The Code of Conduct had to be revised due to legislative changes associated with the Dignity for All Students Act. The revised code only requires one reading by the Board of Education. – The Board of Education approved the revised. Motion made by Mr. Jessen and seconded by Mrs. Thomas. Approved 5-0

***9.6 Excess Surplus Property** – Included in your packet is a list of obsolete hardware that can no longer be used by the school, staff, or students. The equipment is either broken or so outdated it cannot be upgraded for functionality. – The Board of Education declared the hardware indicated as excess surplus property and allow the District to dispose of through E-cycling. Motion made by Mrs. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Jessen. Approved 5-0

10.0 Executive Session – Recommend the Board of Education adjourn to Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. Motion made by Mr. Jessen and seconded by Mr. Fish. Approved 5-0 at 8:31 pm.

11.0 Adjournment – Board returned to open session at 9:05 pm on a motion from Mr. Jessen and seconded by Mrs. Thomas Approved 5-0. Mr. Getty indicated the board had discussed specific personnel and the status of negotiation. No further action taken by the board. Board adjourned at 9:06 pm on a motion from Mrs. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Jessen. Approved 5-0

Respectfully submitted,

Marjorie M. Durling
District Clerk