

Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting on Tuesday, October 5, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. in the board room at 3 Primrose Street.

W. Hart, Chair	J. Robinson
D. Leidlein, Secretary	R. Bienkowski
D. Nanavaty	2 Staff
L. Bittman	17 Public
R. Gaines	2 Press
C. Lagana (absent)	

Mr. Hart called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

MOTION: Mr. Nanavaty moved to go into executive session to interview candidates for the Board of Education vacancy. Mrs. Bittman seconded. Vote: 5 ayes

Item 1 – Executive Session

The Board interviewed two candidates for the vacant position.

Item 2 – Public Session for Vote on Board Vacancy

MOTION: Mr. Nanavaty moved to nominate Andy Buzzi for the vacant position on the Board. Mrs. Bittman seconded. Vote: Mr. Gaines – yes, Mrs. Bittman – yes, Mr. Nanavaty – yes, Mrs. Leidlein – nay, Mr. Hart – yes
Mr. Buzzi was appointed to the Board.

Debbie Aurelia, Town Clerk, swore in Mr. Buzzi and he joined the meeting.
Mr. Hart welcomed Mr. Buzzi and stated that we were happy to have him as a returning member with 5 prior years experience on the Board.

Item 3 – Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mr. Gaines moved to approve the consent agenda which included the minutes of September 14 and 16, 2010, the leave of absence for Elisabeth Neeb, teacher at Middle Gate School, and the Newtown High School trips for the Marching Band in November, the Ski Club in February and the Junior State Club of America trips in November, February and April. Mr. Nanavaty seconded. Vote: 6 ayes

Item 4 – Public Participation - none

Item 5 – Reports

Correspondence: Mrs. Leidlein said there was one item from Kinga Walsh regarding the Wednesday early dismissals.

Chair Report: Mr. Hart attended a CABE workshop on collective bargaining, a budget forum with Mrs. Leidlein and a Charter revision meeting. We are not mandated to have a vice chair so he would like to hold off on an election. We scheduled a coffee with the Board to be held in the schools. The first one will be in the evening but some may be during the day. They will be noticed meetings with only public participation on the agenda. The first will be October 26 at 7:00 p.m. in the middle school auditorium.

Mr. Nanavaty mentioned the Public Building & Site Commission meeting is that night at the same time.

Mr. Hart is also planning to produce articles periodically to be posted on our website and the press. He referred to the one he sent the Board on our goals.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Robinson stated that 39 of our high schools students are being acknowledged with a letter from the Commissioner of Education because they achieved at the Advanced level on all of the CAPT subtests. A training session is being held Wednesday for secretaries on entering the expenditure estimates directly into Phoenix. Wednesday is also the first early release day for district level Professional Learning Communities which will focus on student writing. Unofficial October 1, 2010 enrollment shows us down 72 students from last year but up 35 over our projections and up 43 over Chung's projections. Dr. Chung will be at the Legislative Council meeting Wednesday night.

Mr. Nanavaty noted the increase of 35 students at Reed.

Dr. Robinson cut teachers at Reed so they are running large class sizes.

Mr. Nanavaty asked for the class sizes at Reed. Mrs. Leidlein asked to discuss enrollment at the next meeting.

Dr. Robinson said there could be additional changes before we have the official enrollment report.

Mr. Nanavaty asked to have it emailed to the Board.

Public Building and Site Report: Mr. Nanavaty attended the meeting last Tuesday. They indicated that all Town building project will go through them. Regarding the schools they want to be sure the middle school roof will be done. There is some concern by Dan Holmes who wanted to make sure that all sustainable options for the work would be looked at. The tentative start date for the roof is April 2011 and completion in August or September 2011. We may have to relocate some students during the work. Regarding the high school, Morganti said November 2 would be the move in date. The gym will be completed by November 22. There are some issues regarding the framing on some sides of window and with the field base coat on the track.

Mrs. Leidlein was concerned about relocating middle school students and asked for additional information.

Mr. Nanavaty said we don't have any yet. The portables at the high school could be used but transportation would be an issue. They would like to get as much done as possible during the April break.

Mr. Nanavaty referred to the letter from Mrs. Llodra to Bob Mitchell regarding the \$440,000 for the greenhouse. Public Building and Site asked Morganti to put together a list of price credits for the add-ons. He feels Morganti should meet with the greenhouse teacher, Dr. Robinson and Joe Costa to determine what is needed for educational purposes and what could be left out for a cost savings. We hope to have the greenhouse by the second semester.

Item 6 – Old Business

District Goals and Objectives:

The Board discussed revisions to the document which included adding "space" to #2. This document would be reviewed periodically and include timelines and actions. A committee would be formed to develop actions with some assigned to the Superintendent and some to other groups. It was suggested that the Board talk about what it is that interests each of them and who would like to address that.

MOTION: Mr. Nanavaty moved to approve the district goals and objectives as discussed and amended. Mrs. Leidlein seconded. Mrs. Bittman amended the motion to read approve the Newtown Board of Education Goals and Objectives. Mrs. Leidlein seconded the amendment. Vote: 6 ayes.

Policy Subcommittee Discussion: Mr. Hart asked for a volunteer to join Mrs. Bittman to which Mr. Buzzi accepted.

Transfers: Mr. Hart referred to the request from Mr. Kortze that we revisit our motion on transfers. Tom Mooney had a recommended policy we should adopt. He referred it to the policy subcommittee. We need to be sure we are legal.

Mr. Nanavaty agreed. It answers all of the issues that have been addressed. Mrs. Leidlein expressed concern about doing transfers without a public discussion. She would like us to have a public discussion on encumbrances also. We are all accountable for this money and they should be discussed by the Board.

Mr. Nanavaty stated we always used an encumbrance system and transfers would be done when moving between departments. Nothing in the state statutes requires us to use transfers. We are willing to take the Board of Finance recommendation to give Tom Mooney's policy to our policy subcommittee to review. We want to acknowledge the Board of Finance suggestion which will ferment cooperation between the Boards.

Series 9000 Bylaws: Mrs. Bittman asked for Board input and that this be discussed at the next meeting.

Item 7 – New Business

Revision to Food Allergy Management Policy 7-103A:

Dr. Robinson said these changes were recommendations from our nurses. Mrs. Bittman noted that the Board is concerned with the policy itself but the Superintendent oversees the guidelines so she can approve these changes.

Item 8 – Public Participation - none

MOTION: Mr. Nanavaty moved to adjourn. Mrs. Bittman seconded. Vote: 6 ayes

Item 9 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Debbie Leidlein
Secretary