

DATE: January 12, 2010
WHERE HELD: Middle School

KIND OF MEETING: Regular
PRESIDING OFFICER: Joe Pericone

**MARGINAL
NOTATIONS**

MEMBERS PRESENT:
John Blowers
Elizabeth Herkenham
Patre Kuziak
James Maughan
Joe Pericone
Robert Speck

MEMBERS ABSENT:
Tim Kelliher

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jim Schultz, Jacqueline St.Onge, Rick Evans, Christy Multer, and 21 others.

President Joe Pericone called the Board meeting to order at 7:35 PM.

Reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance

James Maughan read the Whereas statement for the Boys Cross Country Team recognizing team members for their accomplishments both as a team and individually. He extended congratulations on behalf of the entire Board for winning the New York State Championship.

Mr. Blowers moved and Mr. Speck seconded the approval of the consent agenda, which included the minutes of the December 15, 2009 regular meeting & the minutes of the January 7, 2010 special meeting of the Board of Education. Motion carried 6-0

Privilege of the Floor

Will Farmer addressed the Board about a comment regarding 'teaching to the test' in last week's presentation from the Strategic Framework Committee. He read from his son's 4th grade text citing examples of sections that focus on how to perform well on tests rather than emphasizing content material. He wanted to share his concerns with the Board.

Guest Speaker

John Blowers introduced guest speaker Dave Little from the New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) who presented some ideas on legislative task force initiatives to the Board and Administration. John explained that as the Finance Committee gears up for the budget sessions, the Board will be looking at conducting virtual forums and forming a legislative task force to focus Board efforts and provide information to residents about the impact of the State budget on education. Dave Little feels we are facing legislative issues that are unprecedented and that the fiscal challenges over the next few years will require us to do things differently in public education. He says we can't sustain these levels and we are losing our economic base. It will force us to look at new delivery methods for education and to examine what we do at both the state and local levels, and it will be extremely difficult. New York State has both the worst and the best public education systems in the country found in one state. He believes the only thing to override politics is when the fiscal climate becomes so severe and that's what is happening right now. The public has had enough with all of the tremendous financial pressures. All of the suburban, rural, urban and small city communities are feeling the pressure to do something about property taxes. Changes need to be done by us prior to allowing it to be done by the politicians. School leaders need to figure out an approach to coordinate and communicate with our local community in order to share information. There is very little discretionary spending in school budgets with little flexibility. Politicians in NYS are traditionally more likely to be removed from office for committing a felony than being voted out of office. It is more likely that a public outcry will be heard in these difficult economic times. Mr. Little suggested that local politicians like Jim Tedisco will be sensitive to the concerns of our local community. He also suggested newsletters, virtual town hall meetings, public meetings, facebook, electronic communications, twitter, etc. to communicate information to the community. He says that we have an advantage in this area because we are so close to Albany. He mentioned the North Shore group of school districts that came together to lobby and focus on one or two issues to advocate as one community and one voice. They are currently focusing on a mandate relief bill that consolidates mandates for an omnibus bill to be introduced into the legislature. Their focus is to provide economic relief to schools (their contact is Igor Wood). Most efforts in this area are being headed up by the professional associations including NYSSBA, NYSCOSS, NYSASBO, NYSUT, etc. Another effort is to form key communicator groups and use organized electronic communications. NYSSBA efforts are being called Be The Face For Kids. Dave Little recommended the use of faxed communications or letters rather than email to provide information to legislators that will get a response. He addressed questions from the Board and Administration.

Board took a short break.

Ms. Herkenham moved and Ms. Kuziak seconded the approval of the temporary appointment of Kathryn Welch, .2 Social Studies at the High School, effective 1/4/10-6/30/10, Janice Germain (extended), Grade 3 teacher at Charlton Heights, effective 1/4/10-2/22/10, Amanda Cotrupi, Grade 5 teacher at Charlton Heights, effective 1/26/10-4/30/10, Heather Coons, Grade 2 teacher at Pashley, effective 1/18/10-4/23/10; the approval of the leave of absence of Jill Gobel (extended), Grade 3 teacher at Charlton Heights, effective 1/4/10-2/22/10, Marcy Raeder (extended), Grade 2 at Pashley, effective 1/18/10-4/23/10, Michelle Martin, Special Education at the High School, effective 3/8/10-4/19/10; the approval of the extra-curricular appointment of Traci Hall, CCR for Language Arts, effective 1/4/10-4/30/10, and approval of the extra-curricular leave of absence of Robert Moor, CCR for Language Arts, effective 1/26/10-4/30/10; the approval of the Spring Musical appointments of Eric Shovah, Director; Ann Derrick, Vocal Coach; Carol Hobday, Producer; Peter Giroux, Orchestra Director; Stephanie Andrejcek, Business Manager; Chris Lombardi, Stage Manager; Heather D'Arcy, Choreographer; and the approval of the substitute teacher/nurse appointments of Erin Auzi, Jesse Bisceglia, Shannon Bohan, Laura Dolins, Sara Fetcho, Melissa Gibbs, Carl Hatt, Breanna Hilko, Jessica Kircher, Justin Kupinski, Christina Liguori, Michelle Marshall, Joshua Miller, Rebecca Penn, Lillian Pittman, Jennifer Quirk, James Sheeran, Matthew Sindoni, Stephanie Stanton, Katherine Sutton, Erin Tate, Holly Teal, Susan Thompson, Jason Tourge, Natalie Turner, Peter Vottis, Laura Weinman, David Weintraub.
Motion carried 4-0 (Mr. Blowers & Mr. Speck had not returned yet from break.)

Ms. Herkenham moved and Ms. Kuziak seconded the approval of the civil service personnel action as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.
Motion carried 4-0 (Mr. Blowers & Mr. Speck had not returned yet from break.)

Ms. Herkenham moved and Ms. Kuziak seconded the approval of the \$12,538,550 Serial Bond Resolution.
Motion carried 5-0 (Mr. Speck had returned.)

Ms. Herkenham moved and Ms. Kuziak seconded the acceptance of the Fire Inspection Report and Visual Inspection Report.
Motion carried 6-0 (Mr. Blowers had returned.)

Mr. Blowers moved and Ms. Herkenham seconded the Budget Objectives & Timelines.
Motion carried 6-0

Ms. Herkenham moved and Ms. Kuziak seconded the approval of the Whereas for the Boys Cross Country Team.
Motion carried 6-0

Ms. Kuziak moved and Ms. Herkenham seconded the approval of the recommendations from the Committee on Special Education.
Motion carried 6-0

Fire Inspection Report

Buildings and Grounds Supervisor Dan Diggins presented the annual Fire Inspection Reports along with Fire Inspector Arnold Briscoe. Regulations continue to become stricter. Dan talked about some of the new requirements and how we will address them in the future. Arnold Briscoe commented on the overall improvements that he has seen over the years. All of our school buildings passed the inspections and we will continue to address any areas of concerns. A copy of the report was available for Board members to see.

Financial Controls Over Money Transfers

Jackie St.Onge provided Board members with examples of District financial controls in place for online money transfers and wire transfers. News of the fraudulent transfers from the Duanesburg School District to overseas accounts prompted the discussion with the Board. She brought examples of the wire authorizations and explained the verification process that must occur prior to any funds being transferred by our banking institutions. Wire notifications are received by the district the same day that transfers are initiated. Account balances are checked daily. The Business Office spoke with banking representatives about controls and security measures in place to protect against fraudulent activities. Jackie also spoke to our insurance agent and we do have coverage. She is exploring the cost to increase the current coverage.

Budget Update

John reminded Board members that the first finance meeting is scheduled for next week at the High School. A handout from Christy Multer was distributed to explain how the virtual forum will be conducted and how it will work. Jim reminded the Board that we will devote some time to discuss the Governor's executive budget proposal and we will take time to discuss our core values and beliefs that will help shape the budget process. We will consider which of those premises will be protected, which will be changed, and which will be challenged. For the virtual forum in

February we will need to balance questions from both public attendees and online participants. The session will include breakout groups to further discuss questions. Board members or Central Administration will facilitate groups. The purpose is to get information out and to receive input from the community. Technical aspects will be handled by John Capano and Christy Multer at their computers. The plan is to manage breakout groups like chat room groups with John moderating and Jim presenting. We'll try this first before moving to another model. John posed the question are we ready to start seeking participants for our legislative task force and Board members agreed to start the outreach. The forum can be a catalyst for engagement. Board members need to develop a laundry list and compose a legislative position paper.

Reports & Communications

- Bob Speck visited the Town of Ballston and received an update on the 450 unit development. The process is just starting to evolve and Bob will continue to attend the town meetings to gather information. He did some research on the number of study reports and he will include the list in the next packet. Bob announced that he will not be a candidate for school board in May.
- James Maughan attended the Charlton Heights PTA meeting. He wanted to draw the Board's attention to some demographic information on New York State contained in the Empire State Exodus. The report states that one and a half million people have left New York State creating a significant loss of income. He shared highlights from the article that may relate to the quality of our schools or have an impact on spending.
- John Blowers reported that the Strategic Framework Committee met last week and the process going well. They expect to share their final results with the Board in February. He encouraged Board members to look at the NYSSBA legislative campaign efforts, 'Be the Change for Kids' because it is consistent with some of our legislative actions.
- Patre Kuziak attended the Middle School PTA meeting. Recreation night was very well attended and provides kids with activities to do in the winter. She also attended an open skate where more than 250 kids showed up to participate. The Middle School is starting a movie night for kids. Other initiatives include developing an educational program for kids with long term illnesses and working on an inventory of items in the building. The BHBS Hockey team will be holding their pancake breakfast Jan 23rd at the Millstone from 8:30am to 11am.
- Jim Schultz announced that the Saratoga County H1N1 flu clinic is coming up. It will be held at Charlton Heights Elementary on January 21st from 4pm until 8pm and children must be accompanied by a parent. The clinic is open to any Saratoga County resident at their request and they now have an abundance of supplies. Jim drew attention to the whereas statement for the boys cross country team and their incredible accomplishment. At the same time as we were recognizing this team, Schenectady County was recognizing all of our teams for their outstanding accomplishments. Jim shared an article about an arts-in-ed writing project at Stevens that was published in a national periodical. Jim commented on Bob Speck's tremendous contributions to the BHBL school community over the many years that he has served on the Board of Education. Jim talked about the budget process and how difficult it will be over the next couple of years. We will come through it, but it will be very important to tap into our community support.
- Joe Pericone received the NYSSBA plaque for BHBL membership. He attended the PTA council meeting where the hot topic was an update on the Founders Day celebration on Feb 4th at 5:45pm at the Edison Club (cost is \$20/person). He attended the Holiday Concert which was very good. He has received some email communications and he posed the question to board – what actions will be taken? The response is to use the same past practice as when we received letters. Typically the Superintendent reads them and responds.
- Elizabeth Herkenham talked about the Career Awareness Jamboree at Charlton Heights and they are seeking some help with scheduling the students in various activities. The date is March 31 and the information is needed immediately after February break. Dan Le Claire said that he could help to provide the schedule. Elizabeth also attended the PTSA meeting and will have a fund raiser (selling pies) to help with the High School stage/theatre. She also attended the SGO meeting at the High School and there was lots of energy directed at revamping Homecoming weekend. Elizabeth reported out on the budget at the meeting and she would like to have Board members attend an upcoming SGO meeting to gather their concerns. They are targeting the March meeting (2nd week – 10th?) to present the budget situation and the Board will bring pizza.
- Jackie St.Onge attended a meeting with the architects, construction managers, Superintendent and building principals to discuss the energy bond projects. She gave Board members an update on projects scheduled for summer work over the next two years and the impact on buildings. She reported that the District Health and Safety Committee will be conducting an emergency tabletop exercise in March to test our emergency response and communications. Local emergency responders will be included.
- Rick Evans announced that the search for the Middle School Assistant Principal is almost complete and an offer will be made to a candidate in the next couple of days.
- Christy Multer reported that crosswalk signals are coming from Patti Southworth and the Town of Ballston. The Town of Ballston will still provide money to support the Summer Rec program because it provides great job training for kids and because more parents called about that program than any other program in the Town.

Mr. Blowers moved and Ms. Herkenham seconded a motion to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline St. Onge
Clerk of the Board