

DATE: December 14, 2010
WHERE HELD: High School

KIND OF MEETING: Regular
PRESIDING OFFICER: John Blowers

**MARGINAL
NOTATIONS**

MEMBERS PRESENT:
John Blowers
William Farmer
Elizabeth Herkenham
James Maughan
Lee-Ann Mertzlufft
Joe Pericone

MEMBERS ABSENT:
Patre Kuziak

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jim Schultz, Jacqueline St.Onge, Christy Multer, and 30 others.

President John Blowers called the Board meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Pericone moved and Ms. Herkenham seconded the approval of the consent agenda, which included the minutes of the November 23, 2010 regular meeting of the Board of Education and the authorization of a film.

Motion carried 6-0

Privilege of the Floor

Mia Scirocco-Rhodes was present as a Charlton Heights parent (also a teacher at North Colonie) to voice concerns about the lice outbreak at Charlton Heights. She read an excerpt from the policy at Charlton Heights and feels there is an epidemic and that 30% of third grade students have been infected with head lice. As a parent she wants to know what the policy is and how is it being addressed. She is concerned about children sitting next to each on the bus and questions whether children with lice or nits should be allowed back in the classroom. She cited information from several health organizations and feels that recommended practices are not working to control this problem. She doesn't feel it is acceptable for a school to still be dealing with this after more than three months. She has spoken to other parents and all feel that they need to feel that it is safe to send their children to school. She would like to have this concern addressed immediately.

Ed Murray from Junior Achievement attended the Board meeting to hear the presentation on Financial Literacy. Junior Achievement has been a long term partner with BH-BL and he wanted to thank the district and teachers for their focus on financial literacy. He feels BH-BL is a model for many other schools. He thanked the parents for their support of the programs and students. Junior Achievement is ready to assist the district in any way to support the students and promote 21st century skills.

Program Review – 21st Century Skills: Financial Literacy

Rick Evans spoke about the 21st century framework committee and the document developed to move these skills forward. He gave a brief overview of the topics and presenters before turning it over to Charlton Heights Principal Tim Sinnenberg. Tim spoke about the Junior Achievement program which is provided for 100% of the students. Volunteers come in to share their work experiences with students. He spoke about the types of activities at each grade level. All of the information is available as a handout. Some of the volunteers are high school students. This is a great example of a partnership within the community.

John Antoski, K-12 Department Head, spoke about Social Studies and said that it's not just about history. The curriculum includes economics and then economics teacher Mike Mosall presented. He gave an example of a real life research project given to students to allow them to gain insight into the practical aspect of economic theory. He gave specific examples of student projects. Besides gaining experience with fundraising activities, students are also involved in community service. The second example that he gave is called Econ Island. Students work with theoretical concepts with hands on activities. Concepts include scarcity, opportunity costs, fiscal and monetary policy to name a few.

Renee Tolan, also an economics teacher, spoke about student activities. Students are asked to create a monthly budget and learn how to manage their budget. Students are assigned occupations and salaries and then they must find an apartment, transportation, heat and utility expenses, and live within their means. Next they learn how to read a paycheck stub and understand all of the deductions. They also learn the differences between regressive and progressive taxes, as well as how to file their taxes. They also have a section on Money and Banking.

Brad Thomas, an economics teacher, spoke about KIVA. KIVA is a charity that provides financial opportunities to people in poverty. He thought it would be a good project for students to become involved in. They started with a garage sale on Amazon and students learned about all aspects of selling. Then the proceeds are used to fund KIVA. They become entrepreneurs funding entrepreneurs. It is also a lesson on Internet activities and how they impact the economy.

Rie Posillico, CTE Director began by introducing her department. Rie provided some startling statistics about high school students and their credit history, number of credit cards, monthly balances, and how they spend their money. Two of her teachers presented next. Joyce Brown, an eighth grade teacher presented on some student activities and gave an example of how students develop a monthly budget. Students determine their monthly income and expenses by doing their own research. She read some comments from students that expressed what they felt they had learned from this lesson. Her second activity was a banking lesson.

Stephanie Andrejcek talked about the Stock Market Game, one of her student activities. The lesson simulates a stock exchange experience with trading, investments, risk assessments, and diversification of portfolios. The Stock Market Game involves approximately 75 schools. BH-BL has 25 teams that participate in the competition. These courses are designed to give students the financial literacy tools that they will need for the future.

At the end of the presentations Board members asked some follow up questions. Is there equity across the whole student population? Are these courses electives? With new types of careers, does the program allow you to introduce the new 21st century jobs that are out there?

ACTION ITEMS:

Mr. Pericone moved and Mr. Farmer seconded the acceptance of the Financial Reports.
Motion carried 6-0

Ms. Herkenham moved and Mr. Pericone seconded the approval of the extension of the leave of absence of Erin Hogan, Guidance Counselor at the High School, effective 2/1/11-5/31/11; the approval of the following substitute teacher appointments: Patricia Alvaro, Jodie Barber, Karen Board, Jason Brewer, Nathaniel Coyne, Lauren Crispino, Elizabeth Curran, Karen Dalland, Victoria Duncan-Strain, Mark Eiser, Nester Guardado, Meghan Halley, Katrina Hartman, Tammy Hladun, Karen Hughes, Lorraine Johnston, Joanne Klapp, Rachel Kobza, Jillian Lyons, Jennifer Masker, Simone McGuinness, Tracey McQuay, Sean Merchant, Shelby Natale, Jessica Nevins, Kaitlin Nolan, Jamie O'Malley, Allen Pailley, Lindsay Pesonen, Brock Renfrew, Wilfredo Reyes, Douglas Rice, Jennifer Selke, Daniel Sobel, Karen Stoliker, Karoline Trela, Brittany Wachtel, Jaclyn Whitman
Motion carried 6-0

Ms. Herkenham moved and Mr. Pericone seconded the approval of the civil service personnel action as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.
Motion carried 6-0

Ms. Herkenham moved and Ms. Mertzluft seconded the approval of the Budget Calendar Dates.
Motion carried 6-0

Ms. Mertzluft moved and Mr. Farmer seconded the acceptance of a gift of \$5,000 to the Library Department.
Motion carried 6-0

Mr. Pericone moved and Ms. Herkenham seconded the approval of the Special Athletic Competition request for the Indoor Track Team.
Motion carried 6-0

Mr. Farmer moved and Ms. Mertzluft seconded the approval of the recommendations from the Committee on Special Education.
Motion carried 6-0

Privilege of the Floor Proposal

Board member Will Farmer surveyed surrounding districts regarding their practices to address public comments. He summarized his findings in a written statement. He spoke to eight local Boards. At least four had two sessions of public comment during the meeting. He found very similar formats throughout districts. Will pointed out an interesting practice at Schenectady City School District of holding an informal meeting with Board members prior to the regular meeting. Shenendehowa Central School District has an online tool called Grapevine for communicating with the community. Will provided his suggestions and conclusions regarding privilege of the floor. He talked about speaking as an individual Board member vs. speaking as the whole Board. The Board discussed each of his points. There was some clarification about a second privilege of the floor being the same as the one at the beginning. The point is to allow an opportunity for public comment about something that may have come up during the Board meeting. Elizabeth feels that the practice of not responding until after the research is done is good, but that as a Board we may be slipping by not providing the requested information in a timely manner. As a Board it's important not to engage in debate but rather understand the concern being expressed by the speaker. Joe Pericone voiced a concern about public input after action items have already been presented. The difference between action items and privilege of the floor topics was discussed. Lee-Ann Mertzluft is in favor of having a second privilege of the floor. Will is not

suggesting that the 2nd privilege of the floor be a debate. Perhaps if there is new information that develops during the meeting, then a 2nd privilege of the floor would be allowed. However the session would be kept to a strict time limit and there would be no debate. Lee-Ann proposed that the Board at least try it for a couple of meetings. James suggested if there was a simple answer, then the Board could respond. There is a need for the Board to commit to a follow-up to privilege of the floor questions. He suggested as part of the 1st privilege of the floor to allow Board members and Administration to ask some simple questions. There would still be a need to do the research to get the answers. Joe Pericone wants a decision after privilege of the floor whether the matter will be addressed or not. He doesn't feel the Board should create the expectation that they will address the privilege of the floor topic later in the evening if research needs to be done first.

Budget (Finalizing Budget Objectives / Initial Discussion of Context)

James Maughan led the first discussion on the budget objectives drafted at the Finance meeting. Board members reviewed the draft that has been revised. John Blowers read the objectives and each one was discussed. There was discussion about possibly combining #2 and #3. All agreed that the objectives are acceptable. Next discussion centered on the context for the 2011-12 budget. John read the document introduction and eight specific factors that will impact development of the BH-BL budget. There was discussion about whether teacher contract negotiations and Race to the Top should be included as part of the budget context. It was agreed that they should be included. Superintendent Jim Schultz responded that we have a very good idea of how RTTT will impact us in the next budget year, but it is less clear for the future.

Niskayuna Visit

Board members toured the Niskayuna School District to see the highlights of their recent \$90M bond referendum. Elizabeth Herkenham reported on their wireless infrastructure and connectivity. They had a different mindset for the culture of the school and how their space was reconfigured. Although they still have a traditional technology department, they built their space in a way to incorporate a newer concept of technology and complement their curriculum. Their student community space was designed to allow more opportunities to engage and interact beyond the cafeteria and media space was made more conducive to small group learning. BH-BL could explore similar strategies without engaging in building renovations. Rick Evans reported that Niskayuna had created spaces for teams to meet and seemed to be further along with the technical infrastructure. However now they need to develop their framework for 21st century skills. At Niskayuna their infrastructure is spurring the development of 21st century skills, while at BH-BL our 21st work will guide the infrastructure needs. Joe Pericone reported that Niskayuna's previous bond issue was in 1998 and that they waited a very long period of time before putting out this bond proposition. Our approach of putting up bond propositions on a 5-6 year cycle seems to work better for BH-BL. Joe also talked about their heating and cooling projects. John Blowers was impressed with the server room and that the building has been renovated with a strategy for capacity to accommodate the latest technology,

Reports & Communications

- Lee-Ann Mertzlufft had a legislative task force meeting prior to tonight's Board meeting and there were two new members in attendance. One of the new members, Patrick Ziegler, will be Chris Gibson's education point person and Lee-Ann hopes to bring more attention to the issues concerning BH-BL.
- Will Farmer attended the CAPSBA meeting and found it to be informative. The format was speed networking. He also attended the Middle School PTA meeting and they welcomed Colleen Kane as the new Middle School principal. There was low attendance and topics included the honors award with the school lunch program, walking a marathon program, Rachel's challenge at the High School. They mentioned an anti-bullying task force.
- Jackie St. Onge participated in a State Aid Webinar to discuss current aid formulas and projections. She is exploring potential cost savings for employer based health plans for retirees ages 55-64 through the Early Retiree Reinsurance Program. This initiative is available for a limited time only as part of the comprehensive health care reform under the Affordable Care Act. Jackie discussed the New York Association for Pupil Transportation's legislative agenda and gave copies to Board members. She also described an initiative from our athletic department to participate in a program that would make donations towards our athletic program similar to those being done with local supermarkets.
- Rick Evans discussed a draft of the charge for the 21st century committee and a proposed timeline. Elizabeth Herkenham asked whether we might want to ask for participation from three parent representatives from the High School, Middle School, and Elementary schools.
- Jim Schultz spoke about the recent legislation, Dignity for All, which mandates that school districts develop anti-bullying and anti-discrimination policies. He is putting together a task force with staff representatives from all buildings to put together recommendations. Jim feels that it is critical for us to get parents out to attend Rachel's Challenge at the High School. If parents are not involved then it will be ineffective. We need student, staff, and parental involvement to be effective. The cost of the presentation is being donated by our school attorney Robert Van Vranken because he and his wife (a teacher at Galway Schools) strongly support this initiative. The program at the Middle School is different because it is more appropriate to that age group of students. Jim announced that the calendar committee is beginning to meet

- John Blowers attended the CAPSBA event on December 2 and he acknowledged Board member Elizabeth Herkenham as a key facilitator at that meeting for her strategic partnerships with businesses. A new NYSSBA position paper has been developed and John asked Board members to become familiar with the key points. It is available on their website.

Then the Board returned to a discussion on the lice situation at Charlton Heights Elementary brought up during privilege of the floor earlier that evening. Jim spoke about the steps that had been taken by the District to address the situation. We are currently in the process of developing Administrative Regulations (AR) with consistent guidelines to address the process and how it will be communicated to staff and parents. The school nurses are doing research with the CDC and neighboring districts on recent changes and newer recommendations on treatment. Jim is looking for a parent representative to work on the AR's. There are issues of equity and discrimination that will need to be considered as well as the role of the school nurses. Charlton Heights Principal Tim Sinnenberg discussed the actual procedures that took place during the outbreak this fall. Our school physician will be weighing in on the subject and how to deal with it as well.

Ms. Herkenham moved and Mr. Farmer seconded a move to executive session.

Ms. Herkenham moved and Mr. Farmer seconded a return to regular session.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline St. Onge
Clerk of the Board