

**DATE:** March 23, 2010  
**WHERE HELD:** Stevens

**KIND OF MEETING:** Regular  
**PRESIDING OFFICER:** Joe Pericone

**MARGINAL  
NOTATIONS**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

**John Blowers**  
**Tim Kelliher**  
**Elizabeth Herkenham**  
**Patre Kuziak**  
**Joe Pericone**  
**Robert Speck**

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**James Maughan**

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Jim Schultz, Jacqueline St.Onge, Rick Evans, Christy Multer, and 22 others.

President Joe Pericone called the Board meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Kelliher moved and Ms. Kuziak seconded the approval of the consent agenda, which included the minutes of the March 9, 2010 regular meeting of the Board of Education, the authorization of a film and the acceptance of the Internal Claims Auditor Report.

Motion carried 4-1

**Elizabeth Herkenham arrived at 7:35 PM.**

**Privilege of the Floor**

Jean Foster, President of the Friends of Music program, spoke in support of the music program. Also present were BH-BL students and alumnus who are, or have been actively involved with the arts program at BH-BL. Jean briefly expressed the student sentiment regarding the proposed reductions to the music program. Many of these students have found camaraderie through involvement in the arts and they do well academically. They asked the Board to please take a look at the proposed cuts to these programs and consider the impact on students. They gave examples of the range of students involved in the arts including a student who recently had her sculpture win in competition, is an excellent violinist and does well academically, as well as another student who is on the autistic spectrum and finds communication difficult. The autistic student is able to communicate through music and sings with his classmates in chorus. He says that "music makes my heart feel good." Jean and the students asked the Board to continue to allow all students the opportunity to participate and excel in the program. A student also spoke about the impact that the music program has had on her life and she hopes her siblings have those same opportunities.

**Program Review – Guidance Department**

High School Guidance counselor Russ Weinlein spoke about the guidance program at the High school and the open door policy in their guidance office for students. He spoke about how very important it is for students, parents, and staff to access the department. They serve about 73 students for each grade level that includes a broad range from honor students to special education students. They work with many diverse family backgrounds and they need to be well connected with the students. Quite often they are dealing with mental health and medical concerns that may require dealing with outside agencies as well. Guidance counselors must wear many different hats. They must work as a team with others such as the curriculum team, academic team, administrative team, community team, support teams of nurses, social workers, psychologists, PAT, and the entire guidance team. He provided a calendar of events that described their monthly activities. Next he talked about their daily tasks including parent teacher phone calls and emails, reviewing graduation and diploma requirements, arranging parent teacher conferences, meeting with seniors in jeopardy of not graduating, student meetings, progress checks, academic referrals, and college admission counselors. They also interact with the Pupil Assistance Team (PAT), crisis & suicide intervention, CSE and VESID offices, Child Protective services, and probation. They are just finishing scheduling students' courses for next year and Russ said that sometimes scheduling requires more time due to the personal attention to individual students. He described their involvement in freshman group activities and how they meet again after a couple of months to discuss how the students are doing with the transition from middle school to high school. Guidance gives the Harrington O'Shea interest inventory to all 10<sup>th</sup> graders to explore potential career options, discuss areas of interest and provide information on how the curriculum will need to be structured. They meet with juniors and their parents to review graduation requirements and discuss courses needed, review the college process, standardized testing, review their resumes, financial aid, and scholarships, and provide other resources. For seniors they review their transcripts, talk about the college search and application process, review admission deadlines, letters of recommendations, online applications, resume and college essays. Each guidance counselor also has special duties outlined in the presentation. Russ talked about the software that they used called Naviance and how it is used by parents and students. It provides lots of information for college bound students. He also provided some data statistics for 2008-09 including number of college applications, letters of recommendations, number of college visits, parent teacher conferences, evening programs offered, CSE meetings, emails, etc. Russ gave examples of conference and professional development

opportunities attended by guidance counselors to keep pace with new technologies, businesses, and career opportunities for students. Many activities centered around the college application process. Counselors work with students as a resource for career development and must enhance their knowledge of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills to better understand the needs of today's work force. Also talked about were some external resources available to students such as VOTEC programs, the Career Exploration Internship Program (CEIP), the career EXPO, and important websites. For the future the Guidance Department will continue to expand online resources, college visitations, and addressing the needs of a changing population and community. Board member Elizabeth Herkenham asked if we evaluated the number of students attending four year colleges. John Blowers asked a question regarding the socio economic impact on career decisions for students and whether there are tools available to evaluate the opportunities. There was some discussion about two year versus four year degrees and applicable career opportunities. Are the non college bound students getting the attention that they need? Yes, they are helped with resumes, military options, and these students often require a more hands on approach to address their individual needs. There was another question about opportunities available for college credits offered at the high school level. College credit offerings are available. Online applications make it easier for students to apply to more schools. Guidance is seeing many more students attending two year colleges than in the past. They described some of the scheduling challenges such as conflicts with singletons and electives. There was a question about how many students end up in learning labs. The response was that they try very hard to limit the number and end up with the minimum number of conflicts. With the challenges of next year's budget, are we looking at the impact for next year on the students and will we have the data to best address our students' needs? Guidance expressed concerns about the impact of cuts to VOTEC and CTE areas due to the students who will be impacted. They rely on these opportunities for those students. How do we compare with other area schools in regard to the number of course offerings? We compare favorably. The next presentation was from the Middle School Guidance team of Lynn Kaminsky, Kevin DeBonis and Tone Chirico. While many similarities exist with the high school guidance, it's a very different world at the Middle School level because of the many students in need of additional support. Middle school students exhibit many types of stresses. When they asked kids what worries them, they came up with a list of stressors. Guidance serves as advocates for all students and they find themselves working with an extensive group of stakeholders and an increasingly diverse student population. There are socio economic differences, disabilities, lifestyle differences and differing values. The increased use of technology makes person to person interactions even more important. They must constantly evaluate and revise programs. Their work begins at the 5<sup>th</sup> grade level with their 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers prior to the transition to Middle School. Next Kevin DeBonis talked about how they function as a guidance team. He used an analogy of a wheel with spokes representing the various groups with whom they interact. The students are the most important followed by parents or caregivers, the High School and elementary schools, other community and staff members. He spoke about 6<sup>th</sup> grade orientation and working with many community groups. The parent caregivers has changed and expanded to include grandparents, guardians, siblings, etc. Kevin described how they address student grades and provide support. He talked about bullying and intervention. Facebook, youtube, and other online activities have an impact on students and require different strategies to address student issues. Their goal is to help student continue learning. He described a transition program to help Middle School students acclimate quickly. They also discussed students who try to harm themselves and require immediate interventions. Guidance serves to involve the parent or caretaker and set up plans to help provide outside help if necessary. There is lots of follow up from the Guidance department. Tone Chirico spoke about the role of the 21<sup>st</sup> century counselor. He provided examples of 6<sup>th</sup> grade activities, 7<sup>th</sup> grade possible career interests, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade where they begin to compose their 9<sup>th</sup> grade schedules and choose electives. He went through the Middle School's calendar of guidance activities and highlighted programs developed at O'Rourke to help with the 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade transition. Tone also described their online booklet, newcomers luncheon, rotary mentoring program, military mailbag project, and crossing over Rt 50 transition program. He discussed the skills identified by the District Strategic Framework Committee and how these 21<sup>st</sup> century skills are being addressed with our students at the middle school level. Tim Kelliher asked if they have adequate tools to address bullying. Typically their response is targeted and specific for individual students however, it becomes more difficult when you're talking about Facebook and other online interactions. Bob Speck asked about the challenges presented by block scheduling at the high school and the modified schedule at the middle school level. Has there been any further study to try to match up with the high school? Guidance has not revisited this issue as a committee however students typically make the adjustment better than the teacher. If both had block scheduling it would provide more consistency for the students. Rick Evans asked them to speak to the increase in anxiety, stress, depression, socio-emotional issues with students. There is a need to provide more education to parents and expand the counselor's role with parents. Guidance counselors feel it is important to know their students' individual needs, develop ways to work with them, provide support and help for them. They try to be proactive and make connections with these kids. They recognize that they can't control what goes on at home, but they can control the school environment which often provides a safe haven for students.

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

Mr. Kelliher moved and Ms. Kuziak seconded the approval of the leave of absence of Mindi Modiano, Psychologist at Charlton Heights/High School, effective 3/17/10; the approval of the temporary appointment of Katherine Kindl, .5 Occupational Therapist at Pashley, effective 3/19/10-6/30/10; the approval of the Volunteer Coaching Assignment of Scott Emerle, Assistant to Varsity Softball; the approval of the substitute teacher/nurse appointments of Joanne

Baldasare, Ame Bucher, Brian Collins, Beth Deitcher, Nicole DeJulio, Caitlin Dempsey, Mary Emminger, Nicole Ferraro, Carla Giovanniello, Matthew Holupko, Thomas Kaiser, Sarah Kowalski, Michael LaMastra, Adam MacIntyre-Ross, April Martin, Mary Judith McCampbell, Josh Merlis, Kristen Nuzback, Kason O'Neil, Poppy Picozzi, Margaret Rockwell, Chelsea Roullier, Rosal Ruediger-Hamilin, Maria Saavedra, Christine Tuxill, Lisa Varley-Ross, Amanda Weires, Karen Whalen, Hollie Woods.

Motion carried 6-0

Mr. Kelliher moved and Ms. Kuziak seconded the approval of the civil service personnel action as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Motion carried 6-0

Mr. Kelliher moved and Ms. Kuziak seconded the acceptance of a Dual Enrollment Application.

Motion carried 6-0

Ms. Herkenham moved and Ms. Kuziak seconded the approval of the recommendations from the Committee on Special Education.

Motion carried 6-0

### **Budget Forum**

John Blowers spoke briefly about the upcoming and final public forum will be held at the O'Rourke Middle School in the auditorium. We will share more specificity with the public about the Superintendent's budget recommendations. We will continue to monitor state level school aid discussions and the forum will again be available online.

Superintendent Schultz talked about upcoming discussions that we will have at the finance committee meeting next week and should there be some restoration of aid, what will we consider. Jim described the structure of the budget forum presentation which will be followed by a short Q&A session. Board members will collect questions on 3 x 5 cards during the presentation. Next we will break into small groups and allow board members to be the primary listeners. These sessions will have neutral facilitators mostly from Capital Region BOCES. Jim talked about the three questions that will be addressed during the breakout sessions. Christy described the process and said that central administration will be available after the forum to answer individual questions. There will be two plans depending on the number of people in attendance for dividing up into breakout rooms. The job of Board members will be as notetakers and listeners. Christy went over the questions and the roles of the facilitators. There will be no report outs at the end. There was some discussion about activities from mid April to mid May to communicate the proposed budget.

### **Reports & Communications**

- Tim Kelliher attended the Education Foundation meeting and they are doing a cookbook as a fundraiser and he encourages all board members to submit their favorite recipes.
- Bob Speck reported on the recent meeting with legislators that he attended along with Elizabeth Herkenham, Lee-Ann Mertlufft and Charlie Morrison. They first attended a NYSSBA meeting about the executive budget analysis. Next they went to the Legislative building where they had a brief meet and greet with Senator Farley. It was followed by a meeting with Farley's legislative staff members where Elizabeth described the Board's lobbying position paper. Bob picked up some materials that he will include in the next packet for Board members to review.
- Elizabeth Herkenham added her comments about their visit to Albany and our legislators. She felt that Tedisco's office did not have a good knowledge base about Wick's law and that it's important to educate them. She did speak a little about collaboration between districts and would like to explore sending some followup information to their office regarding the difficulties with aid when transportation consolidation is being considered. She was part of a professional development opportunity on bio technology and two BH-BL teachers were also participating in this activity. Elizabeth also discussed a HVCC grant and the impact of this funding towards building connections with secondary levels.
- John Blowers reported that the legislative task force met tonight and they are in the midst of a letter writing campaign. Handouts will be available at the forum. He attended the play at the Middle School this past weekend and purchased his tickets online. He was impressed with how well it worked. Today he was at NYSBBA headquarters in Latham to explore expanded online activities.
- Jim Schultz is reminding families to fill out their census forms. Tuesday night Jim Schultz and John Blowers will be going to Capital Region BOCES for a meeting on cost savings strategies for school districts. He told the Board that we have a potential buyer for the Hostetter building who visited last week and expressed some interest. On Saturday the OM team from the High School is moving on in the competition.
- Joe Pericone attended the PTA council meeting where they are also looking for recipes. They also talked about their dinner, the April 16<sup>th</sup> production of Wonderland by Theater for Children doing Wonderland and selling pies as a fundraiser. He also attended the District Communication Council and the music concert last night.

- Rick Evans spoke about the staff development activities scheduled for March 26<sup>th</sup>. He and other staff members will be going to Ballston Spa CSD for the STEM conference.
- Jackie St.Onge reported on vandalism that occurred over the weekend at the Hostetter Building. A skylight over the gymnasium was broken. The incident was reported to the Glenville Police and kids were caught on video cameras bringing bicycles onto the roof. Dan Diggins is preparing a cost estimate of damages for the police. Jackie attended a school risk management seminar sponsored by Utica National entitled Managing Your School's Risk in a Tough Economic Climate. Two presentations were made that dealt with the challenges facing schools in today's economic environment. The first was on effective and efficient leadership. The second presentation by an attorney was on abolishing positions, lay-offs and recalls. The presenter provided significant legal developments in these areas and relevant case law decisions to help schools make better decisions when faced with layoffs.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:57 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline St. Onge  
Clerk of the Board