

*Filed subject to approval*

Easton Board of Education  
Meeting  
March 8, 2016  
Minutes

Board of Education: Bindelglass, Chieda, Hicks, Parker, Underberger  
Administration: McMorran, Sullivan, Pierson Ugol, Edwards, Freeston, Fox-Santora, Brownstein, Burke  
Others: more than 50 members of the staff and community for the student presentations, seven members of the public stayed for the remainder of the meeting.

Mr. Parker called the meeting to order at 8:25 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Motion; move that the Easton Board of Education accept the minutes of the February 10, 2016 meeting as submitted. Underberger, Bindelglass. Approved. 4-0-1. Mr. Hicks abstained.**

STUDENT PRESENTATION

The students of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade Ambassadors thanked the board members for what they do for the schools and students. Each presented a token of appreciation.

The Helen Keller Middle School Select Choir performed a song that demonstrated their vocal abilities.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Hicks expressed his concerns about the Health Insurance claims, and the recent reversal of the trend. He asked if the upward trend was expected to continue for the remainder of the year and if the board should review the issue.

Dr. Underberger spoke in agreement with the suggestion made by Andy Kachele at the Board of Finance meeting prior to this meeting. The suggestion was to explore the potential of having parents opt out of transportation completely, and possibility of offering a financial incentive to do that. Mrs. Sullivan will explore the option; she added that changing to smaller vehicles is also being explored.

Dr. Underberger thanked all who were in attendance at the Board of Finance meeting and for their support of the Board of Education budget. The next meeting with the Board of Finance is March 22, 2016.

Mrs. Chieda also thanked for those in attendance, for taking the time to come to the meetings.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON 2016-1017 BUDGET

Technical edits: Mrs. Sullivan had only one technical edit, an \$11,000 addition for the septic system. The State has informally approved the project, but they will require the new tank to be raised higher. The cost of the change is \$11,000.

Dr. McMorran reported the Redding Board of Education currently stands at 0.0% increase. The Region 9 Board of Education will finalize their budget next week. The budget is currently at 1.15%, but he believes the board will finalize the budget somewhere between 0.0% and 0.5%.

Discussion followed. Mrs. Chieda expressed a concern about the fluctuating teaching positions, the adding and deleting of positions over the past few years, creating an unstable environment. Mr. Parker commented that if the budget is to be reduced below the current 1.26%, there would need to be reductions in World Language or Discrete Math, and a change in class sizes.

No decisions on the budget were made.

#### SPECIAL EDUCATION PRESENTATION

Ms. Edwards provided a presentation to the board, Legal Standards in Special Education. She followed that with a presentation, Building the Special Education Budget, which included all the items and costs that are included in the budget. Discussion followed.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Samuel Staples Elementary School: Mrs. Fox-Santora thanked Art teacher Amy Traggianese for helping the students with the board appreciation gifts.

Special Services Report: Ms. Edwards provided her written report.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction: Dr. Pierson Ugol provided a written report. She also reported that the State has eliminated the student English Language Arts performance test. This was a complex 3-day test. The Math performance test is still in place. Dr. Pierson Ugol also reported that the Tri-State Consortium committee revisited the schools to review their visit of two years ago. They had very positive comments on what was being done to produce authentic work.

Director of Finance: Mrs. Sullivan reported the Health Insurance Committee will be meeting soon to review all options for health insurance coverage.

Superintendent: Dr. McMorran provided copies of a publication by the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents highlighting the group's position on education, budgets, special education, personalized learning, and evaluation of administration and teachers.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

Long Range Planning: Dr. Underberger announced that a meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 14, 2016 at 7 pm. He, along with Mrs. Bobroske and Mrs. Chieda, will represent the Board of Education on the committee. This will be a public meeting open to the public.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Caroline Oppenheim, Hunting Ridge Road: Mrs. Oppenheim spoke of her support for the current proposed budget with a 1.26% increase. She urged the board not to make further reductions.

Claire Wilks: Mrs. Wilks challenged the board to make the case clear on what the budget means to the children, and the impact of continually reducing the budgets.

Anne Manusky, Morning Glory Road: Mrs. Manusky suggested that members of the audience become more involved at the State level, and learn more about the unfunded mandates being forced on the towns.

Celeste DeAngelis, Virginia Street: Mrs. DeAngelis commented that the various town meetings are not well publicized and the community does not have enough information.

Connie Seo, Fieldstone Drive: Mrs. Seo agreed that the meetings are not well publicized.

Unidentified: This person asked if the Board of Finance asked for a lower budget. Mr. Parker responded that they asked what the impact would be with further budget reductions.

Unidentified: This person asked if the other town departments were also coming in with budgets with no increases.

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Dr. Underberger suggested further consideration be given to having these board meetings videoed and posted on the website. He added that there is a need to educate the Board of Finance members, suggesting that letters and emails to the members of the BoF would be helpful. Dr. Underberger asked that presentations, like the one given tonight on Special Education, be posted on the school website.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education adjourn the meeting. Underberger, Hicks. Approved. Unanimous.**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 pm

Submitted by Dan Underberger, Acting Secretary

Recorded by Mary Maday