

Filed subject to approval

Regular Meeting
Easton Board of Education
January 12, 2015
Minutes

Attendance:

Board of Education: Parker, Bobroske, Hicks, Horowitz, Peskay, Underberger

Administration: Josefsberg, Pierson Ugol, Sullivan, Friedlander, Freeston, Fox Santora, Brownstein, Kaplan, Burke

Others: nine members of the community

Mr. Parker opened the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education amend the minutes of the December 15, 2014 meeting as follows: under Discussion and Action on Workers Compensation Loss Analysis – change Mr. Horowitz to Mr. Dunsby. Hicks, Horowitz. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the minutes of the December 15, 2014 meeting as amended. Bobroske, Hicks. Approved. Unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT – None

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

DISCUSSION OF 2015-2016 OPERATING BUDGET

Dr. Josefsberg provided a history of the Easton budget, from 2008 (baseline) through 2015, along with a three year period moving average. The adopted budget for each year has been adjusted for and compared to the NY/metropolitan consumer price index and the employment cost index for educational employees. Looking back to 2008 to now, the budget has been on the mark in relation to those two indices. Declining enrollment and staffing history were detailed. Dr. Josefsberg referred to a slide presentation given at last April's Town Meeting and reviewed priorities identified last year; to sustain enhancements from the prior 3 years.

The 2015/2016 proposed budget is \$15,787,260 with staff compensation as a major driver. Other drivers include health insurance, curriculum/professional development, operations/physical plant and transportation. Greater appropriations are being requested in each area. Dr. Josefsberg provided a summary of budget elements and indicated the proposed budget does not assume two-tier busing. Class sizes, proposed staff reductions and additions, and special education were reviewed. Yearly costs related to the Center for Children with Special Needs (BASES program) were discussed, with a decrease reflected in the 2015-2016 budget. Dr. Josefsberg indicated the district is seeking to fund a BCBA district employee against this decrease. The budget reflects an increase in curriculum for world language and STEM resources, as well as an increase in Integrated Language Arts and Science/Math Technology. Proposed capital improvements at Keller were also reviewed.

A question and answer session ensued, with the Board requesting the following:

- A clearer breakdown with regard to staffing, including contractually increases, step vs base and degree changes

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- As consulting in sped comes to an end, how that will impact the SPED budget;
- The number of students in the BASES program;
- A priority list regarding capital improvements; and
- More information regarding two-tier busing.

TOWN OF EASTON WORKPLACE SAFETY PLAN

First Selectman Adam Dunsby discussed the need for the Town to develop a safety plan, noting most towns do have a plan in place, but Easton does not. A plan is currently being created, with the assistance of CIRMA and the insurance consultant, which has been reviewed with the Health and Safety Committee. Mr. Dunsby will forward the plan and is asking for review and comments. It is hoped the Board of Selectmen can adopt a town-wide safety plan by late February/early March.

POLICY REVIEW – FIRST READING

Policy 3542.33: Food Sales Other Than National Lunch Program

Mrs. Pierson Ugol provided some history – over the past 18 months, the Wellness Committee has met on several occasions with the most time spent discussing policies. Some time ago, Easton, Redding and Region 9 submitted health policies to a review group out of Yale known as WELLSAT, for input. We have considered their recommendations; additionally, copies of policies were distributed to parents via ListServ. The committee met a number of times to discuss revisions; the policy then went to the Tri-Board Policy Committee for review. Dave Kennedy attends every Wellness committee Meeting and actively participates. Mrs. Pierson Ugol noted the many wording changes are in relation to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids legislation.

Policy 6142.101 – School Nutrition and Physical Activity

Follows same format as previous policy; most word changes are in relation to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids legislation. Amount of physical education instruction and daily recess and physical activity now more specific.

The Board accepted the policies for a first reading.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Samuel Staples Elementary School: Mrs. Fox Santora reported that Hector Hernandez, school custodian of 15 years, retired at the end of December. A new custodian is in place – Antonio Valenzuela. Second annual National Geography Bee was held before break – Trajan Keane, grade 5 student, will advance to the state competition. Another Kindergarten student was enrolled before the break, bringing the number to 17. We also have a new grade 2 student and 2 more coming – one in grade 1 and one in grade 2. We currently know of 63 students who are eligible to begin Kindergarten next year.

Helen Keller Middle School: Keller also had a Geography Bee prior to recess – the winner, Liam Feltman will take an online test to determine if he qualifies for the State competition. Last week, the PTA hosted a program presented by return speaker, Kurt Oestreicher, who works in the field of internet safety. The program focused on home internet and social media safety and was well attended (35+ parents). Mrs. Kaplan invited all to the instrument concert which will take place this Wednesday, January 14 beginning at 7:00 p.m. at Keller and the choral concert will take place Wednesday, January 21 beginning at 7:00 p.m. at Staples

Easton Special Education: Mrs. Friedlander reported sped referrals remain stable. Training was conducted this month with Redding staff – brought in IEP Direct to provide a refresher course. The Center for Children with Special Needs conducts training each professional development day for the

paraprofessionals in both Easton and Redding. Several staff members have volunteered to assist with the training.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction: Mrs. Pierson Ugol reported the district is about to begin the 2015 standardized testing season. This year is the first year of the Smarter Balanced Assessment which requires a great deal of coordination. Chrome books will be utilized. CMT and CAPT will continue in Science only. The electronic student-lead portfolio pilot will begin, headed by Heather Whalen at Staples and Annie Moore at Keller. The focus is for students to select moments in learning that might be captured as something they are proud of, or a struggle. Students will narrate their story of that experience for a real audience.

Director of Finance and Operations: Mrs. Sullivan reported that November claims are \$143,000, which was less than October, but more than the last 5 years of averages. Average monthly claims YTD are approximately \$177,000 (more than budget of \$164,000). Pool is running 85-86% of Anthem's projections. Update on bus taxes – transcript from October trial received and the lawyers have 30 days to file briefs, due February 2. The judge can then pass a decision.

Superintendent: Dr. Josefsberg reported the two-tier busing presentation elicited some vocal opposition in Redding. It would be premature and counterproductive to vote during the February cycle; it was decided we would defer voting in Redding at the Board level to sometime in March/April/May. This will allow the community more time to sort through the collective thinking. Same fervor has not arisen in Easton; the Board may choose to act on the question regarding two-tier bus savings, but for the moment we are continuing to build FAQ page on our website.

LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE UPDATE

Mrs. Bobroske reported the committee has not met since the December Board meeting. Meeting was scheduled for January 21, which will need to be changed due to the HKMS concert. The goal is to brainstorm a working document that touches on options. Will be checking in with Redding counterparts on their status and future joint meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH UPDATE

Mr. Hicks reported the committee has not met since the December Board meeting. 650 responses to the survey were received and numerous focus group meetings were held. The position has been posted, with a January 26 deadline. The committee will meet at that time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Carolyn Oppenheim

25 Hunting Ridge Road

Has a Kindergarten student coming in. Two years ago, in her daughter's Kindergarten year, 68 children started out and enrollment ended up at 84/85. If this were to happen again, how would it be handled and how would it be addressed to the BoF. Where did we get the money from for the Kindergarten teacher this year?

Beverly Dacy

Redding Road

Regarding enrollment – it would be helpful to conduct a survey as to who owns, who rents and who lives with family. We do not know who is here short term or long term. With regard to the common core, Mrs. Dacy expressed her concern that the Board needs to discuss the data mining and consider a presentation with parents so they are clear about the data being gathered. Mrs. Dacy expressed concern with what will be in a database in the future. Urged the Board to share with the parents.

Stephanie Christy

Speaking on behalf of PTA's EdCom committee asked if for the purpose of speaking to parents, can you break out the data regarding the 2.5% increase - how much spent on children as well as salary increases.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT - None

ADJOURNMENT

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

Approved. Unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20PM

Submitted by Regina Bobroske

Recorded by Wendy Brighindi