

EASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING
Helen Keller Middle School - Media Center
November 9, 2021 – 7:30 p.m.
Minutes

INSTR # M2021000879 RECD 11/18/2021 08:40:03 AM
CHRISTINE HALLORAN TOWN CLERK EASTON CT

ATTENDANCE

Board members: Stinson, Parker, Chieda, De Jesus, Hicks, Wible
Administration: McKinnon, Pierson Ugol, Petruzzelli
Others: 25 members of the staff and public, and the recording secretary.

CALL TO ORDER

J. Stinson called the Easton Board of Education Regular meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Minutes from October 12, 2021 Easton Board of Education Regular meeting and October 28, 2021 Easton, Redding, Region 9 Boards of Education Special Meeting.

J. Stinson asked for any corrections or revisions to the Minutes, hearing none for the October 12, 2021 meeting, they were deemed approved by unanimous consent. J. Stinson asked for any corrections or revisions to the Minutes, hearing only that R. Hicks asked for his prepared statement from the Board Comment section of the October 28, 2021 meeting be entered in its entirety into the Minutes. The statement is as follows: An Easton board member called Easton residents who are opposed to anti-racism and DEI work openly racist. A hateful and defamatory comment. That roughly 1/3 of the Tri-board contingent are members of this same Facebook group. Since no one pushed back on the comment, I questioned how those same people can keep their social agenda out of the work of the BOE which is focused on All Kids, All parents and All residents. The Minutes were deemed approved with the addition of the prepared statement by unanimous consent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Anne Manusky, Morning Glory Lane, said that she did not make the comments attributed to her in the Minutes of the October 12, 2021 BOE meeting. She reiterated her comments from the last meeting stating that D. Wible's employer presents a conflict of interest and that she should resign from the Board.

Rocky Sullivan, Jesse Lee Drive, said that the company for whom D. Wible works does not do business with the District and therefore there is no conflict.

Agnes Bebon, Black Rock Turnpike, said that DEI does need to be in the District, and recalled that she and her brother have told some tough stories at past BOE meetings and that many of those stories happened in this school building.

Dana Benson, Pond Road, said that some BOE members' behavior is defensive.

Allison Bonoff, Gregory Farm Road, asked for the Zoom meeting format to be reinstated because many members of the community are excluded when the meeting is in person; commended Dr. Clapp for having

an evening Coffee with the Principal; said she was disappointed that the math discussion will be held mid-day; said Google emails need more information in them; and asked that more homework be assigned.

Lou DiPietro said that he echoes A. Bonoff's comment to reinstate Zoom meetings. He said that Special Services has been difficult, but that the BOE has been a great sounding board across partisan lines. He thanked Jeff Parker and Devon Wible for their help. He said that when we politicize, our kids lose out.

Allison Bonoff, Gregory Farm Road, said that she noticed that the Public Comment portion had been taken away from the end of the meeting; she said that if Public Comment can only occur once, then it should be at the end of the meeting.

Beverly Dacey, Redding Road, said that BOE members have been making disparaging remarks about her that were uncalled for and could negatively affect her as a local business owner. The BOE has spent a lot of time on non-education focus and they need to shift focus back to academics.

Mimi Jacobs, Morningside Drive, said thank you to the BOE for all that they do and that she supports them, and that the BOE works well together and have always had our kids as number 1. She said she recognizes that the BOE has been distracted by other issues.

Bob Santangeli, Honeysuckle Lane, said that he was opposed to the DEI survey because of some of the questions on it. He also did not appreciate being labeled by certain board members as a racist because of his stand on the survey. He said he would like everyone to get back to the kids.

Anne Manusky, Morning Glory, read a letter from Maureen Hanley who could not be at the meeting.

The main points in her letter were as follows:

1. Believes there is a double standard applied to consecutive voices by those who have a progressive outlook.
2. Controversial email forwarding discussion should be moot as all BOE emails to and from the public are "public documents". As such, no one can expect any of these correspondences to be private.
3. Board members' job is to ensure all children get a good education.
4. Jeff Parker was the only board member answering parent emails and phone calls.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

R. Hicks said that there is some validity to having two sections of public comment.

J. Parker said that he was pleased to see so many people here tonight and that we will need the public's help and support moving forward.

J. Chieda said that the conflict of D. Wible's employer is not a conflict at all and that her employer has nothing at all to do with ER9. She said that D. Wible's employment makes her an important part of the BOE.

D. Wible said that it is sad that her comments, from an emotional Facebook post from months ago, are now being taken out of context. She said that it's important as a community to have discussions and come together, and that she will continue to serve as honorably as possible for the students in our District.

J. de Jesus thanked the public for their comments and said let's work past everything, put the past behind us and work for our children.

REPORTS FROM ADMINISTRATIVE

Samuel Staples Elementary School Principal, Kim Fox Santora, was unable to attend the meeting due to contract tracing she needed to conduct.

Helen Keller Middle School Principal, Dr. Steven Clapp, reported: the staff viewed the documentary "Screener," during a recent professional development day, with Dr. Rushtin being there for a Q & A session; there's a parent coffee via Zoom on November 10 at 8:00pm; the lockers are opening back up for student use; video morning announcements have begun; the "KED Talks" program has begun with two community members creating a KED video so far; the theatre department will be presenting "Annie Jr." with a production date of March 2022; the HKMS enrollment is at 319 students; and that the Park & Rec Department had done a great job cleaning up some things on school grounds. BOE members had questions about the status of a School Resource Officer at HKMS and interventions. Dr. McKinnon replied that the District is considering the contract for a SRO, but that there is currently a security presence on campus. Dr. Clapp said that there is a higher number of students participating in interventions, but that it is too early to gage their progress.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Stephanie Pierson Ugol, reported: an elementary math information presentation was held on November and was recorded; the middle school math information presentation on November 11 will also be recorded; the ER9 health curriculum will be discussed at an ER9 Joint Curriculum Committee meeting in December; an analysis of the DEI survey was sent to the DEI Task Force and will be posted on the District website soon; bullying and harassment policies for ER9 were revised; and, an ER9 climate website will be published later in November.

Director of Finance & Operations, Scott Petruzzelli, reported that an old Budget Object Summary report had inadvertently been attached to tonight's packet of materials. He said that the correct report would be uploaded to the District website the next day.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: OVERVIEW OF 2022-2023 BUDGET PROCESS

J. Stinson presented a December to March timeline for the 2022-2023 budget process; the timeline is the same as was used for work on the 2021-2022 budget. A discussion followed that included: how well the timeline worked last year, whether or not the timeline aligns with Redding and Region 9, concern for Dr. McKinnon's workload of three budgets., A thorough review of the use of federal grant money this year needs to take place prior to the budget process beginning to ensure all revenue is accounted for when the Superintendent's budget is due to the BOEs may be later this year, more time for the Superintendent's budget to as both the Superintendent and Director of Finance started their employment after the school year started, transparency to the public, a possible Saturday morning budget workshop with all three BOEs, and, when the town Board of Finance comes to the BOE meeting to present the town position.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: DISTRICT AND SCHOOL GOALS FRAMEWORK

Dr. McKinnon presented a report on District & School Goals Framework by first stating that data rarely leads to action if it's not connected to a framework of strategies. He said the priorities for 2021-2022 are: High Impact Instructional Strategies, Inspiring Student Outcomes, Students Owning the Learning Process,

School Climate & Safety, and Social Emotional Learning. Dr. McKinnon said priorities are selected if they are research tested, are at the instructional core, and are focused, coherent, synergistic, discussed, understood and measured. He said the next steps are to build understanding with faculty and leaders on priority areas and to develop goals and action steps. Dr. Pierson Ugol added that the building staff are working on their goals.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

J. Chieda said that while she wants to hear from the public, she was disappointed to hear the things said at tonight's meeting. She said that the BOE needs to do a better job at communicating that they (the board) has moved on.

J. Stinson said that we have amazing people here and that we are ready to move on.

R. Hicks said that people will stop when we re-focus on education.

ADJOURNMENT

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education meeting be adjourned. (Hicks, Wible).
Approved. Unanimous.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Submitted by Jeff Parker
Secretary, Easton Board of Education

Recorded by
Sarah Ota