

*Filed subject to approval*

Easton Board of Education  
Meeting  
March 10, 2015  
Minutes

Attendance:

Board of Education: Bobroske (7:32 pm), Hicks, Horowitz, Parker, Peskay (7:40 pm), Underberger  
Administration: Josefsberg, Sullivan, Pierson Ugol, Friedlander, Freeston, Fox Santora, Kaplan, Burke  
Others: 17 members of the staff and community, and a representative of the Easton Courier

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education accept the minutes of the February 10, 2015 meeting as submitted. Underberger, Horowitz. Approved. Unanimous.**

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education accept the minutes of the February 11, 2015 meeting as submitted. Underberger, Hicks. Approved. Unanimous.**

Mrs. Bobroske arrived, 7:32 pm

Dr. Peskay arrived, 7:40 pm

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul Shortt: Mr. Shortt expressed his support for his child's need for an advanced math class and the discussion of the transportation to/from Joel Barlow High School for a math class.

Nicole Solis: Ms. Solis, Easton Education Association, read a letter from the EEA regarding the proposal to move to a 2-Tier bus system. The EEA Union membership is concerned about how the issues of dropping off/picking up the children at different times will be handled at the schools, a potential change in staff working conditions and potential staff financial hardships with a change in start/ending times. She stressed that the Union membership was willing to work with the Board of Education and administration to resolve these issues.

Laura Wheatly: Mrs. Wheatly stated that she is not convinced that there will not be issues on the buses with K-8 students. She added that she remains convinced that cursive handwriting should receive more instructional time.

Cathy Thompson, Mile Common Drive: Mrs. Thompson expressed her concerns about the 2-tier busing proposal, primarily the length of the bus route.

Susan LaBarbera: Mrs. LaBarbera expressed her concern about the proposed reduction in art education.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON TWO-TIER BUSING PROPOSAL

Mrs. Sullivan provided information on proposed 2-Tier bus routes, timing and number of children. For the current year, the range is 19-44 minutes, with an average of 29 minutes for Helen Keller students. For Samuel Staples students, the range is 28-50 minutes with an average of 35 minutes. The proposed 2-tier average route length is approximately 48 minutes with an average of 38 to 61 minutes. Discussion followed.

The cost savings of changing to a 2-Tier system is estimated to be \$80,000 (\$20,000 in fuel and \$60,000 in labor). The labor cost savings is dependent on negotiations with the bus company. Mrs. Bobroske expressed her concern that the real cost savings benefit is not known. Dr. Underberger noted that a change to the 2-Tier bus system will need to be made at some point because of the enrollment numbers, but he questioned whether this was the year to do it.

The Board of Education requested additional information on the cost savings, especially the labor costs, the bus ridership new plan versus current plan, and a plan for the start finish at both schools and how the extra 15 minutes would be used. Dr. Underberger added that the board also needs to communicate with the EEA and understand and address their concerns.

No decision was reached. Mrs. Sullivan noted that a decision could be made as late as June and the change could be implemented in the fall.

#### DISCUSSION OF THE 2015-16 OPERATING BUDGET

The proposed budget with a 1.70% increase was adjusted to bring the increase down to 1.58%

Adjustments included:

1. Removal of the Keller lunch recess aid
2. Replacement of transportation for student to Joel Barlow High School for math class, leaving \$5,000 for a solution to meet those needs
3. Reduction in salary for a teacher on extended leave
4. Addition to Capital Fund

Following discussion, a motion was put forward.

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education adopt a new 2015-16 Operating budget of \$15,646,592, representing a 1.58% increase over the current year budget. Underberger, Hicks. Approved. Unanimous.**

#### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Samuel Staples Elementary School: Mrs. Fox Santora reported on a successful concert. The Chew Crew is planning a Rainbow Day for the cafeteria with activities that will encourage students to build or buy lunches with foods of many different colors. She also thanked the PTA for their continued support of the HOTS School program.

Helen Keller Middle School: Mrs. Kaplan reported the school play performance is this week. She noted that four students have been accepted for participation in the Western Regional Music Program. Both Samuel Staples and Helen Keller are sending students to the State Geography Bee.

Special Services: Mrs. Friedlander reported that the annual review process is underway and summer school plans for students are being finalized.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction: Mrs. Pierson Ugol facilitated the first meeting of the Technology Advisory Committee to oversee K-12 curriculum-based technology goals and action plan. A State Department of Education grant for \$10,000 has been received to begin K-12 math assessment item analysis with the math leadership term, with a goal of reducing testing and increasing instruction. That work needs to be completed by June 30, 2015.

Director of Finance: Mrs. Sullivan reported health insurance claims were up for February, and she anticipates the trend will continue. The Transfer Report was reviewed. The Year-to-date report shows the

first payment received for Excess Cost reimbursement. The amount was greater than anticipated; the budgeted number was 70%, the actual received is closer to 80%. On the Bethel transportation fleet tax issue, the rebuttal briefs were filed yesterday. The judge for the matter now has 120 days to make a decision.

Superintendent: Dr. Josefsberg commented the testing window for the Smarter Balanced Assessments will begin next week. He encouraged parents with questions to refer to the resources on the State Department of Education website for information and answers.

#### WASTEWATER PERMIT RENEWAL

Mr. Horowitz reported he and Mrs. Sullivan met to review the issues with the septic system at Samuel Staples Elementary School. The DEEP requirements have changed with regard to the pond associated with the septic system. Presentations on potential solutions will be made at the March 23 meeting. He will have further information for the board at the next meeting.

#### SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Hicks reported that interviews were conducted and the Committee has narrowed the field to one candidate. Negotiations on contract terms with that candidate will begin.

#### LONG RANGE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mrs. Bobroske reported the Committee is meeting again on March 16<sup>th</sup> and is working toward formation of a report for the May meeting.

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Parker reported the SSES solar panel installation of ground mounted panels at the north end of the field at the rear of the building is set to move forward. Easton Planning and Zoning approved the system at their February 9, 2015 meeting, but the issues with the septic system may have some impact on the installation plan.

Mr. Parker also noted that he, Dr. Underberger and Mr. Hicks will be a team for the Trivia Bee on March 24, 2015. He thanked the PTA for their planning a celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of Helen Keller Middle School.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Cindy Shortt: Mrs. Short commented on the need for a plan for her child for a math class that is appropriate. She expressed her concern that an online or a Skype alternate would not be the equivalent of participating in the classroom with other students. Mr. Shortt added that he had a quote from a taxi service that could provide transportation from Barlow back to HKMS for \$4, 500.

Ann Manusky, Moring Glory Drive: Mrs. Manusky asked that the Superintendent provide parents with information on the Smarter Balanced testing program, the purpose, how the tests will be administered, the hours and days of testing, how the data will be used, and how the data will be used outside of the district.

Shannon Barnett: Mrs. Barnett asked what items on the Capital List were reduced. Mr. Parker responded that the painting and water fountains were eliminated. Mrs. Barnett commented on the importance of good functioning water fountains, especially as the weather gets warmer.

Unidentified. This person commented that the savings from changing to a 2-Tier bus system may mean retainage of other items in the budget.

Kathy Thompson: Mrs. Thompson thanked the board for their thoughtful consideration of the 2-Tier bus system. She added her support for the Art program at Samuel Staples Elementary School.

Dr. Underberger urged members of the public to email or contact Board of Finance members with their feelings on the budget. He also acknowledged that two Board of Finance members commended Mrs. Pierson Ugol for her curriculum work.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education recess to executive session for a Grievance Hearing Filed by CSEA SEIU Local, 2001 CTW, Easton Non-Certified Staff. Underberger, Hicks. Approved. Unanimous.**

The individual requested the hearing be in executive session and was present with representation. Dr. Josefsberg, Mrs. Friedlander and Vicki Cram were invited to be present.

The meeting recessed at 9:09 pm

#### RECONVENE

The Chair reconvened the meeting in public session at 10:45PM

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education deny the Grievance Filed by CSEA SEIU Local, 2001 CTW, Easton Non-Certified Staff. Underberger, Horowitz. Approved. Unanimous**

**Motion: to add to agenda in executive session Discussion of contract negotiations for superintendent candidate. Underberger, Bobroske. Approved. Unanimous.**

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education recess to executive session for discussion of contract negotiations for superintendent candidate. Horowitz, Peskay. Approved. Unanimous.**

The meeting recessed at 10:47PM

#### RECONVENE

The Chair reconvened the meeting in public session at 11:02PM

No action

#### ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 11:04 pm

Submitted by Regina Bobroske, Board of Education Secretary

Recorded by Mary Maday