

Filed Subject to Approval

Special Meeting
Easton Board of Education Minutes
Helen Keller Middle School-Learning Commons
Friday, March 8, 2019
7:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE:

Easton Board of Education: Parker, Chieda, Hicks, Reed, Shortt
Administration: McMorran, Reiss, Fox Santora, Kaplan, Mohr
Others: Approximately 40 members of the public.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Parker called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Anne Manusky, Morning Glory Drive, Easton: spoke about her requests for information about the curriculum committee charge and social-emotional health curriculum.

Nikki Kaldawy, Staples Road, Easton: expressed appreciation for how well the school system informs parents about the human development curriculum.

Sherri Williams, Riley Road, Easton: asked if the board will be addressing the issue of forced regionalization of Connecticut schools.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Mrs. Chieda encouraged everyone to remember the great things that are going on in our schools and focus on the positive during budget season. Ms. Shortt echoed Mrs. Chieda's sentiments.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: "FORCED REGIONALIZATION" OF CT SCHOOLS

Mr. Parker spoke about his experience of attending the hearing on Forced Regionalization. Mr. Parker stated that he wrote a letter as an individual in opposition to forced regionalization and was looking for support from the Board to communicate with legislators on the Board's behalf. Dr. McMorran spoke about three proposed bills. Dr. McMorran clarified for the Board and the public how the Easton, Redding and Region 9 districts function as three different districts and how the proposed legislation would impact them.

Motion: move to charge the Easton Board of Education Chair with the job of writing a formal letter to state representatives about the Board of Education's position on "forced regionalization." Shortt, Reed. Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: 2019-2020 BUDGET

Dr. McMorran presented the most recent suggested pathways for budget reductions. Board members and administrators discussed class size and sections numbers for grades K-5 and the removal of the oil tank on HKMS property. Dr. McMorran spoke about the percentage of students from Easton at Barlow and how that will impact the budget this year and next. Mrs. Kaplan spoke about the role and responsibilities of the media center paraprofessional. Dr. McMorran spoke about the role and responsibilities of the math specialist and math paraprofessional. Ms. Reed, Ms. Shortt, and Mrs. Chieda expressed interest in further discussion of potential budget considerations at the next board meeting.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: IMPACT OF CHANGING THE BUS RUNS

Mr. Reiss discussed the possibility of cost savings from the reduction of a bus run and recommended that the Board wait until the following year to allow for the transition to the new bus company.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ruma Giomalo, Kachele Street, Easton: moved to Easton for the school system. Opposed to cutting the third and fifth grade and opposed to cutting support staff.

Anne Manusky, Morning Glory Drive, Easton: expressed concerns about the Common Core curriculum.

Jessica Zanetti, Bayberry Lane, Easton: asked for clarification about bus route regulations.

Sheri Williams, Riley Road, Easton: asked how residents can learn about how the overall budget is put together and expressed support for “big movements” in reducing the budget. Supports air conditioning at HKMS. Concerned about the loss of instructional time due the lack of air conditioning.

Rachel Massarelli, Ground Pine Lane, Easton: asked for clarification about the town policies affecting the consolidation of bus routes. Also expressed that class size is very important.

Carolyn Oppenheim, Hunting Ridge Road, Easton: confirmed that most of the budget is not negotiable and mandated by law and thanked Tom for his efforts to communicate clearly regarding budget parameters.

Alison Bono, Gregory Farm Road, Easton: expressed concerns about the financial status of the state of Connecticut. Expressed concern that an average student in the school system is not getting anything additional from this budget.

Brad Canor, Chester Road, Easton: expressed heartfelt gratitude for smaller classes in which their children, each with unique needs and interests, are thriving. Mr. Canor asked the Board to maintain small class size as it was one of the main drivers for choosing Easton. Mr. Canor thanked the Board and administrators for all of their efforts.

Elizabeth Bailey, Sunny Ridge Road, Easton: expressed the desire to support our teachers and our children with small class sizes and resources because teacher connection is paramount.

Nikki Kaldawy, Staples Road, Easton: shared that the primary question from families touring the elementary school is about class size. Expressed that Easton can set itself apart and draw new residents with small class sizes and a strong school system.

Brian Briones, Flat Rock Road, Easton: asked about the stance of our local legislators on forced regionalization.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Ms. Shortt suggested that the board revisit bus route policies at the next board meeting or a future meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: move that the meeting be adjourned. Hicks, Shortt. Approved. Unanimous.

The Easton Board of Education Regular Meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Submitted by Jenny Chieda, Easton Board of Education Secretary