

EASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
REDDING BOARD OF EDUCATION
Joint Meeting Minutes
June 2, 2015

Present:

Redding Board of Education: Ajavananda, Florkowski, Gaspar, Sobel, Witt

Easton Board of Education: Parker, Bobroske, Horowitz, Hicks

Administration: Josefsberg, Sullivan, Pierson Ugol, Martin, Wallin, Wessman Huber, Edwards

Friedlander, McMorran, Kaplan, Burke, Fox Santora

Others: 25 members of the community and staff, representatives of the Redding Pilot & Hello Redding, and videographer

Redding Board of Education Chairman Ajavananda called the meeting to order at 7:40 pm in the Community Room of the John Read Middle School.

Easton Board of Education Chairman Parker called the meeting to order at 7:40 pm in the Community Room of the John Read Middle School.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the minutes of the May 12, 2015 meeting as submitted. Bobroske, Horowitz. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education approve the minutes of the May 5, 2015 meeting as submitted. Sobel, Gaspar. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education approve the minutes of the May 19, 2015 meeting as submitted. Witt, Sobel. Approved. Unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Caroline Oppenheim, Easton: Mrs. Oppenheim expressed her concern about the class size for the incoming Kindergarten and asked if a plan was in place if the enrollment increased beyond what is expected.

Amy Zima, Meredith Anand and Jean Stetz-Puchalski, Easton: These ladies addressed the Easton Board of Education with the PTA plans for a garden club at Samuel Staples Elementary School. The club would be a collaborative effort between the PTA, students and the Easton farming community.

Darrel Bradford, Redding: Mr. Bradford addressed the Boards with his concerns about the consideration of a change to a two-tier busing system for Redding.

DISCUSSION OF SCHOOL DAY SCHEDULE FOR 2015-2016

The start/end times for the Easton/Redding schools were presented.

JBHS: students off the bus at 7:00 am, school begins at 7:30 am, school ends at 2:07 pm

HKMS: students off the bus at 7:55 am, school begins at 8:05 am, school ends at 2:50 pm

SSES: students off the bus at 8:45 am, school begins at 8:55 am, school ends at 3:40 pm

RES: students off the bus at 7:55 am, school begins at 8:05 am, school ends at 2:50 pm

JRMS: students off the bus at 8:45 am, school begins at 8:55 am, school ends at 3:40 pm

INST # 02015000506 REC'D 06/05/2015 09:54:24 AM
CHRISTINE HALL ORAN TOWN CLERK EASTON CT

The Easton schools will have an additional 15 minutes more of instructional time beginning next year. The Redding schools added 15 minutes to the day several years ago.

DISCUSSION OF JOINT LONG RANGE PLANNING WORK

The Easton and Redding Long Range Planning Committees met prior to the meeting for a discussion with Jonathan Costa of Education Connection. The Redding Board is funding the work of consultant Mr. Costa through a state grant. The committees discussed the current concerns, the decreasing enrollment, and potential of changing to a two-tier bus system. Mr. Costa will act as a third party reviewer, will review the data, do the research and report back at a meeting in September with options for consideration.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Finance Director: Mrs. Sullivan reported that Redding's health insurance claims are averaging just below the budgeted amount. She anticipates an end-of-year balance of between \$200,000 and \$300,000 which can be returned to the Town.

The Easton health insurance claims for the past two months have been well above the budgeted amount, and unexpended funds will be transferred into the Reserve Account at the end of the fiscal year.

The health insurance renewal for next year is about 3%, and Mrs. Sullivan announced that the prescription drugs coverage included in the stop-loss number beginning on July 1, 2015.

The Facilities Committee in Redding has plans in place for the capital projects to be done over the summer. Contractors have been lined up and are ready to begin when school concludes for the year.

Mr. Parker noted that he is working with Andy Kachele on the potential to bring natural gas powered school buses to the districts. The plan is to build a depot in Easton on the Samuel Staples Elementary School site where natural gas is available. The change would mean a substantial savings in transportation fuel and be good for the carbon footprint. Next year is the final year of the bus contract, and the contract would be rebid in the December/January time frame. The bid spec would include natural gas vehicles.

Mrs. Sullivan also reported that negotiations are ongoing with the paraprofessional unions and the custodial unions.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction: Dr. Pierson Ugol reported on changes in design and function of the library/media centers in the schools. The new design will provide more opportunities for collaborative integrated learning experiences. She also noted that the PDEC committees are reviewing the results of the teacher surveys with regard to professional development opportunities. She indicated there would be a shift next year to greater emphasis on "coaching" for literacy and math.

John Read Middle School: Mrs. Martin provided a written report and announced student awards and recognitions. She announced that JRMS Math Specialist Janet Rossi has been named the Connecticut Association of Schools Exemplary Educator.

Helen Keller Middle School: Mrs. Kaplan announced student awards and recognitions. She also reported that the 7th grade students participated in designing and writing ELF (Easton Learning Foundation) grants. The requests were presented to ELF and several were approved, including a yoga ball chair for the ILA room, a portable score board, and a shade system for the outdoor classroom.

Redding Elementary School: Dr. Wessman Huber summarized the year of learning and the celebrations recognizing that learning.

Joel Barlow High School: Dr. McMorran reported that graduation is set for June 17, 2015. He also announced that JRMS's Mary Burritt has taken the position of Administrative Assistant for the Superintendent.

Samuel Staples Elementary: Mrs. Fox Santora reported that she and the 5th graders returned from a very successful Nature's Classroom experience. This is the 31st year of the program in Easton. She reported that the Student Senate has been working on the issues of fresh water for areas in the world that do not have it, in a program called Charity Water. A student walk around the school (about ½ mile) is being done to bring awareness and financial support. Mrs. Fox Santora noted that many checks have been received, but she did not have a total of the funds raised. She also reported that the staff has begun training for the migration to Google mail.

Special Services: Mrs. Friedlander reported that transition and summer plans are in place for all students. She is also working on transitioning the department to Tracy Edwards.

Superintendent: Dr. Josefsberg reported that there will be three sections of Kindergarten in Redding for the coming year. The decision was based on current enrollment data. He added that the average class size will be 18, which is within the 18-20 range for Kindergarten classes. In addition, each section has a paraprofessional staff person, and depending on student needs, there may be additional adults in the classrooms.

He also expressed his concerns about the new legislation regarding the MBR (Minimum Budget Requirement).

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike D'Agostino, Redding: Mr. D'Agostino asked about the ownership of the transportation fleet and implications with the proposed change to natural gas vehicles. Mrs. Sullivan responded that the contract with Dattco includes an agreement that Dattco will buy the existing vehicles for the amount of money owed on them at the end of the contract.

Brenda Phelps, Redding: Mrs. Phelps commented that the cost of the math specialist that is providing professional development next September has a cost of \$15,000. She asked if Dr. Pierson Ugol had reached out to neighboring communities to see if they had an interest in sending teacher to the training and sharing the cost. Mrs. Phelps also asked if there was a plan in place should the Kindergarten enrollment increase over the next couple of months.

Cathy Thompson, Easton: Mrs. Thompson expressed her concern that the consultant being used to assist with long range planning is an employee of a state agency and she found that to be a conflict of interest. After listening to the discussion of the Long Range Planning Committee, she had the impression that Mr. Costa would be looking for a way to "sell" the plan rather than assist with the development of a plan.

Chris Parkin, Redding: Mr. Parkin expressed his reservations regarding Mr. Costa, and asked if it was long range planning or transportation planning.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Dr. Gaspar acknowledged the contributions made by Dr. Josefsberg during his tenure in Redding and Easton. He reflected on his accomplishments and his leadership.

Mr. Parker invited all to attend the 50th Anniversary of Helen Keller Middle School on June 14.

Mrs. Ajavananda also thanked Dr. Josefsberg for all he has done for the children and communities of Easton and Redding.

Motion: move to adjourn the meeting. Sobel Florkowski Approved, Unanimous.

Motion: move to adjourn the meeting. Bobroske, Hicks.

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 pm

Submitted by Allyson Florkowski, Redding Board of Education Secretary

Recorded by Mary Maday