

Filed subject to approval

Joint Meeting of
Easton, Redding and Region 9 Boards of Education
May 17, 2016
Minutes

Attendance:

Easton Board of Education: Bindelglass, Chieda, Parker, Hicks, Bobroske
Redding Board of Education: Sobel, Denny, Gaspar, Irwin (7:32 pm), Hoffman (7:32 pm)
Region 9 Board of Education: Hancock, Johnston (7:56 pm), Gombos, Coppinger, Hocker, D'Agostino, King
Administration: McMorran, Sullivan, Pierson Ugol, Pin
Others: 10 members of the staff and community

Mr. Parker, the Easton Board of Education Chairman, chaired the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

The Easton Board of Education Chair, Jeff Parker, called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.
Region 9 Board of Education Chair, Vance Hancock, called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.
Redding Board of Education did not have a quorum at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Clare Wilks, Easton: Mrs. Wilks commented on a recent Easton PTA presentation on opiate awareness for parents. She questioned why the high school did not have a School Resource Officer and suggested that this should be considered.

Mr. Hoffman and Dr. Irwin arrived, 7:32 pm

Redding Board of Education, Sara Sobel, called the Redding Board to order at 7:32 pm.

Joel Barlow High School Principal, Gina Pin, introduced Tim Huminski, English teacher, who presented a video of introducing the Barlow Palooza on May 26, 2016. The event will include A.P Final Science Research projects, student art, music and live performances, dancing, Robotics demonstrations, choir presentations, clubs & student council activities. The all-day presentations will be followed with evening presentations for the community.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Mr. Parker announced that long-time Easton Board of Education member, Dan Underberger, was resigning from the Easton board due to work commitments. He thanked Dr. Underberger for his work for the schools and community.

Mr. Johnston arrived, 7:56 pm, during the discussion below.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON SELECTION OF FOOD SERVICE PROVIDER FOR 2016-17

Mr. Parker recapped the work of the Food Service Tri-district Committee. The contract was put out to bid, proposals were reviewed, two vendors were invited to make presentations, a site visit was conducted, and the committee arrived at a recommendation to continue and extend the contract with Chartwells.

Discussion followed. It was noted that the contract includes a reduced management fee based on the current number of meals served, Chartwells will address the ideas and concerns identified in a parent survey, and they will explore using more organic and locally grown products.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve Chartwells, a division of the Compass Group U.S.A., as the food service provider for the ER9 schools for the period from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017, with the option of four (4) additional one-year renewals upon the consent of the Boards of Education. Hocker, Coppinger. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve Chartwells, a division of the Compass Group U.S.A., as the food service provider for the ER9 schools for the period from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017, with the option of four (4) additional one-year renewals upon the consent of the Boards of Education. Bobroske, Chieda. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education approve Chartwells, a division of the Compass Group U.S.A., as the food service provider for the ER9 schools for the period from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017, with the option of four (4) additional one-year renewals upon the consent of the Boards of Education. Denny, Hoffman. Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON HEALTH FOOD CERTIFICATION AND BEVERAGE EXEMPTION ANNUAL RENEWAL

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the Healthy Food Certification and Beverage Exemption as follows: For the 2016-2017 fiscal year, the ER9 Boards of Education will continue to certify to the Connecticut State Department of Education that all food items offered for sale to students separately from a reimbursable lunch will meet Connecticut Nutrition Standards. Such certification shall include all food offered for sale to students at all times, in all schools, and from all sources including, but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, and any fundraising activities on school premises whether or not school sponsored; and **FURTHER MOVED** that the Boards of Education continue to exempt from the above certification, sale of food items that do not meet Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages that do not meet the requirement of state statute (Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes), provided (1) such sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend, (2) such sale is at the location of the event, and (3) such food and/or beverage is not sold from a vending machine or school store. Gombos, Coppinger. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the Healthy Food Certification and Beverage Exemption as follows: For the 2016-2017 fiscal year, the ER9 Boards of Education will continue to certify to the Connecticut State Department of Education that all food items offered for sale to students separately from a reimbursable lunch will meet Connecticut Nutrition Standards. Such certification shall include all food offered for sale to students at all times, in all schools, and from all sources including, but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, and any fundraising activities on school premises whether or not school sponsored; and **FURTHER MOVED** that the Boards of Education continue to exempt from the above certification, sale of food items that do not meet Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages that do not meet the requirement of state statute (Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes), provided (1) such sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend, (2) such sale is at the location of the event, and (3) such food and/or beverage is not sold from a vending machine or school store. Hicks, Bobroske. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education approve the Healthy Food Certification and Beverage Exemption as follows: For the 2016-2017 fiscal year, the ER9 Boards of Education will continue to certify to the Connecticut State Department of Education that all food items offered for sale to students separately from a reimbursable lunch will meet Connecticut Nutrition Standards. Such certification shall include all food offered for sale to students at all times, in all schools, and

from all sources including, but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, and any fundraising activities on school premises whether or not school sponsored; and **FURTHER MOVED** that the Boards of Education continue to exempt from the above certification, sale of food items that do not meet Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages that do not meet the requirement of state statute (Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes), provided (1) such sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend, (2) such sale is at the location of the event, and (3) such food and/or beverage is not sold from a vending machine or school store. Denny, Irwin. Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON CENTRAL OFFICE CONTRACTS & COMPENSATION

The proposed Central Office budget, reflecting the change to a budget reduction of \$1.00, was presented for review. Compensation increases include a \$1.00 increase for the Superintendent, 1 ½% increase for the Assistant Superintendent and Director of Finance, 4% increase for the Human Resources position, and 2% increase for the support staff. Other changes included a reduction in the Health Insurance Account based on experience, a reduction in Pension Account based on recommendation of actuary.

Mrs. Gombos questioned the increase for the Human Resources position considering the previous three years of substantial increase. She suggested that all non-certified positions should get the same increases as the non-certified positions in the schools, and the certified staff should receive the average of the certified staff increases that have been negotiated. Mr. D'Agostino questioned giving increases that were larger than the certified teacher General Wage increases.

Mr. Coppinger asked if formal evaluations of staff were in place. Dr. McMorran indicated that all Central Office staff members have written evaluations. Mr. Hancock commented that Dr. McMorran was hired to manage the Central Office and has indicated good reason for the increase in the Human Resources position increase. Dr. McMorran is the best person to judge those hired to run the office.

Mrs. Bobroske asked for confirmation of the certified staff increases in the schools. Mrs. Sullivan responded that averages for Easton is 1%, Region 9 is 1 ½% and Redding is 2%, with the non-certified positions getting 2 ½%.

Following further discussion, the following motion was made.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education accept the Central Office proposed 2016-2017 budget as presented. Hocker, Coppinger. Approved 4-3. Voting yes: Hancock, Hocker, Coppinger, King. Voting no: Gombos, D'Agostino, Johnston.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education accept the Central Office proposed 2016-2017 budget as presented. Bobroske, Chieda. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education accept the Central Office proposed 2016-2017 budget as presented. Gaspar, Hoffman. Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON ENROLLMENT DECLINE AND LONG RANGE PLANNING

Dr. McMorran provided information related to addressing the decline in enrollment and the future of learning. He proposed the establishment of a Long-Range Planning Steering Committee to guide the three districts. The Committee would include the Superintendent, Asst. Superintendent, and two members of each of the three boards, and would be tasked with the development of a long-range strategic plan.

The Committee would direct and oversee the work of the Central Office administration, and report to and work with the individual boards at their monthly meetings. The administrators would prepare a set of recommendations to be presented to the Boards prior to the start of the budget development process for the 2017-18 school year. Members of the community would be invited to join the committee at their meetings, and reasonable attempts will be made to include all stakeholders and constituencies. Dr. McMorran suggested each board appoint two board members to the committee at their next meetings.

Dr. McMorran commented that any and all options should need to be explored. In addition to the parameters for strategic planning established in 2005, Dr. McMorran recommended included two additional items: Decisions will support the capacity of the pre-K through 12 systems to promote academic excellence, and changes related to declining enrollment will be enacted in a manner that allows for reversibility should enrollment grow in the future.

Discussion followed. Mrs. Bobroske commented that the Easton Board of Education Long Range Committee completed a first phase of long range planning with a recommendation that planning should move forward as a 3-board committee, and she believes the comparable committee in Redding reached the same conclusion. Mrs. Gombos noted that the Region 9 Board had not entertained any conversation regarding the declining enrollment and long term planning. Dr. Gaspar commented that the alternative of each board working separately would not be effective, and that coordination and cooperation seems to be the best method.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education agree with the concept to form a steering committee composed of two representatives of each of the boards, to be appointed at a later date, and to report back to each board with recommendations. Coppinger, Hocker. Approved 6-1. Mrs. Gombos voted against the motion.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education agree with the concept to form a steering committee composed of two representatives of each of the boards, to be appointed at a later date, and to report back to each board with recommendations. Bobroske, Hicks. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education agree with the concept to form a steering committee composed of two representatives of each of the boards, to be appointed at a later date, and to report back to each board with recommendations. Hoffman, Irwin. Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON TRANSPORTATION CONTRACT AND FINANCING RENEWALS

The Tri District Transportation Committee discussed two options, going out to bid for a new contract or renewing the current contract with DATTCO. Mrs. Sullivan noted that other districts that went out to bid this year received bid responses with increases ranging from 13% to 22.9% in the first year and totaling 23% to 30% over three years. The DATTCO renewal contract is for 7.3% in each of the three years, totaling 21.9%. The increase is primarily due to large increases in labor costs for health care, paid sick leave, testing procedures, workers' compensation costs and environmental laws related to the facility and buses, as well as liability insurance cost increases and the added requirement to remove snow from the roofs of buses.

The proposal included a request to approve a new financing agreement for the bus fleet for the three-year period with Wells Fargo Equipment Financing. Wells Fargo will pay off the balloon payment due to TD Finance in June 2016, and will finance that amount over three years with a final balloon payment due in June, 2019 that DATTCO will pay.

Following discussion, the following motions were made.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the Transportation contract with DATTCO as discussed. Coppinger, Gombos. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the Transportation contract with DATTCO as discussed. Bindelglass, Bobroske. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education approve the Transportation contract with DATTCO as discussed. Denny, Irwin. Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON BUS DEPOT

Mrs. Sullivan reported that consideration of Veteran's Field in Easton has been identified as a potential site for the bus depot. In addition to the amount of available space, the property has access to a natural gas line if the bus fleet were to be converted to natural gas in the future. Mrs. Sullivan is working with Easton volunteers on planning for the bus depot and adjacent parking plans. The Easton Public Works Department could perform the site work and they estimate the cost for the work and a prefab building would be \$378,000. The Chairman of Easton Planning and Zoning Commission believes the project would receive board approval. The Town of Easton would build and own the facility.

At this point, the Easton Board of Selectmen has requested approval of the concept from the three boards of education before moving the project forward. Mrs. Sullivan noted that there would be a savings for Easton, a savings in driver's time and some fuel costs. Redding would have some savings; the drive time from Redding to Bethel is about the same as to Easton. Currently the rental in Bethel is \$130,000/year. The goal would be to have the new depot ready for July 1, 2017.

Discussion followed. Sites in Redding were explored, but none were suitable. Mrs. Gombos questioned the location due to the proximity to Helen Keller Middle School and the number of children walking in the area. Mrs. Sullivan noted that the buses would leave the site about 6:15 am and not return until after the final run after 4 pm, well before and after HKMS arrival/dismissal times.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education agrees with an expression of support to the concept to explore the financial and site feasibility of Veteran's Park for a bus depot, as a non-binding agreement. Hocker, Coppinger. Approved 6-1. Mrs. Gombos voted against the motion.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education agrees with an expression of support to the concept to explore the financial and site feasibility of Veteran's Park for a bus depot, as a non-binding agreement. Bobroske, Bindelglass. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education agrees with an expression of support to the concept to explore the financial and site feasibility of Veteran's Park for a bus depot, as a non-binding agreement. Denny, Hoffman. Approved 4-0-1. Dr. Gaspar abstained.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON HEALTH INSURANCE RENEWAL

Dr. Bindelglass reported the Tri-district Health Insurance Committee reviewed renewal information from Anthem and a bid from CIGNA with their consultant HD Segur. The rates for the Connecticut Partnership Plan were also reviewed. While the proposal from CIGNA had some savings in the first year, the plan was not compatible with the existing coverage and could cause difficulties for participants. The Committee recommended an increase in the stop loss limit, and renewing the contract with Anthem. The cost is within the budgets approved by each of the boards.

Mrs. Gombos suggested that next year the consultant contract, as well as provider contract should be put out to bid.

No action was required on this matter.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Amanda Neville, Redding: Mrs. Neville recommended that the bus fleet be equipped with cameras that could record vehicles that do not stop when a bus is loading or unloading students. She has encountered many problems with this and would like to see drivers of these vehicles fined for disobeying the laws regarding school buses.

Chris Parkin, Redding: Mr. Parkin commented that the enrollment statistics are not accurate, especially for Redding which already has at least 20 more students than indicated. He also was disappointed that the boards did not take a more proactive approach regarding the contract with DATTCO. Included in the current contract is a requirement that the equipment would be new, with the renewal, the equipment is at least five years old. The bus his children ride on has frequent equipment failures.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education adjourn the meeting. Gombos, Hocker.
Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education adjourn the meeting. Hoffman, Denny
Approved. Unanimous.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:03 pm.

Submitted by Regina Bobroske, Easton Board of Education

Recorded by Mary Maday