

Filed subject to approval

Joint Meeting of
Easton, Redding and Region 9 Boards of Education
January 27, 2016
Minutes

Attendance:

Easton Board of Education: Bindelglass (7:46 pm), Chieda (8:18 pm), Parker, Underberger
Redding Board of Education: Sobel, Gaspar, Denny, Florkowski, Irwin, Hoffman (7:46 pm)
Region 9 Board of Education: Hancock, Johnston, Gombos (7:40), Coppinger, Hocker, D'Agostino, Lewis
Administration: McMorran, Sullivan, Pierson Ugol
Others: eight members of the staff and community, and a representative of the Redding Pilot/Easton Courier, Danbury News Times & Hello Redding, and the videographer

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

CALL TO ORDER

The Easton Board did not have a quorum at this time.
Redding Board of Education Chair, Sara Sobel, called the meeting to order at 7:39 pm
Region 9 Board of Education Chair, Vance Hancock, called the meeting to order at 7:39 pm.

Mrs. Gombos arrived, 7:40 pm

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education approve the minutes of the Joint Meeting of May 19, 2015 as submitted. Florkowski, Irwin. Approved. 4-0-1. Denny abstained.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the minutes of the Joint Meeting of May 19, 2015 as submitted. D'Agostino, Coppinger. Approved. 4-0-3. Johnston, Coppinger & Lewis abstained.

Mrs. Gombos requested that each board review and approve the minutes of joint meetings at their next regular meeting rather than waiting for the next joint meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

None

Mr. Hoffman and Dr. Bindelglass arrived during the discussion below, 7:46 pm.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON THE 2016-17 CENTRAL OFFICE OPERATING BUDGET

The proposed Central Office budget is \$1,645,355, representing a 1.94% or \$31,369 over the current year budget. Additional documentation was distributed at the meeting.

Mr. D'Agostino commented that he would prefer to receive the budget documentation in advance of the meeting with sufficient time for review.

Mr. Parker called for a 10 minute recess to allow board members to review the budget document and additional information provided at the meeting.

RECESS, a brief 10 minute recess followed.

Mr. Parker called the meeting back to order.

Director of Finance, Peggy Sullivan, provided information on the need to move the 0.5 FTE position to a full time position. She noted that the workload for the Central Office does not decline as the student population declines. The state is requiring more forms and data, residency issues are increasing, and there is greater participation and paperwork for the Free & Reduce Lunch Program. In the area of human resources, there are more complex issues due to the Affordable Health Care Act and workmen's compensation issues.

Mrs. Gombos suggested outsourcing the payroll function for a savings. Mrs. Sullivan noted that a payroll clerk would be needed due to the complexity of the payroll. Mrs. Gombos suggested that a task force be established to look at the issue.

Mr. Hocker suggested arriving at a bottom line for the budget and to allow the administration to determine the allocation of resources.

Mrs. Sobel commented that the most significant impact is the increase in the salary line, and that the conversation was an unpleasant one with the administrators present.

Dr. Irwin questioned the current rental situation for Central Office, the lease terms, and potential to relocate the office to vacant space in one of the schools. Mrs. Sullivan responded that the current lease runs to the 2018, the area is 6,200 sq.ft. and the current annual rental is \$85,000.

Mrs. Chieda arrived, 8:20 pm.

The Easton Board of Education was called to order at 8:20 pm.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the minutes of the Joint Meeting of May 19, 2015 as submitted. Underberger, Bindelglass. Approved 2-0-2. Bindelglass & Chieda abstained.

Discussion of the proposed budget continued.

Chairman Parker allowed for comments from the public.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tim Brady, Easton: Mr. Brady commented on the decline in Easton's population, his concerns about the economy, the number of foreclosures and the impact of losing GE. He stated he believes that there is capacity in the schools to accommodate the Central Office and called for more creative thinking with regard to the budget.

Adam Schwartz, Redding: Mr. Schwartz commented that the salary discussion was difficult, but the public wants to know and understand what they are getting for their investment.

The meeting continued with more discussion of the budget.

Concerns expressed:

- The amount of the increase for staff;
- The workload for the office working with three districts;

- The Central Office budget, once approved, will be untouchable when each district considers their budgets. Once approved, the Central Office budget can only be revisited if either town's budget fails.
- The addition of the 0.5 FTE brings the current part-time position to a full time position, without board approval;
- The three district structure is cumbersome.

The following motions were made, with discussion on each motion prior to the vote.

MOTION #1

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve an increase of \$16,000 over the current year budget, bringing the increase to just under 1%. Hocker, Coppinger.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve an increase of \$16,000 over the current year budget, bringing the increase to just under 1%. Underberger. No second, No motion.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education approve an increase of \$16,000 over the current year budget, bringing the increase to just under 1%. Gaspar, Denny.

Discussion followed.

**Region 9 Board of Education withdrew motion #1.
Redding Board of Education withdrew motion#1.**

MOTION #2

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education approve a flat budget request, the same budget as the current year. Hoffman, Irwin.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve a flat budget request, the same budget as the current year. Coppinger, Lewis.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve a flat budget request, the same budget as the current year. Underberger, Bindelglass.

VOTE ON MOTION #2

VOTE #1, on Motion #2

Region 9 Board of Education: approved, 4-3. Yes: Lewis, Coppinger, Gombos, Johnston. No: D'Agostino, Hocker, Hancock.

Redding Board of Education: approved. 5-1. Yes: Irwin, Sobel, Florkowski, Hoffman, Denny. No: Gaspar

Easton Board of Education: NOT approved, unanimous.

Discussion followed.

VOTE #2, on Motion #2

Region 9 Board of Education: NOT approved, 3-4. Yes: Lewis, Johnston, Hocker. No: Coppinger, Gombos, D'Agostino, Hancock

Redding Board of Education: approved. 5-1. Yes: Irwin, Sobel, Florkowski, Hoffman, Denny. No: Gaspar

Easton Board of Education: NOT approved, unanimous.

Motion #2 FAILED

MOTION #3

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the Central Office budget as submitted, with a 1.94% increase. Underberger, Chieda.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the Central Office budget as submitted, with a 1.94% increase. Coppinger, Lewis.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education approve the Central Office budget as submitted, with a 1.94% increase. Gaspar, Florkowski.

VOTE ON MOTION #3

Region 9 Board of Education: motion failed 1-6: Yes: Hancock. No: D'Agostino, Gombos, Coppinger, Lewis, Johnston, Hocker.

Redding Board of Education: motion failed, 0-6.

Easton Board of Education: motion passed, 3-1. Yes, Parker, Underberger, Chieda. No. Bindelglass

Motion #3 FAILED.

MOTION #4

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the proposed budget with the following adjustments: Account 111, Certified Staff, increase at 1%; Account 112, Non-Certified staff, increase at 2%, for a budget at \$1,603,646, representing a decrease of 0.64% over the current year budget. D'Agostino, Coppinger.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education approve the proposed budget with the following adjustments: Account 111, Certified Staff, increase at 1%; Account 112, Non-Certified staff, increase at 2%, for a budget at \$1,603,646, representing a decrease of 0.64% over the current year budget. Hoffman, Gaspar.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the proposed budget with the following adjustments: Account 111, Certified Staff, increase at 1%; Account 112, Non-Certified staff, increase at 2%, for a budget at \$1,603,646, representing a decrease of 0.64% over the current year budget. Underberger, Parker

VOTE ON MOTION #4

Region 9 Board of Education: approved 4-3: Yes, Gombos, D'Agostino Johnston, Lewis. No: Hancock, Hocker, Coppinger.

Redding Board of Education: failed on a tie vote: Yes: Hoffman, Denny, Sobel. No: Gaspar, Florkowski, Irwin.

Easton Board of Education: failed, unanimous vote.

Motion #4 FAILED.

MOTION #5

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the proposed budget with the elimination of the additional 0.5 FTE position, for a budget of \$1,613,435, representing a decrease of 0.03%. Gombos, D'Agostino.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education approve the proposed budget with the elimination of the additional 0.5 FTE position, for a budget of \$1,613,435, representing a decrease of 0.03%. Hoffman, Florkowski.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the proposed budget with the elimination of the additional 0.5 FTE position, for a budget of \$1,613,435, representing a decrease of 0.03%. Bindelglass, Underberger.

Vote on Motion #5

Region 9 Board of Education: failed, 3-4. Yes: Gombos, D'Agostino, Johnston. No: Hancock, Hocker, Lewis, Coppinger

Redding Board of Education: failed 5-1. Yes: Hoffman. No: Sobel, Denny, Florkowski, Gaspar. Irwin

Easton Board of Education: failed, 0-4

Motion #5 FAILED.

MOTION #6

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve a Central Office budget with a 1% increase. Bindelglass, Underberger.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve a Central Office budget with a 1% increase. Coppinger, Lewis.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education approve a Central Office budget with a 1% increase. Irwin, Florkowski.

The motion was amended.

**Amendment: with the reduction in the budget to come from the 111 & 112 Accounts.
All boards agreed with the Amendment to the motion.**

VOTE on MOTION #6, as amended.

Region 9 Board of Education: motion failed, 2-5. Yes: Hocker, Hancock. No: D'Agostino, Gombos, Lewis, Coppinger, Johnston.

Redding Board of Education: motion failed, 2-4. Yes, Irwin, Gaspar. No: Sobel, Denny, Florkowski, Irwin.

Easton Board of Education: approved, 4-0

Motion #6, as amended, FAILED

MOTION #7

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve a Central Office budget for \$1,613,985, \$1.00 less than the current year budget. Lewis, Coppinger.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education approve a Central Office budget for \$1,613,985, \$1.00 less than the current year budget. Hoffman, Florkowski.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve a Central Office budget for \$1,613,985, \$1.00 less than the current year budget. Underberger, Parker.

VOTE ON MOTION #7

Vote #1

Region 9 Board of Education: approved 4-3. Yes: Lewis, Coppinger, Hocker, Johnston. No: Gombos, Hancock, D'Agostino.

Redding Board of Education: approved 5-1. Yes: Sobel, Denny, Florkowski, Irwin, Hoffman. No: Gaspar

Easton Board of Education: not approved, 0-4.

Vote: 2-1

Vote #2

Region 9 Board of Education: approved 4-3. Yes: Lewis, Coppinger, Hocker, Johnston. No: Gombos, Hancock, D'Agostino.

Redding Board of Education: approved 5-1. Yes: Sobel, Denny, Florkowski, Irwin, Hoffman. No: Gaspar

Easton Board of Education: not approved, 0-4.

Vote 2-1

Vote #3

Region 9 Board of Education: approved 4-3. Yes: Lewis, Coppinger, Hocker, Johnston. No: Gombos, Hancock, D'Agostino.

Redding Board of Education: approved 5-1. Yes: Sobel, Denny, Florkowski, Irwin, Hoffman. No: Gaspar

Easton Board of Education: not approved, 0-4.

Vote: 2-1

MOTION APPROVED, following the required three votes on the motion, the motion was approved, 2-1 with Region 9 and Redding Boards of Education voting for the motion, Easton voting against the motion.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON 2016-17 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

The Calendar Committee presented the proposed 2016-17 school calendar. The Committee is still working on the 2017-18 and 2018-19 calendars.

Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education approve the Redding 2016-17 school year calendar as presented. Florkowski, Denny. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the Region 9 2016-17 school year calendar as presented. Lewis, Johnston. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the Easton 2016-17 school year calendar as presented. Underberger, Bindelglass. Approved. 3-0-1. Dr. Bindelglass was out of the room at the time of the vote.

DISCUSSION OF STATUS OF THE HEALTH INSURANCE RESERVE ACCOUNT

Mrs. Sullivan reported the Reserve Fund for the Easton Board of Education is in a deficit position for about \$63,000. An appropriation for \$1,200,000 was approved at an Easton Town Meeting on Monday, February 25, 2016. Mrs. Sullivan noted that the Easton Board of Education, Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance have been kept informed on the status of the Reserve Fund over the last four months.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Amy Arnold, Redding: Mrs. Arnold commented that the budget is based on the business of the office, not on performance of the personnel.

Christine Calvert, Easton: Mrs. Calvert asked that the Calendar Committee try to align the January vacation days of the lower schools with the high school.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Lewis thanked all for their patience, and believes that a message is being sent to the public that the boards are serious about addressing the declining enrollment.

Mr. Coppinger commented that something should be done to address the tri-district structure, especially to some time and work for the Central Office staff.

Mrs. Gombos asked if the budgets in the future would specify improvements, such as the additional 0.5 FTE position.

Mr. D'Agostino commented that the decision was a business one, not a reflection of the work being done by the administration.

Superintendent McMorran commented that the boards spent three hours to discuss \$30,000. He added that the administration is aware of and understands the impact of the decline in enrollment, but that will continue to be the situation for 7- 8 years. He also noted that he is aware of the amount of work being done by the Central Office staff, especially Mrs. Sullivan and Mrs. Cram, to keep the three districts functioning legally and efficiently.

ADJOURNMENT

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

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

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 pm

Submitted by Dan Underberg, Easton Board of Education
Recorded by Mary Maday