

Easton, Redding & Region 9 Boards of Education  
Joint Special Meeting Minutes  
February 5, 2015

**Attendance:**

Easton Board of Education: Hicks, Horowitz, Parker, Underberger (7:14 pm)  
Redding Board of Education: Ajavananda, Florkowski, Gaspar (7:32 pm), Irwin, Miller, Sobel, Witt  
Region 9 Board of Education: D'Agostino, Gombos (7:09 pm), Hancock (7:21 pm), Hocker, Johnston  
Administration: Josefsberg, Sullivan and additional school administrators  
Others: 30 members of the public, videographer, and representatives of Hello Redding and the Easton Courier/Redding Pilot

Chairman of the Redding Board of Education, Kim Ajavananda, opened the meeting of Tri-board in the Community Room of John Read Middle School.

**Mrs. Ajavananda called the Redding Board of Education meeting to order at 7:05 pm**

The Easton and Region 9 Boards did not have a quorum at this point, but expected additional Board members to arrive.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

John Reilly, Redding: Mr. Reilly addressed the Boards, speaking for himself and Chris Parkin (Redding), regarding the Superintendent Search. He mentioned that he had heard rumors that the search was a "done deal. He asked that all candidates for the position be considered carefully in order to find the best candidate for the districts.

Mrs. Gombos arrived, 7:09 pm, during the comment below.

Darrell Bradford, Redding: Mr. Bradford spoke of his agreement with the comments made by Mr. Reilly. He questioned the two-tier bus proposal, asking who would be served by the change.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Mrs. Florkowski (Redding Board of Education) appealed to the community not to listen to rumors, but get the facts. She encouraged those with questions to communicate with Board members.

Dr. Underberger arrived (7:14 pm)

Dr. Irwin (Redding Board of Education) commented that the discussion of the proposed changes for John Read Middle school at the Redding Board of Education meeting on Tuesday was a positive discussion.

Mr. D'Agostino (Region 9 Board of Education) commented that Board members highly value the input from parents and community members and that they are equal stakeholders in the process.

**Mr. Parker called the Easton Board of Education to order at 7:16 pm**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education accept the minutes of the May 15, 2014 and October 30, 2014 meetings as submitted. Sobel, Witt. Approved. 5-0-1. Mr. Miller abstained.**

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education accept the minutes of the May 15, 2014 and October 30, 2014 meetings as submitted. Underberger, Horowitz. Approved. 3-0-1. Mr. Hicks abstained for the May 15, 2014 meeting and Dr. Underberger abstained on the October 30, 2014 meeting.**

The Region 9 Board did not have a quorum and will approve the minutes at their next scheduled meeting.

#### DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON 2015-16 CENTRAL OFFICE OPERATING BUDGET

The proposed 2015-16 Central Office Operating budget was presented with a cost of \$1,656,907, representing an increase of 0.31%.

Mr. Hancock arrived during the discussion below (7:21 pm)

Dr. Gaspar arrived during the discussion below, (7:32 pm)

**The Region 9 Board of Education was called to order at 7:21 pm, during the discussion below.**

Discussion followed on various line items.

- Salaries: the budget includes a placeholder for 2% increases for staff. The Superintendent salary amount is a placeholder, along with the life insurance line item for that position.
- Comparable data on superintendent salaries was provided for the towns of New Canaan (\$225,000 plus \$15,000 annuity; Ridgefield, \$103,000 plus \$40,000 annuity and incentive; Wilton, \$199,000; Westport \$292,000 with no travel or annuity; Weston, \$246,311)
- Facility rent: discussion of potential relocation to one of the school buildings, cost to relocate, and potential savings.
- Telecommunications: additional information was requested for what was included.
- Tuition reimbursement: additional information was requested.

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education accept the Central Office Operating budget as presented, \$1,651,815, representing an increase over the current year budget of 0.31%. Hancock, Johnston. Approved. 4-0-1. Mr. D'Agostino voted against the motion.**

**Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education accept the Central Office Operating budget as presented, \$1,651,815, representing an increase over the current year budget of 0.31%. Miller, Sobel. Approved. Unanimous.**

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education accept the Central Office Operating budget as presented, \$1,651,815, representing an increase over the current year budget of 0.31%. Underberger, Horowitz. Approved. Unanimous.**

#### DISCUSSION AND UPDATE ON SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR SEARCH

Dr. Josefsberg reported that the search will close next week and 12 candidates have applied to date. The process will move to a search committee to review resumes and plan for interviews of potential candidates.

#### DISCUSSION AND UPDATE ON SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH

Mrs. Sobel reported the search was closed on January 26 and 14 applications have been received. The Committee is working on reviewing the resumes and will schedule interviews of potential candidates. She assured the public that the process is not complete and a finalist candidate has not been selected as yet. The Committee has received resumes from highly qualified candidates and plans to narrow the selection to a chosen few candidates which they will then present to the Tri-Board for consideration by

the end of February or early March. She added that the consultant, Gary Richards, has been extremely helpful in the process.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Kurt Stowell, Easton: Mr. Stowell asked why comparable superintendent salary information for some of the other surrounding towns was not considered. He also feels that moving to a two-tier bus system will drive current potential families from the towns.

Cathy Thompson, Easton: Mrs. Thompson addressed the Boards with her concerns about the proposed two-tier bus system, including issues with safety, bullying, and actual cost benefit. She believes the added time on the bus for the children will not be beneficial.

Darrell Bradford, Redding: Mr. Bradford asked if relocation expenses were considered as a part of the superintendent search.

Sandy (name unclear), Easton: This person asked for clarification on the role of the Special Education Director. She commented that she has had difficulty with communicating and getting information from the staff regarding her child.

Juliette Turek, Easton; Ms. Turek stated that she is not in favor of the two-tier bus proposal.

Ron Berry, Easton: Mr. Berry asked for clarification on the proposed salary for the superintendent's position and what was actually included in the placeholder.

#### **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Mrs. Gombos (Region 9 Board of Education) spoke of her family's positive experience with the two-tier busing Easton had for several years. She found that the 8<sup>th</sup> graders were very protective of the youngest children. She added that parents have to teach their children about appropriate behavior on the bus.

Mr. Parker (Easton Board of Education) also spoke of his children's positive experience with Easton's earlier two-tier bus system.

Mr. Hocker (Region 9 Board of Education) commented that the salary listed for the superintendent position is only a placeholder. The compensation package would include relocation expenses, if appropriate.

Dr. Underberger (Easton Board of Education) commented that his two children also had positive things to say about the two-tier bus system. He added that if the combined bus runs added more than 15 minutes to the ride for the children, the change would not be beneficial. He expressed his concern for the amount of time the children spend on the bus.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education adjourn the meeting. Gombos, D'Agostion, Approved. Unanimous.**

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

**Motion: move that the Redding Board of Education adjourn the meeting. Sobel, Irwin Approved. Unanimous.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm

Submitted by Allyson Florkowski, Redding Board of Education Secretary  
Recorded by Mary Maday