

Filed subject to approval

Easton Board of Education
Special Meeting
August 4, 2015
Minutes

Attendance:

Board of Education: Bobroske, Hicks, Horowitz, Parker, Peskay, Underberger

Administration: McMorran, Sullivan, Pierson Ugol, Edwards, Fox-Santora, Kaplan

Others: five members of the staff and community, and a representative of the Easton Courier

Mr. Parker called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion; move that the Easton Board of Education accept the minutes of the June 2, 2015 meeting as submitted. Hicks, Horowitz. Approved. 5-0-1. Mr. Parker abstained as he was not present for the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Dr. Underberger thanked Mrs. Sullivan for her work on the Bethel vehicle taxation issues and congratulated her on the positive results for the districts.

DISCUSSION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Special Education Director Edwards presented information on the process of moving a referral through the system to the development of a student IEP (Individual Education Program). This was followed by discussion.

DISCUSSION OF DARE PROGRAM

Dr. McMorran indicated that further review and consideration of the DARE program is needed. The 10-lesson program for the 5th graders is being examined to determine the fit with the State standards and current curriculum. The program is designed to help students make appropriate decisions, primarily regarding drinking and drug use. Mrs. Bobroske asked for additional detail on the efficacy of the program, evaluation of how efficacy is measured, cost and what alternatives exist. Dr. Underberger asked about the overall supervision of the program. Dr. Peskay suggested consideration be given to the amount of time dedicated to the program compared with the amount of time given to sex education. Dr. McMorran will have more to report at future meetings over the next couple of months.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Helen Keller Middle School: Mrs. Kaplan reported on the hiring process over the summer months. She also noted that the additional 15 minutes each day will result in school starting at 8:05 am and ending at 2:50 pm. Dr. Underberger asked how the additional 15 minutes each day would be used. Mrs. Kaplan will have further detail for the next meeting.

Samuel Staples Elementary School: Mrs. Fax-Santora reported on the hiring process. She reported the additional 15 minutes of time each day will be used dedicated to work in the area of integrated language arts. The current Kindergarten enrollment is 76, compared with a projected enrollment of 78.

Special Services: Ms. Edwards reported on the hiring process and the completion of the extended school year for children.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction: Dr. Pierson Ugol reported on the curriculum work that occurred over the summer months. The Professional Development calendar is being finalized. She added that new staff members will have staff mentors to assist with their integration into the Easton school system.

Director of Finance: Mrs. Sullivan reported the Bethel vehicle tax issue has been resolved by the judge. Bethel will be refunding three years of paid vehicle taxes to ER9. The installation of solar panels has begun. The contractor expects to complete all the disruptive work prior to the first day of school. The solar panels are expected to provide half of the school power. A meeting is scheduled with DATTCO regarding the potential conversion to propane or natural gas vehicles. The Food Service contract went out to bid last year, but a federal audit of the program found errors in the state program. As a result, the contract will need to be rebid for the 2016-17 school year. The errors involved the allowance of a donation of a scholarship to a Joel Barlow High School student and an annual \$1,500 allocation to the schools for food education programs. Health insurance claims were higher than anticipated for March, April, May & June. Funds from the 2014-15 operating budget have been moved to the Health Insurance Reserve Fund to cover expenses. The level of the Health Insurance Reserve Fund will be an issue for the next budget cycle. The issue of 2-tier versus 3-tier bus service will continue with more analysis and discussion.

Superintendent: Dr. McMorran commented on the issue of declining enrollment in most of the school districts in Connecticut (only 16 districts have increasing enrollment, mainly urban and approx. 150 declining), and the New England states. He commented further on the quality of the Easton schools. Dr. Peskay asked board members to consider making a statement regarding keeping the schools and children safe with regard to gun control matters.

LONG TERM PLANNING COMMITTEE

Mrs. Bobroske reported the Committee is in the process of regrouping and moving forward. The Redding grant that was to provide a consultant to assist with the work has been pulled by the State. In addition, the chair from Redding, Kim Ajavananda, is relocating to another state. Her replacement has not yet been chosen.

SSES SEPTIC COMMITTEE

Mrs. Sullivan reported that the State DEEP, the Easton Health Department and the Public Works department are working together to resolve the issues.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Parker reported he attended a Redding Board of Education meeting for a review and discussion of Freedom of Information. He provided copies of pertinent information to board members regarding meetings, meeting guidelines, agenda and minute postings. There was also discussion on the use of social media and the issues of what could be posted.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Anne Manusky, Morning Glory: Mrs. Manusky asked when the curriculum would be available on the school websites for the parents and members of the community to review. She also asked how the parent issues with the performance of a teacher were reviewed.

Tim Brady, Center Road: Mr. Brady commented on the importance of math and STEM education, and that he would like to see more focus on the Common core math education.

Unidentified: This person asked about the impact of the “Cadillac” tax on health benefits and impact on the school system contracts. Mrs. Sullivan responded that the district’s health insurance is a self-insured program, and the district would not hit the threshold until 2020. The current contract expires in 2018.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education recess to executive session for discussion of contract negotiations.. Underberger, Hicks. Approved. Unanimous.

Dr. McMorran and Mrs. Sullivan were invited to be present.

The meeting recessed at 9:18 pm

RECONVENE

The Chair reconvened the meeting in public session at 9:31PM

No Action.

Discussion:

Mr. Hicks asked Dr. McMorran if the Board would be receiving Goals and Objectives from the new superintendent. Dr. McMorran responded that he will work with the Board to create them. Mrs. Bobroske asked Dr. McMorran if he would be scheduling initial conversations with each board member, and he replied that he would be. Mr. Hicks expressed concern about how much time teachers are out of the classroom for professional development, and stated that he has heard that concern from many parents. There was some discussion around ways to determine how much time teachers are actually out of the classroom and possibly identifying alternatives.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:43pm

Submitted by Regina Bobroske, Board of Education Secretary

Recorded by Mary Maday