

EASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Special Meeting Minutes  
June 21, 2017

ATTENDANCE

Board of Education: Bindelglass (arrived 7:38), Bobroske, Chieda, Hicks, Parker, Shortt  
Administration: Lagas, McMorran, Pierson Ugol  
Others: Approximately 20 members of the public were in attendance

Mr. Parker called the meeting to order at 7:31 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the minutes from the June 6, 2017 regular joint meeting of the Easton and Redding Boards of Education. Bobroske, Chieda. Approved, 4-0.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Mr. Parker reported on the coffee/cake and conversation meeting with 22 Realtors from Fairfield County. All attendees received information on the unique aspects of the Easton School system.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: NESDEC BEST USE OF FACILITIES REPORT

Tom Kennedy, Director of the NESDEC, and Hannah Cross performed a facilities review at SSES and HKMS and presented to the Board. They were asked to conduct a facilities best use study from K-8 to determine if a pre-K through 8 reconfiguration could be housed at SSES. They presented a Demographic Analysis, Enrollment Projections, Capacity Analysis, Reconfiguration Analysis and Conclusions. They deemed that there would be insufficient capacity to provide adequate PK-8 grade level classroom space. Even if adequate grade level spaces were to become available, middle school programming issues would still need to be addressed, such as the installation of science labs, lack of locker room availability, lack of capacity for music programming and the maintenance of instructional models with grade level groups. NESDEC's conclusion is that the reconfiguration of SSES to a PK-8 facility is not a viable option for the district.

Unannounced attendee asked if this report took into account businesses leaving the area.

Andy Kachele asked about a discrepancy in Planned Operating Capacity numbers, and then asked if SSES could be expanded upon. Discussion ensued.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: END OF YEAR FINANCIAL STATUS

Dr. McMorran presented on the end of the year status of the current year budget as of June 21, 2017. He addressed the status of unspent funds, that there will still be incoming invoices for the month of June and additional payroll periods that will cover earnings through June 30<sup>th</sup>. He stressed that this is not necessarily a surplus.. There are purchase orders that will remain open until services are completed. Special Education costs have not yet been finalized. Legal fees for June may not be submitted until July. So far 96.52% of the budget has been spent, with a current balance of \$547,392. Dr. McMorran overviewed the objects as follows: those that went over budget, the objects with balances of zero, objects with unspent funds greater than \$100,000, objects with unspent funds in the range of \$50,000-\$99,999, objects with unspent funds in the range of \$50,000-

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\$99,999, objects with unspent funds ranging from \$20,000-\$49,999, objects with unspent funds range \$10,000- \$19,999, examples of unspent funds, objects with unspent funds in the range of \$5k-\$9,999, objects with unspent funds in the range of \$1,000-\$4,999, examples of unspent funds in conference and travel, and objects with unspent funds under \$1,000. The larger (100k +) objects of unspent funds were human resource related, which amount to around \$250,000.

Mr. Hicks asked why the amount of unspent funds is so high, and noted that there may be “fluff” in the numbers. Discussion ensued. Ms. Chieda added that this could be viewed as fiscal responsibility on the part of the staff. Hicks requested that actuals be included in future budgets. Ms. Bobroske seconded that the format should be changed to include actuals. She stated that she does not feel there is any “fluff” built into the budget. Mr. Parker added that he feels there are additional unspent personnel funds under different objects. He also praised Dr. McMorran and Dr. Lagas for their detailed reporting, time and effort.

Discussion ensued regarding how the health insurance reserve fund is allocated. Mr. Parker announced that for May the health claims were \$234,000. There is now \$96,000 in the health claim reserve. Dr. Bindleglass noted that if we didn’t self-insure it would cost the town more money. Further discussion ensued.

#### AGENDA CHANGE

**Motion: move agenda Item VI, Public Comment, to item VII. Hicks, Bobroske. Approved, Unanimous.**

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: END-OF-YEAR FINANCES BOARD DIRECTION  
Discussion ensued regarding the appropriate action to maintain the health insurance reserve, whether or not any action was necessary and if so, how much money should be added to the reserve.

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education transfer \$170,000 from unspent funds to the health care reserve fund. Bindleglass, Shortt.**

Discussion continued and the motion was amended.

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education transfer \$100,000 from unspent funds to the health care reserve fund. Bindleglass, Bobroske. Approved, 4-1. Mr. Hicks voted against the motion.**

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT AND STAFFING  
Dr. McMorran updated the Board that current kindergarten enrollment is at 85 students for 4 sections, and that the number is likely to increase. He proposed reallocating the FTE approved as teacher for a sixth section of 5<sup>th</sup> grade to kindergarten. He added that while this FTE is in the current budget, additional funds will be required for a paraprofessional for the kindergarten class, which costs approximately \$30,000. Dr. McMorran also proposed that we add another special meeting for July to reevaluate the staffing and address the concerns about 5<sup>th</sup> grade class sizes and staffing. Discussion ensued. Mrs. Chieda expressed concern about 5<sup>th</sup> grade as well as the strain on the budget, and asked if there was some way the town could fund this.

The BOE will reconvene in late July to review student enrollment with summer registrations and to discuss the number of class sections, staffing, and budget implications.

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education authorize the superintendent to move the FTE approved for a sixth section of 5<sup>th</sup> grade to kindergarten, as well as to add a paraprofessional for the additional kindergarten section. Bobroske, Hicks. 4-1. Mrs. Chieda abstained.**

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Numerous members of the public, including Diane Ronan, Jennifer Nolle-Berg, Connie Sayo, Beth Natt, Tiffany Tortora, Brad Thompson, Christy Sogofsky, and Nikki Kaldawy spoke in support of maintaining smaller class sizes, in support of adding a kindergarten section, and to express their concern regarding 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and the need for a sixth section in 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

**Motion: the Easton Board of Education move to Executive Session to discuss the Superintendent's Evaluation. Bobroske, Bindleglass. Approved. Unanimous.**

The meeting recessed at 10:49 pm.

#### RECONVENE

The Easton Board of Education chair reconvened the meeting to public session at 11:00 pm.

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

None.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Motion: move to adjourn the Easton Board of Education meeting. Hicks, Bobroske. Approved. Unanimous.**

The meeting adjourned at 11:01 pm.

Submitted by Regina Bobroske, Easton Board of Education Secretary

Recorded by Elise Cavanaugh