

Special Meeting Agenda
THOMASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Thomaston Town Hall – Meeting Room One

Date: Thursday, February 14, 2013

7:00 p.m.

Members: Lucy Santopietro, Chair; Roxy Fainer, Vice Chair; Kathleen Freimuth, Secretary; Holly Herbert, Treasurer; Rebecca Guay, Member; Alexander Lee, Member; Anne Petrucci, Member; Joanne Gilland, Member; Debra Schriver, Member

Minutes

Present: Lucy Santopietro, Kathleen Freimuth, Holly Herbert, Anne Petrucci, Alexander Lee, Becky Guay, Debra Schriver

Absent: Board members Joanne Gilland and Roxy Fainer, and Student Representative Phil Sechow

Also Present: Business Manager, Nancy O'Dea-Wyrick; High School Administrators, John Perrucci and Jonathan Kozlak; Black Rock School Administrator, Alisha DiCorpo; Center School Administrator, Anne Uberti; Student Board Representative, Sarah Guay and Board Clerk, Patricia George

I. Establishment of a quorum and call to order:

Board Chair Lucy Santopietro established a quorum and called to order the Special Meeting of the Board of Education at 7:04 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance:

Lucy Santopietro led the pledge of allegiance.

III. Approval of Agenda:

On a motion made by Holly Herbert and seconded by Kathleen Freimuth to accept/approve the agenda as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

IV. Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Alexander Lee and seconded by Kathleen Freimuth to accept/approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education dated Monday, January 14, 2013; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Kathleen Freimuth and seconded by Becky Guay to accept/approve the minutes from the Budget Subcommittee Meeting dated Thursday, January 24, 2013; no further discussion; Holly Herbert, Anne Petrucci and Alexander Lee abstained; motion carried.

A motion was made by Becky Guay and seconded by Lucy Santopietro to accept/approve the minutes from the Budget Subcommittee Meeting dated Thursday, January 31, 2013; no further discussion; Kathleen Freimuth, Holly Herbert, Alexander Lee, Anne Petrucci, Debra Schriver abstained; motion carried.

V. Student Representative Reports:

Student Representative Sarah Guay provided information regarding mid-term exams, Spirit Week, and a Hallway Contest at the high school. She also noted that the tennis team is securing Retail 101 as a fundraiser in an effort to raise money to repair the tennis courts.

VI. Incredible Classroom/Student Presentations/Guests:

1. First Selectman Ed Mone, ESPC (Energy Savings Plan Committee) update
First Selectman Ed Mone, along with Johnson Controls Sales Manager Jim Cotton were on hand to field questions from Board members regarding the Energy Savings Plan initiative. One concern that was highlighted pertained to the gas conversion at the Center School and its delay. Mr. Cotton noted that the delay stemmed from issues with Yankee Gas and Super Storm Sandy. He also noted that the conversion was scheduled to be completed the following day.
1. State Representative John Piscopo, Education Reform
Due to a personal illness, Mr. Piscopo was not available to talk on Education Reform.

VII. Communications:

1. New Hires/Rehires/Replacements:
On a motion made by Kathleen Freimuth and seconded by Debra Schriver to accept/approve the new hires as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.
1. Resignations/Retirements/Exit Interviews:
On a motion made by Anne Petrucci and seconded by Becky Guay to accept/approve the resignations as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.
1. Athletics: n/a
1. Transfers: n/a
1. Leaves of Absence: n/a
1. Field Trips: n/a
1. Correspondence:

1. *Harvard Education Letter* (Article)-Informational, as presented

VIII. Superintendent's Report:

1. Student-of-the-month: (December) Drew Gagne

Superintendent Mitchell noted for the minutes that Drew's last name is "Gagne" not "Gagnon" as noted on the agenda.

Superintendent Mitchell said that Drew is, "an outstanding student, clean cut and impressive". Reading from his resume, Ms. Mitchell highlighted a few of Drew's academic, athletic and leadership accomplishments. To name a few, Drew is a National Honor Society member, participates in soccer, baseball, and basketball, and attended the American Legion Boys' State Leadership conference.

B. Student-of-the-month: (January) Joseph Fainer

Joseph Fainer currently ranks number 3 in his class of 77 students. Superintendent Mitchell noted that Joseph has taken a series of advanced placement classes, has been an honor roll student his entire high school career, and is a successful athlete.

C. Student-of-the-month: (February) Heather Jones

Heather has volunteered in a number of services, Church Nursery Assistant, Camp Counselor, and Interact President. Her extra-curricular activities include Math League and she was a Laurel Girls' State participant.

Speaking as a whole, Ms. Mitchell indicated that all three students, "work hard, are very involved, and are positive representations of the Thomaston School District".

D. Consolidation Discussion Group

Due to declining enrollment in school districts across Connecticut, a Consolidation Discussion group was implemented in Thomaston to address the issues surrounding the topic locally. Several Board members, the First Selectman, members of the Finance Board, the Superintendent and several parents had met on several occasions; no decisions have come from those discussions. Superintendent Mitchell squashed any ideas that the meetings were held in secret and/or exclusive. Addressing public misconceptions, Ms. Mitchell felt that it would be best to contact her office directly to obtain accurate information as opposed to utilizing other venues such as Facebook.

E. S.E.N.D. (Sharing Education News and Data)

A purpose of the SEND group is to provide a better connection between the Thomaston community and the Board of Education. Ms. Mitchell, who feels very good about the group, explained that her hope is to provide clear and accurate information and to make the budget process a seamless one.

IX. Business Manager's Report:

A. "Keeping our Schools Safe"/Safety Meetings

Administrators, the Superintendent, and Business manager had, and continue to have, discussions regarding health and safety. A focus relevant to safety, specifically reminding faculty and staff to wear their identification badges, was brought to the forefront.

Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick said that the doors were reprogrammed at the schools and that changes in entry protocol have been instituted.

A suggestion was made that perhaps students should begin wearing identification badges.

Health and safety concerns will continue to be addressed; they are on-going topics.

X. Administrators' Reports:

A. Black Rock School, Alisha DiCorpo/Thomaston Center School, Anne Uberti

Both Ms. Uberti and Ms. DiCorpo publicly acknowledged and thanked their custodial staff for the recent snow removal due to winter storm Nemo.

1. Thomaston High School, John Perrucci
Written report, as presented.

In light of the heavy snow accumulations, Board member, Becky Guay asked about the roofs at the three schools. Both Ms. Uberti and Ms. DiCorpo indicated that they had not noticed any roof leaks, however, Principal Perrucci indicated that, "over all it was looking pretty good", but there was a new leak that they were repairing.

C. Pupil Services, Nancy Schnyer
On leave

XI. Standing Committee Reports:

1. Budget
 - i. Summary-by-Budget-Line Y-T-D expenditures
A motion was made by Holly Herbert and seconded by Anne Petrucci to approve/accept the y-t-d expenditures in the amount of \$8,501,705.07; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.
1. Transfers: n/a
1. 2013/2014 Budget Presentation

Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick, the district's Business Manager, presented the proposed 2013/2014 operating budget to the Board. Significant impacts to the budget include the new teacher assessment and professional development; student testing, in both operational and capital budgets; security; the Energy Savings Performance Contract; the settling of the AFSCME and Teachers' contracts; and declining enrollment.

The budget also includes reductions in staff; 1 certified staff member at Center School, 1 certified staff member at Black Rock School, 1.6 certified staff members at the high school, a .5 certified staff and a 1.0 non-certified staff member from Pupil Services.

The high school will take a big hit with tuition students attending WAMOGO as the number of students attending has increased.

Several Board members expressed their concerns regarding the money allocated for a superintendent search. Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick, without having a solid figure or quote to work from, had allocated \$15,000 for the search. Board chair, Lucy Santopietro, explained that she had just begun researching the process and felt that the \$15,000 figure is on the very high end of the spectrum. Some members felt that an interim should be considered as well.

The 2013/2014 operating budget, which will be brought to the Board of Finance, represents a 1.9% increase over the prior year or \$14,610,693.

A motion was made by Debra Schriver and seconded by Becky Guay to accept/approve the 2013/2014 budget as presented; Kathleen Freimuth and Holly Herbert opposed; motion carried.

1. 2013/2014 Capital Plan

Capital requests totaling \$137,000 included tablet devices, additional wireless points in the three schools, entrance security walls and masonry repairs were brought to the Board for approval. Next stop, the Board of Finance.

On a motion made by Alexander Lee and seconded by Kathleen Freimuth to accept/approve the 2013/2014 capital requests as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

1. Retirement Incentive Discussion

The Board will not be offering a retirement incentive this year.

1. Curriculum/Instruction:

Thomaston High School, increase the minimum passing grade from 60 to 65

On a motion made by Anne Petrucci and seconded by Becky Guay to accept/approve a minimum passing grade of 65 from 60 at the commencement of the 2013-2014 school year for students in grades 7-12;

Further Discussion:

Principal Perrucci stated that, "higher standards yields better performance". He said that there are high functioning students performing well below their ability.

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Maintenance/Facilities: n/a

D. Technology:

1. Technology Committee Update/Protocol for Technology Purchases – Deborrah Sanford

It was asked that all technology purchases be channeled through the technology department prior to the actual buy, because it will subsequently have a consequence on that department.

The I.T. department is manned by three individuals, so if there is a plan to purchase and there isn't enough man power to implement, it's great to have it but there needs to be a balancing act.

Currently, the Center School is a "high needs" area. The physical structure of the building makes wireless difficult due to the thickness of the walls.

An anti-virus software was recently acquired for the district free-of-charge. Ms. Deborrah Sanford, the district's Senior Support Tech, indicated that if you applied for it, you received it, so she took advantage of that opportunity.

E. Personnel: n/a

F. Transportation: n/a

G. Athletics: n/a

1. Long Range Task Force/Building Committee: n/a

I. Policy: n/a

J. Government Relations: n/a

K. Affiliations: n/a

1. Legislation: n/a

XII. Public Participation:

Julianne Ingham
70 Elm Street
Thomaston, CT

With the talk of consolidation, Ms. Ingham felt that an interim superintendent should be considered.

People in town are asking to consider sharing/consolidating services; why two payroll positions – why two accounting positions? Why not a shared Superintendent?

Trish Brody
790 Hickory Hill Road
Thomaston, Ct

Asked if the budget can be posted on the webpage once it has been approved

XIII. Old Business:

1. Board Meeting Structure
2. Start Time for 2014 BoE Meetings
3. Field Trip to Greece in Spring 2014

Ms. Lucy Santopietro asked that the items under Old Business be moved to Items for Future Agendas

XIV. New Business:

- A. Superintendent Search (discussed under budget presentation)

XV. Items for Future Agendas:

XVI. Executive Session:

XVII. Adjournment:

A motion was made by Kathleen Freimuth and seconded by Anne Petrucci to adjourn the Special Meeting of the Board of Education dated Thursday, February 14, 2013 at 9:30 p.m.; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.