



Minutes
THOMASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Meeting
Thomaston Town Hall – Lena Morton Gallery
Date: Monday, May 10, 2010
7:00 p.m.

Members: Laurie Barrett, Chair; Beth Yaffe, Vice Chair; Lucy Santopietro, Secretary; Laura Rieley, Treasurer; Joanne Gilland, Holly Herbert, Roxy Fainer, George Counter and Steve Catania, Members

Minutes

Present: Laurie Barrett, Beth Yaffe, Lucy Santopietro, Roxy Fainer, Joanne Gilland, Holly Herbert, Laura Rieley

Absent: George Counter and Steve Catania

Also Present: Superintendent, Lynda Mitchell; Board Clerk, Patricia George; Pupil Services Director, Nancy Schnyer; Thomaston Center School Principal, James Diorio; High School Principal, John Perrucci; Business Manager, Sue Laone; and School Board Representatives, Alexander Lee and Leah Miller

- I. Establishment of a quorum and call to order:**
Chairperson Laurie Barrett established a quorum and called to order the Regular Meeting of the Thomaston Board of Education at 7:02 p.m.

- II. Pledge of Allegiance:**
Flag not available

- III. Approval of Agenda:**
On a motion made by Beth Yaffe and seconded by Lucy Santopietro to approve/accept the agenda with the following amendments:
 - Under Item VII., Superintendent’s Report, add an item E: Two Schools Interview Process;

 - Under Item X., Subsection C, Standing Committee Reports, move letter C, item 1., Presentation: Kendra McQuilton, ECG Engineering, LLC to follow V. Student Representatives’ Reports.

No further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

- IV. Approval of Minutes:**
On a motion made by Lucy Santopietro and seconded by Beth Yaffe to approve/accept the Regular Meeting minutes dated Monday, April 12, 2010 at 7:00 p.m., no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

V. Student Representatives' Reports:

Student Board Representative Leah Miller highlighted the main fundraiser at the high school, Mr. T.H.S., the proceeds of which will be used to fund scholarships.

Student Board Representative Alex Lee brought forward information pertaining to the upcoming school elections. Mr. Lee expressed his interest in continuing in his capacity as Student Board Representative next year.

(X). Standing Committee Reports (amended to follow item V.)

C. Maintenance/Facilities:

1. Presentation: Kendra McQuilton, ECG Engineering, LLC

The firm, ECG Engineering, serves as a technical consultant to school districts that are looking to make energy efficient related upgrades to their buildings. Energy Performance Contracting (EPC) allows school districts and municipalities to partner with Energy Services Companies (ESCO) such as Honeywell, Siemon, and Johnson Control to name a few. The companies review all energy consuming systems in the district and determine if any of the systems could be upgraded to more energy efficient technology. The company(ies) would provide the district with a detailed audit including the energy savings that could be realized. Ultimately, if approved, the company would be secured to make the upgrades. All costs associated with the project, including ECG's fees, must be paid for out of the projected energy savings once they are realized. There are no upfront costs for the project. Ms. McQuilton said, "It is a wonderful solution for the economy we are experiencing today".

VI. Communications:

A. New Hires

Jonathan Kozlak, the candidate to fill the Assistant Principal position at Thomaston High School, was introduced to the Board of Education. Upon approval, Mr. Kozlak will begin work on May 24, 2010.

On a motion made by Beth Yaffe and seconded by Lucy Santopietro to approve/accept the new hire as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

Items B-G

On a motion made by Beth Yaffe and seconded by Lucy Santopietro to approve/accept correspondence items B-G as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

VII. Superintendent's Report:

- A. Student of the Month: Information on student of the month will be brought forward at the June Board of Education meeting, once the student has been presented at Rotary.
- B. Presenters for Grade 8 Awards Night: Lucy Santopietro and Roxy Fainer
- C. Presenters for High School Graduation: Beth Yaffe and Holly Herbert
- D. Graduation tickets for Board members: Beth Yaffe, Holly Herbert, Lucy Santopietro

- E. Two Schools Interview Process
Superintendent Mitchell brought the Board up-to-date with the interview process. She noted that four candidates have been interviewed to date with three more candidates scheduled for interviews on Thursday, May 13, 2010.

VIII. Business Manager's Report:

- A. Revision of 403(b) document to allow employer non-elective contributions:
On a motion made by Lucy Santopietro and seconded by Beth Yaffe to allow employer non-elective contributions; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.
- B. Updated 403(b) Vendor Listing:
On a motion made by Lucy Santopietro and seconded by Beth Yaffe to approve/accept the vendor listing as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.
- C. 457(b) Plan (Informational only)

IX. Administrators' Reports:

Pupil Services Director, Nancy Schnyer: (oral report)

Ms. Schnyer reported on the following:

- Status of English Language Learners and Talented and Gifted State reporting;
- May 1st grants were written and approved by the State;
- Summer school planning - combining with Plymouth to reduce transportation and staff costs;
- Acknowledged Leah Miller as the recipient of a \$1500 scholarship from Alpha Delpha Kappa, a sorority in which Ms. Schnyer is a member.

High School Principal, John Perrucci

Principal Perrucci highlighted information contained in his written report including:

- The recently conducted Bullying survey;

- Math Curriculum is scheduled for review and revision during the summer;
- All Juniors are now scheduled to take British Literature and Early American Literature;
- A Math intervention course has been implemented for the summer and;
- An update on how he plans to address the NEASC's concerns regarding the Media Specialist.

Center School Principal, James Diorio

Principal Diorio reported on the following:

- Safe Kids Community Club were involved in five activities including a Senior Technology day which he felt was very successful;
- The sixth grade drama club presentation of "The Pirates of Penzance, Junior" in which approximately 500 people attended. Students also had the opportunity to see the play as well. Mr. Diorio expressed his gratification of the presentation.

Board Chair Laurie Barrett asked Mr. Diorio to update the Board regarding the renovations at the school. Mr. Diorio reported that 500 auditorium seats were removed and a model seat had been delivered. He speculated that the auditorium should be ready by the end of June. He further added that the building committee committed to paint the auditorium, but it has to be done before the seats are installed. He also reported that the Engineers will not accept all the original work in the flooring, some portions have to be redone.

Black Rock School Principal, Paul Johnson

Mr. Johnson was not present, written report only

X. Standing Committee Reports:

A. Budget:

1. and 2. On a motion made by Laura Rieley and seconded by Beth Yaffe to approve/accept the budget expenditures of \$10,751,314.20 and monthly transfers as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.
3. 2010/2011 Budget Reductions

With the failed budget referendum, the Board of Education was once again instructed to reduce their budget an additional \$175,000 on top of the \$348,400 first round reductions. The total cuts for the Board of Education now stands at \$527,818.

Business Manager, Sue Laone along with Superintendent Mitchell and Building Administrators, met earlier in the day, and reviewed every budget line item. Ms. Mitchell, as a prior board member herself for 10 years said, "Certain things that the school district loses are never regained."

In order to meet the original \$348,000 budget reduction, there needed to be closure on several outstanding items as reported last month. Those issues have since been resolved and include Math remediation which will remain as it is this year, AFSCME rolled over their contract for a second year in a row, and the Business teacher at the high school will not be added to the 2010-2011 Budget.

Ms. Laone was happy to state that the district has been able to stay away from existing staff, but in the same breath she noted that line items have been cut down to bare bones. "If a boiler needs repair, there is no money to fix it", she said. Ms. Laone then went through each item on the table to be cut.

Board Chair Laurie Barrett publicly thanked the AFSCME union members for their forfeiture of negotiating a new contract. She said, "They never wait for the Board to ask. They step up time and time again and the Board really appreciated it."

- B. Curriculum and Instruction:
 - 1. District Goals (included in packet, informational)
- C. Maintenance/Facilities:
 - 1. Amended to follow item V.
- D. Technology: n/a
- E. Personnel: n/a
- F. Transportation: n/a
- G. Athletics: n/a
- H. Long Range Task Force/Building Committee: n/a
- I. Policy: n/a
- J. Government Relations: n/a
- K. Affiliations:
 - 1. Cable Television
Board Chair Laurie Barrett will confirm with member, George Counter, his status as liaison to the Cable Television Advisory Council.

XI. Public Participation:

Bill Gloade
245 Babbitt Road

Questioned the new hire's position

Keith Lahey
230 Reynolds Bridge

Feels the way the town referendum works is strong-arming the Board of Education with their voting; doesn't feel the money should be taken from Education. He asked if it would be beneficial to separate the town budget from the education budget.

Mr. Lahey indicated that the State, at one point, sued tobacco companies and thought the money was going to Education.

Board member, Ms. Fainer said that she believed the money would go to educating children against smoking, not education in general.

Dianne LaBonte
117 Bristol Street

Ms. LaBonte asked if the Board of Education could use the Teachers' Sick/Severance Payments reserve account on the town side for early retirement payouts.

Kerry Veronesi
12 Innes Avenue

As a follow-up to the last meeting, Ms. Veronesi asked Superintendent Mitchell if once a ballot is cast, could the individual casting the vote indicate why they voted the way they did.

Ms. Mitchell indicated that she did make an inquiry with the First Selectman but had not received a response from his office to date.

Public participant, Dianne LaBonte added that an exit poll could be conducted.

67 Tim Scatena
Patricia Lane

Thanked the Board for not cutting teachers and programs. Indicated that he had some ideas for a third round of cuts should that become necessary, but he was not prepared to share them publicly at this point in time.

Sue Palomba
182 Carter Road

Thanked the Board for listening to the members of the public. She said that there are “lots of places to take a little bit...to try to impact everybody fairly across the board.”

XII. Old Business:

- A. Principal, John Perrucci: High School Homework/Grading Policy
Principal Perrucci fielded questions regarding his proposed homework/grading policy.

XIII. New Business: n/a

XIV. Items for Future Agendas:

XV. Executive Session: n/a

XVI. Adjournment:

On a motion made by Lucy Santopietro and seconded by Beth Yaffe to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education at 8:45 p.m.; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.