

East Haddam Board of Education  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Nathan Hale-Ray High School Cafeteria  
February 13, 2007  
7:00 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Pamela Gourlie, Tracey Gionta, Everett Herden, Nick Iacovelli,  
Robert Mather, Manny Misenti, Tom Mielt, Mary-Beth Mordecai

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Alan Hyla

**STUDENT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:** Anne Durfee Kevin Staehly

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Dr. Durham and approximately 9 people including staff were  
present.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Mrs. Gourlie.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. REPORT OF THE BOARD CHAIR

A. Update on Superintendent Search Process

Mrs. Gourlie informed the Board that the second round of interviews of the superintendent search with the finalists would be held Thursday, February 15, 2007; followed by a potential site visit the following Thursday.

B. Report from Student Council Representatives

Mr. Staehly reported that last weekend the high school had a Valentine's Day dance at which the FFA sold roses. Mr. Staehly informed the Board that the safety poll had been typed and would be available next week. There will be a Chamber Music Concert held at the Goodspeed Opera House this evening and tomorrow evening at 7 p.m.

Ms. Durfee reported that some seniors were partaking in the work study program. Mr. Flaherty had baked red velvet cakes for the Senior Center and Chestelm. February break begins next week. Ms. Durfee informed the Board that seniors, during their second semester, can choose to continue with their portfolio class or the WISE project. Many seniors have chosen to participate in the WISE project. Last month, the multi-cultural club offered a movie event in which dinner (Greek food) was served and the movie "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" was viewed.

III. REPORT OF THE BOARD CHAIR (continued)

B. Report from Student Council Representatives (continued)

Ms. Durfee informed the Board that the event was well attended and that the next scheduled meeting will have a Chinese theme. The National Honor Society is working with the middle school to develop a mentoring/ tutoring program.

IV. ACTION ON THE MINUTES

**MOTION:** Gionta, Iacovelli; to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of January 9, 2007 as presented.

**FAVOR (5):** Gionta, Herden, Mather, Mordecai,  
Misenti

**OPPOSED (0):** None

**ABSTENTIONS (2):** Iacovelli, Mielt

**ABSENT (1):** Hyla

**MOTION PASSED**

**MOTION:** Mather, Gionta; to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 9, 2007 as presented.

**FAVOR (6):** Gionta, Herden, Mather, Mordecai,  
Misenti, Iacovelli

**OPPOSED (0):** None

**ABSTENTIONS (1):** Mielt

**ABSENT (1):** Hyla

**MOTION PASSED**

**MOTION:** Mordecai, Herden; to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of February 5, 2007 as presented.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT**  
**MOTION PASSED**

V. REPORT OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEES

A. 4-8 Middle School

Mrs. Mordecai informed the Board that the referendum for the additional fees needed to build the new middle school had passed. Todd Moss, SBC Chairman, has signed the final contract with Newfield Construction and construction is scheduled to begin within the next week. There will be a formal ground breaking ceremony, date and time still to be determined. Mr. Iacovelli commented that the building of the school was a historic event and suggested that students in the

V. REPORT OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEES (continued)

A. 4-8 Middle School (continued)

WISE program document its progress. Mrs. Mordecai informed the Board that she would be working in conjunction with the Finance Director to establish a financial reporting system.

B. Middle and Elementary Schools' Capital Improvements

Mr. Mather reported they had met earlier this evening to approve the three projects which were performed last summer; asbestos removal at the middle school and elementary school as well as the installation of the fire alarm system at the elementary school. The installation of the fire alarm system was a smooth project and it is in excellent working condition.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

A. Presentation of the 2007-08 School Budget

Dr. Durham presented the proposed 2007-08 education budget via a PowerPoint presentation. The detailed budget was provided to Board members and is filed at the Board of Education office. Dr. Durham has met several times with the Finance Committee to review the budget. Pending approval by the Board, it will be presented to the Board of Finance. Dr. Durham thanked all administrators for their work in establishing the budget.

Dr. Durham informed the Board that the goal of the budget is to maintain existing programs at or near the current level of operation and to support the district's efforts to improve student achievement. He also noted that the budget contains no new strategic planning initiatives.

The budget contains four objectives: funding of the second phase of the music curriculum, a new science teacher at the high school, a reading teacher to address the reading needs of low performing students at the high school, and funds to continue the initiatives implemented under the direction of the strategic plan.

The percentage increase of the budget is 4.91% over last year's budget. Salaries and insurance premiums are the major contributors to this increase. Dr. Durham informed the Board that a part time aide position would be required at the middle school next year for the incoming 4<sup>th</sup> graders. The current 4<sup>th</sup> grade class is the largest class the school system has had.

Dr. Durham informed the Board that Project O was not new, but that it had always been funded by the Ray Board. Due to investment/interest rates, it will not be funded by the Ray Board during the upcoming budget year.

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VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS (continued)

A. Presentation of the 2007-08 School Budget (continued)

Dr. Durham briefly reviewed student enrollment. There is a need for additional teachers at the high school due to student demographics which has shifted. Additionally, the increase in student graduation requirements at the high school requires additional course selections and faculty. Dr. Durham stated that they feel that Hale-Ray is a very competitive option for those families who used to consider private school.

The Boards collective bargaining efforts with the Unions have helped to control the costs of health insurance.

The increase in services is attributed to the following; an increase in maintenance and repair costs as well as transportation. Gasoline and fuel costs have increased. The increase in services is slightly higher than benefits and is attributable to the increase costs of supplies, labor costs, etc.

Electricity fees are being purchased through a consortium of other municipalities etc., which purchase kilowatt hours at a reduced rate. Similar efforts are implemented for fuel oil, gasoline, etc.

The Capitol Improvement Plan was reviewed. The middle school roof (Hale building) needs to be replaced. It was in the budget last year and the Board of Finance did not approve the funds to replace the entire roof but did release some funds for repairs. Dr. Durham stated that there had been discussions that the facility would be turned into municipal space after the new school opens. Regardless, the roof repairs would be necessary to maintain the integrity of the space and infrastructure. Dr. Durham stated it would be a decision by the Board of Finance as to whether the roof would be repaired or replaced.

The water supply well at the elementary school should be replaced. The relocation of the water supply well was recommended by the Department of Public Health. Approximately 55% of the cost will be reimbursable.

The replacement of the middle school gymnasium windows is a part of the capitol improvement plan included in the budget. The windows are inefficient and need to be replaced. Several of the elementary school ventilator systems will be replaced each year as indicated in the budget under capitol improvements. Re-pointing of one of the chimneys at the middle school is also included under the Capitol Improvement Plan. The Capitol Improvement Plan budget is over a million dollars.

Responsive to a question by Mr. Herden, Dr. Durham replied that participation with Project O had remained the same as last year.

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VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS (continued)

A. Presentation of the 2007-08 School Budget (continued)

Mrs. Gionta questioned if funding for an additional bus for the incoming 4<sup>th</sup> graders to the middle school was included in the budget. Dr. Durham replied they were able to eliminate a van route and include an extra bus at no additional cost to the budget.

Responsive to a question by Mrs. Gionta, Dr. Durham replied that the plan under the Long Range Schools Facilities Plan was to conduct a facilities study to determine to what extent there needed to be some renovations at the elementary school, which could take some time.

Mr. Iacovelli commented that there was approximately \$600,000.00 allocated under the Capitol Improvement Plan for the middle school. Mr. Iacovelli questioned if the repairs were performed and then the facility was turned over to the town, would the reimbursable rate need to be paid by the town. Dr. Durham replied if the use changes within a certain amount of time from being reimbursed, some of the funding could be lost. The Board of Finance will ultimately decide if the \$600,000.00 will be allocated for the repairs. Dr. Durham stated that the precise use of the middle school when it is no longer a school has not been decided, which could effect the Board of Finance's decision to fund capitol improvement projects at the middle school.

Mr. Misenti stated that during the arbitration with the non-certified bargaining unit, data was produced that the BOE had spent significantly more per student than any other school district in the area for maintenance and repairs. Mr. Misenti questioned if the reason had been identified. Dr. Durham replied this was true but that for a long time prior, the Board had not allocated money to repair its facilities. Dr. Durham stated any reductions to the Board of Education budget typically came from the maintenance account rather than textbooks and supplies. Dr. Durham briefly reviewed recent maintenance repairs.

Mrs. Gionta questioned how long the plastic mulch was supposed to last at the elementary school. Dr. Durham replied hopefully forever.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Long Range Planning

Long Range Planning met February 1, 2007. Mr. Iacovelli briefly

reviewed discussions as documented in the Long Range Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.

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VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS (continued)

B. Finance

Finance met on January 10<sup>th</sup> and January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The meeting minutes were provided to the Board. Mr. Mather spoke favorably about the budget.

C. Policy

Policy met February 1, 2007. Dr. Mielt briefly reviewed discussions as documented in the Policy Subcommittee Meeting Minutes. Policy 5131.911 (Hazing) and Policy 5131.913 (Cyberbullying) were presented as second readings.

D. Transportation

Mr. Mather reported this Committee had not met.

E. Personnel and Negotiations

Mr. Misenti reported that this Committee had met this evening. Mr. Misenti suggested the Board go into Executive Session at the end of the meeting for discussions related to Personnel and Negotiations.

F. Ray Board Liaison

Mr. Iacovelli stated that Ray Board had not met.

G. LEARN

Mrs. Gourlie briefly reviewed and discussed the following documents:

- CAFE Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc. Advocacy Highlights; and
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual CAFE Leadership Institute.

H. Curriculum Council Liaison

Curriculum Council met on January 18<sup>th</sup> and February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Mr. Herden briefly reviewed discussions as documented in the Policy Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.

Mrs. Gionta stated that when she had attended a recent parent/teacher

conference, a teacher had suggested alignment of the math curriculum with mastery testing.

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VIII. COMMUNICATIONS AND AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

There were no communications and audience of citizens at the time it was offered.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

A. Strategic Plan

There was nothing new to add.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Acceptance of Consent Agenda

1) Warrant

a. To approve the warrant for 2006-07 in the amount of \$1,281,046.69.

2) To approve Policy 5131.911 (Hazing) as a second reading.

3) To approve Policy 5131.913 (Cyberbullying) as a second reading.

4) To approve the business textbook entitled Personal Finance as recommended by Business Education Curriculum Committee.

**MOTION:** Iacovelli, Herden; to approve items 1 through 4 of the Consent Agenda.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT  
MOTION PASSED**

B. **MOTION:** Mather, Iacovelli; to approve the 2007-08 school budget in the amount of \$16,599,590 as recommended by the Finance Committee and to direct the administration to prepare the necessary documents for submission to the Board of Finance.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT  
MOTION PASSED**

**MOTION:** Iacovelli, Gionta; to enter Executive Session at 8:08 p.m. for the purpose of

discussing Personnel & Negotiations.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT  
MOTION PASSED**

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The Board returned to Regular Session at 9:38 p.m.

**MOTION:** Mordecai, Iacovelli; to adjourn at 9:39 p.m.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT  
MOTION PASSED**

Respectfully submitted,

Nick Iacovelli  
Secretary