

East Haddam Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes
Nathan Hale-Ray High School Cafeteria
February 26, 2008
7:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nick Iacovelli, Tracey Gionta, Tom Mielt, Bryan Perry, Alan Hyla,
Mary-Beth Mordecai, Deborah Fiala, Everett Herden, Robert Mather

STUDENT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT: None

ABSENT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE: Joseph Weaver, Kevin Staehly

OTHERS PRESENT: Dr. Ellen Solek, Bob Carroll, Linda Dadona, Chuck Rinaldi,
Cindy Mello, Jason Peacock, Bonnie Butsch, Dave Scata, Richard Gable,
Sue Link, Toni McCabe, Ruth Ziobron and approximately 7 other staff,
students and citizens

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairman Nick Iacovelli.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. REPORT OF THE BOARD CHAIR

A. Communications

Mr. Iacovelli informed the Board of a letter to the editor from the Registrar of Voters. The letter thanks the Board and Selectmen's office for working together for the use of the middle school for primary voting.

Mr. Iacovelli mentioned how impressed the Board was for the large turnout of people in support of the proposed Track Team.

Mr. Mather thanked the custodian's work during the primary voting at the middle school.

B. Report from Student Council Representative

No one was available to report.

C. Report from the First Selectman

First Selectman Walter was unavailable to report.

IV. ACTION ON THE MINUTES

MOTION: Mather, Perry; to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 8, 2008 as presented.

FAVOR (8): Mordecai, Mielt, Gionta, Perry, Fiala, Hyla, Herden, Mather
OPPOSED (0): None
ABSTENTIONS (0): None
ABSENT (0): None
MOTION PASSED

MOTION: Fiala, Mather; to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of January 18, 2008 as presented.

FAVOR (3): Fiala, Herden, Mather
OPPOSED (0): None
ABSTENTIONS (5): Gionta, Hyla, Mielt, Perry, Mordecai
ABSENT (0): None
MOTION PASSED

MOTION: Mather, Perry; to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of January 29, 2008 as amended as follows:

- Page 11, 3rd paragraph, 4th line, strike “undesigned” and replace with “capital reserve”.

FAVOR (8): Mordecai, Mielt, Gionta, Perry, Fiala, Hyla, Herden, Mather
OPPOSED (0): None
ABSTENTIONS (0): None
ABSENT (0): None
MOTION PASSED

V. REPORT OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEES

A. 4-8 Middle School

Ms. Mordecai distributed and discussed the following:

- East Haddam 4-8 School State Project #141-0038 N/PS Budget Report for the Month of January 2008.

Ms. Mordecai reported on the progress of the school building project. The guard rails and fencing around the ball fields have been installed. Windows, doors and paint will be complete within the next two weeks. The locks on the lockers are integrated on the locker and are not the types that come off the locker. Built in cabinets are being

V. REPORT OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEES (continued)A. 4-8 Middle School (continued)

installed in the 6 – 8 wing. Ms. Mordecai stated the architect and project manager had advised that the progress of the project was ahead of schedule with very little complications. The percentage of change orders are minimal comparative to similar type projects.

B. Middle and Elementary Schools' Capital Improvements

Mr. Mather had nothing new to report.

VI. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLSA. East Haddam Youth and Family Services' Asset Survey

Mrs. McCabe from East Haddam Youth & Family Services presented her findings from the asset survey with a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Developmental Assets. A Profile of our Youth 2008 Report, Grade 7 – 12, Middlesex County/United Way".

Mrs. McCabe distributed and discussed a document entitled, "East Haddam Youth & Family Services, East Haddam Local Prevention Council, 2008 Report to the Community".

Responsive to a question by Mr. Herden, Mrs. McCabe replied reference to illicit drugs on the survey did not include prescription drugs.

Mr. Hyla questioned what activities were most responsible for increasing some of the assets. Mrs. McCabe replied the results were very positive and significant work performed in schools had built positive relationships with kids. The following examples were cited: academic support, peer mentoring, talent shows, band and choral concerts, extra-curricular clubs, student assistant teams, school transition programs, responsive classroom, developmental guidance, Names Can Really Hurt Program, Straight from the Heart Program, Spirit Club, right of passage grants, athletic programs, and East Haddam Youth and Family Services' Asset Survey helping youth and middle school first day of school celebration. The following community services were cited as being positive for youth: youth adult jam night, intergeneration program, faith based youth groups, community conversations, volunteerism, parent community education programs, family day, little league and children's night on Moodus Green.

Mr. Iacovelli stated the strategic plan worked to build relationships with kids.

Mr. Iacovelli stated having Mr. Hyla as liaison to the Local Prevention Council was evident of the Board's commitment to keeping the lines of communication open.

Mr. Iacovelli questioned how many people served on the Local Prevention Council. Mrs. McCabe replied 10 to 12 people and new volunteers were always welcome.

VI. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS (continued)A. East Haddam Youth and Family Services' Asset Survey (continued)

Ms. Mordecai questioned how to get parents more involved. Mrs. McCabe replied this was a tough community to get parents involved because of how spread out the area is, work obligations, etc. Mrs. McCabe stated she was researching ideas and was considering performing a presentation with parents and kids together then breaking out into workshops which would require them to work together.

Mrs. McCabe stated there needed to be better education, communication and dialog between the formal systems and parents. Mr. Hyla questioned if there were any national programs. Mrs. McCabe replied not that she was aware of. Mrs. McCabe stated there were ways to educate parents. Mrs. McCabe stated she would be proposing a "Parent Pledge". The parent would sign a pledge to provide a safe home for kids for parties. All the people on the list would be a part of a document which would be sent out to everyone on the list. Parents could reference the list before allowing their child to attend a party.

Mrs. McCabe stated parents needed to be supported to stay connected with their children, especially in the 7 – 12 grade level. Mr. Iacovelli stated as children start going to the middle and high school they want less and less parent involvement, yet are looking for more contact with other adults. Mrs. McCabe stated that was why it was important to get other sectors of the community involved.

Mr. Herden agreed it was difficult to get people involved. Mr. Herden questioned if a mother/daughter or father/son activity had been planned. Mrs. McCabe replied affirmatively. Ms. Mordecai suggested a town wide book club. Mr. Iacovelli suggested a sports celebrity lecture as a father/son activity.

Dr. Solek stated the Board was reviewing curriculum initiatives around health and wellness, developing policy for illicit drug use, instructional practices and that Mrs. McCabe's findings from the survey would help in these areas.

Dr. Solek informed the Board that she and the administrative team had been having dialog about parent involvement and awareness. The need for parents to become more involved was identified.

Dr. Solek advised the creation of a new subcommittee for safety and security. Mr. Perry volunteered to be on this subcommittee. Dr. Solek and Mr. Perry will formulate a proposal for presentation at the next meeting. The Board discussed coordinating safety and security issues with the town.

B. Track Team Proposal

This item was discussed and reviewed during the Long Range Planning and Policy committee reports.

VI. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS (continued)C. 2008-09 School Budget

Responsive to a question by Mrs. Gionta, Mr. Carroll replied the final budgeted amount for approval was \$17,775,681.00. This is a 7.09% increase over last year's budget. Mr. Carroll agreed to provide the net percentage at the next meeting. Mr. Carroll has included on the capital improvement plan the date in which the item was first put on the list and narrative history.

Ms. Mordecai, referencing the January 29, 2008 meeting minutes, stated she was in agreement with Mrs. Gionta's suggestion of setting aside funds in a capital reserve funds for the capital improvements. This item will be addressed with the Board of Finance.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTSA. Long Range Planning

Long Range Planning met February 7, 2008. Mr. Herden briefly reviewed discussions as documented in the Long Range Planning Subcommittee meeting minutes.

Regarding the Track and Field Team proposal, the committee decided to make a recommendation to the full Board that due to the lack of any formal proposal submitted to date for such a team, the committee did not support the funding of a track and field team within the 2008-09 proposal. The committee requested policy and procedures to be established regarding this issue.

The following document was discussed and provided in Board member's packets:

- The East Haddam Board of Education Track and Field Program Information 2008-09 Budget Consideration.

This document is broken down into categories, cost, timeline, comments/recommendations and source(s). The estimated total start up cost (not including track) being \$112,200.00.

Responsive to a question by Mr. Hyla, Mr. Herden replied his comments, although not necessarily written in the meeting minutes, was the consensus of the committee. Mr. Hyla stated committee consensus should be reflected in meeting minutes. Mr. Iacovelli stated the consensus would be incorporated into the meeting minutes.

B. Finance

Finance met January 9th and January 16th. Mr. Mather reported the budget would be voted on at the end of the meeting.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS (continued)C. Policy

Policy met February 7th. Dr. Miett briefly reviewed discussions as documented in the Policy Subcommittee Meeting Minutes. Policy #1700 (Firearms on School Property, Policy #4212.42 (Drug and Alcohol Testing for School Bus Drivers), Policy #5131.2 (Weapons and Dangerous Instruments), and Policy #7241 (Permanent Physical Additions to Existing School District Property) were presented as a second reading.

Dr. Miett reported the committee agreed, through discussions regarding the track and field team; that due to the lack of any formal proposal submitted, the committee did not support funding. The committee will formulate policy for the adoption of new programs (non-academic).

Mr. Hyla stated he agreed that non-academic programs needed to start within the school system with a qualified proposal approved by the appropriate administrators; allowing for the Board to make an informed decision.

D. Transportation

Mr. Mather reported Transportation had not met and he had nothing to report.

E. Personnel and Negotiations

Personnel and Negotiations had not met. Dr. Miett had nothing to report.

F. Ray Board Liaison

Ray Board had not met. Mrs. Fiala had nothing to report.

G. LEARN

Mrs. Gionta reported LEARN met twice. Mrs. Gionta reviewed a presentation given by Judith Golden on January 10th regarding professional communities at work, best practices for enhancing student achievement. The second meeting Mrs. Gionta attended was presented by the LEARN director reviewing services offered by LEARN. Mrs. Gionta will provide Board members a copy of the LEARN director's presentation and handouts.

H. Curriculum Instruction and Assessment Council Liaison

Curriculum Instruction and Assessment Council met on February 11th. Mr. Herden reported review of subject areas of curriculum committees was reviewed. The master calendar and draft curriculum guide to science was reviewed. Mr. Herden stated the curriculum guide would be helpful in determining how long particular content areas should be taught to students.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS (continued)

H. Curriculum Instruction and Assessment Council Liaison (continued)

Dr. Solek briefly reviewed professional development activities on February 5th.

Dr. Solek referenced an email correspondence sent to Board members regarding the districts exclusive membership of RTI and SRBI and stated further information would be provided at the next meeting.

Mr. Hyla requested Curriculum Instruction and Assessment Council meeting minutes be included in Board member packets each month. Dr. Solek will provide an overview for differentiation and instruction at the next meeting.

Ms. Mordecai stated the Board may benefit by having a teacher present a differentiation instruction plan.

I. Open Space Committee Liaison

Open Space had not met. Mr. Perry had nothing to report.

J. Local Prevention Council

Local Prevention Council met January 16th.

Mr. Hyla informed the Board that he had requested that Local Prevention Council meeting minutes be included in Board members packets each month.

Mr. Herden suggested a presentation of a lesson plan contrasting conventional methods verses a differentiation instruction plan.

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS AND AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

There were none.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

X. NEW BUSINESS**A. Acceptance of Consent Agenda**

- 1) Warrant
 - a. To approve the warrant for 2007-08 in the amount of \$1,196,134.79.
- 2) To approve a paid leave of absence for Ms. Melinda Blaschik from January 25, 2008 through March 14, 2008.
- 3) To accept the resignation of Mr. Jason Dittert, Physical Education teacher at Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School, effective January 19, 2008.
- 4) To approve Policy #1700 (Firearms on School Property) as a second reading.
- 5) To approve Policy #4212.42 (Drug and Alcohol Testing for School Bus Drivers) as a first reading.
- 6) To approve Policy #5131.2 (Weapons and Dangerous Instruments) as a first reading.
- 7) To approve Policy #7241 (Permanent Physical Additions to Existing School District Property) as a first reading.

MOTION: Herden, Gionta; to approve the Consent Agenda items 1-7.

**FAVOR: ALL PRESENT
MOTION PASSED**

- B. MOTION:** Gionta, Hyla; to approve a Track Team as a line item on the 2008-09 school budget.

Mr. Mather stated the figures presented at the last meeting were different than the figures established by documentation obtained by Dr. Solek. Mr. Mather stated this was one of the reasons why procedure needed to be established by the Policy Committee. Mr. Mather stated if the Board had voted at last month's meeting to approve the track team proposal with the assumptions of \$25,000, where the figure proposed was \$112,000; the Board would have been in a bad situation.

Mr. Hyla stated there were variations of expenditures for the establishment of a track team. Mr. Hyla stated it did not need to cost \$112,000. Mr. Hyla stated different proposals at differing costs could be presented for Board approval.

Mr. Herden stated the Board needed to be presented with a concrete figure before making a decision.

X. NEW BUSINESS (continued)

Ms. Mordecai encouraged another track team proposal.

FAVOR (0): None
OPPOSED (8): Mordecai, Mielt, Gionta, Perry, Fiala, Hyla, Herden, Mather
MOTION FAILED

C. **MOTION:** Mather, Perry; to approve the 2008-09 school budget in the amount of \$17,775,681.00 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: Mordecai, Hyla; to adjourn at 8:49 pm.

FAVOR: ALL PRESENT
MOTION PASSED

Respectfully submitted,

Everett Herden
Secretary