

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17
BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
(JOINT MEETING)
January 14, 2020

A special meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on January 14, 2020 in the Haddam-Killingworth Intermediate/Middle School Student Commons Area. Board of Education Chair, Suzanne Sack, called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Members Present: Peter Sonski, Joel D'Angelo, Jennifer Favalora, Shawna Goldfarb, Dr. Nelson Rivera, Eileen Blewett, Brenda Buzzi, Kathleen Zandi (Arrived at 6:06 PM), Joanne Nesti and Suzanne Sack

Members Absent: Gerry Matthews

Also Present: Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Holly Hageman, President of HK Education Association, Robin Duffield, Haddam First Selectman, Robert McGarry (Arrived at 6:07 PM), Haddam Board of Selectmen, Kate Anderson, Haddam Board of Finance Chairman, Joseph Centofanti, Haddam Board of Finance Members, Harlan Frederickson, David Challenger, Marc Adelberg, Tim Teran (Arrived at 6:25PM), Haddam Board of Finance Alternates, Prem K. Aithal and Peter Baird, Killingworth First Selectwoman, Catherine Iino, Killingworth Board of Selectmen, Louis Annino, Jr. and Eileen Blewett, Killingworth Board of Finance Chairwoman, Gwenne Celmer (Arrived at 6:04 PM), Killingworth Board of Finance Members, Cheryl K. Fine, Robert Rimmer, Marcel Couture, Annie Stirna, Andrew J. O'Neill (Arrived at 6:08 PM), and Board Clerk, Jamie Sciascia

Visitors: Approximately 1

Call to Order/Opening of Meeting: Board of Education Chair, Suzanne Sack, called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Discussion of Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budgets:
The Boards gave a brief introduction of themselves.

Discussion regarding the Fiscal Year Budget for 2020-2021 took place between the Board of Education, the Boards of Finance and the Boards of Selectmen of the Towns of Haddam and Killingworth.

Suzanne briefly went over the Budget process, and timeline. She asked each Board where are they now, and to give an update on their strengths and what challenges they are facing as the District is crafting their Budget. She also went over the ADM for the Towns of Haddam and Killingworth. Board Chair, Sack, introduced Superintendent Dr. Hageman and expressed the Board's and District's excitement for her new position. She spoke about Board Member, Eileen Blewett, being Finance Chair, and how she will help the District balance out challenges they have with achieving the Board's Mission with Student Education and Achievement and as well as fiscal responsibilities. Further, Board Chair, Sack, went over the District restructuring successfully being completed with the merge of BES and HES as well as putting the 4th Grade into the Intermediate School. She stated that the enrollment numbers turned out to be accurate, spoke briefly on the savings that went to the District, and adding another teacher back into BES due to pressure and class size. She also stated enrollment continues to decline. Board Chair, Sack, went over the HKHS Energy Project being bonded and keeping the Capital Account fully funded. Lastly, she spoke about seeing pressure in Special Education continuing to rise and being a challenge to serve the needs of students.

Lastly, she spoke briefly about embarking on *The Vision of the Graduate*, which kicks off this Spring and lead by Superintendent Dr. Hageman.

Gwenne Calmar addressed the Board. She spoke about having two new Board of Finance members, went over the ongoing challenges the Town faces with student population decreasing which in turn made the Town Grand List shrink. Further, she stressed her concerns that if the School budget keeps increasing that the Town of Killingworth will not be able to support any ongoing increase forever.

Cathy lino addressed the Board. She spoke about how the Grand List for the Town of Killingworth is flat this year, and the ADM made a big change with Haddam having a lot more students than Killingworth. She further touched on the long term Capital Plan with major road projects in the Capital Budget and couple of major building projects that they have to consider.

Kate Anderson addressed the Board. She spoke about the Town of Haddam operating under a brand new Board of Selectmen, all who have extensive experience on different Committees within the towns. She addressed the challenges they are facing, have put together Community Vision Workshops to figure out what to do with HES, including hiring professional consultants to facilitate the workshops and getting Community's input. The full report is available on the Town's website for public viewing. Kate also touched on the Underground Storage Tank Projects and HKHS Gym Floor Project; inquired as to who will be overseeing those as they move forward. Board Member, Eileen Blewett, stated there will be an architect that will be hired and working with John Mercier to oversee everything as well as the new Public Building Committee that was formed. Lastly, Kate spoke about looking into the Community Members who don't have students in the District to make sure they receive some sort of quarterly update so communication reaches everyone.

Bob McGarry addressed the Board. He spoke about the need to revitalize the Higganum Center since the closing of HES. He stated that the purchase of HES has opened some opportunities for the Town which they are looking to pursue. He further spoke briefly on the HES roof that needs to be replaced, approximately \$350,000. Also, Bob mentioned the replacement of Fire Engines which have been on their Capital Plan for a number of years. He doesn't anticipate any major changes or increase to the Grand list, and spoke briefly on the 11% increase to their state Health Insurance Plan.

Eileen Blewett spoke about signing another 3-year contract with STA hoping to align with neighboring Districts. She spoke further about negotiating flat for this year as an incentive to sign with STA again. Eileen briefly touched on Community Focus Groups and Town Surveys when searching for a new Superintendent, and addressing the HKHS Gym Floor being an expensive project but they cannot put it off any longer.

Peter Sonski spoke briefly on STA Negotiations, doing extensive research and being pleased with the outcome. Cathy lino asked about the guidelines on going out to bid for a contract if there are any restrictions.

Tim Teran addressed the Board. He thanked the Board for inviting him to this meeting. He stated he is a father of two children and feels that we are all challenged by Budget constraints. Tim raised some suggestions by possibility looking into getting funding from Alumni or Development groups for foundation that would really benefit the District. Board Chair, Sack, stated we haven't looked at any additional means of revenue but stated that she would ultimately like the Communications Committee to start writing Grants. She said that the Board is not in a place to tackle this suggestion today but definitely a year down the road it's something they would be willing to look into. Cathy lino asked if they could create an Independent Foundation what the Board's dream projects would be. Superintendent Dr. Hageman spoke about having labs in high school that allow students interact with science, more hands on, as well as helping special needs

students access curriculum. Board Chair, Sack, spoke about High School students having the biggest need for Technology this year with the Blended Learning. She also mentioned looking into creating more internships and getting kids ready for the working world.

Prem Aithal addressed the Board. He spoke about having a long term vision, specifically, 1-3-5 years, with goals on what the District is planning to spend and why is it important. He suggested the possibility of the long term committees getting together, creating a subcommittee to look at all of this from a global Community perspective. Board Chair, Sack, mentioned that she will reach out to him and to Tim Teran to get their help with The Vision of The Graduate.

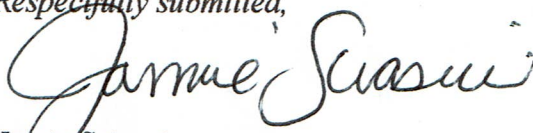
Lastly, Board Chair, spoke briefly about Board Member, Jennifer Favalora, drafting a summary of the Board's work on a monthly basis with Brenda Buzzi reporting at the First Selectmen's meeting for the Town of Haddam and Kathy Zandi reporting at the First Selectmen's meeting at the Town of Killingworth. Bob McGarry said it was a great to have the presentation, and well received by the Community.

Board Chair, Suzanne Sack, thanked everyone for being in attendance and stated that the next Joint meeting will be when Superintendent Dr. Holly Hageman presents the Preliminary Budget for RSD17 scheduled for March 5, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Board Chair, Suzanne Sack, called for the meeting to adjourn at 6:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,


Jamie Sciascia
Board Clerk

Approval:  Date: March 3, 2020
Jennifer Favalora, Secretary