

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**  
**March 5, 2019**

*A meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on March 5, 2019 in the Haddam-Killingworth High School Auditorium. Board of Education Chair, Joanne Nesti, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.*

***Members Present:** Sue Williams, Peter Sonski, Eric Couture, Eileen Blewett, Brenda Buzzi, Maura Wallin, Kathleen Zandi, Suzanne Sack, Joel D'Angelo and Joanne Nesti*

***Members Absent:** Gerry Matthews*

***Also Present:** Superintendent of Schools, Howard Thiery, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Holly Hageman, Director of Finance, Martha Vaughn, Vice President of HK Education Association, Robin Duffield, Berchem & Moses, PC, Attorney Floyd Dugas, Public Building Committee Chairman, Tom Hogarty, CREC Director, Doug Rogers, MJ Daly, Ken Stolting, Student Representatives, Kate Porter and Nolan Serbent, Killingworth Board of Finance Member, Robert Rimmer, Killingworth Board of Finance Member, Annie Stirna, and Board Clerk, Jamie Sciascia*

***Visitors:** Approximately 25*

**Call to Order/Opening of Meeting:**

*Board of Education Chair, Joanne Nesti, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.*

**Public Comment:**

*Tom Hogarty of Killingworth addressed the Board. He spoke about how he lives in Killingworth and also is the Chairman of the Public Building Committee for RSD17. He understands the concerns of the Haddam residents with the HES closure and believes it is District wide issue. He stated how we have heard from 2% of the population between both towns, and feels that the other 98% need to speak up about same. He believes the Board made the right decision for the Community.*

*Diane Fucci of Higganum addressed the Board. She spoke about her daughter's education, and believes it is failing in the school system from not getting the assistance that she needs in regarding her IEP. She spoke about a situation that occurred with her daughter being assaulted by a boy at school. She also stated her daughter has been bullied and she is worried about her safety.*

*Elisabeth Barrett Abbatello of Higganum addressed the Board. She spoke about how she has been a resident since she was a kid and believes the school system is good. She feels that we should keep the HES building, and if the restructuring doesn't work we will have a school to fall back on instead of building onto a school. Elisabeth stated how the building hasn't been assessed and we shouldn't give it way for under what it is worth. If restructuring doesn't work, then we would have a school to fall back on. She briefly spoke on Burr's leaking roofs.*



Katie Packtor, speaking on behalf of Jeff Sturges, addressed the Board. He spoke about his opposition to the District restructuring. He asked that the Board pause the closing for one year to address the Community's concerns. He believes that the closure process began under pressure to reduce expenses. Further, he addressed Capital Funding, Bussing Routes, and the RFP. He believes there is disconnect with the BOE, elected town leaders and Community members especially seeing everyone's displeasure with how this process has been carried out. Jeff spoke about Community Member and parent, Heather Pach, and her addressing Exit Interviews at one of the Board meetings. He asked that the Board stop the restructuring, stop the process, listen to the Community, keep HES open and identify the problems and solutions. He briefly spoke on establishing a Community action group and putting more questions on the budget referendum to see what the Community feels on the closure and getting support from all stakeholders is key.

Robert Rimmer of Killingworth addressed the Board. He spoke about how he lives in Killingworth, and also is on the Board of Finance Committee. He spoke about how the HES closure is long overdue since there has been a steady enrollment decline for a while. He applauds the efforts the Board has done and the \$1.2Million in savings it will bring to the District.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Approval of Minutes for the following Board Meetings:

- A. Approval of Minutes for the Board of Education – Education Session Meeting held on January 22, 2019

Kathleen Zandi **MOVED** and Eileen Blewett **SECONDED** a motion to approve Minutes A as presented.

Motion passed unanimously 10-0-0 by the following show of hands:

Suzanne Sack	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>	Joel D'Angelo	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>
Peter Sonski	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>	Eileen Blewett	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>
Maura Wallin	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>	Brenda Buzzi	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>
Eric Couture	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>	Gerry Matthews	Absent		
Sue Williams	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>	Kathleen Zandi	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>
				Joanne Nesti	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>

**Report from Student Representatives:**

Lauren Miller updated the Board. She spoke about the new musical The Wizard of Oz scheduled for May 2-4<sup>th</sup>, and the Student Council Blood Drive to be held on March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Nolan Serbent updated the Board. He spoke about the Mr. HK event that was held last month which Nolan won. The senior class raised \$1,700 which will go towards end-of-year activities and also towards students that can't afford those activities.

Student Representatives, Lauren Miller and Nolan Serbent, left the meeting at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Suzanne Sack **MOVED** and Eric Couture **SECONDED** a motion to move up Items 7A and 7Aa, High School Energy and Facilities Update, Report from the Public Building Committee set forth under Old Business in the Agenda.

Motion passed unanimously 10-0-0 by the following show of hands:

Suzanne Sack	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>	Joel D'Angelo	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>
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Peter Sonski YES  NO  A   
 Maura Wallin YES  NO  A   
 Eric Couture YES  NO  A   
 Sue Williams YES  NO  A

Eileen Blewett YES  NO  A   
 Brenda Buzzi YES  NO  A   
 Gerry Matthews Absent  
 Kathleen Zandi YES  NO  A   
 Joanne Nesti YES  NO  A

**Old Business**

**A. High School Energy and Facilities Upgrade**

**a) Report from Public Building Committee**

*Tom Hogarty updated the Board. He spoke about the invoice from MJ in the amount of \$46,550.00 which was unanimously approved by the PBC. Secondly, Tom addressed the Change Order in the amount of \$146,342.58 which the PBC also approved. Board Chair, Nesti, briefly spoke about making an amendment to the PBC Minutes due to a discrepancy with the amount that was written in the Change Order. Tom further addressed how there might be difficulty getting the boilers balanced and up and running since we are moving out of heating season and there could be a possibility it will be moved into next winter. Superintendent Thiery also spoke briefly about the Commissioning Agent and the process of the heating system.*

*Doug Rogers updated the Board. He spoke about the Commissioning Agent process, and the extension of their contract. He briefly touched on the Photovoltaic Project, with the racking system complete, all electrical has been run, and the panels arriving shortly. Also, spoke about Eversource, bonding, and ZREC payments. Doug spoke about the Auditorium Project, being a big success with only a few items needing attention (ie. Strobes/lift).*

*Ken Stolting updated the Board. He briefly spoke about the Commissioning Agent coming in at the end of the project to make sure everything is operational and getting started with the rest of the work while it is cold out so we don't run into next season.*

*Eric Couture **MOVED** and Eileen Blewett **SECONDED** a motion to approve the invoice from MJ Daly in the amount of \$46,550.00 as presented.*

*Motion passed unanimously 10-0-0 by the following votes:*

Suzanne Sack YES  NO  A   
 Peter Sonski YES  NO  A   
 Maura Wallin YES  NO  A   
 Eric Couture YES  NO  A   
 Sue Williams YES  NO  A

Joel D'Angelo YES  NO  A   
 Eileen Blewett YES  NO  A   
 Brenda Buzzi YES  NO  A   
 Gerry Matthews Absent  
 Kathleen Zandi YES  NO  A   
 Joanne Nesti YES  NO  A

*Joel D'Angelo **MOVED** and Sue Williams **SECONDED** a motion to approve the Change Order from MJ Daly not to exceed \$146,342.58 for time and materials as presented.*

*Motion passed 7-2-1 by the following votes:*

Suzanne Sack YES  NO  A   
 Peter Sonski YES  NO  A   
 Maura Wallin YES  NO  A   
 Eric Couture YES  NO  A

Joel D'Angelo YES  NO  A   
 Eileen Blewett YES  NO  A   
 Brenda Buzzi YES  NO  A   
 Gerry Matthews Absent



Sue Williams YES  NO  A

Kathleen Zandi YES  NO  A

Joanne Nesti YES  NO  A

**Board Committee Reports and Future Meetings:**

**A. Facilities Subcommittee**

*No Report. Superintendent Thiery stated he will be handing out to the Board a first draft of separate Capital Budget items which will go in front of the Facilities Committee for review.*

**B. Finance Subcommittee**

*No Report.*

**C. Policy Subcommittee**

*No Report.*

**D. Communications Subcommittee**

*Brenda Buzzi updated the Board. She spoke about how the Committee met on February 28<sup>th</sup>, and discussed a continuation of Communications topics. She also gave a Happy Birthday shout out to Board Member, Gerry Matthews, who turned 83 yesterdays.*

**E. Personnel and Evaluation Subcommittee**

*No Report.*

**Board Liaison Reports:**

**A. Healthy Communities – Healthy Kids Council**

*No Report.*

**B. LEARN**

*Suzanne Sack updated the Board. She spoke about the new Special Education Center in New London, and stated they have done some work in the Legislation changes in Kindergarten enrollment in order to be aligned with others in Connecticut. Superintendent Thiery said the governor has put together a Task Force for Kindergarten enrollment and urban centers and assess to early children education as needed is holding everything up. He briefly spoke on Dr. Hawley's retirement who is the Superintendent of LEARN and how grateful he is for her hard work.*

**C. Park & Recreation**

*No Report.*

**D. Haddam Board of Selectmen**

*No Report.*

**E. Killingworth Board of Selectmen**

*No Report.*

**Consent Agenda:**

*The donations on the Consent Agenda are made to the school system as a whole, and the Superintendent may direct any monies to specific schools or programs at his discretion.*

- A. Acceptance of a donation in the amount of \$41.93 from Lathrop Vending, Inc. to be deposited into the Principal's Discretionary Fund Account. Submitted by Donna Hayward, Principal of Haddam-Killingworth High School.

- B. Acceptance of a donation in the amount of \$47.65 from an Anonymous Community Member through their corporate giving program to be deposited into the Student Activity Fund. Submitted by Dr. Jennifer Olsen, Principal of Haddam-Killingworth Middle School.

*Brenda Buzzi MOVED and Kathleen Zandi SECONDED a motion to accept Items A-B listed on the Consent Agenda.*

*Motion passed unanimously 10-0-0 by the following show of hands:*

Suzanne Sack	Absent	Joel D'Angelo	Absent
Peter Sonski	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Eileen Blewett	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Maura Wallin	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Brenda Buzzi	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Eric Couture	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Gerry Matthews	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Sue Twachtman	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Kathleen Zandi	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
		Joanne Nesti	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>

**New Business:**

*No items for discussion set forth under New Business.*

**From the Superintendent:**

**A. Legislative Update**

*Superintendent Thiery updated the Board. He briefly spoke about 3 new bills regarding regionalization and he is tracking them to see where they will go.*

**B. Personnel Report**

*Superintendent Thiery advised that the Personnel Report has been provided in the BOE Packet. He stated if anyone had any questions on the report, please feel free to contact him directly.*

**C. Enrollment Report**

*Superintendent Thiery advised that the Enrollment Report has been provided in the BOE Packet. He stated if anyone had any questions on the report, please feel free to contact him directly.*

**From the Director of Fiscal Operations:**

**A. Budget Transfers**

*No Report.*

**Board Discussion/News/Suggestions: None.**

**Public Comments:**

*Dagmara Pypa of Higganum addressed the Board. She spoke about how she feels that it is not just 2% of the Community that disapproves of HES closing. She further spoke about the HKHS student, Olivia, whose mother spoke on her behalf earlier in the night. She feels that we need to have a zero tolerance for bullying/being assaulted and that the students need to be comfortable and supported in their learning environment.*

*Teri Everett, Owner of Terri's Package Store and resident of Killingowrth, addressed the Board. She spoke about if Killingworth's enrollment is down more than questioned why KES isn't closing instead of HES? Also, she briefly spoke about researching 4-8 graders being in the same school together and didn't find any information on.*



Sean Donnelly of Haddam addressed the Board. He feels that the Community is very upset over the HES closure and questioned how to move forward together. He asked for the Board Chair to resign.

Annie Stirna of Killingworth addressed the Board. She spoke about how she lives in Killingworth and also is on the Board of Finance in Killingworth. She further spoke about how she respects the Board's decision and appreciates their hard work. She also is looking forward to working with them on the Budget.

The next Board of Education – Special Meeting (Joint Meeting) will be held on Thursday, March 7, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in the Students Commons Area of the Haddam-Killingworth Middle School.

**Adjournment:** Board Chair, Joanne Nesti, called for the meeting to adjourn at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Jamie Sciascia  
Board Clerk

Approval:  Date: 5/7/19  
Eileen Blewett, Secretary