

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17
BOARD OF EDUCATION - EDUCATION SESSION
December 18, 2018

A meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on December 18, 2018 in the Haddam-Killingworth Middle School Media Center. Board of Education Chair, Joanne Nesti, called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

Members Present: *Brenda Buzzi, Kathleen Zandi, Eileen Blewett, Peter Sonski, Suzanne Sack, and Joanne Nesti*

Members Absent: *Sue Twachtman, Gerry Matthews, Maura Wallin, Joel D'Angelo & Eric Couture*

Also Present: *Superintendent of Schools, Howard Thiery, Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Holly Hageman, Director of Student Services, Dr. Kris Lindsay, Coordinator of Student Services, Tonya Gorgone, School Psychologist, Dayleen Nelson, and Board Clerk, Jamie Sciascia*

Visitors: *Approximately 55*

Call to Order/Opening of Meeting: *Board of Education Chair, Joanne Nesti, called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.*

Public Comment:

Teri Everett of Killingworth addressed the Board. She spoke about her concerns with the HES closure; asked whether anyone has done a psychological study on 8-9-year-old students riding on a bus for a 45 minute period of time and riding with children who have a significant age difference. She further spoke about her concerns with home values dropping and the mill rate going up. She stated she is a business owner in the center of Higganum and stated that if HES closes it will affect her business. Further, she raised concerns about the possibility in a few years needing to add onto Burr Elementary due to how towns go through ebbs and flows due to low student enrollment right now. She addressed the importance of having low class sizes and the importance of getting Town's input for the decision. Superintendent Thiery did state that all the intermediate school designs as far as transportation goes do not have the 4-5 graders on buses with the Middle School Students.

Andrea Bizarro of Haddam addressed the Board. She spoke about how she just moved to town and moved close to the school since she has a son who is 1 ½ year old. She is questioning whether she made a mistake by moving here since learning of the HES closure, and hopes that the study/data that the Board is using reflects all the new people coming in with younger families.

Ken Gronbach of Haddam addressed the Board. He spoke about how closing HES is a "permanent solution to a temporary problem." He further spoke about how he is a demographer and speaks all over the country. He believes that there will be an increase in population in approximately 7-10 years and feels that it will be a big mistake for the town if the school closes. Lastly, he encouraged the Board to reconsider its decision.

*Kathleen Zandi **MOVED** and Eileen Blewett **SECONDED** a motion to move up on the Agenda Item 5A, Special Education/Student Services Presentation set forth under New Business.*

Motion passed unanimously 6-0-0 by the following show of hands:

Suzanne Sack	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>	Joel D' Angelo	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	Absent			Brenda Buzzi	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Eric Couture	Absent			Gerry Matthews	Absent
Sue Twachtman	Absent			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:

A. Special Education/Student Services Presentation

Dr. Kris Lindsay updated the Board. She gave a brief Introduction of herself, Director of Student Services, Tonya Gorgone, the Coordinator of Student Services and Dayleen Nelson, the School Psychologist. She went over her objective in providing the Board with the way Social and Emotional Wellness plays a role in the District. She further addressed Social and Emotional Learning and the how the District addresses the children's social and emotional wellness through Prevention, Intervention and Intensive Support. She spoke about Second Step which is an evidenced based program at the K-5 Levels used to integrate Social-Emotional Learning into their classrooms and school. She touched briefly on the Mental Health Staff, Intensive Support/Activities and Referral to Special Education. Further, she spoke about Child Find Requirements, Quick Snapshot and Counseling Services. She addressed the District's Trends in Social and Emotional Wellness, Observed Behaviors, Emotional Disturbance and Autism. Dr. Lindsay went over a Quick Snapshot of 2018-2019 School Year which included the number of Referrals/Evaluations as well as School Supports versus Outside Supports. Lastly, Dr. Lindsay addressed the District's Efforts to address Acute Mental Health Needs and the recent action implemented by the District.

Board Liaison Reports:

A. Curriculum Council

Kathleen Zandi updated the Board. She spoke about how the Committee met and focused around the area of Calculus offerings. She further spoke about A-B Calculus, which is a semester of college calculus taught in a year of high school which is offered right now. The proposal is to add B-C Calculus which is a year of college Calculus taught in a year of high school. Superintendent Thiery stated that the A-B Calculus has grown very large in population since they started; and therefore, there should be a group in the population that is B-C appropriate level.

B. Curriculum Subcommittee

Kathleen Zandi updated the Board. She stated that she will be following up with the Committee to meet in January and start putting together some work for 2019.

Old Business:

A. Building Committee Report

1. Approval of Invoices

Superintendent Thiery updated the Board. He addressed the Boiler Project and said MJ Daly Has agreed to relocate three boilers to the original design, work that could be completed by the end of January. Further, he spoke about the three boilers that are in operation and are meeting the heating needs of the building.

Board Chair, Nesti, stated that the racking system has been delivered and installed by Shea, and the invoice that is being presented to the Board for approval is for the work being completed thus far.

Peter Sonski **MOVED** and Eileen Blewett **SECONDED** a motion to approve the invoice as presented from Shea Electric, Inc. in the amount of \$158,041.05.

Motion passed unanimously 6-0-0 by the following votes:

Suzanne Sack	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	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	Absent	Brenda Buzzi	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Eric Couture	Absent	Gerry Matthews	Absent
Sue Twachtman	Absent	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:

B. High School Project Financing

Suzanne Sack updated the Board. She spoke about the High School Project going out to bond in February, with short term loans due on February 27th. She stated that the District owes \$8.1M in bank loans for all the short term financing we did to fund the project. She went over the bonding choices that they have in front of them. Lastly, Suzanne stated that the Board can delegate the decisions to the Finance Committee or the Board can have a Special meeting to discuss options at that point. Superintendent Thiery stated that by January 6th we need to put the steps in motion to have a strategy at that time.

Brenda Buzzi **MOVED** and Kathleen Zandi **SECONDED** a motion that the Board defer the HKHS Project Financing to the Finance Committee.

Motion passed unanimously 6-0-0 by the following votes:

Suzanne Sack	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	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	Absent	Brenda Buzzi	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Eric Couture	Absent	Gerry Matthews	Absent
Sue Twachtman	Absent	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"/>

Public Comment:

Jeff Sturges of Haddam addressed the Board. He spoke about his concerns with the closure of HES and the economic and educational impact it will have for the town of Haddam. He spoke about the high number of community members in town that are concerned, he feels that the decision is incomplete and more factors should be looked at. Jeff further spoke about potential costs that could occur compared to potential savings to the district from closing the building. He further spoke about how school times, class sizes and bus schedules be communicated with the community. Lastly, Jeff would like the Board to pause the decision for another year so more data can be supplied to the community.

David Law of Higganum addressed the Board. He spoke about how he bought a house in Higganum in past year, and the driving factors were location of the school and town atmosphere. He spoke about how he was a member of a school board where he recently lived in California, and they decided to close a private school and he watched the community be really affected by it. He asked the Board to look at the bigger picture before it finalizes its decision.

Katie Packtor of Haddam addressed the Board. She spoke about the group of community members who have concerns keeps growing, and a majority stayed for the entire meeting to address their concerns about HES closing, not just for the 1st public comment.

Dan Luis of Haddam addressed the Board. He spoke about how he feels that the Board is making decisions without having community input and feels that the Board isn't listening to the community since they are strongly against HES closing.

Jenny Law of Higganum addressed the Board. She spoke about moving back to the District from California last October and feels that her children are getting a better education here with smaller class sizes. She feels that HES is the heart of the center and if the school closes it will impact the Village. She briefly spoke about how she feels that short term savings make no sense for anything long term.

Jennifer Petrillo of Haddam addressed the Board. She spoke about the emotional and social impact that her daughter is having about the HES closure. She further spoke about how people are leaving the community because of this decision and businesses will be impacted. Lastly, she spoke briefly about HES being donated by the Hazen Family.

Kathleen Zandi **MOVED** and Brenda Buzzi **SECONDED** a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss a student discipline issue.

Motion passed unanimously 6-0-0 by the following show of hands:

Suzanne Sack	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Joel D'Angelo	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	Absent	Brenda Buzzi	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Eric Couture	Absent	Gerry Matthews	Absent
Sue Twachtman	Absent	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"/>

The Board entered into Executive Session at 9:03 p.m.

Executive Session:

Superintendent Thiery updated the Board on a student discipline issue.

Suzanne Sack **MOVED** and Kathleen Zandi **SECONDED** a motion to end Executive Session.

Motion passed unanimously 6-0-0 by the following votes:

Suzanne Sack	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	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	Absent	Brenda Buzzi	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Eric Couture	Absent	Gerry Matthews	Absent

Sue Twachtman Absent

Kathleen Zandi

YES NO A

Joanne Nesti

YES NO A

The Board came out of Executive Session at 9:46 p.m.

Adjournment:

Board Chair, Joanne Nesti, called for the meeting to adjourn at approximately 9:47 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Jamie Sciascia

Board Clerk

Approval:



Eileen Blewett, Secretary

Date:

2/5/19