

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
December 4, 2018

A meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on December 4, 2018 at the Haddam-Killingworth Middle School Student Commons Area. Board of Education Chair, Joanne Nesti, called the meeting to order at 7:20 PM.

Members Present: *Eric Couture, Sue Twachtman, Eileen Blewett, Brenda Buzzi, Gerry Matthews, Suzanne Sack, Maura Wallin, Joel D'Angelo and Joanne Nesti*

Members Absent: *Peter Sonski and Kathleen Zandi*

Also Present: *Superintendent of Schools, Howard Thiery, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Holly Hageman, Director of Finance, Martha Vaughn, Board Legal Counsel, Attorney Floyd Dugas, CREC, Chris Fields and Mason Thrall 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 7:20 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Board Chair, Nesti, went over the Public Comment process, which consists of a 5-minute limitation per speaker, and 20-minute limitation by topic as well as the name sign-in sheet.

Public Comment:

Mark Fong of Higganum addressed the Board. He stated that he has been a teacher of 23 years in Middletown, recently bought a home in Higganum this past June and his kids are enrolled in the HK District. He spoke about how he believes the projection numbers are wrong, and that if HES closes the ratings of the town will go down. He also stated that he believes the kids programming will be compromised. Mark further spoke on the Middle School capacity and the small savings closing HES will bring which equals 2.3% of the projected budget savings.

John Intravia of Haddam addressed the Board. He spoke about how he lived in town for over 30 years and is concerned with the HES closure. He addressed how the houses on his street alone quadruped since learning of HES closing. He spoke on the empty buildings already being in town and he doesn't feel that putting everyone in Burr which is a smaller school makes sense for the Community. He spoke on the bus rides, putting younger kids with older kids could raise bullying issues, and he asked what the point of having a town center if there is no center?

Arthur Collins of Higganum addressed the Board. He stated how he has 3 daughters that all went through the HK District and has lived in town for over 40 years. He addressed the HES closing, concerns of there being an empty building in the center of town and hopes the Board will make sure the property sells to someone who will be good for Community.

Neal Perron of Haddam addressed the Board. He spoke about his regrets from resigning from the Board of Education because he stated he would have voted "no" to the HES school closing. He addressed how the

Board gets elected by taxpayers, how he feels this decision should have been sent to referendum and the Community votes. He further stated how this decision is about the Community, the center of town and taxpayers.

Maurice Adams of Haddam addressed the Board. He spoke about how the historical budget is going up, the student population is going down, and how we pushed as a town to cut taxes. He urged the Community to go to the Town Selectmen's meetings to see what can be done to keep the town going and stated that we shouldn't put it all directly on the Board of Education.

Mary Hickish of Haddam addressed the Board. She spoke about how her family has been in the Town for over 60 years, how the figures are not adding, and she is not convinced that closing HES is a wise choice. She also addressed her concerns on what if the town needs to expand schools again and the economic impact of the town since businesses are moving out already.

Pam Crum of Haddam addressed the Board. She spoke about how she lived in town for 36 years and is a taxpayer. She read a letter she wrote to the Board in protest of the HES closing. She strongly suggests a stay of execution until every taxpayers' questions are addressed in full by the Board of Education. She feels that many questions still remain unanswered, and asks that additional demographic studies be performed by qualified individuals. She addressed her concerns if the school closes and down the road this turns the opposite way and another school has to be rebuilt which would in turn cause the taxpayers to spilt the costs. She asked that the Board to publish their long term plan that lays out everything; results of demographic analysis and costs that will be incurred for renovating to accommodate the District restructuring. Pam further addressed her questions to the Board asking if we could take another look at the Salary and Benefits costs, questioning whether each elementary school needs a principal in house. Lastly, she asked that the Board to reverse their decision so the taxpayers can further ask questions as well as get more data.

Heather Pach of Haddam addressed the Board. She spoke about how she is a Haddam resident, former employee of the HK District and a parent of two children. She addressed the BOE meeting of November 6th where Board Member, Brenda Buzzi, asked about Exit Interviews. Heather stated that the teachers within the school Districts are fabulous but stated to the Board that the staff needs help and stressed to the Board to investigate further. She also addressed her reasons for leaving her position. She reached out to 13 people who left within the HK District and stated out of the 13 people, 38.5% did not receive an Exit Interview. Heather stated that each person she spoke to would have done the interview if given by the Board.

Gerry Matthews **MOVED** and Eileen Blewett **SECONDED** a motion to 7A, Subsection a), Item 1. Review and Vote on Invoices related to the Boiler and Photovoltaic Projects set forth under Old Business:

Motion passed unanimously 9-0-0 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	Absent	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	Absent
		Joanne Nesti	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>

Old Business

- A. High School Energy and Facilities Upgrade
 - a) Report from Public Building Committee

1. Review and Vote on Invoices related to Boiler and Photovoltaic Projects

*Eileen Blewett **MOVED** and Sue Twachtman **SECONDED** a motion to go into Executive Session to Discuss a Legal Opinion and invite Floyd Dugas, Board Legal Counsel, Chris Fields and Mason Thrall from CREC:*

Motion passed unanimously 9-0-0 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	Absent	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	Absent
		Joanne Nesti	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>

The Board entered Executive Session at 7:44 p.m.

Executive Session:

Superintendent Thiery updated the Board on a legal opinion concerning MJ Daly - contractor for the Boiler Project.

Chris Fields and Superintendent Thiery answered Board questions about the Legal opinion.

Attorney Floyd Dugas was available to provide legal opinions on the contract.

*Brenda Buzzi **MOVED** and Maura Wallin **SECONDED** a motion to end Executive Session.*

Motion passed unanimously 9-0-0 by the following votes:

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	Absent	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	Absent
		Joanne Nesti	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>

Executive Session ended at 8:28 p.m.

The Board resumed the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

*Eric Couture **MOVED** and Maura Wallin **SECONDED** a motion to approve two invoices to MJ Daly: one in the amount of \$380,901.97 and the second in the amount of \$235,737.49 and one invoice to Shea Electric in the amount of \$158,041.05.*

Motion passed unanimously 9-0-0 by the following votes:

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	Absent	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 NO A

Kathleen Zandi

Absent

Joanne Nesti

YES NO A

Board Member, Sue Twachtman, left the meeting at approximately 8:36 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Approval of Minutes for the following Board Meetings:

- A. Approval of Minutes for the October 2, 2018 Board of Education Meeting
- B. Approval of Minutes for the October 30, 2018 Board of Education – Special Meeting

*Gerry Matthews **MOVED** and Eric Couture **SECONDED** a motion to approve the Minutes A-B as presented:*

Motion passed unanimously 8-0-0 by the following show of hands:

Suzanne Sack YES NO A

Peter Sonski Absent

Maura Wallin YES NO A

Eric Couture YES NO A

Sue Twachtman Absent

Joel D'Angelo YES NO A

Eileen Blewett YES NO A

Brenda Buzzi YES NO A

Gerry Matthews YES NO A

Kathleen Zandi Absent

Joanne Nesti YES NO A

Report from Student Representatives:

Student Representatives, Lauren Miller, and Nolan Serbent, were not in attendance.

Board Committee Reports and Future Meetings:

A. Facilities Subcommittee

No Report.

B. Finance Subcommittee

Suzanne Sack updated the Board. She spoke on reviewing expenses over \$5,000, Budget-to-Date, and stated that there were no Budget Transfers.

C. Policy Subcommittee

No Report.

D. Communications Subcommittee

No Report.

E. Personnel and Evaluation Subcommittee

No Report.

Board Liaison Reports:

A. Healthy Communities – Healthy Kids Council

Gerry Matthews updated the Board. He stated how the Committee met on the 15th and spoke about a presentation that was given on Understanding a Coalition that had 15 years' success.

B. LEARN

No Report.

C. Park & Recreation

No Report.

D. Haddam Board of Selectmen

Brenda Buzzi updated the Board. She spoke about how First Selectwoman for the Town of Haddam, Lizz Milardo, asked to speak about this section at the BOE Special Meeting that was held prior to this one.

E. Killingworth Board of Selectmen

Eric Couture updated the Board. He stated that we just heard from the Board of Selectmen at the BOE Special meeting that was held prior to this meeting.

Old Business:

B. Report of the Strategic Capital Planning Committee

Suzanne Sack updated the Board. She spoke about how the Committee met and discussed the status of the RFPs. She further spoke about HES open house being scheduled, how they had visitors in the school and someone requested a return visit and are working to set up access to the building. Suzanne briefly spoke about the Intermediate school, how a new timeline has been established, and January/February more details from that are underway. Lastly, she addressed the upcoming communication to the Community, updating the Q&A's in early January and another update that is coming in next few days.

C. Budget Timeline (Second Read)

*Eric Couture **MOVED** and Joel D'Angelo **SECONDED** a motion to approve the Budget Timeline for the 2019-2020 Calendar year as presented.*

Motion passed unanimously 8-0-0 by the following votes:

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	Absent	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	Absent	Kathleen Zandi	Absent
		Joanne Nesti	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>

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 \$62.29 from Lathrop Vending, Inc. to be deposited into the Principal's Discretionary Fund Account. Submitted by Donna L. Hayward, Principal of Haddam-Killingworth High School.
- B. Acceptance of a donation in the amount of \$55.12 from Coco-Cola vending machine sales to be deposited into the Student Activity Account – Principal Account. Submitted by Dennis J. Reed, Principal of Killingworth Elementary School.

*Gerry Matthews **MOVED** and Eileen Blewett **SECONDED** a motion to accept Items A-B listed on the Consent Agenda with great appreciation.*

Motion passed unanimously 8-0-0 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	Absent			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	Absent			Kathleen Zandi	Absent		
				Joanne Nesti	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>

New Business:

A. District Security Update

Superintendent Thiery updated the Board. He spoke about we are continuing to work on the output of the District's security, some of the changes around the lockdown and security procedures. He stated that the state's competitive security grant has been submitted around the area of cameras. This grant doesn't cover 100% of the expenses. HK High School has been completed so the focus will be on the Elementary Levels. In January 2019 the Committee will meet to go over new things to do for the spring.

From the Superintendent:

A. Legislative Update

Superintendent Thiery updated the Board. He briefly touched on how he will be reaching out to welcome the new legislators in office, and start to build a relationship with them moving forward.

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 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. Also, the monthly Enrollment Report is available on the RSD17 Website for public viewing.

From the Director of Fiscal Operations:

A. Budget Transfers

No Report.

Board Discussion/News/Suggestions: None.

Public Comment:

Gail Rosenberg-Powell of Higganum addressed the Board.

Kate Anderson of Higganum addressed the Board. She spoke about she was raised in Higganum and graduated from HK High School about 11 years ago. She addressed her concerns with an empty school building in the center of town and is disappointed that we have no commercial value to the building. She feels the Community's questions and concerns have not been answered. Lastly, Kate brought up the savings for the District in regard to HES closing and how it will be reused within the Budget. She stressed the importance of having a plan for what happens to the building before it closes.

Board Member, Suzanne Sack, addressed the budget aspect of it, and the costs associated with HES.

Sidney Blackman of Haddam addressed the Board. He stated how he just moved to Haddam 3 years ago, and has two sons who are in HES. He addressed his concerns of closing HES which are class sizes and longer bus rides. Sidney stressed that this decision should be about what the Community wants and that is why we vote for the Board members. He feels that the Board is not listening to the Community of Haddam and asked the Board to hold off for year so they can get the information they deserve to make an informed decision. Lastly, he spoke about his concerns about the lack of interest he saw during the evening from the Board to the speakers under public comment.

Jennifer Petrillo of Haddam addressed the Board. She spoke about how all the Community members that came to the meeting tonight do not want HES to close from business owners, to elderly, to younger, to the taxpayers, even town officials. She spoke about small class sizes, and stressed the importance of it. She further addressed the town center being empty and feels that no one would want to come here if it stays empty. She asked the Board to rescind the vote and keep the town center thriving.

James Petrillo of Haddam addressed the Board. He raised questions on how to have a dialog with the Board members. Board Chair, Nesti, stated that all the Board member's emails are located on the RSD17 website for anyone to communicate with them.

Board Chair, Nesti, apologized to Mr. Blackwell, and stated that if anything she might have seemed frustrated during public comment at not being able to say anything back to the Community members due to the process and didn't mean to be disrespectful.

The next Board of Education meeting is scheduled for December 18, 2018 at the Middle School

Adjournment:

Board Chair, Joanne Nesti, called for the meeting to adjourn at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



*Jamie Sciascia
Board Clerk*

Approval: 
Eileen Blewett, Secretary

Date: 1/8/19