

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17
BOARD OF EDUCATION - SPECIAL MEETING
ANNUAL HEARING
April 3, 2018

A special meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on April 3, 2018 in the Student Commons of the Haddam-Killingworth Middle School. Board of Education Chair, Joanne Nesti, called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

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

Members Absent: *None.*

Also Present: *Superintendent of Schools, Howard Thiery, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and Curriculum, Dr. Holly Hageman, Director of Finance, Martha Vaughn, Principal of Haddam-Killingworth High School, Donna Hayward, Principal of Haddam-Killingworth Middle School, Dr. Jennifer Olsen, Assistant Principal of Haddam-Killingworth Middle School, Ryan Mackenzie, Principal of Burr Elementary School, Eric Larson, Principal of Haddam Elementary School, Brienne Whidden, Principal of Killingworth Elementary School, Dennis Reed, Special Education Coordinator, Tonya Gorgone, and Board Clerk, Jamie Sciascia*

Visitors: *Approximately 13*

Call to Order/Opening of Meeting: *Board of Education Chair, Joanne Nesti, called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.*

Presentation of the Board of Education Proposed Budget 2018-2019:

Board Chair, Joanne Nesti, presented the Board of Education Proposed Budget for 2018-2019 fiscal year for Regional School District No. 17. She went over the RSD17 Mission Statement, the 2018/2019 Budget Goals, all the Programs that are supported; Continued Implementation of Readers and Writers Workshop in Grades K-8, Continued Implementation of Math Curriculum Grades K-8, Continued Development and Implementation of World Language Programs Grades 5-12, Development of Internal Student Services Capacity, Continued Development and Implementation of Maker Spaces Grades K-12, Continued Implementation of Project Lead the Way, Development and Implementation of New Science and Social Studies Programs. Board Chair, Nesti, went over the Gross Budget for 2018-2019 which is \$42,186,148.82 reflecting a gross budget increase of 0.38%. Also, she addressed the Project Revenue and specific areas of Budget Increase which are Salary, Tuition, Buildings and Grounds, and Transportation. Board Chair, Nesti, spoke about the Pie Chart which broke down all the areas that decreased or increased within the Proposed 2018-2019 Budget. Lastly, the Proposed Assessment for the Towns of Haddam and Killingworth as well as the RSD17 Annual Enrollment History 2007-2017 were looked at.

Community Input regarding Board of Education Proposed Budget:

The following Community Members addressed the Board regarding their concerns with the Board of Education Proposed Budget:

Jola O'Connor of Haddam addressed the Board. She spoke about the Building and Grounds Contract and the possibility of using our own public works employees. Superintendent Thiery spoke about how transportation is contracted out every 5 years and is currently in year 3. Also, he stated that waste water treatment is contracted out and the electrician and plumber is used in-house.

Arthur E. Collins of Higganum addressed the Board. He asked if there are any layoffs within the District and/or elimination of educational programs. Superintendent Thiery confirmed that the 2018-2019 Proposed Budget doesn't reduce any positions or education programs. He also stated that the Budget supports all the continued programs such as World Language, etc.

Myles Crete of Haddam addressed the Board. He spoke about the petition for saving Haddam Elementary School and stated that if we have to maintain the vacated building, then why close it. He also addressed smaller class sizes. Board Chair, Nesti, stated that the closing of one of the District's schools, going from 5 buildings to 4 buildings, was due to declining enrollment.

Katie Packtor of Higganum addressed the Board. She asked about the HES data/charts that was brought to the Board to make the decision to close HES over Burr. She stated that she felt it was soon to make a Board vote in March, that many Community members petitioned it and felt uncomfortable about the decision. She also wanted to know about class sizes and is concerned about HES being a vacated building. Board Chair, Nesti, stated all of the Board Minutes are available online for viewing. Superintendent Thiery also stated that he can provide her with all the demographic information. He also stated that he welcomes her and any Community member to set up a time to come into Central Office to sit down to discuss the reports and documents that would fill in any gaps that she has regarding the entire process. Further, Vice Chair, Suzanne Sack, stated that she would be happy to also sit down with Katie to go over the data that was used for the reconstructing and closing of HES. This would include enrollment data, housing data and birthing data. She also stated that at the end of the day the utilization of the schools is way under and birth rates will continue to decline. She also spoke on operating budget, excellent education and low cost.

Shawna Goldfarb of Higganum addressed the Board. She spoke about how the HES data was not put out to the Community and felt that everyone was kept in the dark. Vice Chair, Suzanne Sack, stated that the HES data went out to PTOs meetings as well as all public meetings for the last 18 months.

Liz Bazazi of Higganum addressed the Board. She briefly stated that she would like to attend the next BOE Meeting to address the HES closing under Public Comment.

The meeting adjourned at 8:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted,


Jamie Sciascia
Board Clerk

Approval: 
Eileen Blewett, Secretary Date: 5/1/18