

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17
BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
March 22, 2018

A special meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on March 22, 2018 in the Haddam-Killingworth High School Student Commons Area. Board of Education Chair, Joanne Nesti, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Members Present: *Peter Sonski, Eric Couture, Eileen Blewett, Brenda Buzzi, Kathleen Zandi, Maura Wallin (Arrived 8:08) and Joanne Nesti*

Members Absent: *Suzanne Sack, Gerry Matthews, Sue Twachtman and Joel D'Angelo*

Also Present: *Superintendent of Schools, Howard Thiery, Assistant Superintendent of Schools for Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Holly Hageman, Director of Finance Martha Vaughn, Vice President of HK Education Association, Robin Duffield, Haddam Board of Finance Chairman, Joseph Centofanti, Haddam Board of Finance Members, Mark Lundgren and Robert McGarry, Killingworth First Selectwoman, Catherine Iino, Killingworth Selectman, Louis Annino, Jr., Killingworth Selectwoman, Nancy Gorksi, and Killingworth Board of Finance Members, Gwenne Celmer, Robert Rimmer, Marcel Couture, Derek Phelps, Annie Stirna and Board Clerk, Jamie Sciascia*

Visitors: *Approximately 3*

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.*

Joint Meeting of the Board of Education, Boards of Finance and Haddam and Killingworth Boards of Selectman - Presentation of the Superintendent's Proposed Budget 2018-2019:

Superintendent Howard Thiery presented the Regional School District No. 17 2018-2019 Proposed Budget to the Boards of Finance and First Selectmen of the Towns of Haddam and Killingworth.

A discussion about the proposed budget between all three Boards took place directly after.

All Boards introduced themselves at the start of the meeting.

Robert Rimmer addressed the Board. He spoke on reduction to sick leave severance and professional services decrease. Also, he inquired about the health insurance being self-funded and premium price. Superintendent Thiery stated that accrued sick leave and retirement incentives required them to pay out monies over multiple years versus lump sum. He also addressed the Special Education positions, services that are currently outsourced and outplaced students. He also briefly spoke about having those positions in-house would be a savings to the District. Superintendent Thiery spoke on the \$229,000 reduction to insurance. He spoke on getting projected savings from the broker which would be the lowest most conservative plans.

Gwenne Celmer addressed the Board. She spoke about maintenance of facilities, the closing of HES and consolidations. She also wanted to know the potential costs, if any, of closing the building. Superintendent Thiery spoke about the SCP Committee being very thorough in its work during the last 18 months. He stated that the declining enrollment over multiple years was the driving factor in closing HES. Superintendent Thiery also stated that the Annual Savings to close HES is approximately 1M. Lastly, Superintendent Thiery

stated that Joanne Nesti, Mike Distefano, Peter Sonski and Eric Couture laid out a Facilities Maintenance Tier 1-7 List and also has a long term phase beyond that.

Derek Phelps addressed the Board. He spoke about how the District cut a request on hiring staff, and also stated that the Community believes that the District is favoring staff at the expense of a physical plan. He also spoke about the upkeep and maintenance of an empty school building as far as heating it, etc. He also stated that with a \$42M proposed budget, 50% of it is going towards salaries. He inquired about our unions, length of union contracts as well as who negotiates them. Superintendent Thiery said it will be approximately \$70,000 a year to maintain HES. He also stated that there are 5 unions, ranging in length, with a 3-year contract being a typical one. Teachers, nurses, administrators, support services, custodians are the unions. He briefly spoke about the length of those terms and who negotiates them.

Louis Annino, Jr. addressed the Board. He spoke about how he is concerned with the funding levels, the assets that the towns have together. He was looking for more detail within the budget for a solid plan for the future. He further addressed concerns with maintaining HES and letting it sit vacant. Superintendent Thiery spoke about the historical spending and historical finance reports for years 2010-2018. He spoke on the 1% that the District can set aside in Capital and the \$460,000 that was taken from the Capital improvement account this year.

Nancy Gorski addressed the Board. She spoke about certified salaries increase, State revenue for funding, and the budget cuts.

Mark Lundgren addressed the Board. He spoke on Facilities rates, 1700 students, revenue comparison. He also asked about the possibility of auctioning the HES building off. Director of Finance, Martha Vaughn stated that the Revenue Comparison interest rate for investment is on a monthly basis and the federal rates are up. Superintendent Thiery then spoke in regards to the several possibilities for the HES vacant building. He also spoke about reaching out to the Town of Haddam Planner, and Selectwoman to discuss options. Joanne Nesti stated that we have an obligation to the Community to not leave the building vacant in the town.


Joseph Centofani addressed the Board. He spoke about 16/17 investment income revenue.

First Selectwoman of Killingworth, Catherine lino, addressed the Board. She spoke about the HES building and when it closes next year what would be the budget numbers. She also spoke about the MBR letter that she received from the State, reduction of State and ECG Funding. She further spoke about the 3 Tier Capital plan report. Superintendent Thiery addressed the budget numbers once HES closes.

Adjournment:

Board Chair, Joanne Nesti, called for the meeting to adjourn at 8:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,


Jamie Sciascia
Board Clerk

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