

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**Joint Meeting of the Haddam and Killingworth**  
**Boards of Selectmen, Boards of Finance and Board of Education**  
**March 12, 2015**

*A meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on March 12, 2015 in the Student Commons of Haddam-Killingworth Middle School. Board of Education Chair, Sue Twachtman, called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.*

**Members Present:** *Amy Jacques-Purdy, Susan Dean, Kathy Brown, Becky Valenti, Joel D'Angelo, Michele Amendola, Dan Chase (arrived at 7:08), Karen Perry (arrived at 7:23), Jeannie Young (arrived at 7:53), and Sue Twachtman*

**Members Absent:** *Brian Gamache*

**Also Present:** *Superintendent of Schools, Howard Thiery, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Holly Hageman, Director of Finance Martha Vaughn, Haddam Selectmen Robert Duval, Haddam Board of Finance Chairman Joseph Centofanti, Haddam Board of Finance members David Kapitulik, Marjorie DeBold, John Bosco, John Tabak, Joanne Nesti, Cheryl Haase, and James Bucko, Killingworth First Selectwoman Catherine Iino, Selectman Fred Dudek and Killingworth Board of Finance member Carolyn Anderson, Killingworth Finance Manager, Regina Regolo, and Board Clerk Larissa Johnson.*

**Visitors:** *2*

**Call to Order/Opening of Meeting**

*Board of Education Chair, Sue Twachtman called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.*

**Joint Meeting of the Haddam and Killingworth Boards of Selectmen, Boards of Finance and Board of Education - Presentation of the Superintendent's Proposed Budget 2015-2016**

*Superintendent Thiery presented his Proposed Budget for 2015-2016. An interactive discussion between the three boards followed.*

*Regina Regolo asked about the health insurance plan and whether or not the District has Aggregate Stop Loss (ASL) and Individual Stop Loss (ISL) insurance. Superintendent Thiery explained that the District's plan does include ASL and ISL and that some of the claims may exceed the ISL limits. She asked about the credibility of the group, claims experience and whether the District is getting advice on claims management. Superintendent Thiery explained that the group is only moderately credible, as it is a relatively small group and that they are getting renewal information from both the District's insurance broker and CIGNA, the insurer as well. Board Chair Sue Twachtman added that the budget is funded at the higher estimate made by the insurance broker. The Boards talked at some length about the District's claim experience and history and the insurance renewal quote. Joanne Nesti asked about the fixed administrative costs as well. Superintendent Thiery explained that the fixed renewal costs represent approximately 7.8% of the total renewal, 92% is based on claims history. Claims are covered from Operating Budget funds, employee contributions, and funds from retirees and Haddam town employees who are also participants in the plan. Of those contributions, the funds that are not spent on claims are contributed to the District Health Insurance Reserve account. Superintendent Thiery explained that*

*the Town of Haddam employees are 100% self-funded and pay their own claims. The Boards discussed at some length the reserve account and the Board's history with the reserve account. The District has maintained a healthy reserve account and in past years, the health insurance claims have performed better than estimated which has created a reserve balance in excess of recommended funds. In this past year, claims were higher than expected which caused the insurance renewal to come back dramatically higher than it has in previous years. This will also result in drawing down the reserve fund. The Boards also discussed the Wellness Program offered by CIGNA and Case Management provided by CIGNA. In addition to continuing to discuss the Wellness Program and Case Management aspects of CIGNA's coverage, the Boards also continued their discussion about the reserve balance.*

*Joanne Nesti asked about the Special Education outplacements and the criteria upon which it is decided that students should be outplaced. She asked whether it was possible for some of the needs of these students being outplaced to be met here, in-district. Superintendent Thiery responded that there are a variety of considerations that must be made when deciding whether a student should be outplaced, including the student's educational and medical needs and the District's ability to successfully serve the student, as well as safety considerations for the student him or herself and the community. He said that most of the time it is clear whether or not a student's needs can be met successfully in-district and that there is a Planning and Placement Team and input from the parents, student (if appropriate), psychologist, social worker and administrators as the decision is being made. Joseph Centofanti asked about the Excess Cost Grant (ECG) and the Boards discussed that not all outplacements are eligible for ECG reimbursement.*

*David Kapitulik asked whether the District's per pupil expenditures fit within state averages. Superintendent Thiery explained that the District's per pupil expenditures are within the District Reference Group averages and within \$600 of the state average. Catherine Iino asked how proposed budget increase compares to other Districts, and Superintendent Thiery responded that as reported on the spreadsheet distributed by the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents, other districts are reporting increases generally between 2-6%, with an average of about 3.1%.*

*Catherino Iino also asked about the Capital Fund and whether the Board has looked at improving District energy systems, as well as boiler and roof maintenance. Board Chair Sue Twachtman responded that the Board has looked at proposals for boiler and roof maintenance very recently.*

*Marjorie DeBold asked about the new Assistant Superintendent position and Superintendent Thiery responded by explaining the progression of the gradual reduction of administrative positions over four years, from three Teaching and Learning Specialist positions, to two Curriculum Coordinators, down to one Assistant Superintendent position. He also explained that through this new position, the Assistant Superintendent can work across all areas of curriculum K-12, not just ELA and Math as the previous positions were limited.*

*David Kapitulik expressed concern regarding the budget increasing by \$4 million over the past four to five years, which in the town of Haddam represents an increase of \$500 in property taxes per person over the past five years. The discussion between the Boards returned to the ECS grant and how it is important for members of the community to reach out to state legislators to bring attention to this issue and see if we can get an increase in ECS grant funding.*

*Catherine Iino then thanked the Board for their hard work. Board Chair Sue Twachtman thanked everyone for coming.*

**Adjournment**

*Board of Education Chair, Sue Twachtman called for the meeting to adjourn at 8:59 PM.*

*Respectfully submitted,*



*Larissa Johnson*

*Board Clerk*

Approval:  Date: 4-7-15  
*Becky Valenti, Secretary*