

**APPROVED
MINUTES
BOARD OF EDUCATION
January 12, 2016**

PLACE:

Darien Board of Education
Meeting Room
7:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Harman, Chair; Mesdames Hagerty-Ross, Sullivan, Stein, Zuro and McNamara; and Messrs. Martens and Burke.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Dineen.

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

Dr. Dan Brenner, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Susie DaSilva, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction; Ms. Shirley Klein, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education and Student Services; Mr. Michael Feeney, Director of Finance and Operations; Ms. Marjorie Cion, Director of Human Resources.

VISITORS:

Approximately 50.

CALL TO ORDER.

Mr. Harman called the meeting to order at 7:39 p.m. The next Regular BOE meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 26, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. in the Board of Education Meeting Room.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT.

Mr. Harman welcomed everyone back and expressed his gratitude for those who attended the budget meeting on January 9, 2016.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no one who wished to address the Board at this time.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT.

- Posting of the Board Meeting materials and Web Demonstration: Dr. Brenner said that there had been some comments from the public that locating information on the BOE website was not easy. He demonstrated where the information was on the "Quick Links" on the site.
- Update on Milone and MacBroom Study: Dr. Brenner also spoke about the Facility Plan Update. There was a recent meeting with Milone and MacBroom during which they acknowledged the portables have reached their life expectancy. Dr. Brenner said that Milone and MacBroom 's suggestions were not meeting the expectations

of the Facilities Committee. Milone and MacBroom did have some suggestions about the High School Cafeteria over-crowding and outside storage needs. Dr. Brenner narrated a PowerPoint addressing these two issues. He said that the administration was recommending these two projects be moved into the Capital Projects for this year, along with the Ox Ridge gym floor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

December 8, 2015 Special Meeting and Executive Session

- ** MR. BURKE MOVED TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING AND EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES OF DECEMBER 8, 2015.**
- ** MS. MCNAMARA SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING AND EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES OF DECEMBER 8, 2015 AS SUBMITTED PASSED WITH SEVEN IN FAVOR AND ONE ABSTENTION (MARTENS).**

December 8, 2015 Regular Meeting

- ** MS. SULLIVAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 8, 2015.**
- ** MR. BURKE SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 8, 2015 AS SUBMITTED PASSED WITH SEVEN IN FAVOR AND ONE ABSTENTION (MARTENS).**

January 5, 2016 Special Meeting and Executive Session

- ** MS. STEIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING AND EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES OF JANUARY 5, 2016.**
- ** MS. HAGERTY-ROSS SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING AND EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES OF JANUARY 5, 2016 AS SUBMITTED PASSED WITH SEVEN IN FAVOR AND ONE ABSTENTION (SULLIVAN).**

January 5, 2016 Special Meeting Budget Overview

- ** MR. BURKE MOVED TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 5, 2016.**
- ** MS. HAGERTY-ROSS SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 5, 2016 AS SUBMITTED PASSED WITH SEVEN IN FAVOR AND ONE ABSTENTION (SULLIVAN).**

January 9, 2016 Special Budget Meeting

- ** MS. STEIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 9, 2016.**
- ** MS. HAGERTY-ROSS SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 9, 2016 PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget Committee - Ms. Hagerty-Ross said that the last meeting was on Friday and that the Committee had reviewed the transfers that would be presented later in the meeting.

C.E.S. - Ms. McNamara said she had attended a recent C.E.S. meeting and made numerous observations on various topics such as Greenwich HS starting later as well as the John Hopkins study.

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS

**** MS. ZURO MOVED TO CHANGE THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA TO AGENDA 7 F NEXT.**

**** MS. SULLIVAN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON CONTEMPLATED GIFT FROM DARIEN TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL FUEL CELL TEAM. (File #2448)

DHS students involved with the Fuel Cell Team came forward to speak about the details of their current hydrogen fuel cell project. The Darien Technology and Community Foundation has been very generous to the students involved in this project by offering grant funding.

**** MS. ZURO MOVED TO ACCEPT THE CONTEMPLATED GIFT FROM THE DARIEN TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL FUEL CELL TEAM.**

**** MR. BURKE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED CAPITAL PROJECTS

Mr. Lynch came forward to update the Board on the three major changes to the Capital Plan. Mr. Lynch said that the administration was looking at possibly doing a poured urethane floor rather than a wooden gym floor at Ox Ridge School, similar to the flooring at Tokeneke School. This will reduce the cost significantly.

Mr. Lynch said that he had been asked if the cost of the roof included the cost of the windows on the lower level. He said that the figure did not include work on those windows.

Mr. Lynch said that he had been asked why the track had been ranked as a Priority 2. He explained that the reason the track's priority was changed was because the administration is not planning on spending any of the money until after high school stadium renovations are completed in late fall of 2017. It will be in next year's capital budget as a Priority 1 item.

Board questions and comments and Administration's responses: a) **There seems to be some confusion about the process for replacing the roof. There is a process that the BOE has to follow in order to replace the roof. Could you clarify this?** (Mr. Lynch said that the building was located in a business appearance zone. He said that he had looked into this and if the BOE changed the material, the appearance or the color, they would

be required to get a special permit to change the exterior appearance of the building.) b) **So, we have to use the same type of material unless we go back to get a special permit?** (Yes.) c) **Is there a significant cost different between slate and another material?** (Mr. Lynch said that the cost was about 35% less for asphalt shingles. The lifespan of the asphalt shingle is about 40 to 60% less with commercial grade shingles. The flashing and the masonry needs to be restored and the insulation and new skylights have to be installed in this part of the building. The labor to install a slate roof isn't that much different.) d) **And the Building Committee and the BOE actually had the roof looked at before this project was even done and it was given a 8 –10 year life span.** (Mr. Lynch said that was correct for the slate roof, but they did change the flat roof, which was beyond its useful life. They identified the area that we are discussing now as having a life of approximately 10 years. He went on to briefly mention the condition of the roof in the back area of the building where the newest addition and the elevator is located because the slate is in good condition.) e) **So if we used asphalt, the roof would not match and we would have two different materials?** (Mr. Lynch said that this was so, and while they would be close, people would notice.) f) **We had slate in the past and it is very expensive to repair with the labor.** (Mr. Lynch agreed and said that in this part of Connecticut there are a few companies that specialize in slate roof repairs.) g) **Just so we understand, the new slate roof will cost \$500,000 and the windows in the basement are not included?** (Mr. Lynch reiterated that the windows in the basement were not included, but two windows in the meeting room would be included.)

Community Comments and Questions:

Mr. Jack Davis asked whether the BOE had taken the auxiliary cafeteria for two or three classrooms. Ms. Hagerty-Ross said that this was so, but at the time, the enrollment was not 1,400.

MEETING WITH BOARD OF FINANCE RE: 2016-17 PROPOSED BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET

Mr. Harman welcomed Mr. Zagrodzky, Chair of the Board of Finance and the other members of the Board of Finance (BOF) who were present at the meeting. Mr. Jon Zagrodzky felt that the Saturday workshop was very thorough and there were a number of good items included in the presentation. He said that he liked the multi-year view and zero based budget because everything gets a fresh look. That is definitely a good practice.

Mr. Zagrodzky noted that Dr. Brenner had stated the historical increase for the BOE was anywhere from 2.9% to 5.9%. As BOF Chairman, Mr. Zagrodzky asked that these proposed projects, programs and plans be done for less than projected.

Secondly, he said that Mr. Dennis Maroney had mentioned holistically thinking about the sources of change in the BOE budget. He added that having the re-coding of the budget will be helpful in terms of tracking budget increases and identifying the sources of change. Mr. Zagrodzky gave some examples of how this could be beneficial for the BOE and the BOF in terms of future planning.

He then said that there had been many comparisons with the DRG group, and while this is fine, it's an input metric. One of the first things that people look at is how much the nearby towns are spending per student compared to how much Darien is spending. The BOE needs to also remember that there are other metrics that measure output, in terms of the success of the program, the success of the student and other measures.

Mr. Zagrodzky said that Darien residents want the best school system, but there are areas where efficiency could help deliver this, such as: retiree liability; student growth; CAP EX, (Capital Project Execution); and

shared services.

Mr. Zagrodzky pointed out that there are now three separate health insurance programs and gave a brief overview of the programs. It was important to make sure that these things need to have a Town wide approach. Mr. Zagrodzky will be meeting with Dr. Brenner and Mr. Feeney to discuss the details of this type of approach on the 15th. Mr. Zagrodzky said that he appreciated having the opportunity to address the Board.

FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION ON JANUARY 9TH BOARD MEETING QUESTIONS ON 2016-2017 PROPOSED BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET

Dr. Brenner said that he was going to list a number of items that have been completed and others that they are continuing to work on.

- Legal expenses - This year \$500,000 was budgeted and currently the account is under this.
- There was a question about the utilities snap shot. This has been done.
- The administration said that they would have a re-stated Operational Personnel Budget and it is posted on line.
- There were some questions about curriculum stipends. The information has been posted online.
- RC-19 Professional Development has also been posted on line.

Dr. Brenner then listed the items that are being worked on including: the Excess Cost Grant Fund information; a breakdown of short term substitutes; the analysis of staff salaries and the break out of athletic uniform costs. The information is in the process of being compiled and will be distributed to the Board once the final figures have been received and then posted on the website.

PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED NEW COURSES FOR DARIEN HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR. (File #s 2449, 2450, 2451)

Dr. DaSilva introduced Mr. Jeromy Nelson, Ms. Jackie Sammis, and DHS Principal, Ellen Dunn.

Mr. Nelson came forward to speak about the proposed Marketing Essential class.

Board questions and comments and Administration's responses: a) **These business courses are extremely popular. Will there be an impact on staffing?** (Mr. Nelson said that this had been discussed at great length and the consensus was that the Business and Entrepreneur class had a large enrollment because it was new and exciting. He felt that the three core business classes would even out. There is no anticipation that there will need to be more staff added.) b) **The curriculum seems to be a little light on the role of the Internet and how so many things are sold via social media or the fact that many of the former techniques in textbooks no longer exist.** (Mr. Nelson said that they were aware that any textbook on marketing or any topic in the STEM become quickly outdated. Because of this, the staff does plan to bring people in.)

Ms. Sammis came forward to speak about the proposed Digital Photography class.

Board questions and comments and Administration's responses: a) **Can you address the budgetary cost? Are the students bringing their own cameras or smart phones?** (Ms. Sammis said that the new iPhone and the Samsung phones are more than sufficient for this. The real cost is in the printer ink. However, she said that she wanted to work on creating a digital portfolio online.) b) **I would like to see all the students have access to this type of course even at the introductory level.** (This is the goal. There is no prerequisite and any student can enroll.) c) **This course would not take away from the black and white photography classes we already offer?** (I don't see this pulling many students away. There are students who are focused on photography and they would be able to not only take the black and white courses, but also take the digital.) d) **I hope that there would be clear boundaries about privacy and willingness of the models.** (Ms. Sammis said that this subject is addressed in the existing photography and the art classes.)

Principal Dunn came forward to speak about the proposed Latin 4 class.

Board question and Administration's responses: a) **Could you clarify why this is being run as Latin 4 and not independent study?** (Principal Dunn explained that independent study students receive credit, but there is no grade associated with it. There is no daily class time since the student just meets with the teacher to discuss their class work.)

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON REVISED HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULE FOR SAT AND CAPT TESTS (File #2452)

Mr. Paul Ribeiro came forward to speak about the "new" SAT and CAPT tests. Principal Dunn provided an overview of how the testing would be handled in order to create minimal disruption to the overall student body.

Board questions and comments and Administration's responses: a) **Have you thought about doing a second bus run with the school buses?** (Principal Dunn said that in the past the students who had to take the bus during the CAPT tests, just came in at the normal time.) b) **A student could be sitting in the cafeteria or library for four hours if they come in at 7:40 in the morning.** (Dr. Brenner said the choice was between losing two days of instruction. It left the administration with few good choices for the administration. The complication was that the switch to the SAT has left many of the districts up in the air.) c) **What would it cost us to run another bus at 11:40?** (Dr. Brenner said that they would look into this.) d) **Is this exam required?** (Principal Dunn replied that it was.) e) **Can students opt out?** (Dr. Brenner said that the entire purpose of the SAT exam was to try to inset some meaning into the State requirement and they acknowledge that the SBAC didn't have that. The District is obligated to give the test. The administration is obligated to encourage students to take the test.) f) **Have we looked at our sports schedule to ensure that students don't have practice the night before?** (Principal Dunn said that she would talk to Mr. Manfredonia and review the schedules.) g) **I think it's important for the student's family to make the decision that if the student doesn't want to test, they can choose not to.** h) **If you don't want to keep those SAT scores, you may cancel them before you leave?** (Yes.) i) **Is there a base line?** The Federal Government requires that the schools evaluate the students at every level in English Arts and Math. That is not an option and how it is done is a State's decision. In Connecticut the District has no choice. Principal Dunn said that this would provide the school with an important set of data points. There isn't any more SBAC or CAPT testing so the administration does want the students to take this seriously.)

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON CONTEMPLATED GIFT FROM DARIEN MUSIC FOR

Town of Darien
Darien Board of Education
Regular Meeting
January 12, 2016

YOUTH FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT (File #2453)

Mr. Richard Sadlon spoke about the long history of the Darien Music for Youth and how the collaborative grant effort began many years ago. He said that in the spirit of transparency, this was now being presented as a gift. He said that this year, the invited guests were The Late Show's Gospel Choir who will focus on African American Gospel Music.

**** MS. HAGERTY-ROSS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE CONTEMPLATED GIFT FROM DARIEN MUSIC FOR YOUTH FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT.**

**** MS. ZURO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

REPORT ON 2015-2016 DISTRICT BUDGET AND ACTION ON BUDGET TRANSFERS (File #s 2454 and 2455)

Mr. Feeney outlined the current budget standing and proposed budget transfers.

**** MR. MARTENS MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED BUDGET TRANSFERS FOR JANUARY 2016.**

**** MR. BURKE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

UPDATE ON SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE (File #2456)

Dr. DaSilva provided an update on the Safe School Climate program.

Board questions and comments and Administration's responses: a) **Is there a State requirement for the teachers to have annual training. Have we done that yet?** (Dr. DaSilva said that the law does require this and the District has been providing this training. We have steps in the policy as required by law.) b) **As you look at the policies we were mandated to put in place last year, do you feel that you have adequate tools to perform this assessment and generate this positive climate?** (In terms of having the tools, it is part of collaboration among the staff and knowing the District's priorities. Does the staff look at social skills as part of the training and part of the day? A thirty minute lesson or a program in a box will not create a school climate. Dr. Brenner pointed out that the best schools will tell you it is embedded in the curriculum and part of the everyday fabric. Dr. DaSilva said that there are some children who will need more support. The question is what the first level looks like and how will the teacher support those students who need more help.) c) **I think it would be helpful for the parents to know who they should contact about the goals.** d) **There are standing school based committees in place. What about District wide committees?** (Dr. DaSilva said that there was much more than coming back to two meetings a year, which is what is required by legislation. She added that the students would not have that sense of belonging simply by just having two meetings. It comes back to the social skills and how the school is approaching the climate of the schools.)

ACTION ITEMS

PERSONNEL ITEMS (File #2457)

- **Teacher/Administrator Appointments**
- **Resignations**

- ** MS. HAGERTY-ROSS MOVED TO APPROVE THE REVISED PERSONNEL ACTION REPORT.**
- ** MR. BURKE SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Jill McCammon of Old Kings Highway South asked who will determine the SAT accommodations for the students. Dr. Brenner said that the College Board had said that they would honor the accommodations.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** MS. HAGERTY-ROSS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** MS. ZURO SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Sarah Schneider Zuro
Secretary

SSZ:nv