

September 13, 2012

The Work Session of the Board of Education of the Borough of New Providence was called to order at 7:30 p.m. on September 13, 2012 at the Allen W. Roberts School, 80 Jones Drive, by Board President, Mr. Wolak.

Present on roll call were William Dibble, Ira Krauss, Susan Vogel and John Wolak. Also present were Dr. David Miceli, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Deborah Feinberg, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services; James E. Testa, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary; Sandra Searing, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Supervision; and 24 members of the public.

Mr. Wolak led in the salute to the flag.

Mr. Wolak read the following statement:

This is a public meeting of the Board of Education of the Borough of New Providence. Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with PL 1975, Chapter 231 in that an annual notice was made in conformance with Section 13 of the Act.

This work session is a public meeting of the Board of Education and no Board action will be taken. The Board will convene to Closed Session no later than 10:00 p.m.

Other Comments

The following notice was posted on 9/7/12:

The New Providence Board of Education Work Session scheduled for Thursday, September 13, 2012, at 7:30 P.M. at the New Providence High School/Middle School Media Center, 35 Pioneer Drive, ***will now be held at Allen W. Roberts School Media Center, 80 Jones Drive.***

Comments

Mr. Wolak began the meeting by commenting that it was an honor and privilege to be at Allen W. Roberts School (AWR) for the first meeting of the school year. It is a great night for the AWR community, Board of Education, administration, teachers, and students. It is a true celebration of student success and achievement. On behalf of the Board, Mr. Wolak thanked everyone for their efforts in the success of the completion of the AWR Media Center renovations, whether it is financial or physical.

Dr. Miceli welcomed everyone. Dr. Miceli expressed his enthusiasm about holding the Work Session in the newly renovated Allen W. Roberts School Media Center. About one year ago, Mrs. Hansen and Ms. Conover went to Dr. Miceli with a "vision". After meeting them and discussing their vision, I met with the Committee and Board members. Dr. Miceli and the Board agreed to move forward with the AWR Media Center renovations. He stated that this is just one example of the community working together towards a common goal. It is also one perfect example of why this District has been recognized as the #1 District in the State. Next, there will be a presentation by Mrs. Hansen, Principal of Allen W. Roberts School, the students, New Providence Education Foundation, the PTA, staff members and students, about the successful renovation of the AWR Media Center.

Presentation of the Renovated Allen W. Roberts School Media Center

Mrs. Hansen welcomed everyone. She thanked the PTA, The Spring Fling Committee, the Library Volunteers, AWR Class of 2012, and the generosity of all the AWR families for making the library renovation a huge success. She recognized Mrs. Kohut, an AWR parent, for donating her time to create the layout and beautiful color palette for the make-over, and the technology team and maintenance and custodial staff for their knowledge, creativity and hard work. This project is an example of how a shared vision and the coordination of resources from a variety of stakeholders can produce a warm and stimulating environment for all AWR students to use now and in the future, while being fiscally responsible to the entire community. Mrs. Hansen acknowledged Dr. Miceli and the Board of Education for their insight and planning, which provided AWR with the means to replace the media center technology. The District's long range technology plan included upgrading the media center during the summer of 2012. This was the catalyst for reconfiguring the library. The Board of Education invested approximately \$40,000 to upgrade technology in the library. Mrs. Hansen acknowledged and thanked the AWR PTA for their annual fund raiser, "Spring Fling", which donated approximately \$21,000 for the painting, furniture, circulation desk, table, chairs, pillows, and accent items in the media center. Additionally, she thanked Mrs. Cleenput and Mrs. Conover who applied for two Ed Foundation grants for an iPad Cart and a Smartboard with projector. They received a grant of approximately \$8,350 from The New Providence Education Foundation. Mrs. Hansen expressed her appreciation and gratitude to the Foundation for their generosity. Mrs. Hansen thanked the AWR 6th grade class of 2012, who donated approximately \$1,200 of their class money to be used towards the younger children's books in the media center. And finally, she thanked the Library volunteers who worked so hard to have the books in place for the students on the first day of school. She noted that the library has been filled with children, enjoying the new renovations, since the day school opened. They have embraced the new layout and book circulation. Library use has increased tremendously. Every grade level is using the library on a weekly basis. On behalf of the Allen W. Roberts's students and staff, Mrs. Hansen said thank you to everyone involved in the success of this project.

Mr. Wolak and Dr. Miceli thanked Mrs. Hansen for her involvement in the successful renovation of the media center.

Mr. Hasenkopf entered the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Certificates of Excellence

Mr. Dibble presented Certificates of Excellence to **Thomas Dolan** and **Katherine Dolan**, two students who earned special recognition for excellence by volunteering their time during the summer to make the Allen W. Roberts Media Center a special place to read and learn. Both students came to the school during the summer to help create a wonderful and inviting space for the AWR school community. They volunteered countless hours to help organize, move, and reshelv books. They were all-around good helpers and now serve as a stellar example of volunteerism for their peers.

Mr. Krauss, who has been on the Board for 21 years, shared some history about Allen W. Roberts School. The school was in such disrepair that the District did a bond issue to address the school which included building the original AWR Media Center 21 years ago. There wasn't enough money to buy shelving for the books, so the custodians hand-made all the shelving that is presently in the room tonight. There has been tremendous growth in all the schools over the years. Mr. Krauss thanked everyone who contributed to the Media Center renovations.

Review of 9/27/12 Board Meeting Agenda

The Board reviewed the September 27, 2012 Agenda items.

Mr. Krauss, in Mr. Smith's absence, reviewed the Finance and Facilities items. He noted the generous donations made by the PTA and AWR 6th Grade Class to renovate the Media Center and, on behalf of the Board, expressed his gratitude to them.

Mr. Wolak, in Mrs. Opperthausen's absence, reviewed the Education items.

Mr. Dibble and Dr. Miceli reviewed and commented on the Personnel items.

Mrs. Vogel commented on the Board policies. They are all straight forward.

Mr. Krauss commented on negotiations. When the Board negotiated with the bargaining unit, the District was able to maintain the current health insurance plan. This year the increase was 0%, while the State plan premiums are increasing by 14.7%. Mr. Wolak noted that initially, the State insurance plan was a competitive cost, but has had gradual increases, as high as 14% over the past few years.

Public Hearing

Mr. Wolak opened the meeting to the public at 7:53 p.m.

Mrs. Cheng
126 Hickson Dr.

Congratulated the Board for work well done on the Media Center. She asked questions and expressed concerns regarding the validity of the grading system used in the schools. She noted that there is nothing on the website in regards to the grading system and suggested the Board look into this. Mrs. Cheng questioned if the District gives what she called "feel good grades".

Mr. Wolak responded that he is aware that Mrs. Cheng was referencing a personal specific student matter, which, by law, he is not permitted to address at a public meeting. He clarified that grading is the responsibility of each professional employee, and the grades are a reflection of the students' performance. Mr. Wolak reiterated that he would have to defer to the process which is already in progress. Mr. Wolak stated that there is no such thing as a "feel good" grading system in the New Providence School District.

There being no other comments from the public, Mr. Wolak declared the public portion of the meeting closed at 7:57 p.m.

Closed Session

Mrs. Vogel moved to adopt the following resolution:

1. This body shall on September 13, 2012 at 7:58 p.m. in the New Providence High School/Middle School Media Center, 35 Pioneer Drive, discuss in closed session, pursuant to Section 7 of the Open Public Meetings Act, specific matters which may generally be described as follows:
 - Litigation: Case #1121440
 - Student Matters

2. The minutes of the discussion in closed session of the aforementioned matters may be disclosed to the public after final determination of action has been reached.

Mr. Hasenkopf seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Return to Public Session

The Board reconvened to public session at 8:45 p.m. Mr. Wolak called the Board to order.

Members present were William Dibble, David Hasenkopf, Ira Krauss, Susan Vogel, and John Wolak.

There being no other business before the Board, on a motion by Mr. Krauss and seconded by Mr. Dibble, the President declared the meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

James E. Testa
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary
9/13/12