

**Please note these minutes are pending Board approval.  
Newtown Board of Education  
Newtown, Connecticut**

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting on Wednesday, July 18, 2012, at 7:30 p.m. in the board room at 3 Primrose Street.

D. Leidlein, Chair	J. Robinson
L. Roche, Vice Chair	R. Bienkowski
C. McCubbin, Secretary)	7 Staff
R. Gaines (absent)	16 Public
W. Hart	2 Press
K. Alexander	
J. Vouros	

Mrs. Leidlein called the meeting to order at 7:48 p.m.

Item 1 – Public Participation

Kevin Fitzgerald, 24 Old Farm Hill Road, said it would be a risk to cut the All Star bond which is our insurance should they not deliver as promised. That's the same reason the MTM bond should not be eliminated. He also felt the transportation coordinator should remain in that position for the first 6 months as we transition.

Alisha Brown, 9 Bayberry Drive, said it would have been helpful to send an email from the elementary principals regarding AM or PM kindergarten placement before the first budget vote, not before the last vote.

Michelle Assante, 16 Wendover Road, feels full day kindergarten is important to the district as well as identifying student problems early. She voted no because she couldn't support the cuts in education. The article in the *Bee* gave a statement by the Board of Education that same services were being kept.

Mrs. Leidlein made the correction that she made that statement, not the Board of Education.

Mrs. Assante didn't know how that would have been possible. There's been a lot of talk about transparency. The transportation coordinator affects services. People have threatened to make calls to disrupt transportation services through the transition period.

Robin Fitzgerald, 24 Old Farm Hill Road, said the letter in the *Bee* gave people a level of security and identified funds that would allow us to do everything with \$9,000 left over. Everyone feels we will provide same services, have full day kindergarten and have funds left over.

Chris Powers, 75 High Rock Road, said her daughter will be entering kindergarten. Enrollment numbers are confusing and class size is a big issue. She wants to better understand the cuts and their impact.

Jessica Hudson, 75A Great Ring Road, has a daughter who will be in kindergarten. Other towns have had privately funded kindergarten so the children can go a full day. We should have the option if it can't be in the budget.

Mr. Alexander stated he had just received an email from Mr. Gaines who was unable to attend due to illness. He read his email in which he made the following statement:

*"We are near same services and it does not appear that we can maintain same services and implement FDK. While I favor FDK for Newtown I do not favor it over maintaining the services we now offer. It has been my experience with the Board that once cut, services do not reappear."*

Mr. Gaines was appalled that Kathy Fetchick and Mary Ann Jacobs wrote to their constituents that their intent in making the \$1M cut was to eliminate full day kindergarten. He feels this may have to wait until next year even though we will have to increase the budget by \$200,000 to maintain same services because the Legislative Council did not restore that amount which was allocated for the Board of Education in the town's capital non-recurring fund.

Mr. Alexander said people are confused. There's been a lot of talk that we found money we should have found before. The \$576,421 would have been cut. It's a projected budget amount but numbers changed in the spring. Also, there is never a same services budget. It is the same level of services. We are looking at cutting things more critical to keep the core educational services. Full day kindergarten depends on those services.

Mr. Bienkowski spoke about the additional costs of \$120,945 in the pupil services department as a result of PPT requirements. Two students will need transitional services and four will need occupational therapy. These are obligations we weren't expecting.

MOTION: Mrs. Roche moved that the Board of Education reduce the proposed 2012-13 budget as follows:

Wireless HS A Wing	(\$23,369)
Worker's Comp.	(\$17,638)
Unemployment	(\$20,000)
Second Transportation Coordinator & Extra Work	(\$44,879)
Sandy Hook Assistant Principal to Lead Teacher	<u>(\$75,245)</u>
Total Net Reduction	(\$181,131)

Mr. Vouros seconded.

Mr. Bienkowski spoke to the proposed reductions. Worker's comp. rates were reduced, the wireless in the high school A wing was added in the initial budget and then taken out. The Board authorized us to do yearend work. Mrs. Amodeo felt this was a higher priority with the work to be done over the summer. We are doing it with surplus funds from last year. Regarding the second transportation coordinator position, we looked at All Star responsibilities and MTM and developed a comfort level that All Star would efficiently deal with the operation. One of the All Star owners will be in the facility the first 3 or 4 months to ensure the operation. He will also review the MTM operation. To have someone in our office to field questions or complaints will add another layer and step to resolve the problem. The coordinator would not have the knowledge to answer the questions. We also thought it might be necessary to have another contract administrator to see how the contract is working and being followed. He feels his staff can oversee the contract issues. That would include Ed Bryan, the terminal manager, Barbara Bozeman, secretary, Sally Lynch, point person for special education, and Tanya Gouveia, will handle the billing.

Mr. Vouros mentioned principal and secretaries meeting with All Star to go over information.

Dr. Robinson said they have already met with our staff and are always ready to answer questions. Principals are delighted there will be working cameras on the buses. She heard there was an effort to disrupt service when school begins. It is hard to believe people would be so mean spirited to put our students safety in jeopardy.

Mr. Alexander feels people would rather talk to a representative from the district for the first few months. He thought of making an amendment to remove the transportation coordinator from the proposed cuts.

Mr. Hart asked what would happen if they are not satisfied with the answer from All Star. Mr. Bienkowski said they could call him or Dr. Robinson. His secretary would be the first point of contact. We could hire a temp for the phone if it becomes an issue or All Star will provide extra services. They are in charge.

Mr. Hart said any change is disruptive and we have to plan on extra work and have to be sure they are filling the requirements of the contract. People need to feel like they are being heard.

Mrs. Roche said the transportation coordinator is no longer here. We should have discussed this position at our June 19 meeting.

Ed Bryan, terminal manager for All Star, 89 Riverside Road. He said he has spoken to approximately 20 people. The routes are not done yet but the target date is August 1. There may be a small change in bus stops but they are mostly remaining the same. We hired 10 former owner/operators and there are 52 buses in the fleet with two having air conditioning and luggage compartments.

Mr. Hart feels there is no problem in eliminating this position. Mr. Roche feels it should have been discussed before it happened.

Vote: 6 ayes

Mr. Alexander asked about the \$200,000 the Town allotted out of the capital non-recurring fund.

Mrs. Leidlein said that would go to cover capital improvements already identified in our budget.

Mr. Bienkowski said the building and site maintenance projects and technology equipment will take care of the \$200,000. Without full day kindergarten we need \$242,558. To continue with full day kindergarten we need \$640,249.

Dr. Robinson went over the proposed budget adjustments. Eliminating the All Star and MTM bonds is a good risk. Back up for MTM would be the All Star surplus buses.

Mrs. Leidlein provided a revised analysis for elementary school staffing. There were some increases in classes with a concern for kindergarten at Middle Gate and Head O'Meadow. She added a teacher for kindergarten at those schools which brings them below the recommended class size and also for the half day kindergarten. Areas to reduce are two fourth grade teachers at Sandy Hook.

Mrs. Roche was concerned about the 25 students in fourth grade at Sandy Hook.  
Dr. Robinson said we would like to have fewer students per teacher.  
Mr. Vouros asked about class size in relation to students that need special services.  
Dr. Robinson said the principals want to keep certain class sizes down.

Mrs. Hochsprung said if we have to have slightly bigger class sizes to allow full day kindergarten we are willing to have that discussion.  
Mrs. Peters was concerned with Hawley's kindergarten not going to a full day program.  
She would recommend keeping two teachers at Hawley without full day kindergarten.

Mrs. Hochsprung said their biggest fear is to lose full day kindergarten and still have very large class sizes. She doesn't want it to be a lose-lose situation for the elementary schools.

Mrs. Leidlein asked if they were willing to have larger class sizes to have full day kindergarten.

Mr. Geissler said the Middle Gate number would still be below the guidelines and he would be okay with that. First grade is always in flux up until the first day of school.

Mr. Vouros asked if there were volunteers.

Mrs. Hochsprung said they take the clerical load off teachers but don't teach.

Mrs. Peters said our parent volunteers provide support but aren't there every day.

The Board discussed areas to reduce to be able to have full day kindergarten.

Mrs. Leidlein stated that the \$238,876 needed included 14 teachers but we would need 16 to be able to increase the number of teachers at Middle Gate and Head O'Meadow.

Dr. Robinson stated that this was a precarious budget. There will be three mediations set up in two weeks. If we have unexpected pupil placements, that \$238,876 will go up. We have very little money in building and maintenance and almost nothing in technology. Two years from now students will be taking tests on 9-year-old computers. This was the perfect year to start full day kindergarten but we don't have the money now.

Mr. McCubbin said he had brought up having the full day program if parents were willing to pay and asked if that was a possibility.

Dr. Robinson did some research but we are not allowed to charge for an academic program. We found a district that is doing it but they are concerned with the legalities and are trying to move out of it. Also, if you have a certified teacher in kindergarten who stays with those students for the remainder of the day, their salary is under a different category and not eligible for TRB. We are also researching running an onsite daycare center like the Monroe model but can't do it by September.

Mr. Vouros said it's called extended daycare.

Mr. Alexander said an extended day care program is not the same as full day kindergarten.

Mr. Hart said some students would be here all day but not all so it would have to be a half day program. He asked what the mediation was referring to.

Dr. Robinson said mediation is held when someone is in a dispute with their services. We have three scheduled for parents requesting out of district placement.

Mr. Vouros stated that we don't know where the money is coming from in the future in the special education sector. He's always wanted full day kindergarten but we have to have money for the special education students. If this doesn't happen now for next year he will propose that we start out with that bottom line number to have full day kindergarten. The money needs to be there.

Mr. Hart feels the amount needed is large. Full day kindergarten is the way to go but we have to be prepared. To reduce it down this low is very risky but it should be the #1 priority for next year.

The Board was polled on full day kindergarten.

Mr. Vouros – no	Mr. McCubbin - no
Mr. Alexander – no	Mrs. Roche - no
Mr. Hart – no	Mrs. Leidlein - no

Mr. Alexander said we need to start getting to understand the program. This needs to be the sole item for the community to support to move the system forward. He suggested a subcommittee to put this through because we can't let it happen again.

Mrs. Roch was very disappointed. Everyone worked very hard to get this program through. She agreed to get people on board for next year.

Mr. Vouros said more importantly than this being broadcast, it is being sure we have an advocacy group in September to get people to vote.

Mr. McCubbin said to be fiscally responsibly we can't do it. He is frustrated it didn't go through.

MOTION: Mr. Hart moved Move that the Board of Education further reduce the proposed 2012-13 budget in accordance with Schedule B "Board of Education Potential Budget Adjustments" including the specific line items listed as "B" and "numbers 1 through, and including, number 28." Mr. Vouros seconded.

Mrs. Leidlein asked Dr. Robinson if there were any changes to the adjustments.

Dr. Robinson said that as we get these numbers she would like the Board to allow her to have the flexibility in August to add or take away FTE positions.

Mrs. Roche was concerned about taking away a fourth grade teacher.

Mr. Alexander stated we are allowed to remove teachers beyond the time we need to tell them due to budgetary reasons.

Dr. Robinson said if enrollment doesn't come through we will communicate to the junior person that we don't have an assignment for them.

MOTION: Mr. Alexander amended the motion to change line 28 to a .5 FTE. Mr. Vouros seconded.

Mrs. Peters said she would rather keep the two teachers but worries about 19 students in a kindergarten class.

MOTION: Mrs. Roche made a friendly amendment to Mr. Alexander's amendment to completely remove line 28. Mr. Vouros seconded.

Mrs. Leidlein stated that line 24 was reduced by zero.

Vote on friendly amendment – 6 ayes

Vote on original motion – 5 ayes, 1 nay (Mr. McCubbin)

MOTION: Mr. Hart moved that the Board allow the Director of Business to make any mathematical or other adjustments necessary to balance this budget. Mr. Alexander seconded. Vote: 6 ayes

MOTION: Mr. McCubbin moved to adjourn. Mr. Vouros seconded. Vote: 6 ayes

Item 3 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

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Cody McCubbin  
Secretary

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION JULY 18, 2012

**BOARD OF EDUCATIONS POTENTIAL BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS**

**Schedule B**

	POTENTIAL	WITHOUT FDK	
		ADJUSTMENT	REQUIRED FUNDS
<b>BUDGET REDUCTIONS</b>			\$1,700,000
A June 19, 2012 BOE Adjustments			(\$576,421)
B July 18, 2012 BOE Adjustments			(\$181,131)
C Balance needed to find			\$942,448
<b>ADJUSTMENTS AVAILABLE</b>			
<u>LC to Fund from Capital Fund (June 6, 2012)</u>			
1 Building & Site Maintenance Project	(\$96,500)	(\$96,500)	\$845,948
2 Technology Equipment	(\$103,500)	(\$103,500)	\$742,448
Total	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	
<u>Additional Costs</u>			
3 Special Education and Transportation Services	\$120,945	\$120,945	\$863,393
<u>Adjustment to Kindergarten</u>			
4 Without All Day Kindergarten	(\$620,835)	(\$620,835)	\$242,558
5 With All Day Kindergarten	(\$223,144)		
<u>BOE Specific Budget Cuts - Non-Instructional</u>			
6 Magnet School Bus Aide	(\$12,060)	(\$12,060)	\$230,498
7 H.S. Pay to Participate for Athletic Trips	(\$21,500)	(\$21,500)	\$208,998
8 H.S. Textbooks - Lost Book Funds in Activity Funds	(\$22,761)	(\$22,761)	\$186,237
9 All Star Transportation Bond	(\$16,500)	(\$16,500)	\$169,737
10 MTM Transportation Bond	(\$12,000)	(\$12,000)	\$157,737
11 Non-cert. Salary Adj. - Turnover Savings	(\$15,000)	(\$15,000)	\$142,737
12 Non-cert. Extra Work - District Wide	(\$20,000)	(\$20,000)	\$122,737
13 Professional Services - B. & G.	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	\$117,737
14 B. & G. Contracted Services	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	\$112,737
15 Postage - H.S.	(\$2,000)	(\$2,000)	\$110,737
16 Transportation Contracted services - consultant	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	\$109,237
17 HS Student travel	(\$1,000)	(\$1,000)	\$108,237
18 MS Student travel	(\$862)	(\$862)	\$107,375
19 MS Contracted services	(\$1,400)	(\$1,400)	\$105,975
20 Benefits adjustments, FICA, SS, life, misc.	(\$15,000)	(\$15,000)	\$90,975
21		\$0	\$90,975
22		\$0	\$90,975
Total	(\$151,583)		
<u>BOE Specific Budget Cuts</u>			
23 S.H. Music Teacher	0.2 (\$21,264)	(\$21,264)	\$69,711
24 All Schools - Instructional Supplies	(\$10,000)	(\$10,000)	\$59,711
25 H.S. Program Reduction	(\$30,700)	(\$30,700)	\$29,011
26		\$0	\$29,011
27		\$0	\$29,011
Total	(\$61,964)		
<u>Other Adjustments not dealt with</u>			
28 Elementary Teachers	0 \$0	\$0	\$29,011
29			
30			
31			Shortage

**NEWTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
BUSINESS OFFICE  
3 PRIMROSE STREET  
NEWTOWN, CT 06470**

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** July 16, 2012  
**TO:** The Board of Education  
**FROM:** Ron Bienkowski, Director of Business  
**SUBJECT:** Pupil Services Expenditures – Professional Services,  
Tuition & Transportation

The following Pupil Services costs have been brought to my attention and are the result of PPT requirements and staffing requirements that we are legally obligated to provide. These costs will impact the 2012-13 budget.

		<u>Budget</u>	<u>Need</u>	<u>Shortage</u>
The Kennedy Center	1 Student	\$25,000	\$55,000	(\$30,000)
Goodwill (Summer)	1 Student	0	\$7,220	(\$7,220)
Goodwill(School Year)	Same Student	0	\$69,540	(\$69,540)
The Foundation School (Summer)	1 Student	0	\$8,100	(\$8,100)
Occupational Therapy	4 Students	0	\$5,060	(\$5,060)
Transportation to Kennedy Center		0	\$29,700	(\$29,700)
Transportation to Goodwill		0	\$33,660	(\$33,660)
Estimated Excess Cost Revenue		0	(\$62,335)	\$62,335
		\$25,000	\$145,945	(\$120,945)

RB:bb

Copy: Janet Robinson, Superintendent of Schools