

**Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut**

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting on Tuesday, January 15, 2013 at 7:30 p.m. in the board room at 3 Primrose Street.

D. Leidlein, Chair	J. Robinson
L. Roche, Vice Chair	L. Gejda
C. McCubbin, Secretary	R. Bienkowski
R. Gaines	12 Staff
W. Hart	20 Public
K. Alexander	3 Press
J. Vouros	

Mrs. Leidlein called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m.

Item 1 – Discussion and Action on Policies

Video Surveillance Policy:

Mr. Gaines spoke about the need to be able to monitor entrances and parking lots. The current policy did not allow us to do that in real time.

MOTION: Mrs. Roche moved that the Board of Education approve video surveillance policy 5131.111(a) as presented.

Mrs. Leidlein said this came directly from CABE and requested that the Board waive the second reading and vote tonight.

MOTION: Mr. Alexander moved that the Board waive the second reading of the video surveillance policy and vote after the first reading. Mr. Hart seconded. Vote: 7 ayes
Vote on the main motion: 7 ayes

Transfer Policy 3-202:

MOTION: Mr. McCubbin moved that in light of recent events and as a result of the need to act more quickly, we bring to the entire Board the recommendation that we suspend the requirement in the transfer policy requiring the superintendent to have Board approval for any new hires for the remainder of the school year.

Mr. Gaines seconded.

MOTION: Mr. Gaines moved to amend the current motion to suggest that the superintendent report to the Board any hiring at the next regularly scheduled meeting. Mr. McCubbin seconded. Vote on the amendment: 7 ayes
Vote on the amended motion: 7 ayes

Item 2 –180-Day Waiver for Sandy Hook School

MOTION: Mr. Gaines moved to authorize the superintendent to request a waiver from the State Commissioner of Education for the 180-day minimum attendance requirement for Sandy Hook School. Mr. Hart seconded. Vote: 7 ayes

Item 3 – Resolution on Sandy Hook School Redistricting

MOTION: Mr. Gaines moved that the Board of Education approve the following resolution:
Mr. Gaines moved that the Board of Education approve the following resolution:

Whereas, the families in the Sandy Hook Elementary School District have suffered through the traumatic events of December 14, 2012 and the days following and,
Whereas, the families in the Sandy Hook Elementary School District have a very close communal bond which has strengthened over the last month and,
Whereas, the families in the Sandy Hook Elementary School District have demonstrated amazing strength, fortitude and resilience and,
Whereas, the Newtown and Monroe Superintendents of Schools and Boards of Education have worked with hundreds of volunteers to transform the Chalk Hill School facility in Monroe into an incredibly safe and nurturing environment in order to keep the Sandy Hook Elementary School kindergarten through 4th grade students together as they continue their education and,
Whereas, the community has expressed gratitude for these efforts and a fervent desire to continue and maintain the Sandy Hook Elementary School District and its community of families upon the school's return to Newtown regardless of the location and nature of school to which they will return or begin to attend,
Be It Resolved that the Newtown Board of Education will make every effort to honor the expressed desire of the families in the Sandy Hook Elementary School District and others in the Town of Newtown by committing to minimize or, preferably, avoid entirely any redistricting of the Sandy Hook Elementary School District as we determine how we will provide an environment in Newtown that is as safe and nurturing as the Chalk Hill School facility in Monroe to which we have been able to send them in the interim.

Mr. Hart seconded. Vote: 7 ayes

Mrs. Leidlein stated that with this resolution we are saying that we are committed to keeping the Sandy Hook School family together but we cannot predict that something might occur out of our control that will not allow us to be able to do this.
Mrs. Roche said many parents are concerned about redistricting. This is our way of showing we want that to remain.
Vote: 7 ayes

Item 4 – Superintendent's Recommended Budget for 2013-2014

Dr. Robinson presented her recommended budget which is attached. The presentation included strategic plan objectives, Newtown's high achieving schools, enrollment, and stated that we are one of the most efficient school systems in the State of Connecticut. There are monetary obligations to implement the new teacher evaluation program and costs for the Connecticut Common Core of State Standards for professional development and classroom resources.

Dr. Robinson also highlighted the Board of Education budget goals for 2013-2014. Newtown must balance the reality of a recession economy with mandates, quality education and safety. We have contractual obligations which must also be met. The projected health insurance trend is approximately 12%. We estimated 4% in our budget. We expect increases and decreases in various energy costs. Building and maintenance project costs total \$1,074,000. Special education out-of-district placements has increased to 36.

The initiatives in this budget include full day kindergarten, restoring maintenance, restoring TCO in technology, restoring curriculum and instruction to former levels, Common Core State Standards, teacher evaluations, NEASC and security needs.

The costs for Sandy Hook School at Monroe area unknown at this time. We have added 8 additional security guards for \$165,200. This does not include requests for SROs. These 8 will be permanent.

This budget request is a 6.54% increase which fulfills the Board budget goals, the strategic plan goals, and the mandates.

Mrs. Leidlein felt some of the grants may address security concerns now.

Dr. Robinson said the grants will not address security people at this time. Grants are normally for short term needs.

Mrs. Roche inquired about using money donated to the town to which Dr. Robinson had no information about those funds.

Mr. Hart thought we would have to make that request.

Mrs. Roche said we need this right now to take the burden off the administrators and should be addressed before budget season.

Mrs. Leidlein said the grant talks about things reasonable to provide security which includes additional security guards and cameras. Mrs. Roche would focus on this grant.

Item 5 – Public Participation

Amy Roman, Taunton Hill Road, spoke about the school system being safe and urged the Board to include a SRO in each elementary school. They don't have a posted officer on sight. Public knowledge of the presence of an officer is a strong deterrent for crime, a posted officer with a radio can contact headquarters sooner, and the law enforcement officials don't see the presence as a concern but as being seen to speak about safety. There's a group working to provide evidence about the importance of doing this.

John Bello, Glenmore Drive, said we have no security in our schools. We need an armed guard. Top priority of the budget is security in the elementary schools.

David Bardsley, 16 Beaver Dam Road, has a son at Head O'Meadow. We need security for the children and teachers. Someone has to be at the building, not a distance away with a camera.

Dr. Robinson said the SROs are supplied by the police department.

Mrs. Leidlein stated that we have to ask the police through the security committee who will make a recommendation to the Board.

Item 6 – Elementary School Budgets

Mr. Gaines asked the principals if they had room for a full day kindergarten program.

All responded that they did.

Dr. Robinson said Sandy Hook School is an unknown right now but there is room there.

Mr. Gaines asked if they had any safety and security concerns in their schools.

Mrs. Peters was in 100% support of SROs in the elementary schools.

Ms. Gasparine said the doors at Head O'Meadow can only be locked from the outside which needs to be addressed along with an inspection by Mr. Faiella and Mr. Pompano.

Mr. Geissler said we need the expertise of others to see what was needed. He often looks at the outer structure of the building and heavily populated areas when students are outside and also safety in the cafeteria especially when crowded.

Mrs. Gasparine also stated that cellular service is needed at Head O'Meadow as soon as possible.

Mr. Hart suggest a cell on wheels and that a radio system independent of the phone system or power was needed. He asked if the 8 security staff were in the elementary budget or security budget.

Dr. Robinson said security was separate. There will also be an action plan from the security committee.

Mr. Alexander asked if it was worth considering having an assistant principal for Sandy Hook School on a temporary basis to which Dr. Robinson felt that could be addressed given the situation there.

Mr. Hart said when he attended the legislative breakfast there was a discussion about providing mental health services. We need to give the teachers some back up plus the administrators have to evaluate teachers 6 times. He questions if we had the right number of support staff. Dr. Robinson stated we were nowhere close to supplying adequate needs. We are lean on administrators. She put in a grant for counselors and social workers. We need to think in terms of what the students and teachers need.

Mr. McCubbin asked how long we could have the grant as these students will need this help through high school.

Dr. Robinson said they didn't give her a timeframe. It's up to us to determine the length of time. Once submitted we should get a quick response.

Mr. Alexander said the Board knows the amount of work done by the administrators and it was not going unnoticed.

Mrs. Peters stated they feel the community support. Mr. Geissler also praised the teachers.

Mrs. Leidlein asked that instead of using Chung's predictions the principals use actual enrollment figures to be given to them the following week.

Item 7 – Reed Intermediate School Budget

Mr. Gaines asked about the reader's workshop which followed with some discussion.

He also asked about the large increase related to the master schedule and restoring project adventure to Reed. He asked how adding the teacher would add to the program.

Dr. Smith said the position was eliminated a few years ago and we had to increase sizes of classes in phys. ed.

Ms. Sinal said project adventure helps the students work collaboratively and communicate.

Dr. Smith stated it also provides emotional help and will help with the placement of the Gates program and compacted math program.

Mrs. Leidlein asked if Reed enrollment and staffing was based on Chung's report. She requested a comparison of numbers from 4th going into 5th grade.

Mr. Gaines asked for any security and safety elements we should be aware of.

Dr. Smith said steps are being investigated and a lot of expertise pulled together. Dr. Robinson has been part of the committee walking each building.

Mr. Gaines asked about increasing the library clerk to a full time position.

Dr. Smith said there was a new librarian this year who decided to run 2 libraries at once. One is a closed library where she does direct instruction on library skills and an open library when the teachers can send students to the library to pick up a book or do whatever is needed. A person is needed on the 5th day to accommodate this. Regarding technology, we have gaps in our capability for wireless throughout the building.

MOTION: Mr. Hart moved to adjourn. Mr. Vouros seconded. Vote: 7 ayes

Item 8 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Cody McCubbin
Secretary

Students

Conduct

Video Surveillance

District surveillance cameras will only be utilized in public areas where there is no “reasonable expectation of privacy.” Audio recordings shall not be utilized by School District employees without the express permission of the Superintendent or his/her designee; such prohibition does not preclude the use of audio recordings by law enforcement officials in accordance with their official duties and/or as otherwise authorized by law.

To further the Board's objective, the District-wide Safety Team shall meet as appropriate and/or deemed necessary to develop, implement and review District and building level safety practices. The Team shall also make recommendations to the Superintendent regarding the implementation and use of surveillance cameras as authorized by the Board of Education. The Superintendent shall retain final decision-making authority regarding the recommendations of the Safety Team; and he/she shall notify the Board as to the procedures to be implemented with regard to the use of surveillance cameras by the School District.

In determining the most appropriate use and implementation of surveillance cameras in the schools, school buses and/or on school grounds, the District-wide Safety Team's recommendation will be guided by, at a minimum, the following considerations:

- Demonstrated need for the device at designated locations;
- Appropriateness and effectiveness of proposed protocol;
- The use of additional, less intrusive, means to further address the issue of school safety (e.g. restricted access to buildings, use of pass cards or identification badges, increased lighting, alarms);
- Expense involved installing and maintaining the use of surveillance cameras at designated locations, including school buses and/or on school grounds.

Any video recording used for surveillance purposes in school buildings, school buses and/or on school property, shall be the sole property of the District; and the Superintendent or his/her designee will be the custodian of such recordings. If it is necessary to download any file it will be stored on CD-ROM and secured to avoid tampering and ensure confidentiality in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Under no circumstances will the District's video recording be duplicated and/or removed from District premises unless in accordance with a court order and/or subpoena.

Appropriate signage will be posted at entrances to the school campus and/or at major entrances into school buildings notifying students, staff and the general public of the District's use of surveillance cameras.

Students and staff will receive additional notification, as appropriate, regarding the use of surveillance cameras in the schools, school buses and/or on school grounds. Such notification may include, but is not limited to, publication in the District calendar, employee handbook, and student handbook. Such notification does not preclude, as deemed appropriate by administration, the discussion of the use of surveillance cameras with staff and students to heighten awareness and help foster a sense of security.

(cf. 4112.6/4212.6 – Personnel Records)
(cf. 5125 – Student Records)
(cf. 5131.1 – Bus Conduct)
(cf. 5131.11 – Video Cameras on School Buses)
(cf. 5131.5 – Vandalism)
(cf. 5145.12 – Search and Seizure)

Legal Reference: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, sec. 438, 20 U.S.C. sec. 1232g (1988).

Adopted

To see the Superintendent's Budget Presentation click the following link.

<http://www.newtown.k12.ct.us/Portals/Newtown/District/docs/BOARD%20OFF%20EDUCATION/BOE%20Presentations/2012-2013%20presentations/Proposed%20Budget%20for%202013-14.1-15-13.pdf>