

**Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut**

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting on Tuesday, September 17, 2013 at 7:30 p.m. in the council chambers at 3 Primrose Street.

D. Leidlein, Chair
L. Roche, Vice Chair
K. Hamilton, Secretary
R. Gaines
W. Hart
K. Alexander
J. Vouros

J. Reed
L. Gejda
R. Bienkowski
1 Staff
8 Public
3 Press

Mrs. Leidlein called the meeting to order at 7:36 p.m.

Item 1 – Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mr. Gaines moved that the Board of Education approve the consent agenda which included the minutes of September 4, 2013, the donation of \$756 to Sandy Hook School, the donation of an iPad to Sandy Hook School and Head O'Meadow School, the child-rearing leave of absence for Amy Deeb, teacher at Newtown High School and the resignation of Leah Clark, teacher at Newtown High School. Mrs. Roche seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 2 – Public Participation - none

Item 3 – Reports

Correspondence: Ms. Hamilton said the Board received a letter from Dinah Lee Brewington regarding the donation of paintings. She requested this donation be turned over to the donation coordinators.

Chair Report: Mrs. Leidlein read the attached letter from the AFT of Connecticut president Melodie Peters regarding the appointment of Dr. Reed as Interim Superintendent and security concerns in the district.

She also received a letter from NEASC with dates for the evaluation of Newtown High School which are October 4 to 7, 2015.

Prior to the meeting tonight three Board members informally met with Tom Hennick regarding questions on FOIA protocol. We set a formal workshop for December 17 at 6:30 p.m. when new board is seated.

Mr. Gaines said the Board also received an email from Rosemary Conrad regarding school hours.

Superintendent's Report:

Dr. Reed went to each open house to address parents regarding security and his desire to involve parents in an activity to learn about the budget through budget seminars. Regarding security he does not want to make recommendations in public so there is no misuse of the information. On September 26 he is having a meeting for parents only with no media present. We don't want information made public that might do harm.

There were two false alarms at Hawley School today in the 48 section. An obvious reason couldn't be found but some of the wiring is old. We have a fire watch in that part of the building and will maintain that until we find the reason for the problem.

In October he will present a budget calendar different from the one we've had in the past. We will be using a different process in the administrator's review of the budget by bringing them all together for the discussion of their budgets. He asked the Board for input on their thoughts about the budget.

Mrs. Roche spoke about the superintendent search and the various focus groups throughout the community. There will also be three parent meetings. The survey is on our website. The policy subcommittee met last week and will work the next month to get through them.

Dr. Reed said the referendum authorizing the expenditure for the new Sandy Hook School will be funded by the State of Connecticut. There will be extended hours for the community to drop by with questions for him and Pat Llodra. This is about restoring us to where we were.

Newtown High School Assessment Report:

Mr. Dumais compared our scores with districts in our Drg. Regarding the SAT, scores in math and critical reading are in the same area as last year but in writing there was an 11 point increase.

For the ACT scores we had a drop in everything but everyone in the nation also dropped.

Regarding CAPT the lower end of our Drg matches the state average. We dropped in reading and are a little lower in science than last year.

Dr. Reed stated that if you want increases in scores in subject areas the students need to spend more time in those subjects.

Mr. Dumais mentioned that these results included all students including special ed. Also in CAPT the writing and math scores dropped. We are going to focus our efforts in math and try to identify with freshmen.

Item 5 – New Business

High School Resiliency Survey:

Dr. Reed introduced Dr. John Woodall who spoke about collecting data about our students over a period of time in the areas of resiliency. We feel it is appropriate and necessary to collect data about staff and students as to where we are relative to the Sandy Hook tragedy. Also, David Jacob, the Project Recovery Director, will start this Monday.

Mr. Dumais said he met Dr. Woodall prior to December to discuss the Unity Project and empowering students. They formerly started in the spring having students working with Dr. Woodall, faculty advisors and other students on ways to improve the schools.

Dr. Woodall stated Mr. Dumais established a vision to use this project which is all about good leadership. He is a psychiatrist and has worked in traumatized environments.

Dr. Reed said he would come back with a plan for the Board to approve. We want to get to the impact of this tragedy on adults and children. It will be an anonymous survey. The high school started out as an afterschool club.

Item 3 – Reports (continued)

MOTION: Mr. Hart moved to approve the financial report for the month ending August 31, 2013. Mr. Gaines seconded.

Mr. Bienkowski presented his financial report. Main object accounts are in a positive position. We spent \$3.2M for operations in August which is about \$700,000 less than in July. This does not include the first payroll. This report also includes a list of cash donations since December 14.

Ms. Hamilton asked if there were any tax implications for the district due to the cash donations. Mr. Bienkowski said we are a non-profit organization so anything received is revenue. Those who donate would claim it on their taxes.
Motions passes unanimously.

Item 5 – New Business (continued)

HVAC Bid for Newtown High School and Reed Intermediate School:

MOTION: Ms. Hamilton moved that the Board of Education award the contract for the HVAC Preventative Maintenance to Global Mechanical, the low bidder on September 9, 2013 for Newtown High School and Reed Intermediate School. Mrs. Roche seconded.

Mr. Bienkowski said Mr. Faiella put the bid together with three bidders who responded. Global Mechanical was the low bidder and we would like to contract them for the work.

Mr. Alexander asked if this covered any failures.

Mr. Bienkowski stated this is a preventative maintenance which is done on a scheduled basis. If we have a failure it would be a separate cost but some problems could be a major cost. We have a \$25,000 deductible.

Mr. Gaines asked who held this year's contract.

Robert Carnoli of Global Mechanicals said they had Reed and Trane has the high school contract.

Ms. Hamilton spoke about Global's work as they have worked for her and she recommended them to others. They are lower priced than anyone around. Global has also worked in the town hall.

Motion passes unanimously.

Sandy Hook School Asset Reclamation:

MOTION: Mr. Hart moved that the Board of Education approve the Sandy Hook School asset reclamation as discussed. Mr. Vouros seconded.

Mr. Bienkowski said we are interested in retrieving useful items from Sandy Hook School before it is demolished such as 2 dual fuel power flame burners, an 80-gallon hot water heater, an 8-KVA generator and auto transfer switch, a fire panel, three cafeteria refrigerator/freezers and several Allerton control modules. We will also remove lighting fixtures and stainless steel sinks. We've discussed this with Bob Mitchell for timing on removal. We will also contract for asbestos removal after the referendum. We received a very generous donation regarding the removal of burners and the hot water heater. McKenney Mechanical volunteered to remove these at no cost and relocate them to our warehouse.

Mr. Vouros asked about the Smartboards.

Mr. Bienkowski said Mrs. Amodeo arranged for a company to remove them which will also be free of charge. This will occur before October 5. A rigger will remove the generator. It can wait until after the building begins to be taken down.

Dr. Reed said a significant number of Smartboards will go to the middle school.
Motion passes unanimously.

Special Funding for Security Cameras:

MOTION: Mr. Hart moved that the Board of Education request \$34,217 from the Special Revenue Fund – Undesignated Account, #1-133-11-000-5800-4014 for the purpose of providing additional video surveillance equipment and the associated labor needed to meet the additional security system requirements for Hawley, Head O'Meadow, Reed Intermediate and Newtown Middle Schools that fell outside the scope of work of the donated solution. In addition to this amount, \$9,074 of funding for this purpose will be provided by the Hawley Fund. Mr. Gaines seconded.

Mr. Bienkowski said this is coming from the Town's undesignated special revenue account. A grant reimbursed the fund.

Dr. Reed stated this came in as an unassigned contribution to be used by the school system. Others have been using money in the fund.

Motion passes unanimously.

Item 6 – Public Participation

Michelle Ku, 28 Platts Hill Road, was happy to see John Woodall working in the district. She was glad to hear Dr. Reed speaking about not just focusing on test scores.

MOTION: Mrs. Roche moved to into executive session to discuss the NASA contract and invited Dr. Reed and Mr. Bienkowski. Mr. Gaines seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 7 – Executive Session

Executive session began at 9:15 p.m.

Item 8 – Public Session

MOTION: Mr. Gaines moved to adjourn. Mr. Alexander seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 9 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Kathy Hamilton
Secretary