

**Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut**

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting on Tuesday, April 5, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. in the Board Room at 3 Primrose Street

W. Hart, Chair	J. Robinson
D. Leidlein, Vice Chair	L. Gejda
A. Buzzi, Secretary	R. Bienkowski
D. Nanavaty	12 Staff
L. Bittman	30 Public
R. Gaines	2 Press
K. Alexander	

Mr. Hart called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

Item 1 – Student Recognition

High School Senior to Live in Peru:

Justin Villamil considered the advantage of living abroad for a year as opposed to going to college right now. The organization he plans to work with helps orphans living on the streets and is short-staffed right now. They would like him to go June 1. He contacted Mr. Dumais directly who was very receptive. He thanked Mr. Dumais and the Board for allowing him to take advantage of this opportunity. Answering Ms. Bittman's question, this would be a gap year. He hopes to blog about his experiences.

Mr. Hart moved Item 4 – Head O' Meadow School Report so the students could leave early.

Barbara Gasparine introduced the school leadership team that meets monthly. They are a liaison with the school community team. Four children read their essays in a cardboard television box. The theme was character building, citizenship, caring, ecosystem, etc. Jenn Myers showed a video on a two day workshop. PLCs are focused on teachers sharing data. Mr. Hart asked what the Board could do and noted the positive feedback. A handout was distributed "2010-2011 MUTUAL COMMITMENTS & EXPECTATIONS – Barbara Gasparine." She gave the Board a progress update. Dr. Robinson complimented everyone's participation. This could not have been done without the cooperation of the staff.

Reed School Students Accepted at CECA Tech. Expo:

Sarah Strait, 6th grade teacher along with three students, explained what they had done for their entry into the Expo. Reed School was one of 29 invited to participate. Invitations had been sent to Board members.

Item 2 – Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mr. Alexander moved to approve a portion of the consent agenda which includes: the minutes from March 15th, additional spring volunteer coaches at the HS; the resignations of Danielle Harris at the High School and Judith Beers of the Middle Gate School.

MOTION: Mr. Nanavaty moved to amend and remove a staff item from the consent agenda. Mrs. Leidlein seconded the amended motion. Vote: 7 ayes

Item 3 – Public Participation – none

The Board discussed a request from a teacher who has exhausted her sick days. She would like to be able to receive the difference between her daily rate and substitute rate. The Board will take up this matter at the next Board meeting.

Mr. Hart moved Item 5 – Discussion and Possible Vote on Middle School Roof Plans

Bob Edwards of the Public Building and Site Commission and the architect of the project were present with updated plans. They distributed “COST ESTIMATE – NEWTOWN MIDDLE SCHOOL ROOF” They ran into other issues including aging air conditioners that might not be able to be removed and put back operational. Last week they reviewed documents with the Building Official, Health Official and Fire Marshal. They encountered difficulty with the drainage. When snow is removed it is not necessary to go down lower than six inches.

MOTION: Ms. Leidlein moved that the Board of Education certify that these final plans and project manual as prepared for bidding and dated March 31, 2011 and the professional costs estimate dated March 31, 2011 for the Newtown Middle School roof project have been reviewed and approved for this site on the dates shown above. Mr. Nanavaty seconded. The motion was unanimously approved

Item 4 – Reports

- Correspondence – Mr. Buzzi noted e-mails received since the last meeting
- Chair Report – Mr. Hart distributed Technology Plan requesting feedback. He visited the Middle School PTA last evening. There is a lot of emphasis on the China initiative. Travel paid by individuals. There has been a 10% increase in languages.
- Superintendent’s Report – Dr. Robinson stressed the importance of languages. She has a preliminary list of college acceptances. Awards to two High School and two Middle School students will be presented with letters. 290 early tickets were sold to “Race to Nowhere”. Mr. Nanavaty complimented the cast of “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat.”
- Facilities Committee – None
- Policy Committee – None

Item 5 – Old Business

Newtown High School Expansion Project Update:

Renovation is close to schedule. The greenhouse was approved. Morganti is shooting for the second week of May for the grand opening. Damage to the curb and other parts of the new addition caused by snow were discussed. The Town is working with Morganti to apportion responsibility and determine a remedy.

Item 6 – New Business

Student and Parent Substance Abuse Surveys:

The survey is presented to an anonymous sampling of students in grades 7 through 12. It will be sent out electronically via Survey Monkey to parents and processed

anonymously by an outside vendor. Mrs. Bittman asked if comparisons as the child gets older would be possible. The results would be interesting.

First Reading for Budget Transfer Policy 3-202:

The Board discussed budget procedures and line item transfers. Some issues concerning part-time people need to be discussed. At what time do people become eligible for benefits? What level of control does the Board need to have over staff? Ms. Leidlein expressed concern about transfers being dollar amounts as opposed to percentages. She asked to defer any decision to the Policy Committee. Mr. Hart gets a detailed report every month.

Item 7 – Executive Session

MOTION: Mr. Gaines moved to go into Executive Session to discuss Student Discipline. Seconded by Ms. Leidlein. Vote: 7 ayes
Approved Stipulated Agreement for student “B” as identified.

MOTION: Mr. Nanavaty moved to adjourn. Mrs. Bittman seconded. Vote: 7 ayes.

Item 8 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Andrew Buzzi, Jr.
Secretary