

TORRINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, December 12, 2012
7:00 pm

Torrington High School
Major Besse Drive

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Present: Mr. Brady, Mr. Cavagnero (arrived at 7:19pm), Mrs. Hoehne, Mr. Kissko, Mr. Merola, Mr. Nargi, Mr. Rovero, Mr. Thibault, Mr. Traub, Mrs. Batchelder, Mrs. Domanico, Mr. Joslyn, Mrs. Kloczko

Absent: Mrs. Cappabianca, Mayor Bingham, Austin Kelson, Kevin Finn, Rachael Kelly

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY SESSION

Public Participation

Mr. Traub read aloud the purpose of the School/Community Session. Then he related all emergency exit information.

There were no speakers.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mrs. Hoehne made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Thibault seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Brady made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from November 14, 2012. Mr. Rovero seconded the motion. The vote passed with one (1) abstention from Mr. Thibault.

INFORMATION SHARING AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

5A Student Representatives—School News

The student representatives were not present.

5B Superintendent Report

1. CAPT Recognition Letters

Mrs. Kloczko presented certificates to the students who received advanced scores on the CAPT test.

2. Education Connection—2011-2012 Programs and Services provided to TPS

Mrs. Kloczko presented the Board with a report of the programs and services that Education Connection provides to Torrington Public Schools.

3. Community Family Literacy Center

Mrs. Kloczko informed the Board of the Community Family Literacy Center and what it entails.

5C Energy Efficiency upgrade at Torrington Middle School

Mrs. Kloczko gave the Board a report of the energy upgrade to the Torrington Middle School.

5D Special Education Questions and Answers

Dr. Beth Robin presented the Board with some information related to previous questions regarding Special Education.

Mr. Traub asked if Dr. Robin knew the number of Special Education students ten (10) years ago.

5E Evaluation of Special Education Law Firm

Dr. Robin was given permission from the previous superintendent to use a specific attorney for special education legal issues. Superintendent Kloczko was also asked for permission to use the same attorney. This attorney knows the Torrington School District and gives the district the attention it needs. There are also ongoing cases that this attorney is involved in.

Mr. Cavagnero asked how the billing contracts for the attorneys are set up.

Mr. Nargi said he feels disturbed on a procedural level that the administration would bypass the Board and hire an attorney that was not voted on by the Board.

Mr. Thibault stated that he is pleased that the best interests of the students remains in the forefront but wanted to know what the Board-approved Attorneys Office has done to alleviate some of the concerns of the district regarding special education cases. He has concerns that the administration would go ahead and hire someone without informing the Board.

Mr. Merola stated that if the administration was dissatisfied with the performance of the Board-approved Attorneys Office, then it should have been brought to the Board's attention.

Mr. Rovero asked if the attorney hired by the administration has a lower rate. He also wanted to know how much of the annual fees are devoted to special education.

Mr. Traub said that it is nice to have history with a specific attorney but eventually you will have to change due to a number of circumstances. If the appointed attorney from the approved firm didn't meet the needs of the district then they should have looked at other attorneys within the approved firm and what they had to offer.

Mr. Cavagnero stated that it is important to remember that the members of the Board of Education change and they have to adhere to policies. Some kind of procedure needs to be in place for the administration to make exceptions.

Mr. Thibault said the administration should inform the board when they need to use outside attorneys. If an immediate situation arises then just sending out an email to the Board members informing them of the need for an outside attorney should be considered.

Mr. Merola expressed concerns regarding which way to move forward on this subject.

Mr. Traub stated that the Board needs to come up with a way for the administration to go outside the directive of the Board.

Mr. Joslyn read aloud a policy regarding this subject.

Mrs. Kloczko stated that from now on all cases that the outside attorney has been involved in will stay with the outside attorney and any new cases will be brought to the Board- approved Attorneys Office.

Mr. Traub said he will ask the Approved Attorneys Office to have a meeting with some of the administrators and Board members to discuss the appointment of attorneys and costs.

5F Library and Textbooks

Mrs. Batchelder presented to the Board an explanation of the expenses by school of library and textbooks.

Mr. Nargi asked if the administration is doing their work regarding books and curriculum based on events of this school year or upcoming years. He also asked if the common core standards are remedial in nature, are they bringing up the lower scoring students and do the standards have a positive effect on the higher scoring students.

Mr. Kissko asked if classic novels, such as Dickens, Twain, and Shakespeare are part of the common core standards. He also asked if any private schools are adopting these common core standards voluntarily.

Mr. Cavagnero asked if at the next meeting the administration could report back to the Board why private schools are not adopting the common core standards if they are really the best way to educate students.

5G THS Attendance and Discipline

Mrs. Kloczko reported to the Board the attendance and instances that required disciplinary action.

Mrs. Domanico announced to the Board a correction to the chart for September through November, 2011 THS, the column marked “displays of affection” should read “tardiness”.

Mr. Nargi asked if the number of “displays of affection” is not being reported or not happening enough to make this list. He also asked what constitutes a “display of affection”.

5H Expenses Associated with Mediated Settlement with TEA

Mr. Joslyn presented the Board with a report of the expenses.

Mr. Nargi asked if these costs were average.

5I First Read—Policy for Armed Services Vocational Battery Test, Option #8

Mrs. Hoehne informed the Board that they were asked to amend this policy to reflect what is already in practice.

5J First Read—New policy Management Plan for Students with Food Allergies and/or Glycogen Storage Disease

Mrs. Hoehne presented the Board with this new policy to be reviewed.

Mr. Joslyn stated that it is required by law to have a policy regarding this issue.

5K Board of Education Goals

Mr. Traub presented the Board with the Board of Education goals.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:14pm Mr. Thibault made a motion to enter into Executive Session to review the tentative agreement between the BOE and Administrators. Mr. Rovero seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Mr. Joslyn, Mrs. Batchelder, and Mrs. Kloczko were invited into the Executive Session.

The vote to end Executive Session was not recorded.

ACTION ITEMS

7A Approval of October 1, 2012 Enrollment Report

Mr. Thibault made a motion to approve the October 1, 2012 Enrollment Report. Mr. Rovero seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

7B BOE Bylaws Update

Mrs. Hoehne updated the Board on the wording changes to the bylaws. Mr. Brady made a motion to approve the changes to the bylaws. Mr. Rovero seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

7C Tentative Agreement between the BOE and TPS Administration

Mr. Cavagnero made a motion to approve the tentative agreement between the BOE and TPS Administrators. Mr. Kissko seconded the motion. The vote passed with one (1) opposed, Mr. Nargi.

Mr. Nargi stated that although the negotiation team and the administration both did an excellent job he would not vote for a salary increase when the town of Torrington's economic base is depreciating.

7D Approval of 2013-2014 BOE Five year Capital Plan

Mr. Rovero made a motion to approve the Capital Plan. Mr. Thibault seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Mr. Rovero stated that the focus is on the first year of this plan.

Mr. Cavagnero asked if there was money set aside already.

Mr. Traub explained that they are required to submit a five year capital plan. The first year of this plan is what will mainly be focused on.

7E Approval of Forbes Elementary School Re-Roofing Project

Mr. Thibault made a motion to approve the re-roofing project. Mr. Rovero seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Mr. Traub explained the state has changed requirements for reimbursements.

Mr. Cavagnero asked what the dollar amount was.

7F Approval for Superintendent to request City Council funds for Forbes Elementary School Re-Roofing Project

Mr. Rovero made a motion to approve the Superintendent asking the City Council for the funds for Forbes School Re-Roofing Project. Mr. Thibault seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Mr. Cavagnero asked if the Board of Finance would receive the request.

7G Approval for Superintendent to establish a Building Committee for Forbes Elementary School Re-Roofing Project

Mrs. Hoehne made a motion to approve the establishment of a Building Committee for Forbes Re-Roofing Project. Mr. Rovero seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

7H Approval for Superintendent to submit Financial Reimbursement Forms for Forbes Elementary School Re-Roofing Project to the State of Connecticut

Mr. Rovero made a motion to approve submitting the Financial Reimbursement Form. Mrs. Hoehne seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

7I Financial Statement

Mr. Brady made a motion to approve the financial statement. Mrs. Hoehne seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Mr. Nargi asked why there were two (2) different insurance companies. He also asked if the rates were discussed when they switched insurance companies.

7J Consent Agenda

Mrs. Hoehne made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Brady seconded the motion. The vote passed with one (1) opposed, Mr. Rovero.

Mr. Nargi asked what happens to the people if the Board does not approve the Consent Agenda.

Mr. Traub explained that if any Board member had an objection to the Consent Agenda, he/she would have to voice their objection. Then the Board would have to go into Executive Session to discuss whichever individual was being objected to. He then explained that the Superintendent can hire that person, but the Board evaluates the Superintendent. He said he would look into whether a Board member could actually block a person from being hired.

Mr. Rovero clarified that one (1) objection would essentially hold up the entire Consent Agenda.

Mr. Cavagnero stated that in the past if a Board member had an objection, they would make a motion to modify the Consent Agenda and add an Executive Session to discuss the particular part of the Consent Agenda to be modified.

7K Approval of THS Oversight Panel

Mr. Kissko handed out information regarding the Oversight Panel.

Mrs. Hoehne made a motion to approve the THS Oversight Panel. Mr. Thibault seconded the motion. The vote passed with one (1) opposed, Mr. Nargi.

Mr. Nargi stated he would not vote for this Oversight Panel because of the time parameters. He said the Superintendent is responsible for the district and Board members should communicate their concerns for all schools to the Superintendent in a timely manner. They should not wait a year and a half to communicate any problems with THS.

Mr. Cavagnero said that the Board of Education's emphasis should be on the number one goal. He asked Mr. Kissko if this would be a fact gathering committee. He then said he would vote in favor because he felt this committee is in line with BOE goal number one. He also stated that the Board cannot expect the Superintendent and her staff to solve problems that are so broad.

Mr. Kissko stated that this committee is in support of the Board of Education's goal number one.

Mr. Traub explained the time frame is based on the budget cycle.

Mrs. Hoehne clarified that this committee is not only looking for problems but they are looking at what is right and wrong within THS.

Mr. Thibault asked if Central Office and the school principal will be cooperating with the committee.

Mr. Kissko stated that he expects all persons involved with the school to be very cooperative.

Mrs. Kloczko said it is a good way to look at education reform.

COMMENTS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Mr. Traub announced there will be a special meeting for the Approval of Educational Specifications for Forbes Elementary School Re-Roofing Project on January 30, 2012 at 5:15pm at Central Office.

Mr. Kissko mentioned an article he had read related to the legislators saying they don't have enough money to fund the schools.

Mr. Cavagnero spoke about the possible abuse of sick days by staff. He said this has been a big problem for a long time. He gave credit to the Personnel Committee for bringing it up. He wants this to be an item on the next meeting agenda because this abuse sends a signal that expectations are soft.

He later said that the state paradigms have changed because their information has shown that several schools are failing. Common Core Standards are the state's way of showing that not as many schools are failing and they don't have to spend a ton of money. He said if the Torrington Board of Education wants to improve we are going to have to think for ourselves and come up with our own goals and how to implement them.

Mr. Nargi asked if they were going to have a more comprehensive look at published test scores from the CMT's. He is concerned that the articles are not favorable to the Torrington School District. He would like something to be able to measure the district with.

Mrs. Kloczko said they had already shared that information in a previous meeting and Mrs. Domanico said the Power Point presentation is on their website. Mrs. Domanico also said the CMT's give all the same information that they already collect.

Mr. Traub read a comment from Mrs. Cappabianca. She stated that she has been receiving several questions regarding the Education Connection lunch program. Some elementary schools are running out of food choices by the last lunch shift and not all students are able to have the same choices. She also said that the same portions are being given to a 30 pound, 2nd grader and a 100 pound 5th grader.

Mr. Traub asked about an RFP for IT that was passed in July of 2012.

Mr. Thibault said they are in the process of redoing the original RFP; the scope of the contract will shift. There will be more information to come.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- 9.1** Personnel Committee: November 7, 2012
- 9.2** Special School Improvement Committee: November 8, 2012
- 9.3** Budget Committee: November 14, 2012
- 9.4** Policy Committee: October 24, 2012
- 9.5** Grievance Committee: No Report
- 9.6** Education Connection Update

ITEMS FOR UPCOMMING AGENDA

- Financial Statement
- Committee Reports
- Options of Education for Secondary Students (TMS/THS)
- Capital Projects—Referendums
- Solar Projects
- Sick Days

FUTURE MEETINGS

- 11.1** Personnel Committee Meeting: Date to Follow
- 11.2** Budget Committee Meeting: January 9, 2013
- 11.3** Regular BOE Meeting: January 16, 2013

11.4 School Improvement Committee Meeting: January 2, 2013

11.5 Policy Committee Meeting: January 2, 2013

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Thibault made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Brady seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.