

**TORRINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
Wednesday March 27, 2013**

**Torrington High School Media Center
Major Besse Drive**

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:04pm.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Mr. Brady, Mrs. Cappabianca, Mr. Cavagnero, Mrs. Hoehne, Mr. Kissko, Mr. Merola, Mr. Nargi, Mr. Rovero, Mr. Thibault, Mr. Traub, Mrs. Batchelder, Mrs. Domanico, Mr. Joslyn, Mrs. Kloczko, Dr. Beth Robin

Absent: Mayor Bingham, Austin Kelson, Kevin Finn, Rachael Kelly

Mrs. Cappabianca wanted to amend the agenda to add a Community Session.

Mr. Kissko said he would vote against that because a Community Session could easily have been added before hand and if people knew about it they would have shown up.

Mr. Joslyn made a point of order stating that a special meeting agenda could not be amended.

VARIOUS DEPARTMENT PROPOSALS

3.1 The Director of Athletics, Michael McKenna, presented.

Mr. Kissko had a question regarding uniforms and regulations.

Mr. Cavagnero asked Mr. McKenna what the role of sports is in Torrington, why do we need to spend so much money on it, and what are the benefits to the community.

Mr. Nargi asked who pays for equipment. He also asked if pay to play funds pertain to equipment. He then asked about having an ambulance available during football games and police presence. Mr. Nargi had questions regarding transportation costs and having more competitive rental rates for the swimming teams practice pools.

Mrs. Hoehne asked if there was enough competition for JV and freshman sports within or out of the NVL. She also asked if any students have left a sport because of not having enough games per season.

Mr. Merola asked if there was any way to have the EMT program students attend the games to be on scene while awaiting the arrival of the ambulance if need be.

Mr. Brady asked what the point of having freshman sports is when the community provides club sports.

Mr. Cavagnero asked to discuss the YMCA contract for the swimming teams. He said the YMCA's mission is only about the wins and does not reflect the mission statement of the district.

Mrs. Cappabianca asked about the Booster Club and parent volunteers. She also asked what the role of the Athletic Director was regarding the Booster Club. She then asked what percentage of student athletes were on the free or reduced lunch program.

3.2

Dr. Beth Robin presented about Special Education.

Mr. Traub made a clarification as to the number of staff involved in Special Education.

Mr. Rovero had a question about the number of Special Education students.

Mr. Kissko asked what a Wilson instructor was. He also asked what Special Education expenditures are mandated.

Mr. Merola asked about 504 legislation.

Mr. Nargi asked what services early childhood entailed. He also wanted to know the projected number of special education students for the 2013-2014 school year. Mr. Nargi wanted to know the bottom line number for the Special Education budget. He asked Dr. Robin if she had any recommendations for cuts. He stated that Dr. Robin has done a good job in keeping costs down. He asked for the breakdown of the revenue stream.

Mrs. Batchelder made a clarification on the handouts the Board members received.

Mr. Thibault had a question about IEPs (Individual Educational Programming).

Mr. Cavagnero asked about a per pupil cost. He asked if Special Education really works, not just what Torrington is doing, but overall, is there some kind of evaluation.

Mr. Traub asked for a total cost for Special Education.

Mr. Kissko stated that Dr. Robin is doing a good job keeping kids in the district. He asked if the High School special education students' needs are being met by the staff which is presently there.

Mrs. Kloczko stated that Dr. Robin has created a three year projection of programs that, if started, would keep more students in-district and save more money.

Mr. Cavagnero asked if, some point in the future, the Board could sit down with the press and explain how the Board needs to spend money to save more money in the future.

Mr. Rovero had questions about a single administrator being enough to oversee the whole Special Education program.

Mr. Thibault asked about the clerical staff for the Special Education department.

Mrs. Hoehne asked for a breakdown of the Special Education administrators.

Mr. Nargi had a question regarding the position of a High School psychologist.

APPROVAL OF SUPERINTENDENT'S 2013-2014 PROPOSED BUDGET

Mr. Thibault made a motion to accept the Superintendent's 2013-2014 Proposed Budget. Mrs. Hoehne seconded the motion.

Mr. Traub spoke about growing as a school district, mandated school choice, per pupil costs, and making additions to save money.

Mrs. Cappabianca would like to begin the budget process in the summer for the future so the Board can absorb all the necessary information.

Mr. Cavagnero spoke about digital media and making cuts to create space for more updated and relevant courses for the students' future.

Implemented recommended safety measures and personnel were discussed.

Capital Improvements were discussed.

Mr. Nargi spoke about cutting courses and some positions. He also stated his approval of moving the Migeon Avenue offices to City Hall.

Mr. Thibault stated he would like to send the budget forward to the Board of Finance, as is, and tell them that the Board cannot balance the city's budget.

Mr. Kissko said he would be opposed to any cuts in the High School. The High School cannot be understaffed.

Mr. Brady felt the Board needs to focus more on the elementary schools.

Mr. Merola wanted to save teachers and programs ahead of the safety measures.

Mr. Rovero said he did not want any losses at the High School. He agreed that eliminating safety measures would be better than eliminating teaching positions or programs.

Mrs. Hoehne said she wanted the safety measures cut, and did not want anything eliminated at the High School.

Mrs. Cappabianca said she would not support any cuts to the High School. She also felt she was not comfortable voting on this tonight, she needed to go through the information.

Mr. Traub related information regarding transportation and ecological bussing.

Cuts from the Athletic budget were discussed.

Early retirement was discussed.

Mr. Traub explained what the Mayor had asked of the Board regarding the budget. He also reminded the Board of a state statute saying the Board members are personally responsible for the budget.

Presenting the budget to the Board of Finance was discussed.

Health insurance and transportation costs/savings were discussed.

Bus company contracts were discussed.

Pre-Kindergarten and pre-school were discussed. Out-of-district pre-school was discussed.

Contractual increases for teachers were discussed.

Tuition totals and legislation were discussed.

Mr. Cavagnero said Torrington needs to have some magnet programs. They need something to attract students and keep them from going out-of-district.

Mr. Nargi asked about eliminating programs that are partially funded by grants.

Grants were discussed.

Mrs. Batchelder passed out reports on district wide employees and Migeon Ave.

The IT Department was discussed.

Administrative secretaries were discussed.

Mr. Nargi asked about applying an insurance surplus to other areas of the budget that need to be funded. He asked about the Board and the city being insured together.

Mr. Traub spoke about SEC regulations and requirements.

The insurance fund and health insurance was discussed.

Mr. Cavagnero asked some questions from parents regarding busses, supplies, and the number of secretaries at Migeon Ave.

Mrs. Hoehne asked to see the stipends.

School closings were discussed.

Mr. Nargi wanted to know what the bare minimum costs, within the law, would be to educate the children.

Mr. Cavagnero asked for the reasons why the students in the past five (5) years go out-of-district.

Mr. Brady made a motion to table this discussion until the next Board meeting on April 3, 2013. Mr. Merola seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

COMMENTS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Mrs. Cappabianca asked for a total number of 504 students who are not in Special Education.

Mrs. Hoehne asked about having extra paraprofessionals in the classrooms with several 504 students. She also wanted to know how many students are receiving crisis intervention services. Response to intervention teams was discussed.

Mr. Nargi said he has repeatedly heard that the Board has to spend money to save money. He voiced concerns about a higher tax burden on the property owners of Torrington. He said a higher tax burden will cause local businesses to leave and the middle class property owners will follow. The Board has to balance good education with a tax burden the property owners can handle.

Mr. Thibault said the ten (10) Board members carry some weight when presenting the budget to the Board of Finance. Having a room full of spectators carries a lot of weight when presenting to the Board of Finance.

Mr. Cavagnero stated that he agrees with Mr. Nargi. He also said the High School Administration, Athletic Director, and Superintendent need to prove the value of the sports program to the town; not just wins, but character building for students and bringing pride to the town.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:59pm an un-named Board member made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Hoehne seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.