



**TORRINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
BOARD OF EDUCATION RETREAT-Part I  
Monday, July 18, 2016  
355 Migeon Ave.**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 5:06 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Fiona Cappabianca, Chair; Joanne Brogis; Ellen Hoehne; Bill Knight; Jim Lamoin; Armand Maniccia; Jessica Richardson; Daniel Thibault; Kenneth P. Traub; Peter Vergaro

Administration: Joseph L. Campolieta, Director of Human Services; Jerry Domanico, Director of Business Services; Susan M. Lubomski, Assistant Superintendent; Lynda T. Reitman, Interim Superintendent

**Absent:** Mayor Carbone

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION- Superintendent Search Committee**

The Chair made a motion to move into executive session at 5:07 p.m. Mr. Vergao seconded the motion. All in favor.

The Chair called the meeting back into open session at 5:29 p.m.

**BOARD GOALS**

Owned by the Board, set to improve process and procedures, and are evaluated in conjunction with the Board self-evaluation.

The Chair stated that we have not been able to accomplish our goals for many reasons. We are missing the boat at looking at the big picture because we are so tangled in the day to day operation.

Mr. Lamoin stated instead of having multiple goals why not have one or two goals so that they are attainable.

Mr. Traub shared that each Board goal was geared towards a subcommittee. If you gear your goals towards what you want your year to look like you can accomplish them.

The Chair stated that it's been a learning curve for all of us, if the work isn't getting done, we jump in and do it but that's not a good long term plan.

Our lawyer outlined what the Board should be doing and provided a list of what the responsibilities should look like.

The Chair questioned “do we think our 2016-2017 goals are attainable”.

Mr. Vergaro stated he would like to create a new system of revenues to bring money into the district for next year. He also stated he would like to change the atmosphere so it doesn't feel like it's the Board vs. the City.

Dr. Brogis stated she would like to see a five year plan.

Mr. Knight shared that the two budget cycles he's been a part of have been excruciating and it seems like it's difficult to get the numbers that they need to put together the budget.

Ms. Richardson shared that we don't know what's mandated and what's not so if that information was provided it would make the budget a little easier on us. For this coming year, she believes we should look at the re-districting and hiring a permanent Superintendent. She stated maybe the subcommittees should set goals for themselves.

Mr. Thibault stated that he feels we need to focus on re-districting and figuring out if we need to close a school. It takes a year to plan and execute closing a school which means we would have to start right now. Also, we have to go for our Superintendent.

Mr. Lamoin stated his first priority is getting a Superintendent. Once we have that, if we are going to start re-districting we need to do that, it will affect the budget at the same time.

Mr. Maniccia stated he feels a lot of this will be taken care of if we develop a five year plan.

Mr. Traub stated that certain things are inherent such as finding a Superintendent, that's not a goal, that's a reality. If we really want to improve the school system, we have to build a plan to live within what we have. The five year strategic plan has to be one of our top priorities. We also have to promote our schools especially TMS and THS.

Ms. Hoehne believes we do need to focus on a Superintendent but agrees with Mr. Traub that it isn't a goal. She believes that communication is a huge thing. There's so much negativity out there that we have to do a better job at communicating what's good. In our meetings, conduct ourselves in a more positive light.

Mr. Traub stated that they used to always recognize someone or share something positive that is going on in the schools at the beginning of every Board meeting.

## **DISTRICT GOALS**

Everyone owns the District Goals, the Administration is responsible for their completion, the Board supplies the resources necessary for their attainment.

Mr. Traub stated there is a three year strategic plan the Superintendent is supposed to submit to the State.

The Chair stated she doesn't know how to develop any of these things without a permanent leader. She feels like the District's five year strategic plan needs to be done with administration and staff from the buildings.

Ms. Hoehne stated we need to do a better job communicating, "these are our contractual obligations."

The Chair stated that other than the Budget, the Superintendent and the employee/student moral are our biggest issues.

### **Board, Administration and Employee Morale**

The Chair shared that she spoke with 43 different people throughout the buildings, teachers, paras, parents, etc about the morale in schools. She shared that the morale starts from those at the top and trickles down. The main comment was that they felt demeaned at meetings especially in how absences were discussed.

Ms. Hoehne shared that there was no explanation to the teachers who don't go to the meetings why we were looking at the absences.

The Chair stated that it isn't our job to try to fix those employee absences. If there is an issue with absences, we need to tell administration to look at it.

Mr. Traub stated what could bridge a lot of this is that when we did TEA negotiations, they wanted representation on the committees. However, the representatives have yet to come to a meeting.

### **Importance and Benefits of Board Evaluation**

1. Provides an Opportunity for Board members to discuss the governance role of the Board.
2. Allows the Board to identify strengths and challenges regarding its leadership role in the district.
3. Provides valuable information to be utilized in developing Board of Education and District goals.
4. Helps the Board clarify its mission and set board goals.
5. Increases Effectiveness of Board Meetings.

The Chair stated that she thinks it has to be a mandatory item that goes into the calendar and gets done.

### **Superintendent Evaluation**

The Chair stated that the Board can't evaluate the Superintendent unless it evaluates itself.

### **Committee Chairs Role and Ideas for Maximizing Committee Contributions**

The Board discussed the process of how agendas are created and the timeline of how things need to happen.

The Chair stated that the subcommittees should know a month before of what is on the upcoming agendas.

Mr. Vergaro made a motion to extend the meeting an hour. Dr. Brogis seconded the motion. All in favor.

### **Formalized Organizational Procedures for Board of Education**

The Chair stated that the process is that the Superintendent should be delegating the work. The subcommittees should know a month before of what will be discussed next month and send it to the Chair and she will forward it to the Superintendent.

Mr. Vergaro stated he would like to know how many hits the school calendar gets so that maybe we can offer advertising and a banner on the page for revenue.

Ms. Richardson shared that we don't have a person that can put a banner on the website because we don't have a webmaster.

Ms. Hoehne stated that we have to have a policy in place before we can do any advertising like that.

The Chair stated before the next meeting the Board needs to put a lot of thought into where it's going. We need to make the goals more tangible.

The Chair stated she would like to create a procedural calendar showing which items need to be accomplished in which month.

### **COMMENTS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Ms. Hoehne made a motion to extend the meeting five minutes. Dr. Brogis seconded the motion. All in favor.

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for the 25<sup>th</sup>. 5:30 p.m.

Mr. Vergaro shared what he got out of tonight's meeting.

Dr. Brogis asked if the next meeting could be recorded since she cannot attend.

Ms. Richardson stated she felt that the meeting was really good.

Mr. Lamoin, Mr. Maniccia and Ms. Hoehne also agreed

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Knight made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Hoehne seconded. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:18 p.m.