



**TORRINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING
Wednesday, April 27, 2016
THS Media Center- 50 Major Besse Drive**

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Fiona Cappabianca, Chair; Ellen Hoehne; Bill Knight; Jim Lamoin;
Armand Maniccia; Jessica Richardson; Kenneth P. Traub

Administration: Dave Bascetta, Director of Facilities; Jerry Domanico,
Director of Business Services; Susan M. Lubomski, Assistant
Superintendent; Lynda T. Reitman, Interim Superintendent

Absent: Joanne Brogis; Daniel Thibault; Peter Vergaro; Mayor Carbone

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY SESSION

The Chair outlined the purpose and rules of the School/Community Session.

There were two (2) speakers who discussed their budget concerns.

INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT DISCUSSION

The Chair stated she spoke to the State and they have not granted our appeal to extend the Interim Superintendent for another year. This is in no way based on Ms. Reitman's performance rather than a statute that is put in place. Legal counsel suggests to look for a retired Superintendent from New York or Massachusetts living in Connecticut because they don't apply to the 45% rule (only being able to work part-time).

All Board Members agreed that the position needs to be posted as soon as possible.

The Chair stated she will send everyone a copy of what gets posted.

DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED BUDGET

The Chair stated that to get down to a zero we are looking at 4 million dollars from what we already cut. The issue is, ultimately it's not going to be our choice and we don't want to be unprepared. They have an obligation as a Board to show what it is going to do to the school system, if these cuts have to be made.

Ms. Reitman stated they looked at the potential of closing a school. Her concern is that to close a school and have it work well, you need 18 months to plan. Mr. Bascetta is looking

at what if it's East School that closes, do we do a general redistricting. She stated they are looking at a savings of a million dollars, if it's done right, with no leadership in place, that's huge. Half day kindergarten \$100,000 savings. Full day kindergarten is going to be mandatory not too far down the road. The only place you are going to get significant savings is through people and programs and we don't have any more people or programs to cut. If we are stripping people, programs and resources, not sure how to educate the children. Not millions of dollars to be found in our budget if we are still planning on education 4100 children.

Decimate sports programs \$500,000 savings, still not millions.

We can not budget for something but doesn't mean the expense goes away. There is not 4 million dollars in the budget.

Mr. Traub stated if we look at closing Southwest, there was \$200,000 in there for bussing. 1.2 million savings there. If we take the literacy and numeracy and cut it to the coaches only, after unemployment, \$509,000 in title one leaves us at \$931,000 there. Cut kindergarten a half day, only 100,000 savings but we are going to need the rooms if we close an elementary school, frees up 9 rooms in the district. IT Vendor is now e-rate eligible so 80% of his e-rate services can be reimbursed.

Mr. Lamoin stated full day kindergarten is supposed to be mandated next year or the year.

Ms. Hoehne states she thinks we need to fight for what we have and not make any more cuts.

Mr. Domanico questioned why we are looking at 4 million. If it goes lower then 3.2, there is a penalty to the city. There are only three reasons (state statute) we can reduce the MBR we don't meet any of those reasons. Number of students (our population is increasing districts that don't have their own high school, if you close a school but essentially you are closing it because of enrollment (we would be doing it for fiscal reasons).

The Chair would like to see us look at cutting a Behaviorist or psychologist; very concerned about cutting the secretaries at the school for security reasons.

The Chair stated Pre-K is the only department that is not losing anything, would like to take another look at that so things are even across the board.

The option of moving 7th and 8th grade to the high school, 4, 5, and 6 at the middle school and then close two elementaries was discussed.

Mr. Bascetta stated if you are going to do something that traumatic in closing two schools, you may want to look at Torrington School and looking at a different model totally. Looking at a tier school such as kindergarten/1st, 2nd and 3rd in one school and so on might be the way to go.

Mr. Domanico said the more you change, the more planning you need.

The Chair questioned whether all the board members were interested in pursuing Southwest

All Board members were in agreement they wish to look into re-purposing Southwest School.

Half day kindergarten for \$100,000 savings- all board members were opposed except Mr. Traub.

Running the district with no supplies \$141,000 reduction in supplies- all opposed.

Look into THS athletics- all opposed, Ms. Richardson abstained.

Look into getting rid of all Literacy and Numeracy with exception of coaches- all in favor.

\$400,000 district implementing a transitional program- (savings of tuition but have to add back in costs for staff)- All board members in support of at least getting additional information on this.

Looking at if we need a behaviorist and psychologist in every building- all in favor

Looking to see if there are any efficiencies we can find in the Pre-K program as far as staffing goes- all in favor

Ms. Hoehne made a motion to extend the meeting 15 minutes. Mr. Lamoin seconded the motion. All in favor

Tiered school option- All opposed except Ms. Richardson and Mr. Traub would like additional information on this potential.

Community programs – do we want to do an analysis of those how much space is being used what they are, any costs to us. All in favor

E-rate initial posting due tomorrow-discussed. All in favor at looking into this.

Mr. Knight made a motion to extend the meeting ten (10) minutes. Ms. Hoehne seconded the motion. All in favor.

Does Board want to look at early retirement numbers for both teachers and administrators- All in favor.

Another meeting was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, May 10th Special BOE. Will reach out to city to have a meeting with them as well.

Mr. Knight made a motion to extend the meeting 5 minutes. Mr. Lamoin seconded the motion. All in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Knight made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Lamoin seconded the motion. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:27 p.m.