

**TORRINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
April 1, 2009**

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Pending Litigation

CALL TO ORDER - The meeting was called to order by Mr. Lyons at 7:10 p.m. Mr. Cavagnero arrived at 7:25 p.m. and took his chair.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

Present: Mr. Broverman, Mr. Cavagnero (arrived at 7:25 p.m.),
Miss Laus, Mr. Lyons, Mr. Mattiello, Mr. Nargi,
Mrs. Raymond, Prof. Royals, Mr. Rubino, Dr. Campbell,
Ms. Haynes

Absent: Mr. Oliver, Mayor Bingham, Miss Cavagnero,
Mr. Wright, Mr. Robinson

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Miss Laus moved and Mr. Rubino supported a motion to approve tonight's agenda. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Miss Laus moved and Mrs. Raymond supported a motion to approve the special Board meeting minutes of February 23, 2009, as amended. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

The minutes were amended by striking the arrival time for Mr. Cavagnero, and adding Mrs. Raymond to the yea vote on page 3.

Prof. Royals moved and Mr. Broverman supported a motion to approve the regular Board meeting minutes of March 18, 2009, as amended. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

The minutes were amended on page 5, line 2, to read the CJR swimming pool.

Prof. Royals moved and Mr. Mattiello supported a motion to approve the special Board meeting minutes of March 25, 2009. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous with the exception of Mr. Rubino who abstained.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Broverman moved and Miss Laus supported a motion to approve tonight's consent agenda. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

1. Certified Staff Resignations

George Smalley, Guidance-MS, resigned eff 6/30/09

Maureen S. Beach, Kindergarten-FB, deceased 3/14/09

Nicole Criss, Math-MS, resigned eff 3/23/09

2. Notice for Home Schooling: RUSTH09

DISCUSSION ITEMS

5.1 Update THS Principal Search – Mr. Joslyn's Memo

Mr. Broverman confirmed that he would attend the first round of interviews on May 4th which is scheduled for 7 p.m. at Migeon Avenue. Mr. Joslyn reported that there will also be a meeting on April 21st at 7 p.m. at the THS Library/Media Center for discussion regarding interview questions and for review of the leadership profile report.

5.2 Superintendent Search – Mr. Mattiello

Mr. Mattiello gave a brief presentation regarding the proposed transition plan and the superintendent search. He reported that the personnel committee feels that they will need contract help in order to do the superintendent search and that CAFE has estimated the cost to be \$14,000. The personnel committee has also decided that the superintendent search be a community driven process with a membership of 2 Board members who would serve as chair, 2 THS parents, 1 administrator, a teacher, a staff member, a town official, 2 student members, and 4 at-large members. This should be assembled with their initial meeting convened by June 1st with the goal of an interim superintendent to begin on July 1st. The superintendent search would then be done from July 1st to January with a finalist identified by the search committee by November 1st, with a possible start date between November 15th and January 1st.

Board members asked questions and had discussion about the membership of the search committee, posting of an interim superintendent position, confidentiality issues in regards to applicants for the position, reducing the size of the search committee, more full Board involvement in the superintendent search process, and relationships between the Board and administrative contracted positions.

5.3 Board of Education Budget 2009-2010

Ms. Haynes reviewed budget cuts found which will total \$61,664. The first area would be in the health insurance account in the amount of \$48,514; the second area would be in the supply account in the amount of \$8,150; and the third area would be in the technology budget in the amount of \$5,000.

Board members asked questions and had discussion about the possible \$14,000 required for the superintendent search; the possible \$40,000 to \$60,000 for pending litigation with

a possible amount up to \$200,000 with resulting shortfalls to the substitute, tutor, salary, and/or out-of-district placement accounts; \$423,000 which was given back to the City at the end of the fiscal period and the chances of getting that back; ARA funds expected; other districts who are developing budgets without counting on the money; ability to make budget adjustments at a later date; restrictions on use of grant monies; adding 2 primary school teachers back into the budget; and parental outreach programs.

Mr. Broverman moved and Miss Laus supported a motion to add 3 primary school teachers back into the budget. The motion carried. Miss Laus, Mrs. Raymond, Mr. Rubino, Mr. Lyons, Mr. Cavagnero, Mr. Broverman, and Mr. Mattiello were in favor. Prof. Royals and Mr. Nargi were opposed.

Mr. Nargi moved and Prof. Royals supported a motion to have the administration cut 3 teachers within the school district where these teachers would not affect the core curriculum of language arts and math courses. The motion did not carry. Mr. Nargi and Prof. Royals were in favor. Everyone else was opposed.

Mr. Rubino moved and Mr. Lyons supported a motion to remove the Language Arts K-1 adoption for \$225,000 from the budget. The motion did not carry. Prof. Royals was in favor. Everyone else was opposed.

Miss Laus spoke in support of the K-1 program to improve scores and writing.

Mr. Cavagnero spoke regarding using the money for teachers instead of textbooks.

Mr. Nargi stated that he thinks that the Board has to decide whether they want to consistently pay more for teachers at the cost of never getting book updates or curriculum upgrades.

Dr. Campbell stated that the elementary principals stated at the budget hearing that they would like to have the teachers and that they thought they could get by another year with the textbooks they have.

Mr. Mattiello stated that he would like a strong sense of what the priorities are. For him academic achievement, particularly reflecting on the AYP goals, is exciting. He also thinks the Board needs to keep in mind how this budget fits within the City's budget and what they face.

Mr. Cavagnero stated that he feels they need to go to the City with a budget which says that this is the absolute minimum needed, even though ground is being lost every year. He feels there are big problems and that cutting staff will just make things more and more unmanageable.

Prof. Royals feels it is their responsibility to put forth a responsible budget, and she feels this can be done with a 2% increase in the budget still doing a good job of educating students.

Mr. Broverman feels that the literacy program is needed to bring scores up as the math adoption did a few years ago. He feels strongly fewer problems will be seen down the road if a better job is done at the primary level educating children in the basics of reading, writing, and numeracy.

Mr. Rubino stated that the major purpose of this discussion is to see where the Board feels the direction of the Torrington school system should go. They have got to shake the trees to see what they are willing to shake off.

Mr. Nargi moved and Mr. Lyons supported a motion to add the additional money which administration prepared to have the K-2 literacy program for \$217,660. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous with the exception of Prof. Royals who was opposed.

Ms. Haynes explained that this would be less because IDEA ARA funds would be used to subsidize; so a grade level and 3 teachers can be added with the price coming to \$217,660.

The Board and administration asked questions and had discussion about professional development.

Dr. Campbell explained that much of professional development is either driven by academic achievement expectations or sanctions or NEASC. She feels that this line item is lean at this time.

Mr. Cavagnero stated that he wanted a commitment from administration that the professional development monies would be spent on teachers to help them with their teaching skills as he had heard from several staff members at the middle school that this was not the case.

Mr. Nargi stated that it concerns him that Mr. Cavagnero publicly states that there are faculty members who are talking to him privately about the misappropriation of these funds.

Mr. Cavagnero stated that it was not misappropriation of funds. He would say poorly used funds.

Mr. Nargi stated he doesn't think it serves the Board or the administration for those type of discussions to take place.

Mr. Nargi also asked if it would be between professional development and his proposal to eliminate the expenditure for CAFE, which would be a more valid elimination?

Dr. Campbell responded that both are so important. Just as professional development is critically important for the teachers, CAFE has provided innumerable resources to administration and human resources for policy committee questions and advocacy.

Mr. Nargi moved and Mr. Mattiello supported a motion to eliminate \$20,000 from the professional development line item. The motion did not carry. Mr. Cavagnero and Mr. Mattiello were in favor. Everyone else was opposed.

Miss Laus asked Dr. Campbell if she had to eliminate this amount where she would do it, and Dr. Campbell stated she would have to give it more thought. She feels it would be an either/or situation.

Mr. Mattiello suggested more explanation from the administration on how these dollars are spent, so the Board gains a better understanding of this when criticisms are relayed.

Mr. Nargi commented that he would like to see a presentation on the swimming program.

Mr. Porch reported to the Board that the executive director of the YMCA has adjusted his fee downward for a savings of about \$5,500. As far as the CJR pool, at this point they are questioning whether they can get the money from the programs that are in existence there already. The total cost was estimated with personnel to be about \$120,000. If they don't get that cost, they will probably shut down for a year and then decide what to do with the pool. The CJR is a four lane pool as opposed to the YMCA being a six lane pool. The CJR also has very little deck space or room for seating. Neither pool has a diving board. There is concern that Torrington would get the 7:30 p.m. or 8:00 p.m. time slot at CJR. Busing to CJR would also be a huge expense.

Board members asked questions and had discussion about loss of any hours or time with the pool because of the \$5,500 deduction at the YMCA, how many swimmers were in the program (girls 38 to 40, boys around 30), CJR not being a feasible option, and potentially eliminating the swim team if more budget cuts are needed.

Mr. Nargi stated he would like to make a motion to only remove \$9,500 from that athletic program budget explaining that previously the budget committee recommendation was to remove \$15,000. This motion would reflect the savings of \$5,500 provided by the YMCA.

Prof. Royals stated that she thinks that \$5,500 is still needed. Three things were removed from the athletic budget including the football uniforms, the middle school intramural program, and the entire budgetary supply account which would be offset with gate receipts.

Ms. Haynes stated that it was \$9,400 in supplies and \$5,600 in middle school sports. She explained that the middle school intramurals could be totally eliminated because they have interscholastic sports.

Mr. Nargi asked if the girl's swim team in the fall could be combined with the boy's swim program in the winter to reduce that total expenditure by \$25,000.

Mr. Porch responded that he was the coach when the teams were together before, and he stated that the girls didn't get the recognition they deserved when they were on the boy's team. He also stated that he is not aware of any school of Torrington's size with one combined team.

Mr. Nargi moved and Mr. Mattiello supported a motion to put \$5,500 be put back into the athletic budget so that the reduction is no longer \$15,000, but \$9,500, and the \$5,500 be put into the middle school intramural programs. The motion carried. Mr. Mattiello, Mr. Nargi, Mr. Broverman, Mr. Cavagnero, Mr. Lyons, Mr. Rubino, Mrs. Raymond, and Miss Laus were in favor. Prof. Royals was opposed.

Prof. Royals stated that she disagrees because the budget has got to be cut. There is a \$412,916 athletic budget, and she doesn't think a cut of \$20,505 is in any way a drastic cut. She thinks intramural athletics is a luxury.

Mr. Cavagnero disagrees. He thinks that the money for intramural sports is money well spent. It gives a lot of kids something to do after school who don't have parents to go home to.

Mr. Nargi asked if the Board thought parents would be adverse to making a contribution of about \$150.00 to be on the swim team. Mr. Cavagnero stated he has never had that conversation with any of the parents.

Prof. Royals asked Mr. Porch why \$5,839 needs to be spent on a head football coach and \$19,000 needs to be spent on 5 assistant football coaches. Mr. Porch responded that 5 assistant football coaches is the average number for a football program. There are offensive, defensive, positional, and linebacker coaches.

Prof. Royals asked Mr. Porch if he could do without 1 coach to save the Board \$3,893. Mr. Porch stated that would depend on if he could get certified volunteer coaches. In this area of the state, these volunteer coaches are not readily available.

Mr. Broverman stated that at this point he thinks that these items will have to be revisited after the Board of Finance speaks.

Mr. Mattiello proposed putting \$11,000 in the budget for the superintendent search for next year which would include advertising and consultant fees.

Mr. Mattiello moved and Mr. Rubino supported a motion to add \$11,000 to the 2009-2010 budget for the purpose of a superintendent search. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

Mr. Nargi asked if they could do without the consultant fee. Mr. Mattiello stated they considered that in personnel committee and no one thought that was a feasible option.

Mr. Mattiello moved and Mr. Broverman supported adding a line item to the special ed budget for \$10,000 for the purpose of a special education program review. The motion carried. Mr. Mattiello, Mr. Nargi, Mr. Broverman, Mr. Cavagnero, Mr. Lyons, Mr. Rubino, Mrs. Raymond, and Miss Laus were in favor. Prof. Royals was opposed.

The Board and administration both commented that they would prefer to use ARA funds for this if able.

Mr. Cavagnero spoke in support of the motion. He thinks that it is a step in the right direction to control spiraling out-of-district costs.

Mr. Broverman stated that this will be money well spent even if they find out that everything is being done right because this has been a topic of discussion for 2 or 3 years.

Mr. Mattiello moved and Mr. Broverman supported a motion to reduce the substitute services line item by \$10,000. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

Dr. Campbell stated that she thinks that there are things that can be done over time to reduce this line item, but she does not want go into the year with this line item reduced. She doesn't want that line item to go into deficit.

Mr. Nargi stated that he believes he made motion at the budget committee meeting to reduce the substitute number by \$60,000.

Mr. Mattiello stated that it was \$66,000, but it failed.

Mr. Nargi stated that he projected that teachers are actually getting over \$2,000,000 in wages for services that they are not performing, plus another \$500,000 for the cost of a substitute.

Ms. Haynes stated that she looks at it as a contractual benefit which the teachers are entitled to.

Mr. Lyons stated he did not know of a person who would work for a company without any benefits for sick leave, etc.

Mr. Mattiello moved and Mr. Nargi supported a motion to eliminate 1 central office administrative position at \$110,000. The motion did not carry. Mr. Mattiello, Mr. Nargi, Mr. Cavagnero were in favor. Miss Laus, Mrs. Raymond, Mr. Rubino, Mr. Lyons, and Mr. Broverman were opposed. Prof. Royals abstained.

Miss Laus stated that she would need more information of how that would affect the central office.

Mr. Broverman stated that he looked online at some district websites that are approximately the same size as Torrington, and he found that Torrington is not overstaffed and in some respects they are understaffed. He found that high-performing districts have more leadership and supervision. He is reticent to make that kind of cut right now.

Mr. Nargi commented that on July 1st Torrington will be getting an interim superintendent and that means there will also be an assistant superintendent at work. He asked if Dr. Campbell's, Ms. Haynes', and/or Mr. Joslyn's positions could be merged.

Ms. Haynes said no. She stated her office does with 6 people what the City does with 7.5, and that doesn't even include facilities, transportation, or food service.

Dr. Campbell commented that administrators already have their hands full.

Mr. Cavagnero stated he was willing to take the risk of supporting the motion.

Mr. Broverman moved and Mr. Nargi supported a motion to continue the Board of Education regular meeting for ½ hour. The motion carried. Mr. Mattiello, Mr. Nargi, Mr. Broverman, Mr. Cavagnero, Mr. Lyons, Prof. Royals, and Mrs. Raymond. Mr. Rubino and Miss Laus were opposed.

Prof. Royals began Board discussion in regards to the cutback of the bus runs at the middle school for the late buses.

Prof. Royals moved and Mr. Broverman supported a motion to cut the middle school late bus on 1 day and leave 3 days in with an approximate savings of \$15,000. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous with the exception of Mr. Mattiello who was opposed.

Prof. Royals suggested reopening employee contracts for savings with the exception of the teachers who already did make concessions.

Mr. Mattiello asked administration for a summary of what would be required to reopen contracts.

Mr. Nargi moved and Prof. Royals supported a motion to cut 2 full-time teachers district wide. The motion did not carry. Mr. Nargi and Prof. Royals were in favor. Everyone else was opposed.

Mr. Mattiello moved and Prof. Royals supported a motion to cut \$300.00 from subscriptions. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY SESSION

Sally Pirla, 157 Revere St., spoke in regards to budget cuts which could be considered. She mentioned cell phones, Kelly services, an administrator instead of teachers, paper,

consultants, professional development, and the TAG program. She believes that all levels of grants should be applied for as well.

Fiona Cappabianca, 3 Stoneridge Drive, thanked the Board for adding the 3 teachers back into the elementary budget. She expressed concerns regarding reducing other staff. She strongly encouraged the Board to add the media specialists back into the budget.

Mr. Nargi moved and Mr. Broverman supported a motion to extend the Board meeting for another 15 minutes. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous with the exception of Miss Laus who was opposed.

Mindy Hobson, 125 New Litchfield, thanked the Board for adding the 3 teachers back and spoke in support of the K-2 literacy adoption.

Dawn Beardsley, 341 Park Ave., thanked the Board for adding the 3 teachers back, but expressed concerns over keeping the children first when addressing the budget.

ACTION ITEMS

7.1 Adopt Board of Education Budget for 2009-2010

Mr. Lyons moved and Mr. Rubino supported that the Board adopt the budget at a figure of \$64,192,057. The motion carried. Mr. Mattiello, Mr. Nargi, Mr. Broverman, Mr. Cavagnero, Mr. Lyons, Mr. Rubino, Mrs. Raymond, and Miss Laus were in favor. Prof. Royals was opposed.

7.2 Recommendation on Superintendent Search

Mr. Rubino moved and Miss Laus supported a motion to enter a contract in support of a superintendent search. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

COMMENTS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Prof. Royals reported that she attended the THS basketball game. She felt these athletes should be commended for their talent and their commitment.

Mr. Lyons reported that the CABE workshop will be on April 22nd.

Mr. Nargi asked the administration to prepare what the issues are pertaining to what the rights and obligations the BOE has with the BOF liaison. He would then like to make a motion at the next meeting that the Board hire an attorney, preferably Atty. McKeon, to write up a brief for the Board and pursue what this legal relationship is.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Lyons reported that the school improvement committee will meet on Monday.

ITEMS FOR UPCOMING AGENDA

Discussion items will be the report on the CTE needs assessment and the special education program review, and the summary on the workshop on getting concessions from bargaining units. Action items will include receiving the policy on controversial issues, approving the proposed school calendar, and approving budget transfers and the monthly financial report.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 p.m. All were in favor.