

**TORRINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
January 14, 2009**

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING – Administration Transition

CALL TO ORDER - The meeting was called to order by Mr. Cavagnero at 7:15 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

Present: Mr. Broverman, Mr. Cavagnero, Miss Laus, Mr. Lyons,
Mr. Mattiello, Mr. Nargi, Prof. Royals, Mr. Rubino,
Dr. Campbell, Ms. Haynes, Miss Cavagnero (left @
9:20 p.m.), Mr. Wright, Mr. Robinson

Absent: Mr. Oliver, Mrs. Raymond, Mayor Bingham

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY SESSION

Joe Ammirato, 79 Brass Mill Dam Rd., informed that the Board that he received a brochure from an organization who would be willing to perform an independent investigation of Torrington's special education programs in order to get a better handle on out-of-district costs. He will forward this information to the Board

Noel Croce, 155 Sycamore Dr., spoke to encourage the Board in setting the date for Dr. Susan O'Brien's hearing as soon as possible so the primary focus can return to educating the children of Torrington. She also stated she was not in support in settling with Dr. O'Brien.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Miss Laus moved and Mr. Rubino supported a motion to approve the regular Board meeting minutes of December 17, 2008. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

Mr. Rubino moved and Miss Laus supported a motion to approve the special Board meeting minutes of December 22, 2008. The motion carried. Mr. Mattiello, Mr. Broverman, Mr. Cavagnero, Prof. Royals, Mr. Rubino, Miss Laus were in favor. Mr. Lyons abstained and Mr. Nargi was opposed.

INFORMATION SHARING SESSION

Student BOE Representative Reports

Mr. Robinson spoke regarding Southwest School. The kindergarten classes will be attending “If You Give a Pig a Pancake” at the Warner Theatre on January 30th; Dr. Stephanie Fowler will present “Tar Wars”, which is program that highlights the dangers smoking on January 27th; and a family dance sponsored by the PTO will be held from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Friday, January 30th.

Mr. Wright spoke regarding Tarringford and TMS. At Tarringford, Secretary Carol Szmalc will be retiring after 24 ½ years. TMS has a sixth grade dance coming up on January 23rd and midterm exams are scheduled for the 7th and 8th graders on January 20th, 21st, and 22nd, weather permitting.

Miss Cavagnero spoke regarding THS. The Girl’s Basketball Team won against Holy Cross and remains undefeated 11-0. A THS Blood Drive will be held on Thursday, February 5th in the gym. Mid-term exams begin next Tuesday, January 20th, through Friday, January 23rd. The THS Chamber Choir will be going to Carnegie Hall in March and are accepting donations. The 8th grade orientation will be held January 20th at 7 p.m. in the gym, snow date January 29th.

Superintendent’s Report

Dr. Campbell stated that everything has moved along quite smoothly since the start of the second semester. She reported that Pat Richardson, IAL at THS, has been asked to join the State Committee to rewrite the social studies portion which is an honor, and also that Wayne Spletstoeszer, Director of Music at THS, has been named the Technology Institute for Music Educators National Teacher of the Year for 2009. She cautioned parents and students about the upcoming cold weather.

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. Coaching Appointments
2008-2009 Spring Sports Season
Gerry Carbone, Head Baseball-HS
Richard Dubois, Head Boys’ Track-HS
Alan Kittle, Asst. Boys’ Track-HS
Jada Mattiello, Head Girls’ Track-HS
Joseph Minutillo, Head Golf-HS
Mark Moulton, Head Boys’ Tennis-HS
Maryann Musselman, Head Softball-HS
John Nickles, Head Girls’ Tennis-HS
Tammy Ostroski, Asst. Softball-HS
Arthur Richardson, Asst. Baseball-HS
Patrick Richardson, Asst. Baseball-HS

Erika Fritch, Head Softball-MS
Brien Kiernan, Asst. Girls' Track-MS
David Lopardo, Head Girls' Track-MS
Eric Mahar, Head Baseball-MS
Andrew Marchand, Head Boys' Track-MS
Henry Marchand, Asst. Boys' Track-MS

2. Notification of Home Schooling: MULALY09

DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1 Discussion of Appointment of Special Board Counsel to Act as Hearing Officer and to Advise the Board with Regard to the Hearing Requested by Dr. O'Brien.

Atty. Vic Muschell explained that the Board will need counsel in regard to the hearing requested by Dr. O'Brien and he feels he may need to act more as a witness in the case. He suggested the Board hire a hearing officer to act as facilitator and Board counsel

Mr. Cavagnero informed the BOE that Dr. O'Brien, through her attorney, has requested a hearing which will be held either January 20th or 21st, and it is felt in fairness to everyone involved that it will be necessary to have a neutral party act as a facilitator for this hearing. Dr. O'Brien and her attorney will be representing her, the Board will present its evidence to Dr. O'Brien and her attorney, and there will need to be a neutral party who can facilitate this. The Board is well aware of the cost of attorney's fees and also of the cost of possible litigation down the road, but it is Mr. Cavagnero's and Atty. Muschell's opinion in the big picture here, that it is in the best interests of the Board and the City to provide such an officer to guarantee the best chance of allowing for and providing a very fair hearing.

Board members asked questions and discussed the number and type of meetings which will be involved; the role of the hearing officer; the need for people to be sworn in at the meeting; whether or not the meetings will be public; what actual input Board members will have in the process at this point; if the attorneys themselves could settle most of the process issues; the need for a stenographer and transcripts in case a person misses one of the hearing meetings; approximate cost in legal fees; if enough money is budgeted to cover the costs; and the cost savings involved in consolidating meetings.

Atty. Muschell likened the hearing to an expulsion hearing, and explained the hearing officer will perform similar duties such as keeping order, going over ground rules, ruling on evidence when there is an objection, and then later deliberating with the Board over what the evidence has been. The decision that the Board is going to make has to be made on the basis of the evidence presented at the hearing, and that is why it is important that the hearing be conducted properly. He also informed the Board that the Superintendent has asked that all the meetings be public, so at this point they will be public.

Ms. Haynes projected a possible \$60,000 in legal fees between now and the end of year which would bring the Board beyond almost double what their existing attorney fees are. She is currently working on the year-end projections system wide, and right now she anticipates breaking even on the budget, but that assumes that the City passes on the revenue anticipated from specific grants which are expected.

Atty. Muschell informed the Board that he has spoken to Atty. M. Jackson Weber regarding the hearing. He was the mediator during the TEA contract negotiations and Atty. Muschell thought he would be a good person to have because his job as a mediator requires him to have a neutral face, and Atty. Marty Weber has stated he would be willing to do this.

7.2 TAG Plan/APL Update – Mrs. Cheryl Kloczko

Mrs. Kloczko gave an update presentation regarding the 5-year plan for the TAG and APL programs.

Board members asked questions and had discussion about the magnet school concept being an interdistrict program; number of students participating; expansion of program into the high school; State funding for the arts magnet school program; discussions with Warner and other places in town regarding the concept; goals for the district regarding the programs; selection criteria and assessment pieces; addressing criticisms of the APL program; parent's concerns regarding better preparing middle schoolers for high school; steps being taken to facilitate a seamless transition to the 9th grade for the 8th graders; what the testing criteria suggests regarding present programming; use of the CMT in the selection of gifted students; skills of the teachers involved in the middle school programs; and the learning curve involved in regards to CMT scores.

7.3 Keeping Students in School (Upward Bound/Code of Conduct) – Mr. Harnett, Dr. Olsen

Mr. Harnett gave a presentation regarding Upward Bound, the new alternative program that has been put into place this year, and explained some of the changes made in the code of conduct at TMS. Dr. Olsen explained the updated discipline code being used at THS since October of 2008. Dr. Campbell explained the current ISS/OSS data for TMS and THS.

Board members asked questions and had discussion about the ISS/OSS data for the middle school and high school; improvements in students in the Upward Bound program; how the dropout rate is calculated and what it means; comparing Torrington's data to the State targets; funding of an Upward Bound type program at the high school; downward trend in the dropout rate at THS; translation of lessons learned at the middle school into the high school; effects of current Upward Bound program on future dropout rates at the high school; and the sharing successful interventions used at the middle school with the high school teachers as part of professional development.

7.4 CABE Services for Recruiting THS Principal – Mr. Joslyn

Mr. Joslyn gave a brief update regarding the timeline in the search for the THS principal, and the use of CABA services in this recruitment. The cost of the CABA services is estimated to be \$7500.00.

Board members asked questions and had discussion about the Superintendent's recommendation of the principal candidate to BOE; paid travel expenses for candidates; value of the CABA services; the background search process; concerns regarding the costs; possible negotiations regarding a lower price; the amount of time involved in the screening process; who the interview team will be composed of; possible ala carte list; and time elements regarding the recruitment process.

Mr. Nargi moved and Mr. Rubino supported a motion to extend the BOE meeting until 11:15 p.m. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

The Board asked Mr. Joslyn to come back next week with other pricing options with CABA or the possibility of the HR Department doing the process themselves.

ACTION ITEMS

8.1 Appointment of Special Board Counsel to Act as Hearing Officer and to Advise the Board with Regard to the Hearing Requested by Dr. O'Brien.

Mr. Nargi moved and Mr. Mattiello supported a motion to appoint Atty. Marty Weber as Special Board Counsel and Hearing Officer to advise the Board with regard to the hearing requested by Dr. O'Brien. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

8.2 Receive Proposed Revision to Policy No. 6040, entitled Student Dress Code

Mr. Broverman moved and Prof. Royals supported a motion to receive the proposed revision to Policy No. 6040, entitled Student Dress Code. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

Mr. Joslyn explained the changes in the policy and the rationale behind these changes.

8.3 Receive Proposed Revision to Board By-Laws

Mr. Broverman moved and Miss Laus supported a motion to receive a revision to the Board by-laws. The motion carried. Mr. Mattiello, Mr. Nargi, Mr. Broverman, Mr. Cavagnero, Mr. Lyons, Mr. Rubino, and Miss Laus were in favor. Prof. Royals abstained.

Mr. Broverman explained it was thought it would be a good idea to have a separate grievance committee to hear grievances who could rule for the total Board, but this will require a revision to the Board by-laws.

8.4 Receive Proposed Revisions to Policy No. 7010, entitled *Use of Public School Facilities*

Mr. Broverman moved and Miss Laus supported a motion to receive revisions to Policy No. 7010, entitled Use of Public School Facilities. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

Ms. Haynes explained that this proposes a utility fee which will apply to all groups regardless of their profit or not-for-profit status with an exemption for school-related groups including the PTO, booster clubs, school building committee, and alumni associations, and an exemption for not-for-profit groups who use the school immediately following school which would include groups like the boy scouts and girl scouts. It also creates an account for funds to pay the utility bills.

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY SESSION

Kathi Petersen, 445 Lorraine Lane, Torrington, CT, spoke regarding the APL program. Although she is in support of the program, she is not happy with the program at this time.

COMMENTS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Mr. Nargi requested that the administration look at getting an outside consultant to review the out placement and special ed program in the school district. One proposal would be to contact CREC.

Mr. Lyons encouraged Board members to attend the legislative breakfast coming up.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Lyons reported the school improvement committee is planning to meet tomorrow at 6:30 p.m. at Migeon Avenue.

ITEMS FOR UPCOMING AGENDA

Discussion items will include Attorneys Muschell, McKeon, and Rosenblatt facilitating the process hearing regarding Dr. O'Brien's contract and Mr. Joslyn coming back with the information regarding the principal search. Action items will include the approval of the policy revisions on the dress code, on the Board bylaws to establish the grievance committee, and on the use of public facilities. The budget committee will bring forward the budget transfers and the monthly financial report will be received.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 p.m. All were in favor.