

APPROVED MINUTES

HARBORFIELDS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT GREENLAWN, NEW YORK

Kind of Meeting	-	Special Meeting
Date of Meeting	-	February 26, 2008
Place of Meeting	-	OMS – Auditorium
Board Members Present	-	Mr. Mastroianni, Mrs. Boba, Dr. Chen, Mr. Giuliano, Mr. Schoer, Mr. Toles
Board Members Absent	-	Mr. Brennan
Others Present	-	Dr. Wilson, Ms. Todaro, Mr. Nimmo, Mr. Hartner, Mr. Lambert, Esq., Community Members

Mr. Mastroianni called the special meeting to order at 8:50 p.m. He then led those in attendance to the Pledge of Allegiance and instructed them where to exit the building in case of an emergency.

Mr. Mastroianni made the following statement to community members who were present at this meeting.

Please note that the Board of Education wanted to set this meeting up as soon as possible. Due to the schools being closed last week, we felt it best to wait for various members of our district, Board of Education, and community to return from vacation before holding this meeting.

We have convened this meeting tonight to take specific action, which we will do in a few minutes, and then encourage you to share your comments and/or questions with us.

Joining the Board and administration this evening is Mike Lambert, Esq. of Shaw, Perelson, May & Lambert, LLP. Mr. Lambert, and his firm, are serving as special counsel to the district and may provide assistance to us with regard to some of the questions that may be asked tonight.

Obviously, we are here to address the situation with our district's former attorney, Larry Reich and the Newsday articles that have been appearing concerning this. It is, admittedly, a difficult matter – one that the Board of Education has been dealing with for some time. As you know from reading our statement on the website, we have pursued resolutions or clarification of this issue starting just about three years ago.

As Board members, we can only say that this is a very complex issue; and as taxpaying residents, we can only express frustration that this has not been resolved in a more timely and satisfactory way.

On Sunday, February 24, 2008, the Board of Education held a Special Meeting which lasted approximately five hours. It was during that meeting that the Board of Education passed the following resolution:

Whereas, the Office of the State Comptroller has announced that it will be conducting an audit for Harborfields Central School District's practices in engaging consultants and employees for professional services; and

Whereas, the Board's and administration's desire to conduct a forensic audit regarding the employment of attorney Larry Reich since 1995;

Now therefore be it resolved, that the Board hereby directs its President and Superintendent of Schools to request the State Comptroller to conduct such forensic audit; and

Be it further resolved, that the Board of hereby waives its attorney client privileges with past and present attorneys employed and/or engaged by the District to facilitate said audit activities.

Mr. Mastroianni stated the Board wants a thorough and transparent investigation conducted. He continued that there will be controls and policies put in place to address the results of the forensic audit.

Mr. Lambert, Esq. then briefly explained the waiver of attorney-client privilege. He stated that privilege belongs to the Board of Education in case there are questions raised with respect to what advice was provided to the Board by its attorneys. By waiving attorney-client privilege, any former, current or future attorney does not have to go to the Board for consent in order to provide information to investigative authorities. This will enable full cooperation with respect to all of the pending investigations.

Request for Proposals (RFP) for legal services for general and labor counsel

Mr. Mastroianni stated that the district is not required to put out an RFP for legal counsel. He continued that one purpose for putting out an RFP is to seek counsel that is best able to serve our district. In addition, it shows our community that we are not obligated to any particular law firm. Several Board members made statements in support of an RFP.

It was the consensus of the Board of Education to put out a Request for Proposal for legal services for general and labor counsel.

At this time Mr. Mastroianni stated that Mr. Toles had a prior commitment, but would try to make the meeting this evening. He continued that Mr. Brennan has been dealing with some health issues and that we all wish him well on his road to recovery.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Several members of the community questioned the Board regarding the articles that appeared in Newsday regarding Larry Reich and the benefits he is receiving from several Long Island school districts including Harborfields. The Board as well as Dr. Wilson and Mike Lambert of Shaw, Perelson, May & Lambert responded to the questions asked by the community.

Mr. Toles arrived at 9:08 p.m.

At 10:55 p.m., the Board took a brief recess and reconvened the meeting at 11:20 p.m.

4.1 Approval to Extend the Scope of Services of Legal Firm

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Giuliano, seconded by Mrs. Boba, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board hereby appoints the firm of Shaw, Perelson, May & Lambert, LLP as special counsel to advise and represent the Board with regard to a teacher discipline matter, and in general and labor relations matters as directed, in writing, by the Board President or Board Vice President, at the hourly rate of \$180.00 in accordance with an engagement letter dated February 26, 2008.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Chen, seconded by Mr. Toles, and carried (6-0), the Board adjourned the special meeting of February 26, 2008 at 11:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Muller
District Clerk