

APPROVED MINUTES

HARBORFIELDS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT GREENLAWN, NEW YORK 11740

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| Kind of Meeting | - | Special Meeting |
| Date of Meeting | - | April 16, 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, Dr. Bennardo, Mrs. Kelly, Mr. Kelly, Community Members |

Mr. Mastroianni called the meeting to order at 7:52 p.m. He then led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and instructed those in attendance where to exit the building in case of an emergency. He also instructed them to turn off or silence cell phones and beepers during the meeting.

Mr. Mastroianni then updated the community on our Board President, Mr. Brennan, stating that Mr. Brennan appreciates everyone's concern and he is working on getting himself better. Mr. Mastroianni continued that we are all hoping that we will see him very soon.

BOARD RECOGNITION PROGRAM

At this time, the Board recognized the following students and staff.

Kristen Dauro: participated in the NYS Career Conference and placed third in New York State in the Sales Demonstration category

Samantha Smith: participated in the NYS Career Conference and placed third in NYS in the Retail Merchandising category

Timothy White: named New York State's Premier Scholar Athlete in swimming and diving

Sabrina Meehan: recognized by the High School of the Arts for dedication and commitment in helping students pursue their professional training in visual and performance arts

Joann Bocard, Geri Cornell, Dave Ferguson, Elisa McDonagh: supported the Harborfields Central School District's Outreach Program

Patricia Shatz, John Valente: coordinated and supported the Harborfields Central School District's Outreach Program

Mrs. Boba stepped out of the meeting at 8:15 p.m. and returned at 8:22 p.m.

2008-2009 Budget Discussions

Dr. Wilson stated that the Board had interest in keeping the tax rate below 4%. She continued that there is a 4.2% increase in salary contracts; 1.2% increase in benefits; .47% increase in pension/payroll taxes; .42% transportation increase and .26% increase in programs and enhancements which is a budget increase of 6.55%. There is \$70,000 in capital reserve reducing our fund balance to under the 2% level. Dr. Chen stated that she has grave concerns about us reducing our fund balance to under 2%. She continued that we have been lobbying the state to go from 2% to 3%. There is a reason for that. If the district goes below the 2%, we would be operating dangerously close to situations that could emerge, and we would not be able to deal with those situations. Dr. Chen further stated that "I would be remiss not to bring this to the Board's attention and I would definitely like to see our fund balance at 2%. Other districts are discussing the possibility of a mid-year cut." Dr. Wilson advised the Board that in order to get back to the 3% level, \$275,000 and \$384,000 cuts would give us the \$650,000 which is what is required to bring us back to the 3% level. Mr. Giuliano asked if the building principals were comfortable with the \$275,000 in cuts. Dr. Wilson responded that the physical education cut might have a few class sections that are quite large.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A resident stated that the number of registered kindergarten students is 233 at this time. Is it typical in the summer that the number is higher? Dr. Wilson responded that the district does not have firm numbers at this time. BOCES does those projections for the district and typically their projections are very accurate.

A resident thanked the Board of Education for examining full-day kindergarten and stated that the Board should move forward in a positive manner. This is one of the few districts that does not have full-day kindergarten. We have not heard from the assistant superintendent for curriculum or the principal of Washington Drive. By going to full-day kindergarten it would mean an increase of \$4.17 per month. Mr. Mastroianni stated that the district would not be entitled to additional grant monies if we had additional sections of kindergarten. This would mean a 6.55% budget to budget increase. We need to look at the totality. We need to curb spending any way we can. The tax for each household is significant.

A resident thanked the Board and stated that we need the budget to pass. Not all parents want full-day kindergarten for their children. She continued that contingency took away programs and clubs which the district has not recovered from.

A resident stated that the Universal Pre-Kindergarten program is phenomenal and continued that the more you invest in children ages 2-7 is the time children learn the most. The resident also noted that not everyone can afford day care.

A resident stated that last year we cut a 4th grade teacher. I think full-day kindergarten would be great but with 27-28 kids in a class that is a big concern. Dr. Wilson stated that 25-27 is the recommended class size for this district.

A resident stated that he is already paying \$12,000 a year in taxes and is willing to pay more for full-day kindergarten. It is a must if we want to continue to stay at the top.

A resident asked if we know what the neighboring districts are recommending for their districts regarding tax rate increases. Dr. Wilson stated that it ranges between 4% and 7%. What can community bear as an increase? We are all shell shocked from contingency.

A resident stated that the \$321,000 increase in state aid would be best for the district if put back in the budget rather than returning it to taxpayers.

A resident stated that he supported full-day kindergarten. Half day kindergarten is 2.5 hours per day. Why aren't we embracing a full-day kindergarten? Do not give back the additional state aid. Mr. Mastroianni responded that kindergarten is not even mandated yet. We could be dealing with a cut in state aid in the middle of the school year.

A resident stated that we should take into consideration our older students and older residents regarding taxes. I do not know of any student who went through Harborfields that did not do well because of half-day kindergarten.

A resident stated that it is obvious there is a failing economy and we need to be careful what we do at this time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Schoer, seconded by Mr. Toles, and carried (6-0), the Board moved to Executive Session at 9:35 p.m. for the purpose of discussing budgeted personnel matters.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Chen, seconded by Mr. Schoer, and carried (6-0), the Board returned to the special meeting at 9:50 p.m.

Mr. Mastroianni made the following statement: No one relishes a decision like this. It is my belief at this moment in time that full-day kindergarten is not the prudent thing to do based on a number of items. To bring a budget in line we would have to make cuts in programs and I am not comfortable with that. I believe that the cost over a period of time would have to be better analyzed. We may be opening up a very sore subject down the road based on this issue. This is not a decision I relish making. I would love to support all recommendations made by our administration.

Mr. Giuliano stated that he was in agreement with Mr. Mastroianni. He continued that he would like to see the existing programs rounded out.

Mr. Schoer also agreed. He stated that he would like to spend unlimited money but we don't have it to spend. If this budget does not pass the first time we need to reduce the budget by \$2.4 million if we go on contingency. This would devastate our programs. Our students do a terrific job even without full-day kindergarten. This is one of the top

performing districts in Suffolk County. We have to do what is best for the community as a whole.

Dr. Chen stated that it is difficult to add anything new to what has already been said. I find it very difficult to support full-day kindergarten under the circumstances. The community at large has come to expect high academic performance from our students. It has always been a challenge to put together a budget which includes high expectations with fiscal responsibility. This is a difficult position to be in, but I cannot support full-day kindergarten.

It was the consensus of the Board to finalize the budget without full-day kindergarten.

After further discussion, the Board adopted a \$68,653,824 budget with a tax rate increase of 3.91%.

FINANCE CONSENT AGENDA

Call for removal of resolutions from the FINANCE consent agenda

There were no items removed from the Finance consent agenda

Consent Agenda - Finance

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Giuliano, seconded by Dr. Chen, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the resolution in the area of finance on the agenda of the April 16, 2008 Board of Education meeting was approved by consent.

4.1 Proposed 2008-2009 Budget

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Giuliano, seconded by Dr. Chen, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education adopted the 2008-2009 school district budget in the amount of \$68,653,824 to be presented to the eligible voters of the Harborfields Central School District at the Annual Election and Budget Vote to be held on May 20, 2008.

HUMAN RESOURCES RESOLUTIONS

Call for removal of resolutions from the HUMAN RESOURCES consent agenda

There were no items removed from the Human Resources consent agenda.

Consent Agenda – Human Resources

Upon motion duly made by Mrs. Boba, seconded by Mr. Schoer, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, all resolutions in the area

of Human Resources on the agenda of the April 16, 2008 Board of Education meeting were approved by consent.

5.1 Extracompensation Appointment Schedule

Upon motion duly made by Mrs. Boba, seconded by Mr. Schoer, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the appointees specified on the Extracompensation Appointment Schedule attached to the official minutes of April 16, 2008 were approved.

5.2 Memorandum of Agreement between the Harborfields Paraprofessional Association (New York State United Teachers, AFL-CIO) and HCSD

Upon motion duly made by Mrs. Boba, seconded by Mr. Schoer, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the memorandum of agreement between Harborfields Central School District and the Harborfields Paraprofessional Association (New York State United Teachers, AFL-CIO) attached to the official minutes of April 16, 2008 was approved.

5.5 District Board of Education Members to Attend Conferences

Upon motion duly made by Mrs. Boba, seconded by Mr. Schoer, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following Board of Education members were authorized to attend a conference and be reimbursed for expenses in accordance with policy file 2521.

- Donald W. Mastroianni, Maggie Boba, Dr. Judith A. Chen, Nicholas P. Giuliano, Gary Schoer, and Joseph Toles to attend NYSSBA conference "The School Board's Role in the Superintendent Search" May 8, 2008, Courtyard Marriott, Ronkonkoma, New York
- Donald W. Mastroianni, Maggie Boba, Dr. Judith A. Chen, Nicholas P. Giuliano, Gary Schoer, Joseph Toles to attend the 2008 Joint BOCES Workshop, May 2-3, 2008, Holiday Inn, Albany, New York

INSTRUCTION CONSENT AGENDA

Call for removal of resolutions from the INSTRUCTION consent agenda

Mr. Mastroianni asked to table item 6.1.

6.1 Parent's Appeal of Student Suspension

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Chen, seconded by Mr. Giuliano and carried (6-0), this item was tabled to Executive Session.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Washington Drive Primary School Playground Access

It was the consensus of the Board to discuss this matter at a future meeting.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation at this time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Toles, seconded by Mr. Giuliano, and carried (6-0), the Board moved to Executive Session at 10:20 p.m. for the purpose of Collective negotiations, two personnel discipline matters, to discuss items made exempt by FERPA with regard to student matters, to discuss the employment history of a particular individual, to discuss pending litigation commenced by the Superintendent of Schools against the district, and to discuss matters related to the employment of a particular individual.

Mrs. Boba left the meeting at 10:40 p.m.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Toles, seconded by Mr. Schoer, and carried (5-0), the Board returned to the special meeting at 11:40 p.m.

6.2 Parent's Appeal of Student Suspension

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Schoer, seconded by Mr. Toles, and carried (5-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board Vice President was authorized to issue the decision of the Harborfields Central School District's Board of Education in the matter of a student's disciplinary appeal regarding student #901136 as presented to the Board of Education at the special meeting of April 16, 2008. A copy of the letter is incorporated by reference within the minutes of this meeting.

Dr. Wilson, Ms. Todaro, Mr. Nimmo, and Mr. Hartner were excused from the meeting at 11:42 p.m.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Schoer, seconded by Mr. Toles, and carried (5-0), the Board returned to the special meeting at 12:49 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Toles, seconded by Mr. Schoer, and carried (5-0), the Board adjourned the special meeting of April 16, 2008 at 12:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Muller
District Clerk