

**MINEOLA UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
MINEOLA, NY**

**Workshop Meeting MINUTES**

*The Mission of the Mineola Union Free School District is to inspire each student to be a life-long learner, pursue excellence, exhibit strength of character and contribute positively to a global society.*

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**Board Goals – 2009-2010**

- **Educational**
  - *To further expand the district initiative of differentiated instruction specifically denoting how schools plan to move student achievement from level to level as well as preventing student regression within and between levels.*
  - *To continue to develop our relationship with Winthrop Hospital to develop a career academy at the HS for students pursuing potential post HS opportunities.*
  - *To establish guidelines for the health and wellness of our children that encompasses curriculum, food program(s) and safety policies.*
- **Facilities**
  - *To investigate and embrace projects that incorporate 'green' technologies that over time will decrease our dependency on fossil fuels.*
- **Finance**
  - *To create a five year financial landscape that captures status quo and tax levy projections. Those projections will then be articulated to the community in order to open a dialogue about the future of Mineola.*

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**DATE: January 7, 2010**

**LOCATION: Mineola High School**

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**OPEN WORK SESSION**

**7:00 p.m. Auditorium**

**Board of Education**

William Hornberger, President  
Terence Hale, Vice President  
John McGrath – late arrival  
Laraine Salvatore  
Christine Napolitano

**Central Office**

Dr. Michael Nagler, Superintendent of Schools  
Sherri Goffman, Deputy Superintendent  
John Waters, Asst. Supt. of Finance & Oper.  
Janice Patterson, Asst. Supt. for Pupil Pers. Services  
Donna Martillo, District Clerk

**A. Call to Order**

At 7:00 p.m. the meeting was called to order by President Hornberger.

**B. Pledge of Allegiance**

**C. Reading of Mission – Jack Waters**

**D. Moment of Silent Meditation**

- E. **Dais & Visitor Introductions**
- F. **Old Business**
- G. **New Business**
- H. **Consensus Agenda**

1. **Resignation/Leave of Absence**

- a. That the Board of Education accepts a letter of resignation from Elizabeth Jordan, effective January 8, 2010.
- b. That the Board of Education accepts a letter of resignation, with regret, for the purpose of retirement from Marilyn Berglund, Stenographic Secretary, effective May 1, 2010.
- c. That the Board of Education grants a request to Claudia Rudnet for a leave of absence, for child-rearing purposes, using sick days, starting approximately May 11, 2010.
- d. That the Board of Education grants a request to Dawn McEntee for a leave of absence, using accumulated sick days, starting approximately March 4, 2010.

2. **Appointment(s)**

- a. That the Board of Education approves the addition of the following individuals to the Per Diem Substitute Teacher list; salary \$90.00 per day:

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Michelle Palladino	Early Childhood Ed (Birth-2), Students with Disabilities (Birth-2)
Rachel Isaacs	Early Childhood Ed (Birth-2), Childhood Ed (Gr 1-6), both pending
Melissa Dadich	Childhood Education (Grades 1-6) pending
Cynthia Kopp	Childhood Education (Grades 1-6) pending

3. **Contract(s)**

- a. That the Board of Education approves of a contract between the Mineola Union Free School District and North Shore Central School District for the 2009-2010 school year to provide services to an out-of-district student receiving special education services.
- b. That the Board of Education approves a contract between the Mineola Union Free School District and the Westbury Union Free School District to provide transportation services to a Westbury UFSD student for the school year 2009-2010.

4. **Amendment of Mileage Reimbursement**

- a. That the Board of Education amends the travel mileage reimbursement rate for the 2009-2010 school year at \$.50 per mile as set forth in IRS Regulations, effective January 1, 2010.

**RESOLUTION #48 - BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves Consensus Agenda items H.1. through H.4.a. as presented.

**Motion:** Terence Hale  
**Second:** Laraine Salvatore

**Discussion:** Mr. Hornberger inquired about the mileage reimbursement if it was previously approved. Mr. Waters responded that this will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> time it is being addressed. It was set in July 2009, amended in November 2009 and now the IRS has decreased the reimbursement rate effective January 1, 2010.

**Yes:** Christine Napolitano  
Laraine Salvatore  
Terence Hale  
William Hornberger  
**No:** None

**Passed:** Yes

At 7:08 p.m. Mr. McGrath arrived.

## **I. Superintendent's Reports**

The Superintendent of Schools addressed the following: recapping previous discussions at Board meetings related to the budget (Mandated expenses; pension costs; reducing the budget in order to make it more palatable to the community; revenue sources, i.e. State Aid; State experiencing financial problems and expect to receive less Aid; no mid-year State cuts, but anticipating a cut next year; the taxpayer makes up difference if revenue is cut; calculating the tax levy; looking at a 5.46% tax levy due to a roll-over budget increase; federal money gone after second year; 7 million dollars in reductions over 3 years would be needed to maintain a per year tax levy of 2.5%; if the 2010-2011 budget fails, the district goes to contingency and 3.5 million dollars would have to be reduced from the budget in order to achieve a zero % increase in the budget, even with a zero % increase to the budget, the tax levy could still increase; 80% of budget allocation is in personnel (Salaries and benefits); personnel translates into program and when personnel is reduced program is affected as well; unknown at this time what program or personnel would be affected; even after reducing staff it would not be enough to get to the 2.1 million dollars needed; another area for reduction is Capital Repair of \$100,000.00 and the only other area to look to reduce is in the reserve fund; the Superintendent explained how a reserve fund is generated (Excess money generated from the budget); spending reserve funds creates a spike making the tax levy for the next year shoot up; in order to keep a 2.5% tax levy personnel reductions will have to be made for each of the next 3 years; by year 3 programs will be affected district-wide (Elementary and Secondary levels, Marching Band, Winter and Spring Concerts, Audience Control, Equipment, Sports, Capital Projects); if the budget fails in May, districts are allowed to have an additional vote in June, but there isn't much time to make adjustments so voters can vote again and if that vote fails the district must go to contingency, which is a zero % increase to the budget, requiring that all equipment and capital projects are taken out of the budget reaching the 3.5 million dollars; the next two years are tied together and they need to

strategize in how to proceed; no way knowing how community feels until they vote in May; Administration has to be prepared if the budget fails to get to zero; another solution is closing schools, which will be discussed at the January 21, 2010 Business Meeting where scenarios will be presented; does not see the likelihood in freezing salaries, but will approach the units.

Mr. Hornberger expressed that his biggest concern is the zero % contingency and the potential reality in not passing the budget.

At this time President Hornberger opened up a question and answer portion to the audience. He requested that each person ask one question at a time in order to get to everyone in the audience, to be respectful of other opinions, and when addressing the Board to state their name and address.

Public comments were as follows:

- ❖ A resident suggested sending out a survey to the community as to what their priorities were, because the people in the audience tonight are not enough representation of what the community wants. The resident commented that the figures are quite clear and commended them on a good job. The resident also stated that the community is happy with their community schools. Other suggestions the resident made were: possibly returning Kindergarten to an a.m. and p.m. program. The Superintendent of Schools presented an analysis of voting patterns for the past 12 years and discussed the following: the correlation of no votes to the tax levy; neighborhood voting patterns; consistent number of no votes (1,000); the spreadsheet reflects how the community feels by their voting patterns; concerned that if the budget were to fail in May at a 4% tax levy the district only has 3 weeks to go out to voters again and if that is unsuccessful, the district is required to implement a contingency budget of zero % increase. The Superintendent of Schools also stated ways in which he will gather input from the community: website; video on cable; start a new Q & A piece on his blog.
- ❖ A resident inquired about State Representatives approving a waiver to change the contingency amount. The Superintendent of Schools confirmed they were the only ones who could pass a resolution to change the formula.
- ❖ A resident inquired in how to generate more income for the district. The Superintendent of Schools responded that the way districts are set up they are not designed to generate money, it is frowned upon. The resident inquired about cell towers in the city. The Superintendent of Schools responded that many of his peers are jealous of the revenue Mineola receives from its tower rental. The resident inquired about rental of excess land. The Superintendent of Schools responded that the district is short of land now. The resident also asked about the teacher bargaining unit. The Superintendent of Schools responded that the contract expires June 2011. The resident inquired about how much of the budget was fixed. The Superintendent of Schools responded, practically all of the budget is fixed, salaries, benefits, health, pension (80%), as well as running the facilities. The resident suggested using a pie chart to illustrate the budget and inquired about voting on the budget. The Superintendent of Schools confirmed that a majority of Mineola voters decide on the outcome of a budget. The resident looked for clarification that the Superintendent of Schools is trying to get a realistic number that the community will support. The Superintendent of Schools responded that he is trying to present the Board with all facts and options they will need to give guidance in preparing the 2010-2011 budget.

- ❖ A resident inquired about the difference between a 2.5% and 3.5% tax levy in real numbers. The Superintendent of Schools stated he was reluctant to give that information because it is out of his control. The homeowner would have to know their assessed value. Mr. Waters explained that if you take your assessed value of your house and multiply it by the tax levy amount that will be your increase, i.e. average assessed house in Mineola is \$5,400.00 and multiplied by the tax levy gives you the increase. The resident suggested presenting it that way to the community. The Superintendent of Schools cautioned on this because there are homes paying less than others due to the assessed value. He encouraged the resident to ascertain her County assessed valuation of her home. The resident stated that there are people who will not do that and they may think a 4.5% increase is more money than it really is. The Superintendent of Schools responded he would look to the PTA District Council, and confirmed their next meeting as January 19<sup>th</sup>.
- ❖ A resident inquired if the Administration was looking for the dollar amount the community would react to. The Superintendent of Schools stated no, he is trying to be objective in presenting to the Board what the numbers would be regarding the budget increase and tax levy. He wouldn't be doing this if contingency wasn't zero %. The resident posed two questions to the Board: (1) How come everyone in walking distance of Cross does not attend the Cross Street School? The resident feels the district should go to 3 elementary schools; (2) What is the lowest class size in the district? The Superintendent of Schools responded,13.
- ❖ A resident commented as follows: parents of students have a vested interest in the schools; up to parents to pass the budget and in the past it was not done well; importance of laying out the monthly cost of a tax levy; linking property value and value of community to the school system; up to parents to get their point across to the segment of community that do not have school-age children that they also have a vested interest in keeping property values at a high level.

The Superintendent of Schools displayed what his blog looks like and added a Q&A section and stated that all reasonable questions will be put up.

Mr. Hornberger stated that the community can reach out to the Superintendent of Schools as well as the Board.

The Superintendent of Schools reported on the following: Alumni Day at the High School (Annual tradition where College students return to speak to Seniors); District Council Arts Program Saturday, 1/23/2010; District Calendar change that May 11<sup>th</sup> is not a Superintendent's Conference Day and is a regular school day; Mineola was submitting its application to participate in the Federal Program, "Race to the Top".

The Superintendent of Schools requested an executive session to discuss personnel matters regarding the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation.

Mr. Hornberger informed everyone that the January 21, 2010 Board Business Meeting would be held at Mineola High School, in the Auditorium and directed the District Clerk to alert the local newspapers.

## **J. Executive Session**

At 8:16 p.m. a motion was made for the Board of Education to go into executive session to discuss contractual matters.

**Motion:** John McGrath  
**Second:** Terence Hale

**Discussion:** Mr. McGrath requested the cameras monitor when the Board returns to open session and when the meeting is adjourned. Ms. Salvatore inquired if the Board would be discussing contractual matters in executive session. The Superintendent of Schools responded: legal, contractual, and personnel.

**Yes:** Christine Napolitano  
John McGrath  
Laraine Salvatore  
Terence Hale  
William Hornberger

**No:** None

**Passed:** Yes

The Board may return at any time.

At 8:40 p.m. the Board returned to open session.

#### **K. Adjournment**

At 8:40 p.m. a motion was made to adjourn this meeting of the Board of Education.

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**Motion:** Laraine Salvatore  
**Second:** Terence Hale

**Yes:** Christine Napolitano  
John McGrath  
Laraine Salvatore  
Terence Hale  
William Hornberger

**No:** None

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**Passed:** Yes

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Martillo  
District Clerk