

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.

Board Goals – 2008-2009

- *Educational Expectations and Improvement*
- *School Quality*
- *Operations*
- *Fiscal Management/Stability*

DATE: March 5, 2009

LOCATION: Willis Avenue School

OPEN WORK SESSION

7:00 p.m. 1st FLOOR CAFETERIA

Board of Education

Stephen Siwinski, President
Laraine Salvatore, Vice President
John McGrath
William Hornberger
Terence Hale

Central Office

Dr. Lorenzo Licopoli, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Michael Nagler, Deputy Superintendent
Sherri Goffman, Asst. Supt. of Curr. & Inst.
John Waters, Asst. Supt. of Finance & Oper.
Lori Dolan, Asst. District Clerk

A. Call to Order

At 7:05 p.m. the meeting was called to order by President Siwinski.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Reading of Mission

D. Moment of Silent Meditation

E. Dais & Visitor Introductions

F. Old Business

1. Employment Agreement – Superintendent of Schools

RESOLUTION #57 – **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves the terms of an employment agreement dated February 26, 2009 between the Mineola Union Free School District and Dr. Michael Nagler as Superintendent of Schools, commencing July 1, 2009; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the President of the Board of Education be authorized to execute said agreement on behalf of the Board of Education.

Motion: John McGrath
Second: William Hornberger

At 7:10 p.m. a motion was made to go into Executive Session to discuss contractual matters.

Motion: Laraine Salvatore
Second: Terence Hale

Yes: Terence Hale
William Hornberger
John McGrath
Laraine Salvatore
Stephen Siwinski

No: None

Passed: Yes

At 7:30 the Board returned and a motion was motion was made to come out of Executive Session.

Motion: John McGrath
Second: William Hornberger

Yes: Terence Hale
William Hornberger
John McGrath
Laraine Salvatore
Stephen Siwinski

No: None

Passed: Yes

The Board then voted on Resolution #57.

Yes: Terence Hale
William Hornberger
John McGrath
Stephen Siwinski

No: Laraine Salvatore

Passed: Yes

G. New Business
H. Superintendent's Reports

Prior to the Superintendent of Schools presenting his reports, Mr. Hale inquired as to the procedure for opening and distributing mail addressed to the Board, and expressed

concern that he consistently receives mail that is already opened. The Superintendent replied that he does not see the mail come in. The Assistant District Clerk asked if she could reply, as she is responsible for distributing mail, and explained that if mail is personally addressed to individual Board members, it does not get opened, and if generally addressed mail is received, it is opened so that copies can be made for each individual Board member. The Superintendent then introduced Mrs. Goffman who would be presenting the Literacy Collaborative Program.

- Literacy Collaborative

Discussion: Mrs. Goffman stated that the Program began five years with a team that was put together to gather information that was run through BOCES and Lesley University and that the program is designed to bring about improved achievement in literacy. She further stated that one literacy coordinator was trained each year for four years, one for each elementary school, and that one week of support training was provided for Willis. Mrs. Goffman introduced Literacy Coordinators Stephanie Cosola of Meadow Drive, Lisa Fiocco of Hampton Street, Marilyn Holland of Cross Street and Margarita Marvel of Jackson, who was unable to attend tonight's meeting. Mrs. Holland stated that the Literacy Collaborative is a whole school effort to provide good literacy teaching with a safety net for children who need it. The Team explained that the teaching practices are child-centered, language-based and outcome oriented, and that 2 ½ to 3 hours per day are allotted for literacy activities to provide teaching and learning time for reading, writing and phonics/word study. They further added that the Literacy Collaborative framework is comprised of language word study, a reading workshop and a writing workshop.

Mrs. Goffman explained that all four coaches had to undergo 8 weeks of training at Lesley University and had to pass many benchmarks to become certified, and that it was a very difficult process. They now teach other teachers through modeling and demonstrating, 40 hours of training in the first year and 20 hours of training in years two and beyond. She added that the cost for this professional development is paid for out of Title grants. Mrs. Goffman stated that the students undergo benchmark assessments three times per year and that the testing analysis is in line with state standards. The Superintendent stated Reading Recovery and the Literacy Collaborative Programs should have been in the district 10 years ago, and as a result of these programs we are producing much better readers in our district. He then thanked Mrs. Goffman and the Literacy Coordinators.

- Educational Plan and Budget #2

Discussion: The Superintendent of Schools stated that, depending on the direction from the Board tonight with regard to the next phase, there might be an opportunity to adopt the Budget at the March 19th meeting of the Board of Education rather than have a Special Meeting on March 26th. He stated that he had met with each of the Budget Builders and that the Board had directed that they review a \$500,000-\$400,000 capital upgrade plan, additional staffing reductions, as well as further streamlining of the line by line budget. He further stated that right now we have a budget increase of 1.17% which is a reduction from 1.4% and a tax levy of 3.39% which is down from 3.6% last week. He stated that, although he had not yet received anything in writing, the thinking is that the district will recover the state aid that was reduced, which would decrease the tax levy to 2.53%. The budget increase of 1.17% down from 1.4% translates to a reduction in the budget of

approximately \$180,000. Mr. Waters explained that there was \$700,000 excess fund balance and a possible additional \$500,000, which he recommends using to pay down the remaining portion of the bond. The Superintendent stated that the recommendations are for the budget increase not to exceed 1.2%, estimate a 98.5% budget with \$700,000 designated as Interfund and \$500,000 designated as anticipated/unknown expenses, maintain a \$400,000 level for capital upgrades, maintain staffing as recommended, maintain fund balance at 4%, and the levy to levy increase should not exceed 3.4%. Mrs. Goffman discussed staffing recommendations stating that they were looking to send out a census this year, asking members of the community for the number and ages of their children under school age to help project enrollment. The Superintendent of Schools cautioned that if the Board chooses not to consolidate schools and still have a tax levy of under 4%, it will be extremely difficult to maintain current class size recommendations without cutting out other programs. Mr. Siwinski inquired as to attorney's fees in the budget; in 06-07 the district had attorney's fees of \$80,000 and that went up to \$150,000, presumably due to contract negotiations; now up to \$160,000 and for 09-10 going up to \$168,000. The Superintendent replied that that \$168,000 was budgeted due to the re-negotiating of 3 contracts in 09-10 in addition to any other litigation the district might be dealing with. Mr. Hornberger inquired as to an updated list of capital upgrade projects and Dr. Nagler replied that he would have it for the next meeting. Mrs. Salvatore inquired as to the new phone system for Sub calling, and Dr. Nagler replied that after all training is complete, the district could implement the new system by the end of April or beginning of May. Mrs. Salvatore then inquired if this meant that we would not be replacing the clerical that had done this previously in the Middle School, and Dr. Nagler replied that this clerical position was Mr. Smith's secretary and did much more than Sub calling. The Superintendent reiterated that the budget could be adopted on March 19th and Mrs. Salvatore inquired as to the recommendation of the Finance Committee. A member of the public stated that the Finance Committee had not yet seen the Budget and Mrs. Salvatore stated that she would not be able to vote on the budget on March 19th without a review by the Finance Committee. The Board agreed. Mr. Hale stated that he would like to begin negotiations with the Teachers Aid union, and Mr. Siwinski replied that now that Dr. Nagler's contract was signed they could begin negotiations. Mr. Waters stated that the next meeting of the Finance Committee was the following Wednesday, March 11th. Mr. Hornberger stated that he felt that more could be reduced from the budget to keep the levy under 2% by fund balance reduction. The Superintendent agreed that this could be done, and if that was what the Board would like, to provide a directive to that regard. He then asked the Board if they were in agreement with the proposed staffing recommendations and the Board was in agreement as to the teaching staff recommendations. Mrs. Salvatore inquired why with a Central Administrative position being cut there was no reduction in clerical staff and the Superintendent replied that there is a reduction in one clerical position due to the resignation of a clerical at the Middle School that would not be replaced with a new hire but a shifting of a clerical from within the district. Dr. Nagler added that just because a Central Admin position was eliminated, the work did not "go away" and that clerical staff were necessary to complete this work. Mr. Siwinski stated that the Board would like clarification on the roles of the clerical staff. Dr. Nagler stated that once the reorganizational plan was accepted by the Board he would be able to provide updated job duties and responsibilities information. The Superintendent stated that the reorganization plan will be embedded in the Educational Plan and Budget which will be distributed to the Board the week prior to the March 19th Board of Education meeting. Mr. Siwinski stated that the Board would like the capital upgrade figure increased back to \$500,000, but would like to see where the extra

\$100,000 was coming from. Dr. Nagler stated that he would provide an updated list of capital upgrade projects with added detail. The Superintendent stated that it would be possible to increase the capital upgrade figure and still maintain a tax levy under 2% by reducing the fund balance.

A motion was made to open the floor to public discussion.

Motion: Laraine Salvatore

Second: William Hornberger

Yes: Terence Hale **No:** None

William Hornberger

John McGrath

Laraine Salvatore

Stephen Siwinski

Passed: Yes

Discussion:

- ❖ A member of the public expressed concern that the if the District was able to reduce spending this year that it should and not wait until next year, when there could be further possible reductions. He also asked for clarification from Mrs. Goffman with regard to her staffing recommendations.
- ❖ A member of the public reiterated this concern, asking what the potential percentage increase in the budget would be as a result of pension increases, and Mr. Waters replied 3.5%. This member of the public also expresses concern that many building lights were on in the school while the building appeared unoccupied.

I. Adjournment

At 10:42 p.m. a motion was made to adjourn this meeting of the Board of Education.

Motion: Laraine Salvatore

Second: William Hornberger

Yes: Terence Hale **No:** None

William Hornberger

John McGrath

Laraine Salvatore

Stephen Siwinski

Passed: Yes

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Dolan

Assistant District Clerk