

**MINUTES**  
**ROCKY POINT PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**  
**January 11, 2016**

Mrs. Sullivan called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. in the auditorium of the Rocky Point High School.

Present: Susan Sullivan, President  
Scott Reh, Vice President  
Melissa Brown, Trustee  
Sean Callahan, Trustee (arriving at 5:06 p.m.)  
Edward Casswell, Trustee  
Michael F. Ring, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools  
Deborah De Luca, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent  
Gregory Hilton, School Business Official  
Susan Wilson, Executive Director for Educational Services  
Patricia Jones, District Clerk

Also Present: Kevin Seaman, Esq., School Attorney

Absent: None

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 5:01 p.m. Edward Casswell made a motion and Melissa Brown seconded to adjourn to Executive Session to meet with legal counsel to discuss ongoing confidential legal matters.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0

The Board returned to Open Session at 7:00 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mrs. Sullivan advised that the Board was returning to Open Session from both Executive Session and the Budget Workshop.

Mrs. Sullivan invited Dr. Ring to begin with the Superintendent's Report.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Ring noted that the first Budget Workshop for the 2016-2017 school year had just concluded. Dr. Ring encouraged all to attend the next Budget Workshop which is scheduled for Monday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 in the high school library commencing at 6:00 p.m.

Dr. Ring advised that in follow-up to the discussion held during the New Business portion of last month's meeting, the Facilities Sub-Committee reconvened and met once last week and will meet again this week in order to discuss possible options pertaining to

the Capital Projects Bond Proposal. Dr. Ring expressed his hope that the trustees and the administration would have the sub-committee's recommendations to discuss at the February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 school board meeting.

Dr. Ring invited Mr. Hilton to the podium in order to recognize and honor Mrs. Evelyn Gallino upon her retirement from the district.

Mr. Hilton provided an overview of the many facets of Mrs. Gallino's employment with the district beginning in 1994 as a mini-bus driver and culminating as a senior clerk-typist in the building and grounds department. Mr. Hilton remarked that Mrs. Gallino's vast "institutional knowledge" can never be replaced. When he asked her colleagues to share with him their knowledge of Mrs. Gallino, two words were consistently uttered, "helpful and caring." Mr. Hilton presented Mrs. Gallino a plaque in commemoration of her service to the district and wished her well in her retirement. Mrs. Gallino extended her gratitude to Mr. Hilton, Mr. Martinez and Dr. Ring for their support and she also expressed her pride in being a member of the School-Related Professional Association.

Dr. Ring invited Ms. Linda Towlen to the podium in order to recognize and honor school teacher aide, Ms. Eileen Carneiro, upon her retirement from the district.

Ms. Towlen shared with meeting attendees the comments she garnered from Ms. Carneiro's colleagues, specifically, that she is a loyal friend with an outgoing personality and a memorable smile. Known for her baking skills and her generosity in sharing her famous carrot cake, Ms. Towlen also shared that Ms. Carneiro was known for her kindness and caring and her ability to brighten someone's day. Ms. Towlen presented Ms. Carneiro with a plaque in commemoration of her nine and one-half years of service to the district. On behalf of herself and the JAE faculty and staff, Ms. Towlen wished Ms. Carneiro all the best in her retirement.

#### **MS. LINDA TOWLEN, PRINCIPAL, JOSEPH A. EDGAR SCHOOL**

- Ms. Towlen reported students have been engaged in reading great books, writing pieces that they can be proud of and strengthening their math skills. Ms. Towlen thanked the teachers and parents for their support during the first half of the 2015-2016 school year.
- W.A.R.M. (We Are Reading More) activities are continuing. Students are continuing to record the number of minutes they read each day at home on their log sheets as they complete fun activities both in the classroom and at home.
- Friday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, was Teacher Switch Day, wherein members of the faculty visited different classrooms to share one of their favorite books with the students.
- On Wednesday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, everyone is looking forward to the special guests participating in the "Reading Rocks" assemblies. Ms. Towlen thanked the PTA for its sponsorship of this event. On Friday, January 15<sup>th</sup>, teacher races will take place and raffle winners will be announced as part of the W.A.R.M. closing ceremonies. Ms. Towlen extended her gratitude to the faculty and staff of JAE, the PTA, and Mrs. DiGiovanni for their support in making the W.A.R.M./PARP celebration a success.

**MRS. SUSANN CROSSAN, PRINCIPAL, ROCKY POINT HIGH SCHOOL**

- Mrs. Crossan offered her best wishes to the Rocky Point community for a happy 2016.
- Mrs. Crossan stressed the importance of students remaining focused on learning and disciplined in their study habits as the end of the second marking period approaches.
- Mrs. Crossan reminded parents to remain cognizant of mailed attendance notices regarding student absences as they contain specific thresholds that indicate absences are accumulating and may lead to students exceeding the maximum allowable days, resulting in class audit.
- In support of the college-readiness initiative, fifteen former Rocky Point High School seniors returned from college for the holiday recess and spoke to this year's senior class about their college experiences. In an effort to create awareness and promote discussions about the college experience, the returning college students discussed challenges as well as things they wished they would have known prior to heading off to college.
- Financial Aid Night was held on Thursday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, during which time students and parents acquired information about applying for financial aid. Filing deadlines and the on-line procedures for applying for financial aid were also discussed. College Information Night is scheduled for Thursday, February 11<sup>th</sup>.
- A new web-based program, Method Test Prep, will be presented to students in grades 10 and 11 during an assembly program later this month and the information will be shared with parents during College Information Night.
- Regents Exams are scheduled during the week of January 25<sup>th</sup> for those students who did not successfully pass specific exams last year.
- Mrs. Crossan thanked everyone for their continued support and announced that she is looking forward to continuing to work together in the New Year.

**DR. SCOTT O'BRIEN, PRINCIPAL, ROCKY POINT MIDDLE SCHOOL**

- Dr. O'Brien offered his congratulations to Mrs. Gallino upon her retirement.
- Students will change their elective classes as the new semester begins on Monday, February 1<sup>st</sup>.
- The Middle School Select Chorus coordinated a spirited Sing-A-Long at the Rocky Point VFW during the holidays. Sixth through eighth students performed three of their winter concert pieces before leading those present in a sing-a-long. Dr. O'Brien extended special thanks to Mrs. Ruggiero for her efforts in leading this endeavor.
- The Induction Ceremony for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students into the National Junior Honor Society will take place on Thursday, January 14<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. in the auditorium of the high school. Dr. O'Brien extended his congratulations to the inductees.
- Late Winter Sports begin on January 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Report cards will be posted to the parent portal on Friday, February 5<sup>th</sup>.

**MRS. VIRGINIA KELLY-GIBBONS, PRINCIPAL, FRANK J. CARASITI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

- Picture retake day was held on January 7<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Kelly-Gibbons thanked the PTA for its support of this effort.

- Permission slips are being collected for participation in both the Science Club and the Garden Club. The clubs will start-up again in the next few weeks.
- Students are learning about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in an effort to learn more about the federal holiday.
- FJC is working in conjunction with the PTA in order to finalize the plans for the FJC PARP program.
- Mrs. Kelly-Gibbons thanked everyone for their support and wished all a healthy and happy new year.

Mrs. Sullivan thanked everyone for their reports and opened the floor to questions and/or comments from meeting attendees.

- Referencing the proposed addition of three teaching assistants, Ms. Marianne Barber asked where they would be placed and if they would be an addition to the current staff or if they would be replacing current teacher aides. Dr. Ring responded that in accordance with the proposal provided to the Board of Education during the 2014-2015 school year, the teaching assistants would be placed in 12:1:1 self-contained classrooms and in a 15:1 classroom where the student population is nine or greater. Dr. Ring also noted that the status of instructional and non-instructional Special Education staff, including hiring, transfers and excessing, may be CSE-driven as a result of the annual review process and as students move in and out of the district. Mrs. Sullivan assured Ms. Barber that the teaching assistants are an addition to the present staff and that they will not be replacing current teacher aides.
- Ms. Melanie Connelly offered her gratitude for the proposed addition of a part-time nurse. Reading from the minutes of the Board of Education meeting of December 21, 2015, Ms. Connelly referenced the discussion that ensued following a resolution awarding staffing services for registered nurse substitutes. Ms. Connelly voiced her disapproval and disappointment wherein the district would strive to save money by ensuring that the substitute nurse service with the lowest rate be considered as the primary contact and the more expensive secondary service be called upon only as a back-up service. Ms. Connelly shared her belief that if the district was willing to double the proposed budget for athletic uniforms it should place the highest priority on the value of the contributions of the nursing staff.

There were no other questions or comments.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

The items listed below are presented as part of the Consent Agenda which can be adopted by the Board of Education under a single motion followed by a second and then a formal vote. The Consent Agenda items are listed below in their regular order within a group. Before an actual vote is taken, any Consent Agenda item may be removed by a Board member without a formal motion or second. If this occurs, the indicated resolution will be discussed during its regular order on the agenda and voted on individually.

#### **III-IV          Consent Agenda Items**

Upon a motion made by Scott Reh and seconded by Melissa Brown, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education accepts the following agenda items as one item.

- III: Minutes** – Regular Meeting, December 21, 2015
- IV Budget Transfer Summary** – December 2015

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0

**V DONATION FROM OHIOPYLE PRINTS, INC.**

Upon a motion made by Melissa Brown and seconded by Edward Casswell, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approves and accepts the donation from Ohiopyle Prints, Inc.

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Rocky Point Union Free School District hereby approves, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, to increase the general fund budget by \$26.26 as a result of the donation from Ohiopyle Prints, Inc.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the following budget code be adjusted to reflect said increase:

A 2110 500 03 0000 (HS)     \$26.26

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0

**VI REVISION AND RE-ADOPTION OF BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY 7420 – SPORTS AND THE ATHLETICS PROGRAM (SECOND READING)**

Upon a motion made by Edward Casswell and seconded by Sean Callahan, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education reviews and re-adopts the attached policy:

- Policy Number 7420: Sports and the Athletic Program (*second reading*).

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0

**VII PERSONNEL**

Upon a motion made by Sean Callahan and seconded by Scott Reh, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the attached Personnel changes.

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0

**VIII NEW BUSINESS**

Mrs. Sullivan inquired of the board trustees if there was any new business they wished to discuss. There was no new business.

Mrs. Sullivan opened the floor to questions and/or comments from meeting attendees.

- Mrs. Heggens thanked the trustees and district administrators for their support in opposition to mandatory Grades 3-8 State Assessment Tests. Mrs. Heggens asked that they consider opposing certain Regents examinations, as well. Mrs. Heggens spoke in detail regarding various aspects of current Regents exams scoring as she expressed her concerns that the grades earned on these exams will count for one-fifth of a student's GPA. Mrs. Heggens also shared information regarding what other school districts may consider doing with respect to this issue and urged the board trustees to consider a moratorium on the current testing standards. Mrs. Heggens also encouraged the trustees to consider lowering the cutoff scores, offering different tests, and any other options that would offer students additional opportunities to graduate.
- Referencing the proposed expansion of the teaching assistant program for grades 6-8, Ms. Melanie Connelly requested an overview of the protocol for the hiring process that will be instituted to fill these openings. Mrs. Wilson responded in detail to Ms. Connelly's request for this information including an explanation of the initial posting for any open positions, submission of résumés, interview committee protocols and final recommendations to the board trustees.

There were no further questions or comments.

## **IX                    ADJOURNMENT**

At 7:30 p.m. Edward Casswell made a motion and Sean Callahan seconded to adjourn the meeting.

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Jones  
District Clerk