

MINUTES
ROCKY POINT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
December 15, 2014

Mrs. Sullivan called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m. in the auditorium of the Rocky Point High School.

Present: Susan Sullivan, President
Scott Reh, Vice President
John Lessler, Trustee (arriving at 6:47 p.m.)
Sean Callahan, Trustee
Melissa Brown, 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

Absent: None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 6:46 p.m. Sean Callahan made a motion and Melissa Brown seconded to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss matters pertaining to a confidential personnel investigation.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0

The Board returned to Open Session at 7:07 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Ring extended his best wishes to all for a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and great New Year and invited all to enjoy the winter recess downtime with family and friends.

- Dr. Ring thanked all for their patience and understanding regarding the abrupt cancellation of events over the weekend due to a threat at the middle school. Dr. Ring advised that the Singing Santas Concert has been rescheduled for 7 p.m. on Friday, December 19th in the high school auditorium and invited all to attend. Dr. Ring also thanked Mr. Reh and the Mount Sinai School District for their kind assistance with logistics due to the cancelling of weekend events.

- Dr. Ring congratulated the Varsity Cheerleaders and Mrs. Anna Spallina upon their 11th UCA Empire Championship and offered them the best of luck as they defend their national title in Florida in February.
- Dr. Ring provided an update regarding the offensive odors recently detected at the Frank J. Carasiti Elementary School. Dr. Ring reported that the project to increase the height of the chimney at FJC has been completed and the chimney is exhausting at a height fourteen feet greater. Dr. Ring advised that the district will monitor the situation through the winter and spring to ensure that this remedy achieves the desired results and if so, the four classrooms currently not being used will be reopened.
- Dr. Ring announced he had followed up with the concern regarding third and fourth students receiving free photos in grades K-8 but not at the high school. Dr. Ring explained that the high school photographer donates his work for pictures of student events and therefore the high school cannot discount the cost of the photographs while the PTA sponsors the pictures at the elementary and middle school levels. Dr. Ring thanked Dr. Pinkenburg for bringing this matter to the district's attention.
- Dr. Ring expressed his gratitude for the number of people in the district and the community who are continuously involved with fundraising events during the holiday season and throughout the year. Dr. Ring mentioned meeting attendee and physical education teacher, Ms. Maria Amoscato, and thanked Ms. Amoscato for her continuous tireless efforts to raise funds for the American Cancer Society. Dr. Ring further praised and recognized the PTA, Friends of Music, Boosters, the Civic Associations and the Rotary, among others, for their numerous contributions in support of the community and families in need.
- In this vein, Dr. Ring acknowledged and praised the Rocky Point Historical Society for accomplishing remarkable tasks in their efforts to preserve the history of the community and educate our youth on the rich history of Rocky Point. Dr. Ring shared that this year the Rocky Point Historical Society produced its first Christmas tree ornaments and that he was pleased to purchase a number of these commemorative ornaments in support of the Noah Hallock Homestead. Dr. Ring presented each of the board trustees, the district clerk and the administrators seated on the dais with the society's first annual collectors' ornament.
- Addressing the trustees, Dr. Ring asked for their thoughts and input regarding the State Education Department and mandatory field-testing and assessments. Mrs. Sullivan, referencing her experience as an educator, said she was opposed to mandatory field-testing but believes some field-testing is appropriate; Mrs. Brown said she was opposed to mandatory field-testing as it takes time away from actual teaching; Mr. Callahan expressed his opposition to the mandatory field-testing as he sees no measurable benefit resulting from it; both Mr. Reh and Mr. Lesser voiced their opposition to mandatory field-testing. Dr. Ring thanked the trustees for their responses and advised that he would draft a resolution for the January 12th meeting.

Mr. John DeBenedetto, Principal, Rocky Point High School

- The Singing Santas Annual Holiday Concert has been rescheduled for Friday, December 19th at 7 p.m. in the high school auditorium. The Singing Santas have been performing at several nursing homes in the area. Mr. DeBenedetto thanked Mr. Bonomi for his hard work and dedication to this program.
- Members of the Art Honor Society have set up a holiday “Giving Tree” in the main office of the high school and are collecting gifts for families in need within the community.
- The HS Winter Concert is scheduled for December 18th featuring performances by the HS Orchestra, 9th and 10th Grade Band, HS Chorus and the 11th and 12th Grade Band.
- All ten fall varsity teams were recognized as NY State Scholar Athlete teams for the fourth consecutive year.
- On December 3rd outstanding senior physical education students across Suffolk County were recognized at an award ceremony at the Hyatt Wind Watch. Student athletes William Barber and Ece Batmaz were each recognized for their excellence in physical education as the top male and female physical education students. Mr. DeBenedetto thanked Mr. Aschettino for recognizing these students for this award.
- Second quarter progress reports will be posted to the parent portal on Friday, December 19th.
- Mr. DeBenedetto offered his congratulations to Mrs. Spallina and the cheerleaders and wished them luck in Florida.
- Mr. DeBenedetto wished all a happy and healthy holiday season and a prosperous new year.

Dr. Scott O’Brien, Principal, Rocky Point Middle School Principal

- The PTA hosted the second Middle School Book Fair of the year. The middle school store continues to be a huge success and students are visiting the store, located in the cafeteria, during their lunch periods.
- Dr. O’Brien offered congratulations to the students for their winter concert performances under the direction of Ms. Schecher, Mr. Ragona, Mrs. Ruggiero, Mr. Butcher, Mrs. Donovan, Mrs. Silvestri and Mrs. Gatto.
- Students and staff continued to support the local community throughout the month of December. Students and staff collected hundreds of new gifts as part of the holiday season.
- Dr. O’Brien thanked the guidance department for overseeing the Holiday Drive wherein students and staff collected hundreds of new gifts in support of the local community. Dr. O’Brien also thanked the entire middle school staff, parents and the PTA for their generous support of the drive.
- Progress reports will be posted to the parent portal on Friday, December 19th.
- On behalf of the middle school, Dr. Ring wished everyone a wonderful holiday season.

Ms. Linda Towlen, Principal, Joseph A. Edgar School

- The first holiday concert took place on December 3rd. Ms. Towlen thanked Mr. Knapp for his work with the JAE students along with the third grade chorus

students, fourth and fifth grade intermediate chorus students and the fifth grade select chorus, “High Notes.”

- The winter musical, “Light, Cameras, Christmas!” will be presented on December 17th. The musical is being performed by the “High Notes” chorus. Two in-school performances will be held on Friday, December 19th. Families that attend the evening performance are encouraged to bring a non-perishable food item or a warm winter weather clothing item as a donation.
- Students in Ms. Vieira’s, Ms. Celentano’s and Ms. Jackson’s classes donated pajamas and Scholastic Book Clubs matched the donations with both picture and chapter books. All donations were given to a local shelter. Ms. Towlen thanked the teachers, students and staff for their donations.
- The kick-off date for W.A.R.M. (We Are Reading More) is scheduled for December 17th. Students are encouraged to read over the holiday break and activities are planned for January to encourage reading. Darren Sardelli, author and poet, will visit JAE on January 15th. Ms. Towlen thanked the PTA and Mrs. DiGiovanni for their help and support of these events.
- All students in grades 3 through 5 participated in the Computer science Week National Honor of Code movement from December 8th through the 12th in both their technology and library classes. Ms. Towlen thanked all the teachers with special thanks to Ms. Varriale and Mrs. DiGiovanni.
- Third graders will take a ride on the *Polar Express* on December 19th. They will read the story and have hot chocolate with their classmates.
- The staff at JAE is once again donating holiday packages to families in need. Student Council members have been volunteering their time and energy at the soup kitchen this month in addition to creating the “Giving Tree” filled with donated mittens, gloves, hats, scarves and socks to be presented to a local church for community members.
- On behalf of the entire staff at JAE Ms. Towlen wished all a wonderful holiday and a Happy New Year.

Mrs. Virginia Kelly-Gibbons, Principal, Frank J. Carasiti Elementary School

- Mrs. Kelly-Gibbons reported that the Thanksgiving food drive was a great success.
- Mrs. Adamski and the FJC Angel Committee hosted an angel breakfast to garner staff support for families during this holiday season. Mrs. Adamski is coordinating with JAE to organize a pajama drive. Students are invited to wear their favorite pajamas and join Dr. Herbert and Mrs. Kelly-Gibbons on December 19th as they read *The Polar Express* by Chris Van Allsburg.
- Ms. Kenwood led the second grade chorus in the winter concert, “Light the World,” on December 4th.
- The school-wide winter sing-a-long is scheduled for December 18th. Ms. Kenwood and Mr. Ventura have been teaching the children new melodies and art teachers Mrs. Buonconsiglio and Mr. West have been adding to the festive spirit. Kindergarten students will be donning red and green and wearing elf hats, first graders will be dressed all in white with snowmen on their caps, and second graders will lead the way as reindeer with antlers.

- Individual classes will host holiday celebrations during the last week of school as they await carolers from the high school that will stroll the halls of FJC and spread cheer and good will.
- Mrs. Pilkington-Kaler has invited all of the children to write a letter to Santa as a Make-A-Wish fundraiser.
- On behalf of the entire staff at FJC, Mrs. Kelly-Gibbons extended her warmest wishes to the Board of Education and the Rocky Point/Sound Beach/Miller Place families during this holiday season.

Mrs. Sullivan noted that she had read in *Newsday* Rocky Point Field Hockey Coach, Katie Bittner, was recognized and named as a Coach of the Year. Mrs. Sullivan congratulated Ms. Bittner on this wonderful achievement.

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. On the following pages the Consent Agenda items are listed in their regular order and preceded by an asterisk (*). 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.

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that agenda items II through VII and item XIII be approved as one item.

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0

II (*) MINUTES

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Minutes of the following Board of Education meeting be accepted as presented: **Regular Meeting, November 24, 2014.**

III (*) TREASURER’S REPORT

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accepts the Treasurer’s Report for the month of November 2014 as presented.

IV (*) EXTRA-CLASSROOM ACTIVITY ACCOUNT TREASURER REPORT

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accepts the Extra-Classroom Activity Treasurer Report for the month of November 2014 as presented.

V (*) FINANCIAL REPORTS

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accepts the Financial Reports for the month of November 2014 as presented.

VI (*) BUDGET TRANSFER SUMMARY – NOVEMBER 2014

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the November 2014 Budget Transfer Summary Report.

VII (*) INTERNAL CLAIMS AUDIT REPORT – NOVEMBER 2014

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the November 2014 Internal Claims Audit Report.

VIII SHOREHAM-WADING RIVER CSD 2014-2015 CONTRACT

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education authorizes the President of the Board of Education to enter into a contract with Shoreham-Wading River Central School District for special education students instructional services for the 2014-2015 school year as required under applicable Individual Educational Programs, applicable law, and/or district policy.

All in favor –Motion carried 5-0

IX TAX EXEMPTION FOR GREEN BUILDING

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education for the Rocky Point School District hereby adopts a resolution authorizing the Assessor for the Town of Brookhaven to grant a real property tax exemption pursuant to Real Property Tax Law Section 470 known as the Green Building Exemption for improvements constructed on or after January 1, 2013. For the Rocky Point School District exemption the improvements must be made on or after December 16, 2014. The exemption shall be granted against the increase in assessment caused by the construction of LEED certified improvements. The exemption shall be granted according to Schedule A, attached, and the improvements constructed must be LEED certified as described in the statute.

Discussion ensued. Mrs. Brown began the discussion by inquiring about the district's portion of the tax exemption to be afforded to those who may qualify for the real property tax exemption. Mr. Hilton explained that the exemption is to be against the increase in assessment caused by the construction of LEED certified improvements over a period of

ten years. Mr. Hilton further addressed the three levels of the exemption, i.e., platinum, gold and silver. Meeting attendee and advocate of the Green Homes Tax Exemption, Danny Andersen, was invited to further address the board and those in attendance concerning additional information about the project. Mrs. Brown expressed her approval of the concept of “going green” but stated that she was concerned with the financial impact a tax exemption would pose to the district. Mr. Reh stated that he, too, had concerns regarding the different tax exemption levels and the resultant impact of same on the district.

There was no further discussion.

Motion carried 3-2; Mr. Callahan and Mr. Lessler dissented.

X DONATION FROM ROCKY POINT PTA – AUTHOR VISIT & FIELD TRIP TRANSPORTATION (JAE)

Upon a motion made by Melissa Brown and second by Sean Callahan, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the \$1,000 donation from the Rocky Point PTA to offset the cost of Darren Sardelli, author visit at Joseph A. Edgar Intermediate School, and the \$4,500 donation from the Rocky Point PTA to offset the cost of field trip transportation at Joseph A. Edgar Intermediate School.

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 \$5,500 as a result of the donations from the Rocky Point PTA.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the following budget codes be adjusted to reflect said increases:

A 2110 400 02 0000 \$1,000.00
A 2110 406 02 0000 \$4,500.00

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0

Mrs. Sullivan thanked the PTA for this very generous donation.

XI REVIEW, REVISION AND RE-ADOPTION OF BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICIES

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

BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education reviews and re-adopts the following policies: Policy Numbers: 1650, 5672, 7410 and 7530 (*second reading*) and 6152 and 7330 (*first reading*).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board of Education reviews and re-adopts Policy 7410 to take effect on March 9, 2015 (*second reading*).

Discussion ensued. Mr. Callahan stated that he was against the review, revision and re-adoption of Policy Number 1650, Submission of Questions and Propositions at the Annual Meeting and Elections and Special District Meetings, and as such, asked if this resolution could be considered as two separate motions.

Mrs. Sullivan asked for motions to be made as follows:

XI (A) REVIEW, REVISION AND RE-ADOPTION OF BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICIES

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

BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education reviews and re-adopts the following policies: Policy Numbers: 5672, 7410 and 7530 (*second reading*) and 6152 and 7330 (*first reading*).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board of Education reviews and re-adopts Policy 7410 to take effect on March 9, 2015 (*second reading*).

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0

XI (B) REVIEW, REVISION AND RE-ADOPTION OF BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY 1650

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

BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education reviews and re-adopts Policy Number 1650 (*second reading*).

Motion carried – 3-2; Mr. Callahan and Mr. Reh dissented.

XII FEBRUARY 2015 MEETING DATE CHANGE

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 approves the change in date for the regular February Board of Education meeting from Monday, February 9, 2015 to Monday, February 2, 2015.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the change in date for the February Budget Hearing from Monday, February 9, 2015 to Monday, February 2, 2015.

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0

**XIII (*) COMMITTEES ON SPECIAL EDUCATION/PRESCHOOL
SPECIAL EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education votes to arrange for appropriate services pursuant to the recommendations of Schedule 12-15-14-A and Schedule 12-15-14- B.

XIV PERSONNEL

Upon a motion made by Melissa Brown and seconded by Sean Callahan, 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

XV NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Sullivan inquired of the board trustees if there was any new business they wished to discuss.

- Mr. Callahan referenced the ongoing matter of appointing general/labor counsel following the receipt of proposals recently received by the district in response to the district's request for proposals sent out earlier this school year. The trustees discussed scheduling interviews of the top three or four firms based upon the rubric resulting from the responses generated by the RFP. Mr. Callahan suggested scheduling the interviews in early January 2015 with each interview lasting for approximately thirty minutes. Mrs. Sullivan confirmed the interviews would take place during executive session. Mr. Reh recommended that each of the three or four firms to be interviewed be interviewed on the same day.

There was no further discussion.

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

- Ms. Franco expressed her concerns regarding the board's approval of the green building tax exemption citing the possible negative impact such an exemption would have on the district's budget.
- Ms. Franco extended holiday wishes and thanked the administration and the board trustees for their hard work and continued efforts to ensure the business conducted at board meetings was increasingly more transparent.
- Ms. Franco offered her feedback regarding the new meeting format. Ms. Franco shared that she did like the text of the meeting being projected onto the large screen above the stage but that she did not like the silence following as meeting attendees read the resolutions. Ms. Franco suggested that the board members resume reading aloud the resolutions as they are simultaneously projected onto the screen.

- Both Mr. Reh and Mrs. Sullivan thanked Ms. Franco for her comments and indicated that changes in the meeting format were under consideration.
- In follow-up to Ms. Franco's concerns regarding the approval of the green building tax exemption, Mrs. Brown advised that she had received additional information in the areas in which she sought same. Mrs. Brown shared that she did her own research on the project and was confident in voting affirmatively on this agenda item.
- Miss Skylar Intravaia spoke about the recent overcrowding she experienced on a 3:15 p.m. late bus today and the subsequent safety issues arising from the situation. Miss Intravaia suggested the district provide additional buses for this run. Mr. Reh asked if the overcrowding was today only or if it was an ongoing situation. Miss Intravaia responded that the bus is "usually crowded" but that on cheerleader days it is completely packed. Dr. Ring, Mrs. Sullivan and Mr. Reh thanked Miss Intravaia for bringing this matter to their attention as this was the first time they were learning of the overcrowding. Dr. Ring suggested that by re-routing the buses the bus company could resolve this overcrowding issue. Noting that buses should not roll with students in the aisles, Dr. Ring asked Mr. Hilton to look into the matter as soon as possible.
- Referencing the discussion surrounding the green building tax exemption, Miss Intravaia asked for an explanation of what the tax exemption was. Mr. Hilton provided Miss Intravaia with the information she requested.
- Mrs. Heely asked if the drug sniffing dog policy was a new policy because due to a typographical error, it appeared that the policy was previously adopted. Dr. Ring confirmed that the policy was indeed new.
- Addressing Mrs. Heely directly, Mrs. Sullivan advised that she and Mr. Reh met with Dr. Ring, Dr. O'Brien and Dr. Yannucci to discuss the concerns that have been expressed regarding middle school midterms and finals. Mrs. Sullivan addressed in detail the reported issue of exams not being returned to the students. Mrs. Sullivan said that although the exams were not returned to the students she had been assured that the material presented on the exams was reviewed with the students. Mrs. Sullivan further stated that parents have the right to request to see an exam after contacting an administrator. Mrs. Sullivan mentioned that several parents asked to see the exams and to her knowledge those requests were honored. Mrs. Sullivan referenced the recent changes in teaching strategies relying less on rote memory and more on the common core principles. Mrs. Heely responded that she appreciated Mrs. Sullivan's efforts regarding the matter but that she disagreed with Mrs. Sullivan's evaluation of the situation.
- Mrs. Heggars expressed her agreement with Mrs. Heely's assessment and stated she believed the tests to be a waste of time if they had not been returned to the students or reviewed. Mr. Callahan offered that he believed the testing issue is an area that requires further study.
- Ms. Andersson-Fabricatore asked Mr. Callahan on which of the board of education policies he voted no. Mr. Callahan responded that it was Policy Number 1650 as he is not in favor of increasing the lead time for submission of voter propositions.

- Mr. Anthony Jackson spoke in detail regarding his concerns over the possible security issues emanating from those students who gather after school and engage in illicit behaviors, including underage smoking. Mr. Jackson shared that he has spoken to both Councilwoman Bonner and County Legislator Anker regarding this issue. Mr. Jackson asked the board to address this issue and take the lead in finding methods to eliminate it. Confirming with Mr. Jackson that the students are congregating “off school property,” Mr. Reh noted that the district has the security guard on duty make certain that the students smoking are not on school property and that attempting to regulate the students’ behavior while they are off-property is difficult. Mr. Reh suggested that the parents of those students engaging in this behavior should be expected to take responsibility for their children. Mrs. Brown contributed that the smoking of e-cigarettes is legal and Mrs. Sullivan noted that the students cannot be randomly searched. Mr. Callahan offered that these types of behavior can be precursors to other problems but that the district must strike a balance between being pro-active in stopping these behaviors and infringing upon the rights of the students. Mr. Callahan also offered that students should be discouraged from bringing nicotine and e-cigarettes to school. Mr. Callahan assured Mr. Jackson that the district would do what it could in an attempt to alleviate the problem and suggested that perhaps the use of drug sniffing dogs might discourage these behaviors.
- Dr. Ring advised that he and Mr. Jackson have had several conversations regarding this issue. Dr. Ring referenced the erection of the fence and the planting of the rosebushes, with thorns, to discourage the students from practicing these behaviors on school property. Dr. Ring also noted that members of the administration have made their presence known to students by walking the perimeters where this behavior is taking place. Dr. Ring stated that in addition to the efforts being made by the district, family cooperation and police cooperation are also needed.
- Ms. Lori Markland thanked Dr. Ring for sending out notification and information pertaining to the written threat found in a bathroom stall at the middle school. Ms. Markland asked if Dr. Ring could elaborate on the wording contained in the threat. Dr. Ring responded that he was unable to reveal what was written on the wall as a police investigation is active and ongoing. Dr. Ring advised that because the threat referenced a specific date, Saturday, December 13th, the district, in an effort to err on the side of caution, cancelled all activities, events and building use throughout the district during the weekend of December 13th and 14th. Ms. Markland inquired about other measures that may have been put into place following the incident. Dr. O’Brien shared that students are required to use agenda books (hall passes) when leaving the room and/or using the bathroom in order to keep track of the students once they leave the room.

There were no further questions or comments.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:10 p.m. a motion was made by Sean Callahan and seconded by Melissa Brown to adjourn the meeting.

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Jones
District Clerk