

MINUTES
ROCKY POINT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
September 19, 2005

Meeting called to Order at 7:40 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Present: Geraldine Thalen, President
Jane Bonner, Trustee
Howard Gimple, Trustee
Michael Matera, Trustee
Carla L. D'Ambrosio Ed. D., Superintendent of Schools
Sherry J. Alessandro, Asst. Supt. for Human Resources/Administration
Michael W. Ivanoff, Director of Finance and Operations
Irene Pedota, District Clerk

Absent: Joseph Sanseverino, Vice-President

Mrs. Thalen opened the meeting to questions or comments from the audience:

- Mrs. Ann Marie Johannesen thanked Mr. Knapp for all of his hard work with the students who performed in Buffalo at the New York State Summer Music Conference. It was a fabulous experience for her daughter. Aside from being a wonderful bonding experience for the children, it provided them with an opportunity to work with a famous choral director. Mrs. Johannesen added that she recommends that the members of the school board support this program in the future.
- Mrs. Thalen thanked both Mrs. Johannesen and Mr. Knapp.
- Ms. Ernestine Franco said that she wanted to make it clear that last year was the first time in 25 years that she voted against the budget and to explain that it was due to her level of frustration. She also said that she had a question with regard to the website, and that although she attempted to email questions to the board twice, she never received a reply.
- Mrs. Thalen asked Mrs. Wilson to reply. Mrs. Wilson said that there were no messages from Ms. Franco and that it might be because Ms. Franco wasn't emailing through Outlook Express.
- Mrs. Thalen offered to have Mrs. Wilson explain to Ms. Franco how to make sure her emails are sent successfully.
- Ms. Franco said that she basically had two questions:
 - 1) How many students are in the district?
 - 2) Is the \$2 million dollars that the district put in the retirement fund the amount that is mandated by the state?
- Dr. D'Ambrosio responded that there are currently approximately 3,712 students in the district.
- Mrs. Thalen asked Mr. Ivanoff to explain the retirement reserve fund.
- Mr. Ivanoff explained that the \$2 million was not the amount mandated by the state. The money that is mandated by the state varies every year. In order to practice good fiscal management, this money is being placed in a reserve fund in an attempt of offset increased costs.
- Mrs. Thalen explained that the money is being held in reserve in case the district needs it. The district sometimes uses extra money to reduce taxes and other times it is put in other places. This time, the district did both.
- Mr. Ivanoff added that the district received extra state aid last year. The district is mandated by New York State to contribute money to the retirement system. It makes good sense to put some money aside so that we won't have a huge tax increase next year. The district is trying to maintain a consistent tax rate.
- Mrs. Bonner added that it has been the board's experience every year that state mandates increase.

- Mr. Gimple explained that the district had a certain amount of money and we decided to give some money back to the taxpayers and hold some in reserve so that we don't have to raise taxes to an exorbitant rate.
- Ms. Franco suggested that some of the money should have been saved to offset rising fuel costs.
- Mrs. Thalen said that Ms. Franco was saying that if the money belongs to the taxpayers, it should be given back to them until if and when the district needs it. Mrs. Thalen explained that the money placed in reserve can be moved around from one area to another. Mrs. Thalen added that our district has been lauded by the state and other agencies for maintaining a reserve fund and that no one is getting the taxpayers' money that shouldn't be getting it.
- Mr. Michael Sanchez, a resident of the district for nearly 41 years, asked why the money couldn't go to the children.
- Mrs. Thalen replied that the board couldn't just take the money and spend it anyway they felt. The board believes that the district has an educationally sound program including both academic and athletic programs.
- Mr. Sanchez asked why the money couldn't be used to start a gymnastics program.
- Mrs. Thalen replied that another resident (Mrs. D'Aquila) previously inquired about the feasibility of starting a gymnastics program, and asked Mr. Kies to research it.
- Mr. Sanchez said that there is a local gymnastics business that many residents already patronize. Why not team up with this business to utilize their facilities?
- Mr. Kies explained that the district is required to go through a certain process before adding a new athletic team. He urged Mr. Sanchez to make an appointment with him to discuss the possibility. Mr. Kies explained that it would cost the district approximately \$50,000 alone in equipment, a coach would have to be found that is certified to coach gymnastics, and that gym space would have to be available.
- Mr. Sanchez suggested that the district could use Elite Gymnastics so that the school doesn't have to buy their own equipment.
- Mrs. Thalen said that she could tell that this is an issue that Mr. Sanchez would like to discuss in greater detail and that she knows that Mr. Kies would be happy to work with him since he has been extremely open to adding new teams. Mrs. Thalen said that she feels that there is a likelihood that the district could make it happen.

There were no further questions. Mrs. Thalen reminded everyone that there would be another opportunity for questions at the end of the regular meeting before the Board moved to executive session.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. D'Ambrosio reported that as a district, we had an outstanding opening this year. The buildings were spotless and everything was in order for the start of the year. The buses were running reasonably on time, and there were very few issues to contend with.

William B. Caulfield, Principal – Rocky Point High School:

- Last Friday, the high school social studies department recognized the final signing of the United State Constitution, which was actually signed on September 17th, by reading in all social studies classes the Preamble of the document. Teachers then discussed important concepts.
- Congratulations to Sherin Shanahan, special ed teacher at Rocky Point High School, who has been selected "Educator of the Month" by WLIW Channel 55.
- Rachel's Challenge will take place on Thursday with 2 assembly programs for students—9th and 10th grades at 7:20 AM and 11th and 12th grades at 8:35 AM. Later that evening, we will have our parent program starting at 7:00 PM. Everyone should have received an invitation in the mail.
- Congratulations to Ian Czekala who has been recognized as a National Merit Scholarship Semi Finalist.

- Open School Night will take place on September 29th starting at 7:30 PM with a 9th grade orientation beginning at 6:45 PM.
- Homecoming is October 1st. The theme this year is “Rocky Point Goes Hollywood.” The parade will begin at 12:30 PM in the Carasiti parking lot. Mr. Gerardi will serve as the Grand Marshall.

Carol Tvelia, Principal – Joseph A. Edgar School:

- The Joseph A. Edgar School experienced a very smooth opening.
- The Open School Nights that were held on 9/12/05 for third grade parents, on 9/14/05 for fourth grade parents, and on 9/15/05 for fifth grade parents were all very successful with approximately 250 parents attending 3rd grade open school night, 225 attending 4th grade open school night, and 200 attending 5th grade open school night.
- Students celebrated Constitution Day and learned about the importance of the Constitution by reading stories and participating in many different activities and discussions in class.

Paul Read, Principal – Frank J. Carasiti School:

- School opening at the Frank J. Carasiti School went very well.
- A new class has been added this year at FJC. It is part of our special education program called the ABA class. ABA stands for Applied Behavior Analysis, and it is given this name because of the type of classroom instruction and behavior management that is needed for students who were previously serviced outside our district. Most lessons are intense one-on-one instruction designed to help children master basic social and academic and skills.
- This ABA class as well as the new teacher and staff hired for this class are off to a great start. Most of the staff have extensive backgrounds working with special education children. In addition, our district provided extra training for the new staff this past summer as well as training for our support staff during the first week of school. On-going training will occur as needed for the remaining year to ensure that the children have a successful year.
- Constitution Day at FJC was included in our FJC Facts Newsletter this past week. The US constitution is a difficult concept for K-2 children especially early in the school year. However, further classroom discussions, especially in grade 2, will occur throughout the school year.
- Open School Night for kindergarten parents is scheduled for tomorrow night at 7:00 PM. First grade Open School night will be Wednesday, September 21st and second grade Open School Night will be on Thursday, September 22nd.
- Our first Shared Decision Team Meeting at FJC will be held next week on Monday September 26th. Parents are welcome to attend.
- Mrs. Thalen asked if changing the schedule for kindergartners for the first week of school had any impact. Mr. Read replied that having half days for kindergartners during the first week of school certainly made the transition for these young students a lot easier.

Joseph Centamore, Principal – Rocky Point Middle School:

- This is the fourth year of operation for the middle school and the beginning of the school year was very successful. The halls are nicely decorated with students’ work and the sixth graders have done a nice job transitioning to their new school.
- All clubs and athletics are in full swing.
- Students and staff celebrated Constitution Day by reading and discussing the Preamble during homebase.
- Two Rachel’s Challenge assemblies were held for middle school students last Friday. Thank you to the PTA for helping to make them possible. A parent evening will be held in conjunction with the high school on September 22, 2005.
- Dr. Centamore said that he hopes to see parents at Open School Night on September 27, 2005, and he urged parents to contact his office or the Guidance Department for an appointment if they need to discuss anything.

Joseph Centamore on behalf of John Gallagher – Rocky Point Music Department:

- The Katrina Relief Concert is scheduled for October 28, 2005 (time to be determined) in the high school auditorium. The tentative program includes: the seventh and eighth grade chorus, the high school chorus, the high school jazz band, the high school band, a faculty jazz ensemble, and community guest artists. The high school and middle school student councils and the Friends of Music will be assisting.
- Besides having the high school named a finalist in the Grammy Signature Schools program last year, Rocky Point has been recognized as one of the Best 100 Communities for Music Education in the United States. A certificate was presented to Dr. D'Ambrosio and Mrs. Thalen for display at the district office.
- Last year and over the summer, some of our students performed in various ensembles outside of school, including performances in the Hershey All-USA Band and with the American Choral Directors' Association's Children's Honors Chorus in Los Angeles. In addition, sixteen students performed in Buffalo in August at the NYS Summer Music Conference and were featured at the Fourth Annual NY Chapter of American Choral Directors' Association's Concert.
- Four high school students were notified at the end of August that they were selected to perform in Rochester in December with various NYSSMA All-State Ensembles.
- Last March, the fifth grade select chorus joined the eleventh and twelfth grade concert band in Albany as part of NYSSMA's *Music in our School's Month*. Assemblywoman Patricia Acampora and Senator Kenneth LaValle recognized these students for their achievement.
- Students also performed with All-County Ensembles in special events sponsored by SCMEA and students and faculty members are preparing to return to Rockefeller Center this December for the 2005 Tuba Christmas.
- The Marching Band participated in the Fifth Avenue St. Patrick's Day Parade, performed aboard the USS Intrepid, and for the ALS Ride for Life Kickoff Celebration and were invited to march twice in the NYC Labor Day Parade.
- A new instrumental music program for elementary students was offered from July 6 – 29, 2005.
- Thank you to music teachers – Heidi Milligan, Craig Knapp, Kelly Beery, Amy Schecher and Mary Donovan for all of their hard work.

Leonard Kies – Athletic Director:

- Our fall high school sports are well underway, with varsity and JV teams already engaging in regular season contests.
- Middle school season starts in about two weeks.
- Last Monday night, a middle school parent-coach informational meeting was held.
- The new JV kickline team made its debut at a JV football game recently and the girls look great.
- There are many exciting games lined up for homecoming.
- Thanks to Mr. Mondello, Mr. Puricelli and the grounds crew for the wonderful job preparing the athletic fields.
- This spring, we will be working with Stony Brook University's athletic training program and a workshop will be conducted.
- The athletic booster club is off and running and parents are urged to join. The first meeting of the school year will be on Wednesday night at 7:30 PM in high school room 103.

MINUTES

Upon a motion made by Michael Matera and seconded by Howard Gimple, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Minutes of the following Board of Education Meeting be accepted as presented: **Regular Meeting, August 29, 2005**. All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

TREASURER'S REPORTS

Upon a motion made by Howard Gimple and seconded by Jane Bonner, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept the Treasurer's Reports for the month of **July 2005** as presented. All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

EXTRA-CLASSROOM ACTIVITY ACCOUNT TREASURER REPORT

Upon a motion made by Jane Bonner and seconded by Michael Matera, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept the Extra Classroom Activity Treasurer Report for the month of **July 2005** as presented. All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Upon a motion made by Michael Matera and seconded by Howard Gimple, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept the Financial Reports for the month of **July 2005** as presented. All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

RESOLUTION TO INCREASE EQUIPMENT UNIT VALUE

Upon a motion made by Howard Gimple and seconded by Jane Bonner, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education accept the increase of the unit value for Equipment from \$500 to \$1,000.

Discussion ensued. Mrs. Thalen asked Mr. Ivanoff for an explanation. Mr. Ivanoff explained that this is basically an accounting change that was recommended by our auditors. Currently, anything over \$500 is considered equipment. The change will mean that anything over \$1000 will be considered equipment. There was no further discussion.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

SURPLUS ITEMS

Upon a motion made by Jane Bonner and seconded by Michael Matera, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approve for surplus the following attached list, which will be included in the Minutes Book.

Discussion ensued. Mrs. Thalen made it clear that the members of this Board of Education are not issued cell phones and asked Mr. Ivanoff to explain about the cell phones included on the surplus list. Mr. Ivanoff explained that these cell phones were over four years old, no longer under warranty, and that they are from a prior carrier. Some administrators are issued cell phones. These cell phones are under BOCES contract and cost less than \$40/per month per phone. Cell phone bills are reviewed Mr. Ivanoff and the internal and external auditors. The obsolete phones are being donated to VIBS (Victims Information Bureau of Suffolk). There was no further discussion.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

SURPLUS TEXTBOOKS

Upon a motion made by Jane Bonner and seconded by Michael Matera, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approve for surplus the following attached list, which will be available in district office and included in the Minutes Book.

Discussion ensued. Mrs. Thalen asked if these textbooks were being replaced. Mr. Ivanoff replied that they already have been. There was no further discussion.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

BID-AWARD #06-03 FOOD SERVICE EQUIPMENT

Upon a motion made by Howard Gimple and seconded by Jane Bonner, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education award bid #06-03 Food Service Equipment to the lowest responsible bidder as follows:

Bar Boy	Unit Price Award as per attached Analysis
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Discussion ensued. Ms. Bonner asked what we were getting. Mr. Ivanoff explained that it is refrigeration equipment that is required in the cafeteria by the Suffolk County Board of Health. There was no further discussion.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AMENDED BOARD POLICY #7131 – NON-RESIDENT STUDENTS (SECOND READING)

This policy, which will be available in the District Office, needs to be moved and voted on affirmatively at two successive meetings of the Board of Education.

Upon a motion made by Jane Bonner and seconded by Michael Matera, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education votes to adopt the amended policy # 7131 – Non-Resident Students.

Discussion ensued. Mrs. Thalen asked Dr. D’Ambrosio for a brief summary of the policy. Dr. D’Ambrosio explained that we are getting students from various situations coming into the district so it is necessary to alter our policies with regard to foreign students and foreign exchange students so that we can be equitable to everyone. Mr. Gimple asked how much it costs to educate a child. Dr. D’Ambrosio replied approximately \$12,000 for the year. Some districts accept tuition for out-of-district students. We currently have a relationship with the Rotary Club to handle our foreign exchange students. There was no further discussion.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

COMMITTEES ON SPECIAL EDUCATION/PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Upon a motion made by Michael Matera and seconded by Howard Gimple, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education votes to arrange for appropriate services pursuant to the recommendations of Schedule 9-19-05-A and 9-19-05-B. All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

PERSONNEL

Upon a motion made by Howard Gimple and seconded by Jane Bonner, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education accept the attached Personnel changes. All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

Mrs. Thalen asked if there were any other questions or comments before the Board moved to executive session. There were none.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:39 PM, a motion was made by Jane Bonner and seconded by Michael Matera for the Board of Education to go into executive session to discuss particular personnel matters. All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Pedota
District Clerk

The Board of Education returned to open session at 9:26 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:27 PM a motion was made by Michael Matera and seconded by Howard Gimple for the Board of Education to adjourn the meeting. All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Carla L. D'Ambrosio, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools