

**Minutes**  
**THOMASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Regular Meeting**

Thomaston Town Hall – Meeting Room One  
Date: Monday, January 14, 2013  
7:00 p.m.



**Members:** Lucy Santopietro, Chair; Roxy Fainer, Vice Chair; Kathleen Freimuth, Secretary; Holly Herbert, Treasurer; Rebecca Guay, Member; Alexander Lee, Member; Anne Petrucci, Member; Joanne Gilland, Member; Debra Schriver, Member

## Minutes

**Present:** Lucy Santopietro, Kathleen Freimuth, Holly Herbert, Roxy Fainer, Anne Petrucci, Alexander Lee, Joanne Gilland, Becky Guay, Debra Schriver

**Absent:** Superintendent, Lynda Mitchell

**Also Present:** Business Manager, Nancy O'Dea-Wyrick; High School Administrators, John Perrucci and Jonathan Kozlak; Black Rock School Administrator, Alisha DiCorpo; Center School Administrator, Anne Uberti; Pupil Services Director, Nancy Schnyer; Student Board Representatives, Sarah Guay and Phil Sechow; and Board Clerk, Patricia George

### I. Establishment of a quorum and call to order:

Board Chair Lucy Santopietro established a quorum and called to order the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education at 7:00 p.m.

### II. Pledge of Allegiance:

Lucy Santopietro led the pledge of allegiance. Immediately following the pledge, Ms. Santopietro acknowledged the passing of Ms. Karen DePalma, a teacher in the Thomaston School District for 19 years. A moment of silence was held on her behalf.

### III. Approval of Agenda:

On a motion made by Holly Herbert and seconded by Anne Petrucci to accept/approve the agenda with the following amendments;

Under VII. Communications; Subsection A, New Hires; add an item 3; Julia Silvestri, Long-term Substitute; Thomaston Center School; effective January 14, 2013;

Under VII. Communications; Subsection C., Athletics; add an item 5; Jack Pasquella; Field/Dugout;

Under XI. Standing Committee Reports; Subsection C., Maintenance/Facilities; add an item 2; Field Maintenance Bid Update

No further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

#### **IV. Approval of Minutes:**

On a motion made by Holly Herbert and seconded by Anne Petrucci to accept/approve the minutes dated Monday, December 10, 2012 as presented; no further discussion; Kathleen Freimuth abstained; motion carried unanimously.

#### **V. Student Representative Reports:**

Student Representatives Sarah Guay and Phil Sechow were on hand and reported to the Board on current events at the high school. Phil's report included information on the recently held hallway decorating contest with the victory going to Mr. Dauphinas' classroom. His report also included information on mid-term exams and activities of the High School Bowl team, which is hosted by Mr. Dauphinais.

Additionally, Phil told the Board that several Student Council Representatives, under the advisory of faculty member Sue Santovasi, are meeting and discussing issues relating to consolidation. They are putting together some student opinions to bring to the next meeting of the Consolidation committee.

Sarah reported that the girls' basketball team was selling t-shirts and donating the proceeds to the children of Ms. DePalma, a teacher in the district who recently passed away. She also reported that students in grades 7 and 8 made snowflakes for the students of Newtown. Additional activities to benefit those children included collecting teddy bears and selling candy grams.

#### **VI. Incredible Classroom/Recognitions:**

##### 1. CAPT Scholars' Recognition

Three students obtained Advanced Level Performance on the 2012 Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) Luke McMahon, Caleb Zenobia and Jossie Lee. Board Chair Lucy Santopietro publicly recognized these students for this accomplishment.

##### 1. Ms. Knowlton's students; project reports

Several students from Ms. Knowlton's grade 6 Ancient Civilization class were invited to attend the Board of Education meeting and present their regional reports on a country of their choice. Students provided an oral report covering such topics as geography, government, contributions, a famous person affiliated with the country and cuisine. Sommer Prime reported on Lebanon and Brennan Merritt reported on Greece.

## **VII. Communications:**

### 1. New Hires/Rehires/Replacements:

On a motion made by Holly Herbert and seconded by Anne Petrucci to accept/approve the new hires as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

### 1. Resignations/Retirements/Exit Interviews:

On a motion made by Holly Herbert and seconded by Kathleen Freimuth to accept the Resignations/Retirements as presented;

#### Further Discussion:

Board Chair Lucy Santopietro provided a few words regarding the retirement of Superintendent Lynda Mitchell who will retire from the district effective with high school graduation. She stated that Lynda has been with the district twelve years starting as Principal at the high school and concluding her career as Superintendent of Schools. She said that Lynda has always put 100% forward; she gets along with everyone, does a great job managing the district, is a great leader, is selfless, and always puts the students first. She concluded by stating that it will be hard to fill her shoes.

Motion carried unanimously.

### 1. Athletics:

#### Items 1-4

On a motion made by Joanne Gilland and seconded by Anne Petrucci to accept/approve the athletic new hires as presented;

#### Further Discussion:

Several Board members inquired about the delay in reporting new coaches.

It was explained that new hires occur during the period between Board meetings which represents a four to five week timeframe. Athletic Director, Bill Ryan wants to be certain the prospective new coaches have the appropriate paperwork completed, mailed into the state, and in place prior to submitting their names to the Board for approval;

Motion carried unanimously.

### 5. Jack Pasquella/Dugouts

The original goal of the field committee was to get the playing fields (at the high school) to a point where they were safe to use again and to provide better playing conditions. As the project unfolded, the committee received so much support from the community that they were able to expand it by adding a scoreboard, which will be installed in the spring. The final step will be the addition of four covered benches. Mr. Pasquella indicated that they are currently fundraising and working on the project.

A rough draft/sketch was provided to each of the Board members depicting what the final product would look like. Mr. Pasquella said that basically, it will be a cement pad approximately 30' long and 8' wide and would be housed where the benches are currently located. Tevor Bellemare, a masonry contractor, has volunteered to oversee the project with the committee supplying him with labor. The frame itself will be metal at approximately 8' high in the front and will tier back to 7', the roof will be flat. Josh Herbert has been enlisted to assist with this step of the project due to his expertise in this area. A bench will run along the back and there will also be an area along the side to store helmets and bats. Chapman Lumber and their suppliers are working together on the benches.

The roof of the structure will be flat and will have the high school name and logo. The material that the roof will be comprised of is undecided at this time.

Board Chair Lucy asked what budget maintenance of the dugouts would be incorporated into. Mr. Pasquella indicated that he is hoping that the dugouts will require little maintenance, perhaps a coat of polyurethane every few years and would fall under the BoE Athletic budget.

On a motion made by Joanne Gilland and seconded by Holly Herbert to accept/approve the installation of dugouts; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

1. Transfers: n/a

1. Leaves of Absence:

On a motion made by Joanne Gilland and seconded by Holly Herbert to accept/approve Ms. Nancy Schnyer's leave of absence as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

1. Field Trips:

On a motion made by Holly Herbert and seconded by Alexander Lee to accept/approve the field trips as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

1. Correspondence:

1. 2012-2013 Educator Certification Compliance Report  
Informational; as presented.

#### **VIII. Superintendent's Report:**

1. Student-of-the-month: (December) Drew Gagne
  - B. Student-of-the-month: (January) Joseph Fainer
  - C. Remembering Karen DePalma.....
  - D. Consolidation Committee

Note: Superintendent Mitchell was not present at the Board meeting. Her report items will be brought forward to the February Board meeting.

In Lynda's absence, Board Chair Lucy Santopietro made a few comments relating to the Consolidation committee, its purpose, where the committee is in the process and who it is comprised of. She wanted to ensure that it was understood that it is not a meeting of the Board of Education and that anyone could attend.

#### **IX. Business Manager's Report:**

##### **A. Security Symposium**

Business Manager Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick and High School Assistant Principal, Jonathan Kozlak attended a Security Symposium a week ago. It was reported that there were approximately 800 attendees present comprised of Board of Education members, law enforcement officials, principals, superintendents, maintenance/facilities managers and business managers. The purpose was to listen to experts in the field of security, share ideas, ask questions and start conversations in the community and the state regarding best practices.

A great deal of discussion encompassed collaborating with local law enforcements and emergency responders, as well as building strong relationships with other facets of town government.

This will be an on-going process and will have costs associated with it.

##### **B. Budget Update**

Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick indicated that she is in process of doing budget reviews with administrators. An e-mail has been sent to the budget subcommittee members looking for dates to meet.

#### **X. Administrators' Reports:**

##### **A. Black Rock School, Alisha DiCorpo/Thomaston Center School, Anne Uberti**

In addition to her written report, Principal DiCorpo added that a letter was sent home to the parents of students at Black Rock School noting that there would be a practice lockdown drill at the school during the last week of January.

##### **1. Thomaston High School, John Perrucci**

Principal Perrucci has been exploring increasing the standards for passing grades at the high school to 65 from 60. It will be brought forward to the Board for a vote at their February meeting.

He is also in the very early stages of research with regards to a two diploma structure, one which would represent proficiency of the state standardized tests and the second, a certificate or credit diploma. His feelings are that the two diploma initiative will legitimize the expectations that all students are able to read and write and do mathematics at proficiency.

He said it was very early in the process and that he was not prepared to bring a full proposal to the board at this juncture.

Several Board members had questions for Principal Perrucci stemming from his written report. Member Alexander Lee asked about the network at the high school. Principal Perrucci said they are struggling and that it's not an issue in the entire building and is only affecting certain computers. It has stumped the I.T. department who continues to work diligently in resolving the issue.

Board member Becky Guay made an inquiry regarding the masonry issues which exist at several stairwells on the exterior of the building. Principal Perrucci said that the work really needed to be done this year and felt it should be brought to the Finance Board because it is a safety issue. He was instructed to contact the business manager.

C. Pupil Services, Nancy Schnyer

Ms. Schnyer indicated that she was, "Putting out a lot of fires and handling pressing issues prior to her leave".

This included completing the Focus Monitoring Bi-annual report, budget preparations, having meetings with special education staff, and out-of-district 504s and PPTs. She was also updating cases with Family Outreach worker, Sue Graham.

**XI. Standing Committee Reports:**

1.

i. Budget:

A motion was made by Holly Herbert and seconded by Kathleen Freimuth to accept/approve the Summary-by-Budget-Line Y-t-D Expenditures in the amount of \$5,981,806.15; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

2. Transfers:

On a motion made by Holly Herbert and seconded by Anne Petrucci to accept/approve the transfers as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

1. Special Education Tuition Rates:

On a motion made by Joanne Gilland and seconded by Holly Herbert to accept/approve the Special Education Tuition rates for 2013/2014 as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

1. Curriculum/Instruction: n/a

1. Maintenance/Facilities:

1. Security (school doors/key fob)

The business office has been inundated with issues surrounding the key fob entry systems at the schools. The lifespan of the locks are nearing their end and are approximately \$1,600 to replace. Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick is utilizing replacement parts to repair some of the locks to squeeze

out a little more time. She noted that she is doing what she can do out of this year's budget and will have to put some in next year's budget.

2. Field Maintenance Bid Update

Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick indicated that she was in receipt of the bid specifications from Athletic Director, Bill Ryan when asked by the Board Chair. She deferred to the Board and asked if they wanted to proceed with putting it out to bid at this juncture.

Board Chair, Lucy Santopietro said that Lynda was to reach out to Marty Egan first; if that did not come to fruition, then the field maintenance would need to go out to bid prior to the playing season.

D. Technology: n/a

E. Personnel: n/a

F. Transportation: n/a

G. Athletics: n/a

1. Long Range Task Force/Building Committee: n/a

I. Policy:

1. Cell Phones

An edited policy was brought back to the Board as requested by the Board chair. It was requested by member Roxy Fainer that the wording under Respectful Use, "...the student must secure permission from an adult in the building" be changed to read, ".....the student must secure permission from a staff member in the building." The edit will be made to the policy.

1. Social Networking Policy

With the absence of Superintendent Mitchell, the Social Networking Policy will be brought forward to the February Board meeting

J. Government Relations: n/a

K. Affiliations:

1. CABE Update (Board Member Joanne Gilland)

Ms. Gilland reported on current events at CABE beginning with a CABE sponsored legislative breakfast which was held earlier in the day. She brought forward highlighted topics of discussion specifically, safety and security. Ms. Gilland said a focus of school districts should be safe and welcoming schools. School districts should also have district safety committee meetings.

1. Legislation: n/a

**XII. Public Participation:**

Tricia Brody  
790 Hickory Hill Road  
Thomaston, CT

Explained the formation of a new committee

Suggested video taping meetings

Phil Sechow  
78 Reynolds Bridge Road  
Thomaston, CT

Inquired about a retirement party for Superintendent Mitchell and utilizing state funds for the stairwells

Sarah Guay  
462 Cedar Mountain Road  
Thomaston, CT

Asked if students can use cell phones in the hallways

**XIII. Old Business:**

1. Board Meeting Structure
2. Start Time for 2014 BoE Meetings
3. Field Trip to Greece in Spring 2014

**XIV. New Business:**

**XV. Items for Future Agendas:**

**XVI. Executive Session:**

A motion was made by Anne Petrucci and seconded by Becky Guay to move to Executive Session at 8:45 p.m. to discuss a pending legal issue with regards to the out-of-district transportation bid; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously. The Board invited Business Manager Nancy O'Dea-Wyrick into Executive Session.



Public Session:

On a motion made by Joanne Gilland and seconded by Kathleen Freimuth to move to Public session at 9:08 p.m.; no further discussion; motion carried.

Board Motion:

None

**XVII. Adjournment:**

On a motion made by Anne Petrucci and seconded by Kathleen Freimuth to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education at 9:09 p.m.; no further discussion; motion carried.