



Minutes
THOMASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Meeting

Thomaston Town Hall – Meeting Room One

Date: Monday, October 17, 2011

7:00 p.m.

Members: Laurie Barrett, Chair; Beth Keutzer, Vice Chair; Lucy Santopietro, Secretary; Laura Fitch, Treasurer; Joanne Gilland, Holly Herbert, Roxy Fainer, and George Counter Members (and a position vacated by Steve Catania effective July 15, 2011)

Minutes

Present: Laurie Barrett, George Counter, Beth Keutzer, Lucy Santopietro, Roxy Fainer, Holly Herbert, Joanne Gilland, and Laura Fitch

Absent: N/A

Also Present: Superintendent, Lynda Mitchell; Business Manager, Sue Laone; Pupil Services Director, Nancy Schnyer; Black Rock School/Thomaston Center School Administrators, Anne Uberti and Alisha DiCorpo; High School Administrators, John Perrucci and Jonathan Kozlak; and Board Clerk, Patricia George

I. Establishment of a quorum and call to order:

Board Chair, Laurie Barrett established a quorum and called to order the Regular Meeting of the Thomaston Board of Education at 7:02 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance:

Laurie Barrett led the pledge of allegiance.

III. Approval of Agenda:

On a motion made by Lucy Santopietro and seconded by Roxy Fainer to approve/accept the agenda with the following amendments:

Under VII., Superintendent's Report, add an item D., School Climate;

Under X., Standing Committee Reports, Subsection D., Technology, add an item 3., District Technology Plan

No further discussion, motion carried unanimously.

IV. Approval of Minutes:

Regular Meeting of the Board of Education dated Monday, September 12, 2011:

On a motion made by Joanne Gilland and seconded by Lucy Santopietro to approve/accept the minutes from the Regular meeting of the Board of Education dated September 12, 2011; no further discussion, Beth Keutzer abstained; motion carried unanimously.

Special Meeting of the Board of Education dated Wednesday, September 28, 2011:

On a motion made by Lucy Santopietro and seconded by Beth Keutzer to approve/accept the minutes from the Special meeting of the Board of Education dated September 28, 2011; no further discussion; Joanne Gilland abstained; motion carried unanimously.

V. Guests:

Tabled for a future agenda

VI. Communications:

Item C: Athletics

On a motion made by Beth Keutzer and seconded by Lucy Santopietro to approve/accept the new coaches (pending receipt of appropriate credentials) as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

Item F. Field Trips

1. Gettysburgh, PA and Washington

Further Discussion:

Board member, George Counter inquired as to what would happen with the students who might not be able to afford the expense of the class trip.

2. New York City
3. Quebec City

Further Discussion:

Board member, George Counter expressed his concerns with regards to students in grades 7 & 8 traveling with high school students.

On a motion made by Beth Keutzer and seconded by Lucy Santopietro to approve/accept Fields Trips as presented, all in favor for items 1 and 2, opposed George Counter for item 3; motion carried.

VII. Superintendent's Report:

- A. Student of the month for September: Sarah Hafele
Superintendent Mitchell had the opportunity to hear Sarah speak at a recent Rotary luncheon. She noted that Sarah is a charming young lady. Reading from Sarah's resume, Ms. Mitchell highlighted a number of Sarah's academic achievements, participation in sports and school activities.
- B. Student of the month for October: Michael Ciarlo
Student Michael Ciarlo spoke at a Rotary luncheon on October 13th to which Superintendent Mitchell commented that he provided an, "absolutely outstanding speech." Ms. Mitchell also noted that Michael achieved a very high honor in scouting, the Eagle Award.
- C. "How Welcoming is Your School"
Superintendent Mitchell deferred to Board members Roxy Fainer and Lucy Santopietro for comments on a recent workshop they attended, "How Welcoming is Your School?" Ms. Fainer noted that the focus of the workshop was a

welcoming walkthrough. There were four focus areas, Physical Environment, Public Relations, School-Wide Practices and Policies and Written Materials. Ms. Fainer felt that the workshop initiative tied in with the state bullying and school climate initiatives. Ms. Santopietro provided examples for a welcoming environment which could include a welcoming sign, directions to the office, classroom numbers, a map of the school, and a friendly office staff to name a few. Both Ms. Santopietro and Ms. Fainer felt that the workshop was exceptional and are hoping to implement the design in Thomaston.

D. **School Climate**

Superintendent Mitchell along with several administrators and teachers recently attended a School Climate Conference. A district initiative will be to incorporate school climate and bullying.

VIII. Business Manager's Report:

Business Manager, Sue Laone took a moment to acknowledge a donation of school supplies that was provided to the district from Best Buy of Danbury. Also acknowledged was the Thomaston Opera House who opened their doors and provided bins of supplies to the district. Assistant Principal Alisha DiCorpo plans to use these materials for positive behavior support, to open up a school store at Black Rock School and to add to the school store at Center School.

The Board thanked these vendors for their contributions to the schools of Thomaston.

IX. Administrators' Reports:

A. **Pupil Services Director, Nancy Schnyer**

Ms. Schnyer highlighted the material contained within her written report regarding Transitions (Birth to three/high school) and a district improvement plan which was a result of the State Department Bureau of Special Education's visit last spring. The plan entails implementing and monitoring district progress in terms of two indicators for a period of at least eighteen months. She recently applied for and was granted a \$10,000 Focused Monitoring Improvement Grant to offset some of the costs associated with the plan.

On a personal note, Ms. Schnyer added that she was being honored as a recipient of the Ella Grasso Leadership Award. As a recipient, she would be recognized at a leadership breakfast scheduled at the Aqua Turf for Tuesday, October 18th.

B. **High School Principal, John Perrucci**

Mr. Perrucci stated that he had nothing to add but provided the Board with several handouts that were not included in his written report.

C. **BRS/TCS, Anne Uberti**

Referring to Ms. Uberti's written report, Board member George Counter questioned Principal Uberti on repairs of two heating units at Black Rock School along with their associated unbudgeted \$8,000 estimated repair cost. Mr. Counter also expressed his concerns relating to building safety. The two units were responsible for a gaseous order and subsequent evacuation of the building which had occurred several weeks ago. Both the Fire Department and gas company were dispatched to the school and ultimately the building was rendered safe. Ms. Uberti explained that the repairs are currently in process.

X. Standing Committee Reports:

A. Budget:

On a motion made by Laura Fitch and seconded by Lucy Santopietro to approve/accept the Y-t-D expenditures in the amount of \$2,482,784.78 and transfers for the month of October as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

B. Curriculum and Instruction:

1. CMT Presentation

Principal Uberti and Assistant Principal DiCorpo provided the Board with a Powerpoint presentation on CMT results for students in grades 3-6 with a hard copy of the presentation provided to each Board member. The report offered a review of terms such as AYP and DRS, (Annual Yearly Progress and District Reference Group respectively) associated with the test. Graphs depicting various comparisons were generated and helped to provide an understanding of where the students in these grade levels were in prior years, are currently, and expectations for the future.

It was noted that Black Rock School did not meet AYP in Reading.

C. Maintenance/Facilities: n/a

D. Technology:

1. Technology Committee reconstituted:

The Technology Committee, which in the past was under the direction of previous administrator Paul Johnson, was reconstituted at the end of last year. Plans are to continue with the committee.

2. District Technology issues and demands

Superintendent Mitchell talked about the district's "technology dilemma". She feels that it is serious and presents many problems. She explained that there is a heavy burden placed on the technology department which consists of two people, Tim Polowy and Deborrah Sanford. Tim has been working on several time sensitive state reports as well as being connected to implementing new software in the district, PowerSchool and working closely with the installation of the new phone system. Deb Sanford is currently housed at the high school due to the number of grade levels in that building. Ms. Mitchell feels that the current design of the department is convoluted for a two man technology team. She expressed her interest in establishing a technology subcommittee of the Board. Several Board members offered suggestions to help ease the situation including hiring a full-time or part-time person.

On a motion made by George Counter, seconded by Lucy Santopietro to structure a technology department including job responsibilities, a job description, qualifications, personnel reporting design and to have it submitted to the Board at the November meeting; no further discussion, motion carried unanimously.

3. District Technology Plan

The technology plan, which is comprised off several components, has a due date of June 2012.

- E. Personnel: n/a
- F. Transportation: n/a
- G. Athletics: n/a
- H. Long Range Task Force/Building Committee: n/a
- I. Policy:
 - 1. Policy Review
Superintendent Mitchell explained that plans are to review and update existing policies.
 - 2. Staff Training Days
Staff training days will be established to address the hours that were missed due to Hurricane Irene.
- J. Government Relations: n/a
- K. Affiliations:
 - 1. CABE: Delegate Assembly (informational)
- L. Legislation:
 - 1. New Bullying Guidelines
Superintendent Mitchell deferred to Assistant Principal Kozlak who explained the need to update policy to reflect the new definitions and to address cyber bullying
 - 2. Dropout Age
Ms. Mitchell noted that the drop out age has been raised to the age of 17

XI. Public Participation:

Tim Scatena
67 Patricia Lane

Mr. Scatena, as a parent of a 7/8 grade student, felt that the field trip was an excellent idea.

Speaking from experience, Mr. Scatena explained that the industry standard for technology support is 1 tech person to 20/30 computers.

Ann Petrucci
154 D. Welton Way

Ms. Petrucci made several inquiries with regards to the parent portal in the new PowerSchool software, asking when it was expected to be available to parents.

She also inquired as to what the student/faculty ratio would be for the approved field trip to Quebec.

XII. Old Business: n/a

XIII. New Business: n/a

XIV. Items for Future Agendas: n/a

XV. Executive Session:

XVI. Adjournment:

On a motion made by Lucy Santopietro and seconded by Holly Herbert to adjourn the Regular meeting of the Board of Education at 8:40 p.m.; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.