

Minutes
THOMASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Meeting

Thomaston Town Hall – Meeting Room One

Date: Monday, February 14, 2011

7:00 p.m.



Members: Laurie Barrett, Chair; Beth Keutzer, Vice Chair; Lucy Santopietro, Secretary; Laura Rieley, Treasurer; Joanne Gilland, Holly Herbert, Roxy Fainer, George Counter and Steve Catania, Members

Minutes

Present: Laurie Barrett, George Counter, Beth Keutzer, Roxy Fainer, Steve Catania, Joanne Gilland, Holly Herbert and Laura Rieley

Absent: Lucy Santopietro

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 Lyons; High School Administrator, John Perrucci; Board Clerk, Patricia George; and Student Representatives Curtis Dunn and Alexander Lee

I. Establishment of a quorum and call to order:

Chairperson Laurie Barrett established a quorum and called to order the Regular Meeting of the Thomaston Board of Education at 7:01 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance:

Student Representatives led the pledge of allegiance.

III. Approval of Agenda:

On a motion made by George Counter and seconded by Beth Keutzer to approve/accept the agenda as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

IV. Approval of Minutes:

On a motion made by Roxy Fainer and seconded by George Counter to approve/accept the minutes of the Regular meeting of the Board of Education dated Monday, January 10, 2011; no further discussion; Steve Catania abstained; motion carried.

On a motion made by Laura Rieley and seconded by Roxy Fainer to approve/accept the minutes of the Budget Subcommittee dated Monday, February 7, 2011; no further discussion; Steve Catania, Joanne Gilland, Holly Herbert abstain; motion carried.

On a motion made by Roxy Fainer and seconded by Holly Herbert to approve/accept the minutes of the Budget Subcommittee dated Wednesday, February 9, 2011; no further discussion; Steve Catania and Joanne Gilland abstain; motion carried.

V. Student Presentations:

Curtis Dunn reported that the new playwriting course was “going really well” with ten students currently enrolled in the class.

Both he and Alex spoke about “Spirit Week” at the high school and the many activities surrounding it including a pep rally, Ugly Sweater Day, Color Day (with each grade wearing a different color), Bad Hair Day, and a pie-eating contest to name a few.

VI. Communications:

Item A: New Hires:

On a motion made by Beth Keutzer and seconded by Roxy Fainer to approve/accept the new hires as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

Item E: Leaves of Absence:

On a motion made by Beth Keutzer and seconded by Roxy Fainer to approve/accept the leaves of absence as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

Item G: Correspondence:

As presented

Item H: 2010/2011 School Calendar Revisions:

On a motion made by Beth Keutzer and seconded by Roxy Fainer to approve/accept the 2010/2011 school calendar revisions due to weather related school closings; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

VII. Superintendent’s Report:

A. Student of the Month- January:

The student of the month for January 2011 was Patrick Neumann. Superintendent Mitchell reported on his many academic successes and enthusiastically highlighted his extracurricular activity of junior drag racing. She concluded by stating that Patrick is a very nice young man.

B. Student of the Month - February:

The student of the month for February 2011 was Kayla Fitzgerald. Kayla is extremely involved in school and has taken advantage of the many activities that exist. Ms. Mitchell further stated that Kayla has applied to several colleges and in one college has been awarded approximately \$100,000 in scholarship money. Both students are very nice representations from our school.

C. Challenge Day Follow up:

Superintendent Mitchell deferred to High School Principal, John Perrucci, who indicated he would cover the topic later during his oral report to the Board. Superintendent Mitchell said it was such a wonderful experience that it has to be carried forward.

D. CAS Volunteer Recognition

Volunteers within the school community, including Board members, are being invited to join the Superintendent at a dinner held at the Aqua Turf on their behalf. It is a very nice evening where the district has the opportunity to say “thank you” for everything they do.

- E. Television Show Dates
Superintendent Mitchell is working with Michelle Dayton to establish a date to televise the 2011/2012 school budget on Channel 21. Both Business Manager Sue Laone and the Superintendent will make the presentation.
- F. Community Relations Committee Meeting Updates
Superintendent Mitchell reported on her first meeting of the Community Relations Committee. She said approximately 5 people attended the meeting and that there was very good input. She plans to host two subsequent meetings with the next meeting planned for a time in March.

VIII. Business Manager's Report:

Business Manager Sue Laone indicated that she had met with the Board of Finance last Tuesday. Concerns about the projected deficit in Special Education were expressed. The first payment for Excess Cost is due to be received at some point in February.

With regards to the recent snow removal on the school buildings, George Counter expressed his opinion stating he believes the cost should be incurred on the town's side since they own the buildings. Sue Loane said that she has a bill for \$10,800, the cost to remove snow from the roofs.

IX. Administrators' Reports:

- A. Pupil Services Director, Nancy Schnyer
Ms. Schnyer indicated that she has been working with the state for 3 ½ days during their "Focus Monitoring" visit. Students, as well as Regular Education and Special Education staff in each of the buildings were interviewed as part of the process, and phone interviews were conducted with parents. Ms. Schnyer is hoping that out of this process there will be recommendations that will reinforce what she has been trying to achieve across the district.
- B. High School Principal, John Perrucci
Principal Perrucci noted that during replacement of a section of the boiler, it was discovered that another section had the same crack in the same place as the last two. His question, "What is the recourse?" He stated that it was obvious to the individuals who were installing the sections that it had appeared to be a manufacturer's defect. Parts have been covered 100% but the labor is not.

At the Superintendent's request, Principal Perrucci met with John Kozlak, the Assistant Principal and asked that he develop some type of plan to extend what was learned as part of Challenge Day. He wanted to create an atmosphere that was "cultural" rather than a one-time experience. Mr. Kozlak worked with a small committee and brought forward some of the following ideas, small family groups, painting of mural with the Challenge Day insignia, Spirit Week, and an advisory program.

Principal Perrucci is in the process of establishing protocol to screen every student in the building to create a base-line. He will then administer post assessments for those students who have screened into the intervention courses which will ultimately provide an instrument on the effectiveness of those courses.

- C. Two Schools Principal (BRS and TCS), Anne Uberti
Principal Uberti gave an oral report to the Board which addressed assessments at both Black Rock and Center Schools. She also spoke about the roofs with regards to the amount of snow and its subsequent removal.

X. Standing Committee Reports:

- A. Budget:
1. Summary by Budget Line Y-T-D expenditures
 2. Budget Line Transfers
On a motion made by Laura Rieley and seconded by Steve Catania to approve the year-to-date budget line expenditures and transfers as presented; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.
 3. Retirement Incentive
Business manager, Sue Laone noted that she was currently working up a retirement plan for non-certified staff to avoid layoffs. It was also determined that a retirement plan would not be offered to certified staff. On a motion made by Roxy Fainer and seconded by Steve Catania to approve/accept a retirement plan for non-certified staff only; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.
 4. 2011/2012 Budget Proposal
Business Manager, Sue Laone presented the proposed 2011/2012 budget to the Board for their review and approval. The budget would have an overall increase of 2.42%, or \$337,592 over last year's budget.

On a motion made by George Counter and seconded by Roxy Fainer to amend the agenda to have Public Comment encompassing the budget follow the 2011/2012 budget presentation; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.

XI. Public Participation:

Corinne Wong
875 Huckins Road
Cheshire, CT

She asked that the Board try and keep the academics and reading program intact. She said that you "can't hack away at the roots and expect a fruit to grow". She concluded by saying we need to invest in the future of our children.

Tim Scatena
67 Patricia Lane
Thomaston, CT

Mr. Scatena suggested having the teachers remove the "no strike" clause from their contracts and have them go on strike the third week of school.

Michael Madow
129 D Welton Way
Thomaston, CT

He believed that the administration worked very hard to create a budget which doesn't effect academics. After attending the Budget Subcommittee meetings, he also felt that a budget of 3% plus would not pass.

Motion

On a motion made by Steve Catania and seconded by Beth Keutzer to approve the 2011/2012 budget at 2.42%; no further discussion; George Counter opposed; motion carried.

B. Curriculum and Instruction: n/a

C. Maintenance/Facilities:

1. School Roof update

Superintendent Mitchell provided details regarding snow removal on the school roofs. She had been in close contact with building administrators, custodians and architect, Dennis O'Sullivan, who worked on the building projects. Mr. Henry Osoweicki was contracted to do the snow removal. Parents were kept apprised utilizing the CodeEd system.

D. Technology:

1. PowerSchool

The district is in the process of converting over to PowerSchool. There were some initial problems during the first round. Greg Dandio, a Chief Technology Officer at ACES (Area Cooperative Educational Services), along with the Superintendent of Schools from Wolcott recently met with Lynda and Tim to share their insights. Lynda would like to utilize their services as the district moves forward with the software transition.

E. Personnel: n/a

F. Transportation: n/a

G. Athletics: n/a

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

I. Policy: n/a

J. Government Relations: n/a

K. Affiliations: n/a

L. Legislation: n/a

XII. Old Business:

- A. Teacher Retention
Superintendent Mitchell would like to table the item for the March Board meeting. She recently visited the state website and pulled documents regarding teacher retention. She indicated that there are so many components to teacher retention and that is not necessarily salary driven.
- B. Berkshire League Playoffs
It was decided that the Budget Subcommittee should meet to discuss this item initially.
- C. Technology Funding
A recent Technology Subcommittee meeting was held to discuss the phone system. Information will be brought forward to the entire board once a plan of action has been established. It was also mentioned that technology in the district is under funded and understaffed.
- D. Board Self-Evaluation
Board Chair and Superintendent Mitchell have had discussions regarding the Board doing a self-evaluation. Item tabled for a future agenda. Board will have to decide whether or not to move forward.
- E. On-Line Course Availability
Principal Perrucci indicated that he would hate to spend significant time on the subject if the district couldn't afford to implement. Superintendent Mitchell indicated that it is "credit recovery" that she is referencing. Superintendent Mitchell will be attending a presentation on Odysseyware which would play into a homebound piece. The item is on hold.
- F. Televised Board Meetings
Superintendent Mitchell is very interested in televising Board meetings. She felt it would be another means to create a community link. The item is tabled for the March meeting.

XIII. New Business:

XIV. Items for Future Agendas:

Teacher Retention – March 2011
Technology Funding – no specific date provided
Board Self-Evaluation – no specific date provided
On-line Course Availability – no specific date provided
Televised Board Meetings – March 2011

XV. Executive Session: n/a

XVI. Adjournment:

On a motion made by George Counter and seconded by Steve Catania to adjourn the Regular meeting of the Board of Education at 8:35 p.m.; no further discussion; motion carried unanimously.