

MINUTES
RYE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
Rye Middle School Multipurpose Room
February 8, 2005

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Culyer at 6:40 p.m. and the roll was called.

Present

Mr. James Culyer, *President*
Mr. Stephen Feeney, *Vice President*
Ms. Sarah Mariani
Mr. Joshua Nathan
Mr. George Pratt
Ms. Victoria Sterling
Mr. Robert Zahm

And Dr. Edward Shine, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Daniel McCann, Deputy Superintendent
Mr. Robert Walsh, Assistant Superintendent

On a motion by Ms. Mariani, seconded by Ms. Sterling and carried unanimously (7-0) it was voted to adjourn into executive session for the review of the employment history of current and prospective employees, and the discussion of pending litigation and negotiations.

Upon reconvening in public at 8:13 p.m., on a motion by Ms. Sterling, seconded by Mr. Feeney and carried unanimously (7-0), Mr. Culyer welcomed those present.

Mr. Culyer said that the minutes of the January 25th meeting of the Board would be removed from the Consent Agenda and announced the Hearing of the Public on Non-Agenda Items.

Hearing of the Public on Non-Agenda Items

A member of the public read a letter to the Board regarding test scores at Milton School.

CONSENT AGENDA

On a motion by Mr. Pratt, seconded by Ms. Mariani and carried unanimously (7-0) it was voted to approve the following items:

Action – General

1. The minutes of the Board of Education Work Session of January 18, 2005 as written.
2. The 2005-2006 School District calendar. (Attachment I)

(continued)

3. The Letter of Intent to merge the wrestling program with the Rye Neck School District and the Blind Brook School District. (Attachment II)
4. The Letter of Intent to merge the gymnastics program with the Blind Brook School District and the Port Chester School District. (Attachment III)
5. The Wood Production curriculum, as proposed. (Attachment IV)
6. The recommendation that the Board use Policy 2430 to suspend the provisions of Policy 7900 and allow the use of John Nugent Stadium lights Monday through Friday from March 7 through March 28 in order to allow spring athletic practices to be conducted safely and that the exception would further allow lights to be used until 7:30 p.m. rather than the 6:30 p.m. limit provided by Policy 7900. (Attachment V)
7. The gift from the Milton School PTO of Grades K-1 and Grades 2-5 playgrounds. (Attachment VI)

Action - Fiscal

1. The Treasurer's Summary Report for the period ending December 31, 2004. (Attachment VII)

Action – Personnel

1. The request by Andrea Murphy for an unpaid Child Care Leave of Absence from her position as third grade teacher assigned to Milton School; effective on or about her approximate anticipated due date of May 11, 2005 to June 30, 2005.
2. The resignation due to retirement of Barbara A. Roggemann as a School Nurse assigned to Osborn School, effective June 30, 2005.
3. The resignation of Fran Tencza as a Cook-Manager assigned to Rye High School, effective February 17, 2005.
4. The appointment of Michael Tina as a Special Education Teacher Aide, with a probationary period of a minimum of twelve weeks to a maximum of fifty-two weeks, assigned to Rye Middle School, Step 1 of the 2004-2005 Teacher Aide/Teaching Assistant Salary Schedule, 3.5 hours/day, 5 days/week, effective January 31, 2005.
5. The Extra Pay for Extra Work positions for the 2004-2005 school year per the attached. (Attachment VIII)
6. The appointment of Margaret Leibowitz, Esq. as the Hearing Officer pursuant to Section 75 of the Civil Service Law of the State of New York, with respect to Employee Number 626 and authorizes the Hearing Officer to hear evidence, make a transcript of proceedings, and to issue a written report of her findings and recommendations, including a disciplinary penalty, if any. (Attachment IX)

(continued)

Action – Special Education

1. The recommendations of the Committee on Special Education from its meetings of January 5, 2005 for Students ID#105, 911547, and 911739.

ITEM REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA**Minutes of January 25, 2005 Meeting of the Board**

On a motion by Mr. Pratt, seconded by Ms. Mariani and carried 6-0-1 with Mr. Culyer abstaining, it was voted to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2005 meeting of the Board, as written.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Shine noted that while test results will be shared in the District's annual Report Card and with the Board as they arrive, he wanted to highlight two reports, the fifth grade social studies test on which almost 74% of the students achieved the highest performance standard, 4, and the sixth through eleventh grade ERB scores which were exceptional. He said Dr. McCann, principals and teachers were meeting to review all results, but in the meantime he commended all who are faced with considerable challenges in incorporating increased teaching.

Dr. Shine reminded those present that there would be a work session on the Five-Year Facilities plan the following Tuesday.

PRESENTATION / DISCUSSION**2005 – 2006 Budget Presentation**

Dr. Shine presented the following information:

The annual process of presenting and vetting a school district budget begins with the introduction of anticipated revenue, and the presentation of an educational plan and financial plan in the form of spreadsheets that you will begin to review at the February 8, 2005, Board meeting. Despite all the other important actions you take on an annual basis, this is the most important to the students, parents and to the community as the budget lays out the 2005-2006 plan for the education of some 2,844 K-12 children and young adults in the Rye City School District community. The presentation of the numbers assumes that all the essential ingredients of Rye's education plan are in place; adopted curriculum, staffing to class size guidelines and program requirements, state and federal mandates regarding special education students and Section 504 students are in place; secretarial, custodial and teacher aide support planned; maintenance and operation of the school facilities accounted for; and clubs and athletics will be present for the active engagement of students. Included in the plan is curriculum development, staff development and the leadership of schools and the District.

The present calendar indicates that the Board is scheduled to adopt a budget on April 26 and the community is scheduled to vote on the budget on Tuesday, May 17. In the intervening weeks there will be many opportunities to ask questions and to fully understand the educational and financial plan.

(continued)

The budget that is being presented to you is one with a 9.9% budget-to- budget increase and an estimated 9.3% tax rate increase. It has been framed from the following information:

1. Standstill Budget [Financial]

This approach allows only increases due to contractual obligations and anticipated negotiated increases with several bargaining groups with contract expiration dates of June 30, 2005.

In the attached spreadsheets the increase in salaries is lower than may have been anticipated because we have tightened the budgeted “contingency” in these accounts.

All state school districts are mandated to fund teacher pension benefits [TRS] to the level designated by the State Comptroller. For the 2005-2006 fiscal year we have been directed to use 5.63% of the certified salaries. This is up from 2.25% in the 2004-2005 fiscal year. The increase is \$742,747 to a new total of \$1,510,247 for the 2005-2006 fiscal year. The \$1.5 million that we are mandated to budget is more than a 100% increase to this pension benefit [TRS] allocation in the 2004-2005 budget.

The District has also been directed to fund employee pension benefits [ERS] at 11.27%, up from 9.96%.

Rates for health insurance for all employees are increasing 11% for 2005-2006.

The adjusted standstill budget [before debt] is increasing 3.19% to the prior year’s budget.

2. Debt Service

In October of 2002, voters of the school district approved a \$22 million bond resolution for additions and alterations to the District’s three elementary schools. The administration expects State issued building permits and the sale of school district bonds this spring with increases in debt service from those bonds reflected in the 2005-2006 Budget.

In 2005-2006 the debt service will include the debt approved by the school district voters in October 2002. The debt service will increase 59.38% to a 2.88% increase to the prior year’s budget.

3. Osborn Litigation

The community has been briefed on the important legal positions of this case and on the cost of the litigation. The District’s legal counsel has informed the Board that the trial phase begins on February 14, 2005 in State Supreme Court. The District expects that litigation expenses will continue into the 2005-2006 school year. Legal expenses for the Osborn litigation were not budgeted in 2004-2005.

Litigation expenses for the 2005-2006 fiscal year have been budgeted at \$750,000. This is 1.43% increase to the prior year’s budget.

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4. Summary:

Standstill	3.19%
Debt Service	2.88%
Osborn Litigation	1.43%
<u>TOTAL</u>	7.51%

5. Additional staffing needed to strengthen our programs, support increasing enrollment [2.1% enrollment growth] and strengthen supervision.

This Budget includes the following:

- 6.8 FTE classroom teachers
[2.2 FTE elementary teaching positions to support class size guidelines; 3.2 FTE for the middle school team concept at eighth grade and additional sections in art, music, foreign language and physical education to support the 46 additional students projected; 1.4 FTE for high school additional sections for growth in projected senior class.]
- 3.0 FTE Regular classroom teacher aides [2.0 FTE for Milton to provide additional support and safety during construction; 1.0 FTE to Midland for additional enrollment].
- 2.0 FTE Special Education classroom aides [Projected need]
- 2.0 FTE School Managers [Midland and Osborn] for administrative support to schools with more than 600 students in 2005-2006.
- .5 FTE Secretary [contractual support to school nurses at Midland and Osborn].
- 1.6 FTE Custodial positions –Milton will need additional help to keep the school clean and Midland and Osborn will have additional space.
- EPEW support to Athletic Director to support growth in programs – program growth has been documented; help is needed.
- Increase Athletic Department Secretary to 12 months.
- 10% increase in Facility-Operational Account to fund increases in fuel/electricity, etc.
- Increase in Athletic Department allocation to cover expanded programs and increased transportation costs.
- Allocation to schools to support enrollment increases and CPI increases.

Total this Section – 2.39% increase to the prior year's budget

Grand Summary:

Standstill	3.19%
Debt Service	2.88%
Osborn Litigation	1.43%
Staffing Program	
Growth and Support	2.39%
<u>TOTAL</u>	9.9% Budget-to-Budget Increase

(continued)

6. A Final Caveat – As you review the spreadsheet you will note that there is one additional column to the spreadsheet: Second Proposition. I provided that information to you to let you know that I am cognizant of the need to keep the budget under control yet inform you that, in addition to all the other staffing, program and equipment requests that are not included in this initial presentation, there are two additional priorities. The first is the Board priority for the maintenance and operation of the school district's facilities in and through the Five Year Facilities Plan. The Board had discussed increasing the Capital Reserve budget to 2%. This initial presentation does not include that increase but the Second Proposition column does. The second priority is to make you aware that we need to find and lease space for the Rye School of Leadership and to keep the option open for leasing space for Milton students at the Community Synagogue. An estimate of those costs is also included in that column.

Dr. Shine said that while it may sound surprising to say that a 9.9% increase represented a "bare bones" budget, that nonetheless was the case, noting that what he presented was stripped of personnel and equipment to bring some sense of reasonableness to the budget and to address the concerns of the community. He reviewed those items not included in the budget and said that was also the base behind the second proposition, developed with the concept of presenting the needs represented in that proposition to the community to determine.

In response to Board questions, Dr. Shine noted that the Teachers' Retirement System increases represented \$700,000.00 in the total increases, in addition to an increase in health costs of 11%.

Mr. Culyer suggested that specific, line-by-line items would be discussed in depth at the Board's budget work session on March 1 and asked the Board members to send specific questions to Dr. Shine in time for him to be able to respond and have detailed background information available for the March 1 meeting. Mr. Zahm said he wanted the budget subcommittee report at that time, as well.

Five-Year Financial Plan

Mr. Walsh presented the Five-Year Financial Plan 2005-2006 Update, highlighting 2004-2005 financial performance and financial assumptions; reviewing historical enrollment and projected enrollment; projected staffing; Strategic Planning; contract/employee benefits, and cost centers. He then reviewed the 5-Year Capital Asset Preservation Plan, the 3-Year Technology Plan, and debt service and installment debt. Mr. Walsh concluded his presentation with a review of revenues, assessments, the fund balance, and reserves and a forecast of budgets and tax rates.

After Board discussion, Mr. Culyer asked if there were comments from the public. A member of the public shared his opinion of staffing increases compared to enrollment forecasts.

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COMMUNICATIONS TO/FROM THE BOARD

Mr. Feeney said that the budget analysis subcommittee had met earlier in the evening and on the 28th of January, and that committee members had attended a New York State seminar on the budget in Long Island, noting that the Rye City School District representatives were the only ones to include community representatives. He said the committee would meet three more times before the end of March.

He said the budget and investment committee would meet the following Tuesday to discuss and determine the best roll-out of the \$22 million bonds.

Mr. Pratt reported on the work of the stadium lights committee, noting that the committee had met four times for three hours at each meeting in January. He said the results of their work represented a collective effort. He said they welcomed all opinions prior to discussion between the committee and the Board in March.

Ms. Sterling reported that the technology and the policy committees had met the preceding week.

Mr. Culyer noted that as Board members had been notified previously, there was a School Boards Association meeting with legislators coming up at the Rye Town Hilton and asked Board members to let the administration office know whether they would be attending.

Mr. Culyer also noted that there had been an effort on the part of the Board to draft a letter to the community on two topics, bonding and facilities, and that it had been the ultimate desire of the Board to instead focus the letter on single topics. He asked the Board to provide their final edits to Ms. Sterling, the editor of the letter, so it could be sent to the community in a timely fashion.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Culyer noted that when the Board reconvened in public the meeting would be immediately adjourned. He also noted that there would be Board work sessions on February 15 on the Five-Year Facilities Plan; and on March 1 on the Budget.

On a motion by Ms. Mariani, seconded by Mr. Feeney and carried unanimously (7-0) it was voted at 10:20 p.m. to adjourn into executive session for the discussion of negotiations.

On a motion by Mr. Pratt, seconded by Mr. Zahm and carried unanimously (7-0) it was voted at 10:49 p.m. to reconvene in public.

On a motion by Mr. Nathan, seconded by Ms. Mariani and carried unanimously (7-0) it was voted to immediately adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Ferrari
District Clerk