

MINUTES
RYE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
Rye Middle School Multipurpose Room
May 3, 2005

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Culyer at 7:10 p.m. and the roll was called.

Present

Mr. James Culyer, *President*

Mr. Stephen Feeney, *Vice President*

Mr. Joshua Nathan

Mr. George Pratt

Ms. Victoria Sterling

Mr. Robert Zahm

Excused

Ms. Sarah Mariani

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

Mr. Culyer welcomed those present and announced that the meeting was a business meeting of the Board to which the public was invited. He explained that Education Law requires a public hearing on the budget after it is adopted, which was the first item on the agenda of this meeting. He said that the Board had additionally voluntarily held a hearing on the budget before the adoption of the budget to gather community input as final decisions were being made. He stated that the budget the Board had adopted was for \$55,800,147.00 representing a 6.76% budget-to-budget increase and a 5.54% tax rate increase. He noted that the preparation of the budget required many weeks to develop and thanked all those who had spent so much time on this process. He said that the expectation of the Board is that the budget supports continuous improvement across the District.

Mr. Culyer noted that the public hearing on the budget would be followed by the Hearing of the Public on non-agenda items.

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 2005-2006 BUDGET

A member of the public who identified himself as a 25-year principal in another district and a two-year resident of Rye with a first grader in the public schools. He thanked the Board for the budget presentation and the 2004-2005 Report Card which he said was exemplary. He said he was disappointed to see the budget defeated the prior year and asked the Board to encourage the community to support the budget this year.

A member of the public congratulated the Board on reducing the budget. He said, however, that he had given the Board suggestions that were not made including those pertaining to budget transfers. He said that it was also disturbing to have discovered that the District keeps a second set of books.

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Mr. Culyer replied that the District does not have a double set of books, that all budget transfers are a matter of public record and in accordance with State Education Department regulations, and that all financial records are audited by an independent auditor and have always been and are available to the public.

There were no more questions or comments on the 2005-2006 budget. Mr. Culyer called for the hearing of the public on non-agenda items.

Hearing of the Public on Non-Agenda Items

There were no questions or comments from the public.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Culyer announced that Board Policy 7900 would be open for discussion by the Board and the public before a vote would be called.

Dr. Shine provided background on the recommendation to the Board regarding this policy, as follows:

He said that the preceding day he received communications from the Board's Advisory Committee on Policy 7900 and from a group of neighbors representing 18 families. He said both communications presented compromises from the positions previously presented to the Board and that these communications were sent to the Board via electronic mail earlier in the day.

He said that with a variety of points of view still being processed, it seemed to him to be impossible to try to review and adopt a fully revised Policy 7900 during the meeting, but that it would be possible to isolate the issues and for the Board to vote on the critical revisions that need a decision, and then direct the Policy Committee to integrate, polish and finalize the policy language.

He said he had reviewed the presentations and positions, and was recommending the following:

1. 60 nights with light usage for practices and twilight games:
 - 30 practice days with lights off by 7:00 p.m.
 - 30 practice days with twilight games starting at 5:00 p.m. with lights off by 7:30 p.m. under normal circumstances, or 30 minutes after the conclusion of the event if the event is interrupted by injury, overtime or a significant public safety event.
2. 10 days for Winter Track during the months of December and January. This usage depends on temperature and snow fall but if not used these days cannot be added to the 60 designated above. Lights on two poles rather than four poles would light these practice sessions, if they occur, with lights off by 6:00 p.m.
3. A maximum of 14 weekend games shall be allowed with no more than 4 regular season football games included in the 14. Of this number, two may be used for playoffs; one for football and one for another sport. However, if these events are not used for playoffs they may be used for other weekend night events.
4. Use of the PA System will be allowed only for the PA announcer, playing of the

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National Anthem and half-time shows by the cheerleaders. Other normal high school band activities that are part of the school shall be allowed. Use of the PA system to play music during practices and during game warm-ups will not be allowed.

5. The lights are approved for usage during the months of September, October, November, December, January, March, April and May only.
6. The policy shall restrict the use of the lights to school district activities only and exclude pep rallies, graduation, school assemblies, band concerts and the Rye Harrison Football Game.
7. Crowd control and litter pick-up are already defined in #3 of the current policy.
8. Policy 7900 will be reviewed and evaluated every three years with a report to the Board in June of each year.

Dr. Shine recommended that the Board adopt the above revisions to Policy 7900 and direct the Policy Committee to integrate the revisions into the policy

Subsequent to Board discussion, Mr. Culyer called upon members of the public who had registered to speak on this topic. Eight members of the public addressed the Board expressing opinions for and against the change to the light policy, many also thanking Mr. Pratt and Mr. Feeney for taking the time to meet with them the previous weekend to discuss the policy. A member of the public presented what he termed to be a compromise to the policy that included increased light usage from the original policy but reduced usage from the proposed policy.

Dr. Shine said that a cross-reference to Board Policy 1500 on facilities use would be added to the policy when it was finalized.

Although Mr. Nathan and Mr. Zahm asked to continue the discussion, Mr. Culyer called for a vote on the recommendation regarding Board Policy 7900 as amended to include the cross-reference noted by Dr. Shine.

On a motion by Mr. Pratt, seconded by Mr. Feeney and carried 4-0-2 with Mr. Nathan and Mr. Zahm abstaining it was voted to approve the recommended revisions to Policy 7900. (Attachment I)

Mr. Culyer, in response to Board questions, noted that the approved revisions would be incorporated into Policy 7900 which would then be returned to the Board for approval.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Shine said he was pleased to report that Rye High School Freshman, Will Galperin, entered two films in the Reel Teens Film Festival. He said that Both films were chosen for a festival where 412 films from all over the world (including Europe and Asia) were submitted. Only 70 were selected as semifinalist entries in the festival. Dr. Shine noted that on June third through the fifth, they will be shown to audiences of hundreds of people in Hunter, New York

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and then the winners will be chosen in each designated category: Best Fiction, Short Fiction, Visual Art PSA, etc. he said that one of Will's films is a short fiction/visual art while the other is a Public Service Announcement against child abuse. He said that the Board may recall that last year Will was selected as the winner of an essay contest and that he knew the Board joined him in wishing him well this year, too.

Dr. Shine said that International Day was held at Rye High School the middle of last months, with students from 11 countries speaking about the history, customs, music, teen life, and other cultural aspects of their home societies. He noted that the students spoke at small assemblies throughout the day, and other students participated in a Q & A after their presentations. Dr. Shine offered congratulations to the foreign language department, specifically Ross Vavala, who organized this event, coordinating the presentations of our students from Cuba, Holland, Zimbabwe, France, Austria, Germany, Bolivia, Ecuador, Afghanistan, Peru, Japan, and New Zealand. Dr. Shine said that feedback was impressive and it is hoped that this will become an annual event.

Dr. Shine said that there have been a number of questions about whether May 27th and 30th will be added to the Memorial Day break since the District did not use any snow days this year. He said that this decision is not made until the week before, since these days really are emergency days, reserved in case of any number of situations that may require the closing of school. He said that some parents organizations have prematurely announced that schools are closed these days but that he had alerted faculty and staff not to plan on them as vacation days until a decision is made the week prior.

Dr. Shine said that at the next meeting, May 17th, there would be a display of student work in the area of language arts, coordinated by Debra Fishman. I'd like to thank Laura Klein who coordinated this evening's exposition of the elementary science program.

PRESENTATION / DISCUSSION

Revisions to Policies 4770 and 5110 and Addition of Selection/Classification Policy

Dr. Shine explained that Policy 4770, High School Graduation Requirements, had been revised to reflect changes to the requirements of the State Education Department, particularly pertaining to Regents Exam scores, new designations of Regents Diplomas with Honors, Regents Diplomas with Advanced Designation, Regents Diplomas with Advanced Honors, and clarifying the requirements for a Local Diploma and an IEP Diploma. He noted that these new designations go into effect with the Class of 2005.

Dr. Shine then explained that Policy 5110, School Attendance Areas, has been revised to reflect prior Board discussion on elementary attendance areas and residence requirements within attendance areas. He said as part of the recommendation for approval, he will recommend that those students presently approved for out-of-district placement remain until their elementary school program is complete, but that he would ask the Board to direct him not to approve these assignments in the future.

Dr. Shine then said that the Selection/Classification proposed policy draft provides an umbrella for the regulations to the policy. He said that the Board will be asked to approve the

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policy, and that the regulations would be monitored by the Superintendent and Director of Athletics. He noted that boys' and girls' tennis will be added to the seventh grade eligibility listing in the Regulations; that it had been left off the list because a budgetary request had been made for a new modified boys' and girls' tennis team which then was deleted from the budget.

Board discussion ensued with some recommendations to refinements to the Selection/Classification Policy which Dr. Shine said would be incorporated into the Policy to be brought before the Board for approval May 17th.

A member of the public asked that Dr. Shine send a letter to elementary families explaining Policy 5110. Dr. Shine replied that this would be done.

COMMUNICATIONS TO/FROM THE BOARD

Mr. Culyer reviewed several invitations to the Board including one to the Memorial Day program on the Green at 10 a.m. on May 30th, one to the Westchester Putnam School Boards Association (WPSBA) June 2 annual dinner, and one from the WPSBA to provide names of school board members to be honored for service.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Zahm, seconded by Mr. Nathan and carried unanimously (6-0) it was voted at 10:52 p.m. to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Ferrari
District Clerk