

MINUTES
RYE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
Rye Middle School Multipurpose Room
February 26, 2008

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Culyer at 7:02 PM and the roll was called.

Present

Mr. James Culyer, *President*
Mr. Joshua Nathan, *Vice President*
Mr. George Cady
Ms. Kendall Egan
Ms. Laura Slack
Mr. Robert Zahm

Excused

Mr. Edward Fox

And Dr. Edward Shine, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Stephen Cohen, Assistant Superintendent
Ms. Kathleen Ryan, Business Official

On a motion by Mr. Cady, seconded by Ms. Slack and carried unanimously, (6-0) the Board adjourned immediately into executive session for the review of the employment history of current and prospective employees, negotiations pursuant to the Taylor Law, and litigation strategy.

On a motion by Mr. Zahm, seconded by Ms. Egan and carried unanimously (6-0) it was voted at 8:04 PM to reconvene in public.

Mr. Culyer welcomed those present and announced that at the previous meeting of the Board, the retirement resignation of Mr. Wayne Matteis, Assistant Principal, Rye High School, had been accepted by the Board. Mr. Culyer expressed sincere gratitude for Mr. Matteis's sixteen years of service to the Board.

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 Action – General Item 1, Activate America/City of Rye Grant Proposal; and Action – Fiscal Item 3, Contract with Sabine Borgogni, would be removed from the Consent Agenda.

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On a motion by Mr. Zahm, seconded by Ms. Slack and carried unanimously (6-0) it was voted to approve the following items:

Action – General

- The minutes of the meeting of the Board of Education of February 12, 2008.

Action - Fiscal

1. The resolution for participation in Southern Westchester BOCES Cooperative Bids. (Attachment I)
2. A contract with the Tarrytown School District for Health and Welfare Services for the 2007-2008 school year. (Attachment II)
3. A contract with Dr. Kathleen McNeila for the 2007-2008 school year. (Attachment III)
4. The bid for HVAC Services in the amount of \$28,600.00 to Atlantic-Westchester, Inc. of Bedford Hills, New York. (Attachment IV)
5. A contract with Vernon Hills Contracting in the amount of \$164,781.00 to perform drainage work at Midland School. (Attachment V)

Action – Special Education

- The recommendations of the Committee on Preschool Special Education from its meeting of November 29, 2007 for Student ID#931; from its meeting of January 10, 2008 for Student ID#9532; from its meetings of January 31, 2008 for Students ID#981 and 773; from its meeting of February 6, 2008 for Student ID#903; and from its meeting of February 8, 2008 for Student ID#850.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Shine reported that Milton students conducted a successful Jump for Heart campaign, raising over \$7,000 for the American Heart Association in the process, learning at the same time about physical fitness, heart disease, the dangers of obesity, and ways to improve their cardiovascular health. He said that the following week middle school students would participate in Hoops for Heart, playing 3-on-3 and other basketball shooting games, hoping to raise funds for the American Heart Association, as well, and that they also would focus on heart healthy activity.

Osborn fifth graders have invited Rye senior citizens to a special dress rehearsal performance of their musical, Dr. Seuss is on the Loose, Dr. Shine said, and noted that Rye High School students have invited seniors and the community to their spring musical, Lil Abner taking place Friday and Saturday nights.

Dr. Shine reported that fifth graders District-Wide are completing their DARE instruction and graduation ceremonies have been and are taking place. He said that the following day, Milton's DARE graduation would take place at 10:30 in the Milton gym. Dr.

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Shine said that the District continues to thank the Rye Police Department for sponsoring this program, and Detective John Wood for serving as the community's DARE officer.

The Osborn PTO is hosting a program for 3rd through 5th grades called Injury Prevention, Dr. Shine reported, run by Blythedale Children's Hospital and sponsored by Kohl's, with a focus on the importance of wearing helmets while playing sports. Dr. Shine said this was just one example of the many things our PTOs and POs do to expand and enrich learning for District students.

Students across the district have been involved in a number of Black History Month programs that are starting to wrap up this week, Dr. Shine said. He said, for example, that at Midland, some second graders have concluded researching contributing African Americans and were making puppets of the persons they have studied, and some fourth graders will provide a first person narrative for classmates and parents about a Black American they have studied.

Dr. Shine said that even as he spoke, the Rye High School hockey team was competing in the championship quarterfinals and, in closing, offered a reminder that the District would begin accepting Kindergarten registration forms the following week. He asked anyone who has a friend or neighbor with a small child to remind them that it is important to begin this process. He said that over the next couple of months there will be a number of activities for incoming kindergartners and their families and the elementary schools and administrators would like everyone to participate in them.

ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

YMCA Activate America/City of Rye Grant Proposal

On a motion by Mr. Zahm, seconded by Ms. Slack and carried unanimously it was voted to endorse the YMCA (Activate America) and the City of Rye grant proposal for site improvements at Rye High School/Rye Middle School for improved traffic flow and safety, pending the inclusion of the word "pilot" on the Recommendations list, page 14 of the proposal, item 2, bullet 2, between the words Engineering and recommendations. (Attachment VI)

Contract for Translation Services

On a motion by Mr. Zahm, seconded by Ms. Slack and carried unanimously (6-0) it was voted to approve a contract with Sabine Borgogni for translation services pending the inclusion of the language to be translated. (Attachment VII)

PRESENTATION / DISCUSSION

Report From Accume Partners

Claudia Cabello, Audit Manager, Educational Practices, Accume Partners, the District's Internal Auditor, reported on Accume's audit of the human resources and payroll departments in the District, attached. She reported no discrepancies and reviewed

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recommendations to segregate duties, something she said is a problem in many districts because of tight personnel structuring. (Attachment VIII)

Ms. Ryan reviewed the plans for remediation and steps already taken to address recommendations in the report.

Bertrand De Frondeville commended the Board for undertaking the study and recommended that they move up those remediation plans not scheduled for completion until 2009.

2008-2009 Budget Discussion

Dr. Shine noted that the standstill budget had been updated to reflect several changes suggested during budget discussion at the February 12, 2008 meeting of the Board. He said that there was a change to the benefits cost center, reflecting the actual health premium increase of 9.5%, and that some staff additions had been moved from the enrollment changes category to the mandates category. He said that, as well, some reductions in new staff costs had been made because of the elimination of several existing sixth assignments. He pointed out that all of the principals and Mr. Castagna and Ms. Klein were present and were prepared to speak to items in their budgets.

Rye Middle School Exploratory classes, the sunset provision for which is the end of the school year, were discussed, in addition to current and projected special education costs and costs included in the athletic budget.

Bertrand De Frondeville said that there was no scientific information on SmartBOARDS and that it was a known fact that computers in the classroom are deleterious to effective student learning. He also spoke against additional Rye Middle School classes, saying that the school already has a sufficient number of classes. He then said that there used to be 40 students in a class, and that the count of guidance personnel should be in administration, not with teachers. He concluded his remarks by saying that he would not speak to sports and special education because they were sacred cows, but that he would remind the Board of the goal of no more than 5% as a budget increase.

Charmian Neary said that Mr. De Frondeville insulted special education parents with his comment and that he should not speak of special education as a sacred cow.

Sheri DeGraw thanked the Board and Administration for their efforts and commented that middle school exploratory classes were an excellent addition to the curriculum, giving students an opportunity to learn about areas of study they might not otherwise be able to explore, and that providing foreign language instruction on a daily basis was a vast improvement over the previous schedule.

COMMUNICATION ITEMS

Mr. Zahm said he had sent a letter to the Journal News about their article on Governor Spitzer's proposed budget and read his letter to the Board. Mr. Nathan added that the Journal News article was off by half from the real state aid cut in the Governor's budget. Mr. Culyer announced that Assemblyman, George Latimer, would be holding a hearing on the Governor's budget on March 6 from 4 – 7 PM in the Rye Brook town

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offices and urged everyone to attend and support the effort to encourage reconsideration. He said that information on the meeting and a sample letter for residents to send urging reconsideration was available on the District's web site under Current News, Events/Notices.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Nathan seconded by Ms. Slack and carried unanimously (6-0) it was voted at 10:56 PM to adjourn into executive session to discuss the employment history of current and prospective employees, negotiations pursuant to the Taylor Law, and litigation strategy.

On a motion by Mr. Zahm, seconded by Mr. Cady and carried unanimously (6-0) it was voted at 12:47 AM to reconvene in public and immediately adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Ferrari