

**MINUTES**  
**RYE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION WORK SESSION**  
**Rye Middle School Multipurpose Room**  
**May 5, 2009**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Nathan at 7:03 p.m. and the roll was called:

Present

Mr. Joshua Nathan, *President*  
Ms. Laura Slack, *Vice President*  
Mr. George Cady  
Ms. Kendall Egan  
Mr. Edward Fox  
Ms. Young Kim

Excused

Mr. Robert Zahm

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

On a motion by Ms. Egan, seconded by Mr. Cady and carried unanimously (6-0) it was voted to move immediately into executive session to review the employment history of current and prospective employees, and discuss negotiations pursuant to the Taylor Law.

On a motion by Ms. Egan, seconded by Ms. Slack and carried unanimously (6-0) it was voted at 8:09 p.m. to reconvene in public.

Mr. Nathan welcomed those present and asked Ms. Slack to present the Board's Extra Mile Award..

Ms. Slack commended Susan Eggers, Margaret Hein, Rena Pemble and Fiona Dogan for their volunteerism in establishing and managing each school's list serve electronic newsletter, noting that they had consistently gone the extra mile for young people, the schools and the community.

Mr. Nathan thanked Ms. Slack and asked Dr. Shine to read a statement. Dr. Shine read the following statement which he said was for the public and for the record:

"Last week there were public statements and public accusations leveled by the president of the RTA, claiming that the Board had acted improperly with respect to the high school principal's recent tenure recommendations. My silence last week should not be misconstrued. Tonight I want to be absolutely clear: there was no Board or Board member interference. Dr. Rooney, RHS principal, wrote a letter to the RHS faculty and staff on May 1. As a courtesy I mentioned to Dr. Rooney that I intended to read from his letter for the public and for the record tonight.

(continued)

Dr. Rooney writes:

“I met with the board in Executive Session on two occasions to make recommendations for tenure for eight teachers. When I recommended four ... teachers be delayed for a year because I thought more demonstrated growth was needed before the district made a potentially 30-year commitment to them, it took many by surprise. Those surprised included all members of the Board. I never discussed tenure recommendations with any board member before that night, and all seven members were genuinely surprised by my recommendation.

I did discuss this controversial decision extensively with the relevant department heads, and they disagreed with me. I knew I was setting myself for a punishing pummeling, and I agonized about this for months, but I went with my gut. I am not claiming infallibility ...[yet] it weighed heavily on me that I am setting the direction -- long after I am gone -- for ... education in the next few generations of students at one of the best high schools in the nation.

I have a 20-year nakedly public record in teacher hiring. I am proud that over these two decades, parents and kids consistently tell me that, if I got one thing right, it is that I have assembled an extraordinary faculty.

In all those years, no tenure recommendation (or hiring recommendation) has ever been overturned by various and diverse boards. ... [and] the accusation that one board member manipulated the HS tenure recommendation process is absurd and grossly unfair. The accused board member, like the rest of the board, were scrupulous and principled in their dealings with me on the tenure issue, and however satisfying it is to single out one as a target, it is unworthy of us as professionals. Any finger-pointing about misguided decision-making at the HS should be directed squarely toward me.”

Some final points:

1. The email reference by Dr. Zung was written by me, the words and associated intentions in it were mine and not Mrs. Slack's. Mrs. Slack did nothing wrong here and her conduct is consistent with what I ask of Board members.
2. Over the years the Board and the administration have been religious in their warnings that personnel issues are not discussed in public. There is a process. We all know the danger of introducing un-vetted information in public.
3. Finally, there are times when there are disagreements. Oftentimes we may have the same facts but a different point of view on what they mean. This is normal and a reflection of our passion for what we do. With the pending teacher contract negotiations and the extremely difficult economy it is axiomatic that greater tension will exist. We cannot use the current tension, however, for personal attacks against Board members or anyone else. No one deserves that; it is terribly destructive and serves no good end. We must treat each other well and in the spirit of one of the first rules we learned in school...the Golden Rule. Thank you.”

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Mr. Nathan thanked Dr. Shine for “setting the record straight and returning focus to the budget and educational program.”

Dr. Shine introduced Dr. Cohen who reviewed a number of teacher sites on the District web site.

Mr. Nathan thanked Dr. Cohen for his presentation.

Mr. Nathan then announced the public Hearing on the Budget, noting that the Board welcomed comments on the budget and any other topic people wished to bring before the Board.

Dr. Shine introduced the hearing with the following statement: “School Districts are required by law to hold a public hearing on the adopted budget not less than seven days nor more than 14 days before the Budget Vote. The posting for this meeting includes that required public hearing.

Since February, I have used the District’s Electronic Newsletter to provide information to parents on the 2009-2010 budget. That same information has been included in the local press so that, in theory, parents and local citizen/ taxpayers received the same information. We are in the process of completing a hard copy budget newsletter in one last effort to meet the District’s responsibility to fully inform voters on the budget. I feel confident, more confident than ever, that every citizen has had an opportunity to learn all the nuances of your budget deliberations and decisions. We have two more weeks to continue that effort. Before you open the meeting to the public I would like to provide a very brief over view of the critical issues using several Power Point slides.”

Dr. Shine then presented an overview of the 2009-2010 school year budget.

### Hearing

Maureen Carey, Enisa Sabovic, Rhonda Papert, Linda Bonaventura, and Josephine Tice spoke on behalf of Laura Slack, noting her achievements and generosity in the community. Ms. Bonaventura and Ms. Tice also thanked the Board for its hard work and dedication.

Denise Cypher commended the Board for its courage and stated the Board had done a good job on the budget, then stating that the community should vote for Laura Slack and Josh Nathan.

Ray Schmitt noted that he was a candidate for the Board, that he supported the budget, and that he encouraged the community to vote in favor of the budget. Kim Abate thanked the Board for its work on behalf of the community, thanked the Board for the budget it had adopted, and encouraged a yes vote on the budget.

Mary Beth Lubeck spoke in support of the budget and thanked retiring Board member, George Cady, for his service.

Jeanne Sinnott noted that she had served on the Board and commended the Board for its fortitude.

Shari DeGraw stated that the budget vote was important.

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Bertrand de Frondeville stated that it was very regrettable that page 6-3 was not included in the budget as he had frequently requested and said that the Budget Committee had not met seriously and had held only two meetings. He requested that the Board make sure that there were

two Board members on the Committee in the future.

Ms. Cypher commended Mr. de Frondeville.

Martin Gerson expressed his dismay over Board candidate, Susan Hendler and said people should vote for Josh Nathan, Laura Slack and Ray Schmitt.

Jim Powers said he had watched the previous Board meeting on television and quoted Abraham Lincoln, saying he found the meeting disturbing and could not stand silent about it.

The PTO and PO Presidents thanked the Board for the budget it had adopted and thanked the Board members for their service.

Mr. Nathan thanked those who had spoken and announced that the Hearing on the Budget was closed.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Mr. Nathan asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

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

#### **Personnel**

1. The resignation of Sarah Clermont from her position as a Music Teacher, assigned to Rye High School and Rye Middle School, effective at the close of business May 29, 2009.
2. The One Year Probationary Appointment of Ori Boyum as an Elementary Teacher, for which he holds New York State Permanent Certification in Pre Kindergarten, Kindergarten and Grades 1-6, assigned to Midland School, 1.0 FTE, MA Step 8, of the 2006/2007 Teacher Salary Schedule effective September 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010.
3. The One Year Probationary Appointment of Christine Cadalzo as an Elementary Teacher for which she holds New York State Permanent Certification in Pre Kindergarten, Kindergarten and Grades 1-6, assigned to Osborn School, 1.0 FTE, MA +30 Step 10, of the 2006/2007 Teacher Salary Schedule, effective September 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010.
4. The One Year Probationary Appointment of Kathryn Ridley as an Elementary Teacher for which she holds New York State Professional Certification in Childhood Education 1-6, assigned to Milton School, 1.0 FTE, MA Step 8, of the 2006/2007 Teacher Salary Schedule, effective September 1, 2009 – June 30, 2009.

#### **Special Education**

1. The recommendations of the Committee on Preschool Special Education from its meeting of December 18, 2008 for Student ID#1089.
2. The recommendations of the Committee on Special Education from its meeting of February 25, 2009 for Student ID#911404 and from its meeting of March 18, 2009 for Student ID#931.

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Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Slack, seconded by Mr. Fox and carried unanimously (6-0) it was voted at 9:42 p.m. to adjourn into executive session for the review of the employment history of current and prospective employees and negotiations pursuant to the Taylor Law.

On a motion by Mr. Fox, seconded by Mr. Cady and carried unanimously (6-0) it was voted at 11 p.m. to reconvene in public and immediately adjourn the meeting.

Lynn Ferrari  
District Clerk