

MINUTES
RYE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING
Rye Middle School Multipurpose Room
October 4, 2011

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Slack at 7:00 p.m. and the roll was called:

Present:

Ms. Laura Slack, President
Mr. Raymond Schmitt, Vice President
Mr. Joshua Nathan
Ms. Kendall Egan* Arrived at 7:35 p.m.
Mr. Edward Fox
Ms. Katy Keohane-Glassberg
Ms. Karen Belanger

Dr. Edward Shine, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Kathleen Ryan, Assistant Superintendent for Business
Ms. Elaine Cuglietto, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources

On a motion by Ms. Slack, seconded by Mr. Schmitt and carried unanimously (7-0) it was voted to move immediately into executive session to review the employment history of current and prospective employees, discuss negotiations pursuant to the Taylor Law and review current litigation.

On a motion by Ms. Slack, seconded by Mr. Schmitt and carried unanimously (7-0) it was voted at 8:00 p.m. to reconvene in public.

Ms. Slack welcomed those community members present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Ms. Slack explained the format of the Open Topic Forum indicating that each Board Member would meet in small groups for approximately 45 minutes.

OPEN TOPIC FORUM

Board Members met with small groups until 9:00 p.m. The Board Members then reported on topics of discussion in their groups.

A summary of the matters primarily discussed in the Open Topic Forum is as follows:

New Classroom Addition and Science Labs

There was a general consensus that the District needs classrooms and labs. It was noted that limited facilities are already impacting class sizes and many classrooms already contain as many desks as they can fit. Student participants shared their views that class sizes are becoming very large. The public also expressed the view that academics should be the first priority in the capital project planning.

Bathrooms

Members of the public agreed that bathroom renovations are an absolute necessity; there was a great deal of concern expressed about their condition, particularly among those individuals who attended the building tours and had the opportunity to see the bathroom conditions firsthand.

Locker Rooms

There were many concerns regarding the current condition of the locker rooms.

AC/Ventilation

Several members of the public shared concerns regarding AC and ventilation, and suggested that these items should be priorities.

Roof

Based on the limited green space on the campus, some members of the public were in support of enhancing the roof of the proposed addition so that the District can build up in the future if necessary. Others questioned whether the money specified for the reinforced roof could alternatively be applied to things the District needs now.

Performing Arts Space

Questions were raised about the proposed reclaimed Performing Arts Space, whether it is adequate, what the rationale is, and what it accommodates.

Athletic Fields & Field House

Parents were generally supportive of the field house and an added regulation athletic field. However, it was noted that the field house is less justifiable to community members who do not use the schools. A senior citizen without children in the schools expressed the opinion that there is too much emphasis on sports over academics. Board members wondered if the field project could be included with the demolition of the field house and recapturing locker room space in the wrestling room.

Other Building Concerns

Items and concerns regarding the state of the aging building which have not been included in the capital planning updates thus far were discussed. Among these were the need for paint, lighting, and ceiling tile replacement, and the suggestion for electrical upgrades and rewiring.

Impact

Some members of the public noted that this project has a broad reach; the Middle and High School affect everyone with children in the District, since all will attend these schools at some point. Community members stated that despite the High School's recent US News & World Report recognition, the District needs science upgrades in order to sustain its programs.

Enrollment

Many of the groups discussed enrollment concerns and whether even more space is needed, beyond the addition of classrooms, to accommodate the expected enrollment growth. The cafeteria was one area mentioned.

Cost

Cost was addressed by the majority of the groups. There was acknowledgment from members of the public that this planning still reflects conservative thinking and "we still aren't doing everything we could do." There was also recognition that the District has deferred much of this work for some time already, and a comment that these are reasonable requests. Questions were raised regarding the costs over time, the square footage costs, program costs, and staff costs (specifically whether the additional classrooms mean hiring additional teachers). There was a suggestion to not limit the bond scope based on whether future budgets will pass, as this will be a separate issue for that time.

After meeting with citizens to listen to their concerns and recommendations regarding the District's capital project planning, members of the Board of Education shared summaries of their groups' discussions with the community. Many common themes were identified across the seven groups. While these subjects are outlined below, the Board is still interested in hearing input and perspectives from members of the public. You may email the Board at board@ryeschools.org with any comments regarding the capital project that is being considered.

Mr. Nathan was excused at 9:15 P.M. and returned to the meeting at 10:35 p.m.

The Board and Dr. Shine continued their discussion of the enrollment and space issues at the Middle and High School campus. KSQ Architects presented a District Capital Planning Update, with particular attention paid to the following:

Guidance Suite Renovation

Science Lab Conversion to General Classrooms

Toilet Room Renovations

Non-Core Classroom Renovations (including MS Nurse's Office,
Art/TV/Tech/Guidance/Performing Art/Wrestling Room Space Renovations)

Master Plan Proposed Funding (\$19,622,946 for the Bond Scope)

Field house demolition with athletic space repurposing within the building

All reports and information presented to date can be viewed by visiting the "Capital Project Central" section of the District website, www.ryeschools.org.

The Open Topic Forum addressed all three components of the capital plan that is being considered. These include:

- 1) New Classroom Addition, Existing Science Room Conversion & Bathrooms
- 2) Locker Rooms, Multiple Rooms & MEP Upgrades
- 3) Athletic Fields & Field House

The following members of the Rye Community addressed the Board:
Meghan Keogh, Sue O'Brien, Bertrand deFrondeville, Adele Centanni, Terry DeBartolo, Nancy Pasquale and Mary Emory.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Mr. Fox seconded by Mr. Nathan and carried unanimously (7-0) it was voted at 12:40 a.m. to adjourn into Executive Session to review current negotiations.

On a motion by Ms. Slack seconded by Ms. Keohane-Glassberg and carried unanimously (7-0) it was voted at 1:05 a.m. to reconvene in public and immediately adjourn the meeting.

Elaine M. Cuglietto
District Clerk

Video of this meeting can be found on the District's website (www.ryeschools.org). Click on District and on Board of Education.