

MINUTES
RYE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
Rye Middle School Multipurpose Room
March 25, 2014

Present:

Ms. Laura Slack, President
Ms. Katy Keohane Glassberg, Vice President
Ms. Karen Belanger
Mr. Edward Fox
Ms. Nancy Pasquale
Mr. Christopher Repetto
Ms. Nicole Weber

And

Dr. Frank Alvarez, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Betty Ann Wyks, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Ms. Gabriella O'Connor, Assistant Superintendent for Business
Ms. Elaine Cuglietto, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources
Mr. Gus Mountanos, Legal Counsel

The meeting was called to order by Laura Slack at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday March 25, 2014 at Rye Middle School.

On a motion by Mr. Repetto, seconded by Ms. Pasquale and carried unanimously (7 -0) it was voted to move immediately into executive session to review the employment history of current and prospective employees.

On a motion by Ms. Glassberg, seconded by Ms. Belanger and carried unanimously (7 -0) it was voted at 8:17 p.m. to reconvene in public. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Frank Alvarez provided a report to the Board of Education and community. He announced that focus groups will be held regarding the Midland principal search and parents will be receiving more information. He also shared that he would be leading a focus group for students to hear their input. Dr. Alvarez announced that a meeting about the Algebra Regents will be held for parents of eighth-grade and high school algebra students on April 10 at 7 p.m. in the RMS Multipurpose Room, led by Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Dr. Betty Ann Wyks, Rye High School Principal Patricia Taylor, Rye Middle School Principal Dr. Ann Edwards, and Rye High School Assistant

Principal Ellen McDonnell. He additionally mentioned a Rye Youth Council meeting that was held on March 26.

Dr. Alvarez concluded his report by highlighting two student achievements, congratulating Rye High School freshman Caroline Neaves for being named All American for Squash, and senior Cal Hynson for earning the Lions Club Athlete of the Month honor.

OPEN TOPICS FORUM

The Open Topics Forum was held as an opportunity for the public to share their concerns, questions, and feedback regarding the recommended 2014-15 school budget. This Budget Hearing enables Board members to join members of the audience at their tables for these discussions. Members of the Board then returned back to the Board table and reported the key topics that were addressed in their conversations. A summary of the topics, as well as responses prepared by Dr. Alvarez, will be sent out and posted on the District's website, www.ryeschools.org, within the next two weeks.

The Board of Education reconvened their meeting after open topic discussions were held with community members at 9:15 p.m.

Presentation/Discussion

The District's Music Department Chair, Shawn Amdur, provided a presentation on elementary, Middle School, and High School Music Curricula Revisions. He noted that the curricula had not been updated since 2000 and was in need of adjustments. Revisions were made over the summer in the areas of Elementary General Music grades 1 & 2, Elementary Chorus grades 4 & 5, Elementary Band grades 4 & 5, Elementary Orchestra grades 4 & 5, Middle School Band, Middle School Orchestra, and High School Orchestra. Music Department staff members received training and formed teams with a K-12 perspective, looking at the continuum of music instruction from its introductory stages to its later potential as students move through the grade levels.

Dr. Amdur explained that all units are aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards, and the Music Department's goal has been to meet and exceed all standards. Technology is integrated, and essential questions are a greater focus than they were previously. For example, in addition to knowing how to play a musical piece, students learn more about how the scales and compositions are executed. Dr. Amdur also provided an overview of the essential curriculum components of band, orchestra, and chorus, discussing the types of music studied as well as techniques and skills covered in order for students to develop an understanding of music.

CONSENT AGENDA

On a motion by Ms. Pasquale, seconded by Ms. Belanger and carried unanimously (7-0) to approve the following agenda items:

General

Consent Agenda General 7.01

Recommended Action:

That the Board approves the March 4, 2014 Minutes as presented.

Fiscal

Consent Agenda Fiscal 8.01

Recommended Action:

That the Board of approves the increase of the General Fund budget by \$2900. for gifts.

Consent Agenda Fiscal 8.02

Recommended Action:

That the Board approves two gifts totaling \$26,000 for Project Lead the Way.

Professional

Consent Agenda Professional 9.01

Recommended Action:

That the Board approves the request by Marisa Junta for a Child Care Leave of Absence from her position as a Mathematics Teacher, assigned to Rye Middle School, effective September 1, 2014 to the end of the first semester.

(Marisa Junta was previously approved for a Child Care Leave of Absence, effective January 12, 2014 – June 30, 2014 at the January 17, 2014 Board of Education Meeting.)

Recommendation: That the Board approves the request by Brittany Rothstein for a Child Care Leave of Absence from her position as an English Teacher, assigned to Rye High School, effective September 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015.

Recommendation: That the Board approves the request by April Colarusso for a Child Care Leave of Absence from her position as an English Teacher, assigned to Rye Middle School, effective September 1, 2014 to the end of the first semester.

(April Colarusso was previously approved for a Child Care Leave of Absence, effective February 28, 2014 – June 30, 2014 at the March 11, 2014 Board of Education Meeting.)

Consent Agenda Professional 9.02

Recommended Action:

That the Board approves the Salary Amendment of Jose Maria Moreno Dominguez as a Spanish Teacher, from MA +30 to MA +60, effective September 1, 2012.

(A thorough review of Jose Maria Moreno Dominguez's educational history has determined that he should have received a MA +60 effective September 1, 2012.)

Consent Agenda Professional 9.03

Recommended Action:

That the Board approves the Appointment Amendment of Megan Ollive from a Per Diem Substitute Teacher to a Leave Replacement Science Teacher, for which she holds New York State Initial Certification in Biology 7-12 and New York State Initial Extension Annotation in General Science 7-12 Extension, assigned to Rye High School, 1.0 FTE, BA Step 1 of the 2013-2014 Teacher Salary Schedule, \$55,314 (pro rated amount of \$20,742.75), effective March 10, 2014 – June 30, 2014.

(Megan Ollive is replacing Bruna Mascia who is on a Medical Leave of Absence.)

Consent Agenda Professional 9.04

Recommended Action:

That the Board approves the following Appointments for Extra Pay for Extra Work, for the 2013-2014 school year:

EPEW				13/14	13/14
	<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>INDEX</u>	<u>STEP</u>	<u>RATE</u>
Athletics-SPRING					
LACROSSE (Boys)	Volunteer to Var	Lorono, Frank		Volunteer	
LACROSSE (Boys)	Volunteer to JV	Lorono, Frank		Volunteer	
CREW	Volunteer	DiRusso, Lisa Marie		Volunteer	

Consent Agenda Professional 9.05

Recommended Action:

That the Board approves the Additional Work of Christina Lucca at the rate of \$39.39 per hour for 24 hours of instruction and 12 hours for preparation for an aggregate total of 36 hours for Rye High School Regents Support, effective March 26, 2014.

(Christina Lucca will be paid through the Immigrant Grant. Christina Lucca is a certified chemistry teacher.)

Consent Agenda Professional 9.06

Recommended Action:

That the Board approves the following Per Diem Substitute Teachers and Teaching Assistants to be used only on an as needed basis for the 2013-2014 school year at the approved per diem rates.

Per Diem Rates as follows:

Per Diem Substitute Teacher - \$102.00

Per Diem Substitute Teaching Assistant for Special Education - \$102.00

Per Diem Substitute Teaching Assistant - \$102.00

Name	Effective Date
Jayne Dachs	March 17, 2014
Amanda Dunmire	March 21, 2014
Linda Silverstein	March 26, 2014
Lorelei Uhle	March 26, 2014
Jonathan Zirkel	March 26, 2014

Classified**Consent Agenda Classified 10.01****Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves the Resignation of Ellen Slater from her position as a Teacher Aide, assigned to Milton School, effective at the close of business June 30, 2014.

Consent Agenda Classified 10.02**Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves the Additional Work of Noel Gallicano, as a Teacher Aide for Special Education at the rate of \$18.45 per hour to work with a student at the after school rehearsals and musical, 2 hours per day, 5 days per week, not to exceed 35 hours, effective March 10, 2014 – March 28, 2014.

Consent Agenda Classified 10.03**Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves the following Per Diem Substitute Teacher Aides to be used only on an as needed basis for the 2013-2014 school year at the approved per diem rates.

Per Diem Rates as follows:

Per Diem Substitute Teacher Aide for Special Education - \$102.00

Substitute Teacher Aide \$13.95 per hour

Name	Effective Date
Amanda Dunmire	March 21, 2014
Christine Germani	March 26, 2014
Rhonda Papert	March 26, 2014
Linda Silverstein	March 26, 2014
Lorelei Uhle	March 26, 2014
Jonathan Zirkel	March 26, 2014

Consent Agenda Classified 10.04**Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves the Appointment of the following Substitute Computer Aide to be used only on an as needed basis for the 2013-2014 School Year:

Rate of pay is dependent upon proof of education in accordance with Secretarial Clerical School Nurse and Computer Aide Unit Contract for the 2013-2014 School Year

Hourly rate of pay is as follows:

Step 1 without Degree - \$20.36

Step 1 with BS - \$23.76

Step 1 with Masters - \$28.28

Name	Effective Date
Amanda Dunmire	March 21, 2014

Consent Agenda Classified 10.05**Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves the Appointment of the following Testing Proctors at the rate of \$102.00 per day for the 2013-2014 School Year:

Ann Moller
Rhonda Papert

Consent Agenda Classified 10.05**Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves the Committee of Special Education and the Committee on Preschool Special Education recommendations as attached. (Attachment #)

Board of Education President Laura Slack announced the Board of Education approved two gifts, one from the Nicholas and Christina Raho Foundation and the other from an anonymous donor, totaling \$26,000 for Project Lead the Way at Rye High School. Project Lead the Way, which will be launched at the start of the 2014-15 school year, is an initiative designed to expand the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) component of the high school experience, offering students an introduction to the field of engineering through the Pathway to Engineering program. Ms. Slack expressed thanks on behalf of the Board for these generous gifts.

Board of Education President Laura Slack announced that the Board of Education accepted the retirement of Milton School teacher aide Ellen Slater, providing some background information. Mrs. Slater was hired in 2004 as a substitute teacher before becoming a special education teacher aide. In 2005, she was appointed as a full-time teacher aide. In this capacity she has provided outstanding support to the students and teachers she worked with in the classrooms, also supervising children during lunch and recess. Additionally, Mrs. Slater has participated on Milton's Character Education Committee and School Excellence Team. She herself is a Rye High School graduate and previously served as President of Milton's PTO. On behalf of the Board, Mrs. Slack wished her a happy retirement and thanked her for contributing to so many students' elementary school experiences.

Presentation/Discussion

(Continued – Previous presentation held earlier in the meeting)

The Recommended Budget

Dr. Alvarez explained that the Superintendent's Recommended 2014-15 Budget's focus is on maintaining programs; honoring the class size policy; adding a custodian, security guard, and four teachers at the High School; and fulfilling the vision of what the Writing Mentor Program should be. He noted that several of the differences in the line item budget are a result of realignment, as this is the first year that the District is using WinCap financing software, which is described below.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Gabriella O'Connor provided an updated presentation of the Superintendent's Recommended 2014-15 Budget, which was discussed previously on March 4 and March 11. She reviewed topics including the tax cap calculation process, prior cost saving measures, fund balance, budget drivers, enrollment, the utility tax that is being considered as a means of achieving a tax cap compliant budget, the reallocation of funds in the line item budget, and more. All are summarized as follows:

Tax Cap

Ms. O'Connor reviewed the tax cap calculation process, explaining that the 2014-15 tax cap for the Rye City School District is 1.64%.

Prior Cost Saving Measures

The District has made a number of cuts in the past, including the reduction of 61.9 staff members since 2009-10 and decrease in reserves by 29%. Several cost saving efficiencies, such as the financing software mentioned, have been implemented this year to better track costs and spending as well as the use of staff time. High School and Middle School schedules were aligned in order to allow flexibility with staffing and improved use of facilities. Throughout the District, roles of department chairs were redefined, staffing was adjusted based on specific student needs, and contractual obligations of staff members were maximized. Mrs. O'Connor noted that the District enters into cost sharing contracts whenever possible, and also takes every opportunity to utilize cooperative bidding at all levels (District, County, and State).

Fund Balance

Mrs. O'Connor reviewed the fund balance decline year to year, discussing the three major reserve funds that the District has relied most heavily upon: Tax Certiorari reserves, Employees' Retirement System (ERS) reserves, and Undesignated Fund Balance. All of these have dwindled over the years as unfunded State mandates continue to increase in cost.

Budget Drivers Beyond Local Control

There are a number of budget drivers that are beyond the District's control. Mrs. O'Connor explained that mandated pension costs for Employer Retirement Contributions and Health Care Benefits continue to increase significantly in expenditure. Cost drivers also result from a number of other ongoing unfunded legislative mandates, such as the Common Core Learning Standards and Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR). None of these are eligible for exemptions under the tax cap.

Enrollment

The District's enrollment continues to grow, and the tax cap does not allow for exemptions based on enrollment. At the High School, there will be an increase of 144 students over two years, posing the need for more teachers. District wide enrollment has increased 20% since 2004.

Superintendent's Recommended Budget: Options

The Superintendent's recommended 2014-15 budget is \$79,470,000, which leaves the District with a shortfall of \$3.84 million. The District is looking at two options: A tax cap compliant budget, or an override. The Board of Education and Administration discussed the details of each:

Under a tax cap compliant budget, the District would utilize \$2.5-\$2.8 million from reserves, and could collect an estimated \$990,700 by imposing a utility tax.

The District could propose an override for an additional \$1.54 million, plus the use of \$2.3 million in reserves.

Utility Tax, Explained

Mrs. O'Connor explained the method by which utility tax is collected and provided an estimate of how much revenue this would raise. Based on what the City of Rye collects, the District anticipates an annual utility tax revenue of \$1,200,000. The projected prorated revenue for 2014-15 would be \$990,700.

The Utility Tax is applicable to the receipts from every sale, other than sales for resale, of services such as gas, electricity, refrigeration and steam, and telephone. The tax is collected by the State Tax Commission in the same manner as the state sales tax is collected: the tax appears on the utilities bill, is collected by the utility, and the monies are remitted to the District by the utility.

Reallocation of Funds

As previously noted, the District implemented new financial tracking software over the summer, improving the management of costs, spending, and staff. The WinCap software will enable more accurate budgeting and reporting. Through this transition, many budget codes have changed and funds have been reallocated to other areas in order to better align with state reporting. As a result, this year's line item budget appears somewhat different from those in the past; for example, technology funds are also included within "Districtwide Support" and the line item labeled "Other" speaks directly to District wide instruction. The budget book draft that provides the full line item list will be available in the District Office, located at 411 Theodore Fremd Avenue Suite 100S.

A detailed budget discussion was held between Board of Education members, administration, including questions and input from community members Bertrand deFrondeville, David Harris and Jesus Cantalapiedra.

Budget conversations will continue at the April 8, 2014 Board of Education Meeting, and the Board will adopt the Superintendent's proposed budget on April 22, 2014.

Communications To/From Board of Education

Ms. Nancy Pasquale announced that she recently attended a Westchester Putnam School Board Dinner. A large part of the conversation at the meeting dealt with the possibility of a district override this year in Rye. She had the ability to network with board members from other districts. Ms. Pasquale explained that she had the ability to have conversations around

community engagement and communications pieces for the Board to consider. She will report back to the Board and will have information forthcoming about other district's best practices.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Mr. Repetto seconded by Ms. Glassberg and carried unanimously (7-0) it was voted at 11:54 p.m. to adjourn into Executive Session to continue to review the employment history of current and prospective employees.

On a motion by Mr. Repetto seconded by Ms. Pasquale and carried unanimously (7-0) it was voted at 12:40 a.m. to adjourn the meeting.

Elaine 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.