

TRUMBULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
TRUMBULL, CONNECTICUT
Special/Regular Meeting – January 6, 2015
Long Hill Administration Building
Lorraine R. Smith Assembly Room

The Trumbull Board of Education convened in the Long Hill Administration Building for a Regular Meeting.

Members present:

D. Herbst, Chairperson
L. Chory, Vice Chairperson
R. Seaman, Secretary
J. Donofrio, Board Member
S. LaFrance, Board Member
M. Ward, Board Member

Members absent:

J. Peddle, Board Member

Agenda Item I – Call to Order

The Special Meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. Board Chair Mrs. Herbst conveyed that the Board would begin their Special Meeting/Training Session in the Conference Room after a light supper and invited the public to come into the meeting at 5:45 p.m. The Board participated in a workshop on Freedom of Information (FOI) Act training with Thomas Hennick, Public Education Officer for the Connecticut Freedom of Information Commission. Mr. Hennick shared his background, including serving on the Board of Education for 10 years for Region 13. He shared that the Commission was established 40 years ago. He noted that there are gray areas and not everything is “black and white” when dealing with Freedom of Information. Mr. Hennick reviewed the rights of the public under the FOI Act. These rights include the public’s ability to obtain records and attend meetings of all Public agencies. The following items were reviewed/discussed: the definition of public meetings, proper noticing of such meetings, meeting schedules and agendas, the substance of minutes, and the three kinds of meetings that are recognized under the FOI Act—regular, special and emergency; when Board members meet at any time, even socially, and discuss Board business, it can be considered a meeting even if there is no quorum; public meetings can be video/audio recorded by anyone in attendance without notification to the Board; Public Comment is not required at public meetings, not guaranteed by FOI, and is left to the discretion of the Board; the substance of Executive Sessions and no business/action can be taken in Executive Session; definition of public records—information or data which is typed, handwritten, tape recorded, printed, photographed or computer stored; the importance of responding to/acknowledging a request within four days of receipt of request; and records which are exempted/excluded under Federal law or State Statute.

The Special Meeting/training session ended at 6:55 p.m. and a brief recess was taken.

Agenda Item II – Preliminary Business

- A. Salute to the Flag - The Regular Meeting began at 7:10 p.m. with a salute to the Flag. Mrs. Herbst shared that the Board had concluded the Special Meeting on Freedom of Information training.
- B. Correspondence – Mrs. Seaman noted that the Board received several parent emails requesting the Board to support the Superintendent’s recommendation for the 2015-16 Budget Request. Mrs. Herbst read a letter addressed to Superintendent Dr. Cialfi from First Selectman Timothy Herbst, dated

January 5, 2015 stating: “In accordance with Chapter III, Section 5 of the Trumbull Town Charter, please be advised that I will be participating in tomorrow evening’s meeting as an ex officio member.”

- C. Comments – Vicki Tesoro spoke about retiring teacher Frances Pechtol and thanked her for her many years of service to Trumbull. First Selectman Herbst spoke about the district’s accomplishments under the leadership of Superintendent Dr. Cialfi. He reviewed Superintendents’ Budget Requests for the past 26 years and commented that the Superintendents’ requests averaged approximately 7% a year. He conveyed that Dr. Cialfi’s request at 2.94% was among the lowest requests and commended him for a reasonable budget that does not impact class size and programs. First Selectman Herbst asked that the Board consider eliminating Pay to Participate fees for athletics and fine arts programs in the 2015-16 Budget as opposed to the Superintendent’s recommendation of phasing out those fees over a three year period. Mrs. Herbst commended Dr. Cialfi and administration for presenting a reasonable budget request.

At this time, it was moved (Seaman) to take Agenda Item IV-E out of order. Discussion ensued and Mrs. Seaman withdrew her motion. It was moved (Donofrio) seconded (Seaman) to take Agenda Item IV-F out of order placing it first under Agenda Item IV. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Agenda Item III – Consent Agenda

- A. Personnel – Superintendent Dr. Cialfi noted that three resignations were received that needed Board action. Dr. Cialfi praised Dr. Paslov’s accomplishments with the district and wished her well. He also gave kudos to Frances Pechtol and thanked her for her many years of service. It was moved (Chory) seconded (Donofrio) to accept the resignations of Dr. Linda Paslov, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for the district since July 2008, resigning effective January 5, 2015; Frances Pechtol, [second grade] teacher at Booth Hill School since October 1976, retiring effective June 30, 2015; and Jennifer Alves, Chairman of Elementary Special Education for the district since December 2003, resigning effective February 18, 2015. Vote: Unanimous in favor.
- B. Approval/Minutes – Budget Meetings – 12/2/14 and 12/4/14—It was moved (Donofrio) seconded (LaFrance) to approve the minutes of the 12/2/14 meeting as presented Vote: Unanimous in favor. It was moved (Donofrio) seconded (Seaman) to approve the minutes of the 12/4/14 meeting as presented Vote: Unanimous in favor.
- C. Approval/Financial Reports as of 11/30/14 –Business Manager Sean O’Keefe shared that the Finance Committee met on December 18, 2014. The Committee reviewed various reports including financials, Continuing Education, Connecticut Public Sector Purchasing Coalition, 2015-16 proposed budget, prior year bonding projects, and Expendable Trust. Mr. O’Keefe reviewed financial reports for the 5 months ended November 30, 2014 including year to date expenses, budget transfer, and BOE programs. It was moved (Chory) seconded (Donofrio) to approve the transfer of \$20,000 from Assistant Superintendent, Administration Secretary 12-month account to Assistant Superintendent, Information Services Other, Non-Certified account. Vote: Unanimous in favor. Mr. O’Keefe also reviewed deficits in various BOE programs accounts. Mrs. Chory commented that the deficit in the athletic account due to the elimination of the mandatory fee for health insurance would need to be addressed at the next Finance Committee meeting.

At this time, it was moved (Donofrio) seconded (Chory) to take Agenda Item IV-F out of order. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Agenda Item IV—Reports/Action Items

- F. Standards Based Report Card (SBRC) Survey—Dr. Linda Paslov reported that grades 3 through 5 Standards Based Report Cards were piloted in 2010-11. Since then, these report cards have been utilized by all Grade 3 to 5 teachers. These teachers have collaborated for consistency and continuity of practice. Dr. Paslov commented that the original Standards Based Report Card Committee, along with two parent representatives, recently met 3 times to review Standards Based Report Cards. Mrs. Weinstein conveyed the Committee’s goal to address the issues of parent communication in reporting student progress and understanding of the rubric used for grading. She reviewed the work of the committee which included review of the report card rubric and report card comments, creation of a survey for K-5 parents, and discussion regarding parent/teacher communication and conferences. Discussion ensued regarding the survey included: survey length; how it would be distributed; more consistency with the answers i.e. strongly agree/disagree vs agree/disagree; comments/explanation of answers; expanding survey questions addressing the understanding of grading rubrics; narrative feedback; and reporting of survey results. Suggestions were made for wording additions/clarification to the survey. Dr. Paslov conveyed that the changes would be made and the survey would be set up on Survey Monkey. An eblast would be sent to all elementary parents regarding the survey which would be open for approximately a week for response. It was noted that the survey could be ready the following week with a report on results available within the next few months.
- A. Report of BOE Ad Hoc Committee’s Findings re: Trumbull High School (THS) Assistant Coach Appeal of Termination—Board Chair Mrs. Herbst conveyed that an Ad Hoc Committee of the Board of Education met on December 29, 2014 to address THS Assistant Softball Coach Luigi Cammarota’s appeal regarding a contractual termination. The meeting took place in Executive Session. Mrs. Herbst shared the Committee’s recommendation to deny the coach’s appeal of a contractual termination. Board Attorney Floyd Dugas reviewed the background for the employment of coaches, the Ad Hoc Committee and the issue of the appeal. It was moved (Seaman) seconded (Ward) to approve the BOE Ad Hoc Committee’s recommendation to deny the appeal of the THS Assistant Coach [contractual termination of THS Assistant Softball Coach Luigi Cammarota]. Vote: Unanimous in favor.
- B. Policies, Second Reading
1. Pay to Participate—This policy was presented to the Board for a first reading at their October 21, 2014 meeting. Athletic Director Mike King reviewed the changes made to the Waiver of Pay to Participate form to further clarify documentation needed when applying for a waiver. It was moved (Seaman) seconded (Ward) to approve Pay to Participate, Policy Code 5138 as presented. Vote: Unanimous in favor.
 2. Interscholastic Athletics—This policy was presented to the Board for a first reading at their October 21, 2014 meeting. No changes were made to the policy since then. It was moved (Seaman) seconded (Ward) to approve Interscholastic Athletics, Policy Code 5150 as presented. Vote: Unanimous in favor.
- C. Policy, First Reading
1. Reporting to Parents/Guardians—Dr. Paslov shared that this policy was last revised in April 2000. Since then, reporting procedures have changed and the policy needed to be updated. Principals were consulted for input and also reflected in the changes is the new State Statute mandating two parent/guardian-teacher conferences per year for all grades K-12. It was noted that the reporting periods for grades K through 8 were changed from 4 to 3 times a year. Discussion ensued regarding parents’ ability to review midterm and final exams, teacher use of Infinite Campus (IC) Gradebook, and parent access to student grades and other information through IC Parent Portal. This policy will be returned to the Board for a second reading and approval.

- D. Policy Rescission—The Board’s attorney advised that this policy be rescinded as it is neither required nor necessary as feeding issues are best handled through the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process. It was moved (Ward) seconded (Donofrio) to rescind Assisted Feeding, Policy Code 5141.28 as recommended. Vote: unanimous in favor.
- F. 2015-16 Budget Request—The Superintendent’s requested budget must be approved by the Board of Education and then forwarded to the First Selectman. Dr. Cialfi gave a power point presentation reviewing: district objectives, efficiencies and goals; resources required to achieve goals; budget priorities; phase out of Pay to Participate fees for athletics and elementary strings/band; 26 year history of Superintendents’ requested budgets; and potential areas to reduce the budget. It was moved (Ward) seconded (LaFrance) to approve the 2015-16 Budget Request as presented by the Superintendent in the amount of \$97,790,114, an increase of 2.94% over the current school year’s [2014-15] allocation [to be forwarded to the First Selectman]. Discussion ensued regarding potential budget reductions and the elimination of Pay to Participate fees. Several Board members expressed their support for the Superintendent’s request (2.94% increase) as presented. It was moved (LaFrance) to amend the Superintendent’s 2015-16 Budget Request by eliminating the partial phase out of Pay to Participate fees [\$115,000] and replacing the \$115,000 [use those monies] for bus monitors (\$12,000), a part-time security guard for Trumbull High School, and the remainder of monies to be used to establish a math center created by the Superintendent. There was no second to the motion and no action was required. Discussion ensued regarding the addition of a 1.0 technician for Technology and it was noted that the position was needed due to the increased use of technology in the district. A brief recess was called at 9:05 p.m. and the meeting resumed at 9:13 p.m. It was moved (Chory) seconded (Donofrio) to amend the original motion [reducing the Superintendent’s 2015-16 Budget Request] by the 4 items outlined in the Superintendent’s presentation [totaling \$153,000—textbooks \$50,000; Special Ed Transportation \$45,000; .6 FTE Elementary Specialist \$33,000; and substitutes \$25,000] for a 2015-16 Budget Request of \$97,637,114 or an increase of 2.78%. Vote: 3 in favor (Chory, Herbst, Donofrio) 3 opposed (LaFrance, Seaman, Ward). Motion fails. It was moved (Chory) seconded (Donofrio) to amend the original motion by the three items—Special Ed Transportation \$45,000; .6 FTE Elementary Specialist \$33,000; and substitutes \$25,000—identified by the Superintendent as not being needed in this budget [reducing the Superintendent’s 2015-16 Budget Request by \$103,000] for a 2015-16 Budget Request of \$97,687,111 or an increase of 2.83% . Vote: 3 in favor (Chory, Herbst, Donofrio) 3 opposed (LaFrance, Seaman, Ward). Motion fails. Vote to approve the original motion for a 2015-16 Board of Education Budget Request of \$97,790,114, which represents a 2.94% increase over the 2014-15 allocation from the Town. Vote: 4 in favor (Herbst, LaFrance, Seaman, Ward) 2 opposed (Chory, Donofrio). Motion passes. Mrs. Herbst commented that the 2015-16 Budget Request will now move forward to the First Selectman.
- G. Approval/Expendable Trust—Mr. O’Keefe conveyed that at their meeting, the Finance Committee discussed moving the balance of the entire Expendable Trust portfolio to an interest-bearing account at People’s United Bank. It was noted that the interest income would be allocated to each fund on a percentage of the total basis and any interest on Permanent Restricted accounts will be credited to the Unrestricted portion of that fund. It was moved (Ward) seconded (Donofrio) to approve moving the Expendable Trust portfolio to an interest bearing account as presented. Vote: 5 in favor (Donofrio, Herbst, LaFrance, Seaman, Ward). Motion passes. Mrs. Chory recused herself from the vote as she is an employee of People’s United Bank.

Agenda Item V—Other

There was no business under this agenda item.

Adjournment

Board Members gave unanimous consent to adjourn the Public Session at 9:17 p.m.