

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 11, 2014**

A regular meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was held at Town Hall in Council Chambers, located at 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, CT on February 11, 2014.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Sirard.
2. **INVOCATION OR MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Vincent Grady
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Vincent Grady
4. **FIRE EVACUATION ANNOUNCEMENT:** Chairman Sirard announced the fire evacuation announcement.
5. **ROLL CALL:**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Peter Jonaitis, Raymond Peabody, Lori Unghire, David Wawer, Vin Grady, Timothy Neville, Stacy Thurston (arrived at 7:10 PM) and Tom Sirard

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Tina LeBlanc

**ALSO PRESENT:** Dr. Jeffrey Schumann, Superintendent; Mr. Christopher Drezek, Deputy Superintendent; FHS Student Representative Katie Saltzgeber and EHS Student Representative Christine Luksic

Chairman Sirard recognized Boy Scout Troup 108 to tonight's meeting. They are working on their citizen and community merit badges. He welcomed them all for attending tonight's meeting.

6. **BOARD GUEST(S)**

a. **KITE Video from 01-28-14 BOE Meeting**

Dr. Schumann stated the video from the January 28<sup>th</sup> Board meeting is still not working properly. We will place this on the February 25<sup>th</sup> meeting and guarantee it will work.

7. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

- a. Student Representatives Report– as presented
- b. President's Day & Staff Professional Learning – as presented
- c. BOE Special Meetings – as presented

8. **AUDIENCES**

Elizabeth Davis, North Maple Street – Mrs. Davis congratulated the Board on being elected. She looks forward to a positive direction for our schools and towns. She has spoken to several Board members and Town Council members about the fire alarm last Thursday at Prudence Crandall. The students were outside for 20 minutes in freezing temperatures without coats. She would like to know why it took so long for the fire department to get there. We have top fire departments in our town. She is looking for an honest answer. Today's issue was a standoff on Ganny Terrace. Residents were told to stay in their homes but the walkers were dismissed. This is strike two in less than 7 days regarding the safety of our children. She is

also looking for an answer about this. Regarding the Superintendent's proposed budget, we need counselors and a lot more. The teacher evaluations that are being required makes it impossible for principal's to do their jobs. The amount of time needed for these evaluations is unbelievable. They are going to need help. School climate will tank quickly. Principals will not have time for the children and the parents. The principals need our help and we need more counselors.

Mrs. Thurston arrived at 7:10 PM.

## **9. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Mrs. Thurston stated Eli Whitney is holding their winter concert tonight. She wished the students luck and she is sorry that she could not attend.

Mr. Neville congratulated FHS Student Representative Katie Saltzgeber and the FHS students for their athletic achievements. We are proud of all of you and urged them to keep up the good work.

Mr. Neville addressed Mrs. Davis's comments by stating he would like the Superintendent to respond to her. The governor is relaxing some of the requirements for teacher evaluations and is allowing some flexibility. Thank you for bringing this up. He believes this will be addressed in time.

Mr. Neville stated CREC is recruiting and he has seen several of their ads on television. It costs a lot to advertize. He would like to know what their marketing budget is. Does this come out of the funds we are sending them or does this come from the State? We are fighting we everything we can get for our students. This bothers him.

Mr. Grady responded to Mrs. Davis by stating she can contact the Chief of Police regarding the Prudence Crandall fire alarm. They are responsible for the calls that come into the dispatcher. They can answer your questions regarding the fire alarm call. He is aware of this and there are some big concerns regarding this from the fire department side that should not have happened. He believes you will get a straight answer from the Chief of Police or the immediate dispatcher supervisor about this.

Mr. Grady attended the Heritage Fair on Saturday at JFK. Mrs. Witbro and her volunteers did a great job. Many people were involved with this. He learned a lot about the different cultures. He has attended these before. It was a great day and was a well attended. Hats off to those involved.

Mr. Jonaitis stated he would like us to keep Fermi as some kind of a school. He would like parents that have an interest in Fermi to attend a Board meeting and express your concerns. Don't wait until the end and it is too late. The Board will make a decision about using this building. We are in the infancy state of this process. If you are interested, please contact us. He wished that the charge of the committee would have the Board conducting the research instead of the committee members.

Mr. Jonaitis would like to know if the Superintendent has expressed his previous concern to Buildings and Grounds about cutting the school lawns close to the buildings during school hours to avoid teaching distractions.

Mr. Jonaitis would like a hard copy of Roberts Rules since he is the parliamentarian.

Mr. Jonaitis stated that Mr. Ohlin wife passed away. He was an assistant principal at JFK for many years. His wished his family his sincere sympathy.

Mr. Peabody thanked Mrs. Zalucki for her help. She deals with some pretty complex issues daily concerning our students and appreciates the work you do for us.

Mr. Peabody added that the Fermi Jazz Festival is a great program. He encouraged residents to go and listen to them. One of his son's caught the music bug and it sparked an interest from Mr. Powers at JFK. He now plays in Boston. This spark came from our schools system.

Mr. Peabody also attended the Heritage Day Fair and received a passport. It was a great experience. The food, dancers and cultures were amazing. At the Heritage day, he was asked about common core. There is a lot of misinformation and information out there. He would like us to add information about common core on the website for parents. We could add a FAQ section for frequently asked questions.

Mr. Peabody believes a review of the Crandall plan is needed. There should be a place of refuge for students to go to during inclement weather.

Mr. Peabody is also concerned with the CREC commercials. We should discuss this with our representatives and have them investigate this.

Mrs. Unghire stated she will attend a CREC meeting next week and will look into this and will report back to the Board about the CREC commercials. She is the Fermi liaison and will meet with Mr. Newton next week. Several Board members are planning to attend the Legislative Breakfast in Hartford on Thursday if it doesn't snow.

Mr. Wawer thanked EHS Student Representative Christine Luksic for mentioning the Lamplighter's production. He will be there to support them. He also reported that BUZZ Robotics will hold a fundraiser event on Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup> from 5-8 PM at St. Bernard's. He urged residents to support these kinds of programs.

Mr. Wawer thanked Dr. Schumann for your efforts and meeting with our legislators. He has identified legislation that would be beneficial to the Town of Enfield and the Board of Education. There are several house bills that are enclosed in our packets and one deals with magnet funding. It is a competing school program. If you want to send your child to a private school you will pay for them to attend. The problem with the CREC schools is we are paying for your child to attend. Enfield Public Schools provides the same or better kind of education. Once our 21<sup>st</sup> century high school has been built, we will have the best high school in northern Connecticut. Students should be allowed to attend CREC schools but the costs to attend should come from the State of Connecticut and not the Town of Enfield.

Chairman Sirard addressed Mrs. Davis by stating the Chief of Police responded within 5 minutes of receiving the call and the fire trucks responded within 7 minutes of receiving the call. The Department of Public Safety is dealing with the issue regarding why it took so long to receive the calls. The normal protocol was followed by the North Thompsonville Fire Department. The students were allowed back into the building once the building was deemed safe. That is what he knows about the situation to date.

Chairman Sirard stated we will get the answer regarding the lockdown today at Prudence Crandall. It was an intense situation. Students were already on the bus. The ones that couldn't were brought back to the school. The parents that came to the school to get their child were allowed to stay at Crandall. No one was allowed to leave the building. We will review our policies and procedures to ensure when these kinds of unusual events occur they will not have such an impact. The procedures were followed and there is always room for improvement. Children's safety is our foremost concern. The Fire Department followed the correct procedures.

Chairman Sirard stated he agrees with Mr. Peabody regarding teacher evaluations and common core. He has reservation with this evaluation system and this mandate from the State. The Board must enforce State mandates. If parents have concerns, please contact us by e-mail. We can respond to our representatives and as you know, the more residents that respond, the more fire power our representatives will have. If 5,000 Enfield residents are unhappy with this mandate please let us know. It will give our legislators strength to fight this unfunded mandate.

Chairman Sirard stated that we have received applications for the Fermi Use Advisory Committee. He is concerned with the numbers. We need more interest. One of our campaign promises was to allow all stake holders the opportunity to express their concerns regarding Board of Education decisions. We are trying to improve communication. We are opening the door so everyone can add input. You have an opportunity to shape policies. If we do not receive enough applications to fill the spots, the committee will be shut down and the Board of Education will make the decision without community input. Please fill out the applications and send them in.

Chairman Sirard stated the First Readers Trivia night will be held on February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 PM at Mount Carmel. He attended last year and had a lot of fun. All of the proceeds go to the First Readers program.

## **10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **a. CONTINUE THE DISCUSSION REGARDING THE USE OF THE ENRICO FERMI BUILDING**

Dr. Schumann stated as mentioned by Chairman Sirard, we have received 3 applications to serve on the Future Use of Fermi Advisory Committee. Three (2) applications are from members from the Enfield Community and one (1) application is from a staff member. You have until February 20<sup>th</sup> to submit all applications.

Mr. Jonaitis stated he has heard from several people regarding the need for a vocational or alternative educational program in Enfield. We could house the continuing education program or alternative education program at Fermi. This would free up space at Alcorn.

Mr. Grady asked if there is a need for a vocational program. How many students would be interested? He believes there is a need. What kinds of vocational programs would we be looking at – electrical, plumbing, automotives and culinary? He would like us to ask the students at the middle school about this. These would be the students that would be doing this kind of a program. We need to ask the students what they are interested in.

Mr. Jonaitis would like us to start out small. When the counselors are meeting with the students scheduling classes for grade 8 and 9 they could ask them about this.

Mr. Grady would like to see the data regarding these programs. We would have something to back it up. He would like to see the interest. We need to ask the students.

Mr. Wawer asked if Dr. Schumann knows the percentage of students that do not go on to a 2 or 4 year college after graduation. Dr. Schumann stated that he does not have that information available. He is sure there is a percentage of students do not go to a 2 or 4 year college.

Mr. Jonaitis believes the highest percentage was 84% students went onto post secondary education.

Mr. Neville believes Mr. Jonaitis is pretty close with his percentage. The guidance counselors have this information. The students are not just going to post secondary education. Some will go to technical schools, the armed services and work force. He would like Dr. Schumann to get us this information for the Board.

Mr. Wawer stated that would be the population we would be targeting to start the process.

Mr. Neville stated some students will attend Prince Tech and Cheney Tech during high school. He applauds Mr. Jonaitis for what he is trying to do. He does not want a duplication of services. A lot of these kids have gone onto successful careers in plumbing, electrical and HVAC. We need to look at how many kids are not already being serviced by this group that is not really costing us any money except for transportation. We cut our alternative education program due to the expense of it. He does not want to lead people to the conclusion that we can do anything. This is all tempered by dollars. We still need to deal with the OCR compliance issue at Fermi that was previously listed at \$1.2 million dollars and is most likely much higher now. If we decide we are going to use Fermi as a school building, the clock will begin to tick regarding the repairs that are needed. We will need to address two additional referendums in Enfield, the roads project and roofs. This will also cost a lot of money.

Mr. Neville added that he would like all kinds of things, but we can't afford them. We need to ask if we can afford this.

Mr. Peabody agrees with Mr. Neville. Approximately 84% of our students go onto post secondary education. Do we have any ADA Compliance issues we need to deal with at JFK or any other building?

Mr. Neville does not believe there are any other building compliance issues.

Chairman Sirard added that JFK has not been cited with any violations.

Mr. Peabody stated data and costs are needed. We need to look at any cost avoidance issues. We know Fermi has some ADA compliance issues. Which building would be better to use, JFK or Fermi? Some people would like to use Fermi as a middle school. We need to look at all of the factors. It would be nice to have this, but we need to look at what we can afford. He hopes the committee will be able to methodically gather the information and present it to us so we can make a solid decision.

Mr. Jonaitis stated we need to first find out if there is an interest. If there is no interest, than we shouldn't waste our time collecting data. He would like us to move quickly. There are still kids that will not go to college and will go directly into the work force. We need to prepare them all with a good solid education. He would like a vocational education program to start small. The ADA compliance issues will need to be addressed. He is not sure if we need to address the entire building or just the part of the building we will use. When we open the new combined high school, it will be close to being overcrowded. The housing market in Enfield may become more desirable once the high school is opened. We will need to watch our enrollment numbers. He always wanted to use the Head Start building and Enfield Street School as part of a campus style high school setting. We need to look at the interest first otherwise we will have one of the largest community centers in the State.

Mr. Neville stated interest and the costs associated are needed. Are we going to do this for 50 students? How much will this cost. The students might all be interested in something totally different. We need to look at all of the costs for having this kind of a program. Some of the kids might be interested in doing this at the technical high schools that doesn't cost us anything. Getting our kids ready to go into the workforce is something you are correct about.

We have been discussing this at the Business Engagement meetings held with the mayor, Dr. Schumann and business leaders about getting kids ready for work. We need to prepare our kids on how to get a job, filling out applications, etc. This is something we need to embed in our curriculum now. We need to get their soft skills ready. We can look into the interest, but he is leery about the costs.

Mr. Jonaitis stated we have shop classes at the high schools. He is not suggesting that we expand this. He would like to know how many kids are in these classes now. The easiest would be to make this an annex of the high school. We can get the information from HR regarding the kinds of jobs they have and are looking for kids to have experience in. Apprenticeships used to be offered to kids where you could work your way up in a company. He does not feel it is the job of the public school to teach kids how to apply for jobs. We need to give them a solid education so they can go onto a secondary school to get the specialized training. We are a public school and we need to teach our kids how to use basic math, how to write a cohesive paragraph, spell and read. Sometimes we are shooting for too much. We should not ignore a good amount of our school population and not offer them something that will keep them in school. He truly believes a good vocational education program would keep more kids in school so they can get a diploma and go out into the workforce or go onto to specialized training.

Mr. Peabody stated that our students are going up against highly trained skilled individuals from across the world for jobs. This is also true for any technical job. Programmers are the machinists for the new millennium. We have a shortage for all kinds of engineers. There is a need for good technical skills. We are teaching CAD in our high schools. Students will still need a good education.

Mr. Peabody stated if we are going to keep the Fermi building as an educational building, we will need to look at the costs for everything in the building. What kind of return will tax payers get from this building. He believes students need to know how to go into the business world and be proficient in math, reading and writing.

Mr. Wawer stated we have had a good discussion on this topic tonight. He would like us to continue this discussion at the next meeting.

Dr. Schumann asked Chairman Sirard what specifically the Board would like from him.

Mr. Wawer would like Dr. Schumann to survey the students regarding their interest in a vocational education program.

Mr. Neville would like 5 years worth of school information regarding graduation and post secondary school information.

Mr. Neville would like to know what questions we will ask the students. What kinds of vocational education programs will we survey the students about?

Mr. Jonaitis would like us to survey the students to see if there is any interest for them to attend a vocational education program for electrical, automotive, carpentry and plumbing in Enfield if one was available.

Mr. Neville stated the new high school will have a culinary program. Dr. Schumann stated that is correct. They are going to build a commercial kitchen. Mr. Neville stated they are starting to interview a former staff member from Café Rondavue.

Mr. Jonaitis stated that is a great field for students to get into.

Chairman Sirard stated we have given the Superintendent information we would like him to

research and we can continue this discussion at the next regular meeting.

**11. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Discussion and Action if any, regarding the FY2014-15 School Calendar**

Dr. Schumann stated that Board members have received a DRAFT copy of the FY2014-15 school calendar. A question has been asked about December 23<sup>rd</sup> being a half day. This has been done in the past. The April vacation falls in the second week. Schools have very often used the third full week in April.

Mr. Grady stated you are suggesting moving the April vacation week from the second week to the third full week in April. Dr. Schumann stated this will move us in line with more schools in our area. CREC also speaks about using the third full week for the April vacation.

Mr. Peabody moved, seconded by Mr. Neville that the Enfield Board of Education approves the FY2014-15 School Calendar.

**Discussion:**

Mr. Wawer asked why we have an April vacation. Dr. Schumann stated the Board sets the calendar and we have always had an April vacation.

Mr. Jonaitis stated from after the Christmas break, a break is definitely needed for both students and staff. We tried to have a vacation in March but it created more problems with absenteeism for students and staff. He does not mind moving the April vacation to the third full week in April. The only other day off until the end of school is for Memorial Day. A breather is needed for everyone. There are a lot of reasons to keep the April vacation.

Mr. Neville stated that there is a proposed change in the statute for a common calendar so all districts can be more in sync. Dr. Schumann stated there has been talk about this, but we have not received any guidelines concerning this. The State Board of Education has not made this a mandate to his knowledge yet.

Mr. Neville added if we are to go with a calendar with a spring vacation that is more in-line with other districts, with common core and evaluation training could we possibly share staff development with other towns. He is just wondering if there are some economies of scale that would allow us to do this. That is just another reason for moving the spring vacation to the third full week in April. He also believes the baseball teams go to Florida during this week for spring training.

Mr. Drezek added that they used to go to Bucky Dents training camp in Florida.

FHS Student Representative Katie Saltzgiver stated the softball and baseball teams now go to Disney World's Training Camp every other year.

Chairman Sirard stated the administration is recommending that we move the spring vacation to the third full week in April – April 20-24<sup>th</sup> in order to be more in line with other towns.

Mr. Grady stated the motion will need to be amended accordingly.

Dr. Schumann stated that would be correct – change the April vacation to the third full week in April.

Mr. Grady moved to amend the original motion to make December 23<sup>rd</sup> a half day and to move

the April vacation to the third full week in April from the 20-24<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Schumann stated the administration is not proposing a half day for December 23<sup>rd</sup>. He mentioned this because we have made this day a half day in the past.

Mr. Neville would like the amended motion to be split.

Chairman Sirard asked Mr. Grady to amend the motion into two motions.

Mr. Grady moved to amend the original motion for the Enfield Board of Education to make December 23<sup>rd</sup> a half day. Mrs. Thurston seconded the amended motion.

**Discussion:**

Mr. Neville stated we have only done this a couple of times having a half day on December 23<sup>rd</sup>. The only consistent half day we have had was the day before Thanksgiving.

Mr. Jonaitis stated there is no education value for doing this either. This day is usually a festive day where the kids want to see their teachers before the break. He would recommend leaving this a full day.

Mr. Peabody stated making this a half day may impact working parents. He would also recommend leaving this a full day.

Mr. Grady and Mrs. Thurston withdrew the amended motion.

Mr. Grady moved to amend the original motion for the Enfield Board of Education to move the April vacation to the third full week in April from the 20-24<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Neville seconded the amended motion.

**Discussion:**

Dr. Schumann reviewed the reasons for moving the spring vacation to the third full week in April to Board members.

Mr. Wawer questioned the professional learning day on April 29<sup>th</sup>. Can this day be moved since the students will have just had a week off of school? He would prefer the students have a full week of school.

Mr. Jonaitis stated the professional learning days are being held on the last Wednesday of the month. Dr. Schumann stated that is correct. This way there is some continuity and parents can expect this each month. This day can be moved to May. The Board supports professional learning for staff members. We would then have two professional learning days in May.

Mr. Jonaitis asked when the student testing would take place. Dr. Schumann stated during March, April and May there will be a 12 week window for student testing. Not all students will be tested at the same time.

Mr. Jonaitis asked if the Board is still discussing the amendment.

Chairman Sirard stated the motion is to approve the calendar moving the April vacation to the third full week in April.

Mr. Jonaitis asked why we have Columbus Day off from school.

Mr. Peabody stated we have this day off to honor Christopher Columbus who discovered America. Mr. Jonaitis added we could use this as another teaching day.

Mr. Neville stated he would rather use this day for a professional learning day.

Dr. Schumann stated you would have a contractual conflict with using this day. This is a negotiated holiday.

Mr. Wawer commends the Superintendent for planning a professional learning day on Tuesday, November 4<sup>th</sup> which is also Election Day. He urges caution for using the polling sites for staff development on November 4<sup>th</sup> especially at JFK.

Mr. Neville stated JFK is one of the large buildings that can accommodate a large amount of staff. During a presidential election it would be impossible to hold a professional learning day due to the parking concerns.

Mr. Neville asked about the firm graduation dates. We are basically allowing for 4 snow dates. Dr. Schumann stated that is correct. The Board will set firm graduation dates on the 186<sup>th</sup> and 187<sup>th</sup> student day.

Mr. Neville asked if those dates need to be set now or can this be done in April? Dr. Schumann stated that he does not have the statute in front of him and cannot answer that question at this time. You would need to wait until April 1<sup>st</sup> to set graduation dates but the Board can set firm graduation dates now.

Mr. Grady stated we used to do that in the past.

Chairman Sirard stated we started setting firm graduation dates for the SAFE Grad committees so they could plan their events. If we change this, it will make it impossible for them to plan.

Mr. Jonaitis asked how many snow days have we used. Mr. Grady stated 2 days.

Chairman Sirard asked for a roll call vote on the amended motion.

A vote by **roll-call 8-0-0** passed unanimously

**12. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS - None**

**13. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Grady moved, seconded by Mr. Wawer that Regular Meeting minutes of January 14, 2013 be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 6-0-2** passed unanimously with Mr. Jonaitis and Mrs. Thurston abstaining.

**14. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYROLL - None**

**15. CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS**

- a. Due to the impending snow storm on Thursday, February 13<sup>th</sup> the Legislative Breakfast being held at the State Capital has been postponed and will most likely be held on Thursday, February 20<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Zalucki will send out a notice about the rescheduled date tomorrow.

**16. AUDIENCES - None**

17. **EXECUTIVE SESSION** - None

18. **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Grady moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston to adjourn the Regular Meeting of February 11, 2014.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously.

Meeting stood adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Vincent M. Grady  
Secretary  
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary