

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 25, 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 25, 2014.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Peter Jonaitis, Raymond Peabody, Lori Unghire (participated remotely), David Wawer, Vin Grady, Tina LeBlanc, Timothy Neville, Stacy Thurston and Tom Sirard

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

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

Chairman Sirard stated we have a need to suspend the rules to move an item up on the agenda.

Motion to Suspend the Rules:

Mr. Grady moved, seconded by Mr. Wawer moved that the Enfield Board of Education suspend the Rules and move an item on the agenda. Move Item #11 New Business – Adoption of the FY2014-15 Budget to Item #6.

Discussion:

Mr. Jonaitis asked why we are moving Item #11 up on the agenda.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated that Mrs. Unghire is calling from California and she will not be able to stay for the entire meeting.

A vote by **show-of-hands 9-0-0** passed unanimously with an affirmative voice vote by Mrs. Unghire.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Adoption of the FY2014-15 Budget

Chairman Sirard stated the floor is open for any discussions regarding the FY2014-15 Budget.

Mr. Neville stated he reviewed the information provided by the superintendent regarding the questions that were asked by Board members at the Saturday meeting. This information

answers his questions regarding what the cuts to the budget would look like. He is not sure if the State will follow through on some of these items we are hoping for like the evaluations. The Superintendent broke up the number of assistant principals you were requesting.

Dr. Schumann stated that is correct. He has listed 4 assistant principals at the primary level and 3 assistant principals at the intermediate level. He also listed the 2 school counselors and social worker positions as separate line items.

Mr. Neville stated if the State comes through with some flexibility and this is not required this year at the elementary level, these items would be cut and funding would not be needed?

Dr. Schumann added the assistant principal positions would not be needed for evaluations. They could be used as additional administrative support based on the Board's decision.

Mr. Neville agrees with Chairman Sirard that the way we work on our budget is backwards. We are making decisions without knowing the impact of these cuts. The cuts listed on Dr. Schumann's budget lists the impacts associated with each cut. We want to be as transparent as we can. This shows this and this is how he likes to look at the budget. The budget has been whittled down from 4.98% to 3.43%. We discussed at our previous budget meetings looking at other items that we could possibly cut from. He is against making cuts now when we have two more months to evaluate our needs and not knowing what the impact of the cuts will be.

Mr. Wawer stated we need to reflect the correct terminology. We are looking at how much we should increase our budget for the next fiscal year above the current budgeted amount. We are not looking at cutting our \$64 million dollar budget. We are debating the amount to increase the budget.

Mr. Grady stated the initial budget that the Superintendent presented was for 7 assistant principals. You are now looking to reduce this number to 3 assistant principals based on our requests. Dr. Schumann stated that is correct.

Mr. Grady added the other items listed in the budget would keep our budget neutral with all of our contractual obligations. Dr. Schumann stated that is also correct.

Mr. Peabody asked about the number of retirees and the budget impact replacing these positions. We previously discussed using complementary evaluators without having a huge budget impact. This is something we should continue to explore. He liked Saturday's interactive budget meeting using the excel worksheets.

Mr. Grady asked when the Town Council will give us our final budget allocation. Dr. Schumann stated we will receive this amount in May.

Mr. Grady added we may have some of the answers asked by Mr. Neville by then so we can inform the Town Council. This way they can adjust our proposed budget request before they make their final decision.

Dr. Schumann stated it is possible that we may know the answers to our questions by then. He met with our representatives and Senator Courtney about our concerns. Washington will need to make a decision regarding our waiver to the State of Connecticut. He believes our congressmen are going to work together on this. The responses from Washington have been slow.

Mr. Neville responded to Mr. Wawer by stating we are also looking at where we are going. Our salaries and costs do not remain the same each year. The number we chose will be a

compromise and we will settle for less than what we currently have.

Mr. Neville responded to Mr. Grady by stating we will know a lot of things in May that we do not know now. If we receive additional retirements, we can inform the Town Council. That is what we did last year. We should keep our lines of communication with them open. We are here to come up with a reasonable budget. He is not against making cuts. Our job is to recommend our needs for the school system to the Town Council. The number we come up with tonight is at best a guesstimate. We can continue to look for efficiencies before we make cuts to the budget.

Mr. Jonaitis stated he is having problems with the numbers being presented tonight. A lot of money has gone into central office over the past two years. This is not a wise use of our funds when we are trying to keep class sizes down. We have two curriculum coordinators that are conducting 26 evaluations each. They are only doing half of the jobs they were hired for. He recommends that the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, Chief Academic Officer, Chief Personnel Officer and the Athletic Director conduct 2 evaluations at each elementary schools. This would save the principals from doing some of the evaluations. Having each of you conduct 14 evaluations is not that much to ask. He is thinking outside of the box.

Mr. Jonaitis would like us to move our IT program over to Thomas G. Alcorn and let them run the department. He knows this is something we still need to discuss further and smooth out some of these bumps.

Mr. Jonaitis stated you were discussing the 3 administrators (assistant principals) at the elementary level and not the 3 administrators at the secondary level (JFK principal, JFK assistant principal and FHS assistant principal). Dr. Schumann stated the 3 elementary assistant principals would be at the intermediate schools (grades 3-5).

Mr. Jonaitis added that we still have 2 positions at JFK and 1 at FHS that are open. Dr. Schumann stated that is correct. We have an interim principal at JFK, and interim assistant principal at JFK and an interim assistant principal at FHS.

Mr. Jonaitis does not want to see the secretary position at FHS eliminated. This position is too important to eliminate. He would prefer this be reduced to a half time position. He also does not want to see any increases in class sizes or a reduction of teachers.

Mr. Jonaitis is also concerned about the numbers being presented tonight regarding the budget percentage.

Mrs. LeBlanc is comfortable presenting a 3.43% budget to the Town Council. She feels the budget conversations Board members have had have not been contentious. We have a cushion regarding the implementation of teacher evaluations for just in case the State requires us to conduct evaluations at the intermediate schools. We don't want to cut off our noses in spite of our faces. She appreciates the discussions the Board has had. We are looking at things differently and out of the box. Some of the ideas presented by Dr. Schumann have been visionary. This is why she is supporting 3.43% budget that will support the 3 assistant principals.

Mr. Wawer stated this is a work in progress. He was prepared to go with a 1 or 1.5% budget over current expenditures. He now knows what we are up against. There are still some efficiencies we can look at. We need to be more creative. He would like to look at a 2.83% budget.

Mr. Neville stated these are not easy cuts to make to the budget. The cuts presented are tangible and real. We may get to a 3% after we have done our due diligence. He hates this

process. We have 2 more months to go. He is against making cuts without not knowing what the cuts are and how they will impact us.

Mr. Peabody stated we need to get to the program level and evaluate it to see if it is working. The budget process is backwards. We are giving a number based on the high end of our budget needs. We need baseline information. We are given money from the Town Council. The process is not really transparent to our citizens. Saturday he asked if we have a contingency fund and was told we do not have one. It can be found in the line items. We need to look at our program needs. We receive funds from the State for Open Choice. People are going to look at what we are doing and think we are being crazy. He is not comfortable giving a number tonight. He is looking for a lower amount than 3 %. This is a starting point. This is not a firm figure. This is not our best and final number. He would like to Town Charter folks to change the charter for the Town.

Chairman Sirard stated this is the first number in the budget process. We will present a number to the Town Council of this backwards budget process. He has heard numbers from both sides of the room. We all do not want to do any harm to what we currently have in our school system. There are numbers we can look at in the budget process. He respects both sides. We are making educated guesses by making adjustments to the line items. If we cut the recommendations made by the Superintendent, we will be below 3% or 2.99%. He strongly believes the Governor will give us a break. This budget represents what everyone wants.

Chairman Sirard understands the concerns with the curriculum coordinators and would like to see them work to their full potential. There has been a lot of talk about the common core as a whole. If the citizens tell us they are not in support of the common core, we could use these two individuals to write our curriculum for us. We are also going to need them to conduct evaluations whether we like it or not.

Chairman Sirard added that we also have to think about our new high school which is on the horizon. Part of the budget for the school is furniture and fixtures. We have \$110K in our equipment line item. This is usually the first thing that is cut during the budget process. Part of the expenditure for the new high school will include new furniture. The furniture that will be left at Fermi and at Enfield high will be recycled and will be used at our other schools. His suggestion to the Board is to adopt the budget with the recommended cuts. He is willing to take a gamble by not adding assistant principals.

Chairman Sirard does not want to start a contest between the Board and Town Council. He wants them to know that we are submitting the best number we can present. The number will be contingent. He is prepared to deal with the contingencies as they are addressed. We will not be hurting the school system and we are keeping our current programs.

Chairman Sirard stated by taking a portion of money from the proposed equipment line item it will bring us to a 2.93% budget increase. If we take the whole amount it will bring us to 2.83% budget increase and no one is getting hurt.

Mr. Jonaitis stated we will vote on a budget either tonight or later this week. He said the entire Board is still not on the same page. He respects everyone's opinion that is different than his. We will pass this budget on to the Town Council. He wonders what they will look at if we can't get together. They do not know what is going on here. Our population has been declining. We are giving raises to our staff year after year. People are on fixed incomes in our town.

Mr. Jonaitis added as far as the curriculum coordinators are concerned, he would like us to bring back the 8 or 9 department heads at each school. Pay them the stipend and let them work with Ms. McKernan to develop our curriculum. If they can't do this in 3 years, than none of them should be working in education.

Mr. Neville asked about the 3.43 % amount and the 2.99% dollar amount. Do you know what that amount is? We need to present our number to the Town Council and it takes several days to put the budget together. We need to adopt our number tonight.

Mr. Drezek stated the decision needs to be made by Friday. Mr. Neville asked when the Board needs to make this decision by.

Dr. Schumann stated the Board is not scheduled to meet again this week. We do need time to prepare the documents to present to the Town. It needs to be there on Friday. Mr. Neville added we need to have a number tonight.

Chairman Sirard stated if you take \$65,549,296 and add \$387,500 and \$250,000 it will give you the bottom line number.

Mr. Neville stated we cannot use other personnel for the evaluation system the way it is currently set up. If we were to use department heads for the evaluations, they would not have enough time to teach and put together curriculum at the same time.

Mr. Neville stated that Mrs. LeBlanc has come up with a number of \$66,187,089. We are looking at less than \$300K than what the Superintendent presented for cuts. He asked if this number is close to his.

Chairman Sirard stated and there is \$110K in the equipment line item that we have not touched that could easily be reduced more. There is a \$10 million dollar contingency fund for FF&E for the new high school.

Mr. Neville stated that Mr. Wawer has pointed this out in our furniture and equipment line items previously. This is one of the accounts that we have taken funds from when cuts are needed. His biggest concern is dealing with the evaluations and what if this becomes a mandate and we have cut the assistant principals from our budget. We need a backup plan for just in case like the complementary evaluators.

Chairman Sirard stated he is trying to find a consensus among the Board without harming the school system. Elections have consequences. The State has done this to us. The State is mandating this evaluation system. We have the option of Open Choice to consider. This is not his first option. We can take an additional 25 students and we will receive \$250K.

Mr. Peabody stated that he has the same concerns as mentioned by Mr. Neville regarding the evaluations. Using complementary evaluators will cost us around \$268K. We need to look in our budget to see if this would work instead of using full time assistant principals. Our savings in retirements were not as generous as he would have thought they would be. We need to look in our budget for options. We may not have to conduct the elementary evaluations this year. Hopefully the citizens in Enfield will let their legislatures know they do not like common core. We need to be prepared for just in case.

Chairman Sirard stated evaluators need their 092 certification. Retired principals can receive \$500 per day and most of them do not want to be here during January – April. They typically migrate south during the winter months. It may sound like a good idea using complementary evaluators. The chances are you will not be able to find many of them. There is no other private contractor setup to conduct evaluations yet. The Town does not have the money for this. We can opt for the 25 additional Choice students to fund the evaluation system. The biggest impact these additional students would have on the school system is that it makes it difficult for some of our in town students that need placement in some of our programs. We do not expel the students that come to our town.

Mr. Jonaitis stated that the smarter balance assessment consortium website or smarterbalanced.org can answer your questions regarding common core and the evaluation program.

Mr. Jonaitis stated we can use the department heads for evaluations. We would just need to do things a little bit differently. He has heard that they are being used like this in other districts. They teach 3 periods a day and would be able to conduct a number of evaluations. Then we could look at hiring some retired administrators to help with the remaining evaluations. By using staff a bit here and there, it would help out until this has leveled out. He does not want to spend a lot of money on this if we don't need to. We need to be creative with this. Use our central office staff to pitch in.

Mr. Jonaitis stated taking additional Choice students will bring in additional money to the district. This does not offset what we are paying for Enfield students attending magnet schools.

Mr. Jonaitis believes the administration should have enough time to write something up about the budget to submit to the Town manager on Friday. The budget should be almost ready to send over now. He does not believe you will be starting from scratch.

Mr. Neville stated we are all talking about the same thing. We have a concern if the State does not come through. We need to have a plan for just in case. He also believes we are all working together well to get to a compromise.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated that we are comfortable with a 2.99% budget increase. We could use the equipment line item in case the State does not come through for us regarding the elementary evaluations.

Mr. Peabody agrees with what Mrs. LeBlanc mentioned regarding using the equipment line item for a contingency. If we wanted to reduce this amount further we could let the Town know about this. Chairman Sirard stated it does not work that way.

Mr. Sirard stated we will present a budget that we can live with. The equipment line item is the one area where there is some gray. We have narrowed the budget down to 2.99% which meets everyone's concerns about doing no harm. We will continue to look for efficiencies. If the Town Council gives us less than what we have requested or we can always request less. We are up against a statutory deadline. This budget request will give us a baseline at the highest level requested.

Mr. Peabody agrees with a 2.99% budget increase and to continue our budget discussions with the help of Mr. Drezek and Dr. Schumann. He would also like us to show the Town Council what we are doing. He would like to end the discussion and calls for the question.

Mrs. Unghire also likes the 2.99% budget increase.

Mr. Grady moved, seconded by Mr. Wawer that the Enfield Board of Education approves a 2.99% increase or \$66,187,089 for the FY2014-15 Adopted Budget.

Discussion:

Mr. Neville suggested also looking at any additional retirements for additional cost savings.

Chairman Sirard stated that he does not want to ask the Town Council for more money than we need. We will continue to look for efficiencies. We will also continue to pursue any avenues

of savings. He is confident with this budget recommendation.

A vote by **roll-call 8-1-0** passed with Mr. Jonaitis in dissent.

Mrs. LeBlanc left the meeting at 7:57 PM.

7. BOARD GUEST(S) - None

8. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- a. Student Representatives Report – as presented
- b. Snow Days Used – as presented
- c. First Readers Ceremony – as presented
- d. Grants Report – as presented
- e. Personnel Report – as presented

Mr. Jonaitis asked if we have someone writing grants for our district. Dr. Schumann stated our curriculum coordinators are currently writing grants for submission. They have been pounding the payment looking for grants. They come to us from CREC with extensive experience writing grants. Ms. McKernan has also written several grant proposals.

Mrs. Unghire left the meeting at 8:00 PM.

9. AUDIENCES - None

10. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Wawer stated that he enjoyed the EHS Lamplighters production. The students did a great job. Also there will be a Buzz Robotics Pasta Dinner on February 28th at St. Bernard's. You can meet the students involved in the Buzz Robotics program.

Mr. Grady attended Mrs. Reale's Kindergarten class at Henry Barnard and was amazed at all the teachers are doing with the kids. They are doing a great job. The teachers are very happy with our full day Kindergarten classes.

Mr. Neville thanked his fellow Board members for the collaborative effort putting the budget together this year. It was done with respect for each other and the process has been good. He appreciates the effort and he is sure the public does also.

Mrs. Thurston wished the grade 5 students good luck. They will be starting the CMT Science portion on March 11th. She will attend Head Start on Friday to see their version of the winter Olympics.

Mr. Jonaitis asked the Board to consider some things for the future. He would like us to look at the incentives for early retirements. A possibility could be to offer insurance incentives. That is the biggest cost for retirees. It is too late to do this now but it is worth looking into for the future.

Mr. Jonaitis would like the Board to bring back the Personnel Committee for two reasons. They can help with negotiations, getting information and reporting back to the Board. They can also help with the policies. Some of the policies still reference a Personnel Committee. Especially when hiring vice principals on up. He would like the Board to look into this.

Mr. Jonaitis would like the Board to contact the ETA and discuss having a Board member as a liaison for the teachers to vent to so we can make this a better school system. He questions

some of the moral in our schools.

Mr. Jonaitis would like the Board to hold exit interviews for staff with the Superintendent. We can gain a lot of valuable knowledge from these meetings.

Mr. Jonaitis stated we still have 3 positions that need to be filled. They are currently being filled by interim staff. He would like to see a timeline for filling these positions.

Mr. Jonaitis asked if parents have an option to opt their child out of the testing that is required by the State. Dr. Schumann will look into the testing option for parents.

Mr. Peabody stated that we have placed a link on the website regarding common core for parents to access information easily. He thanked Dr. Schumann for having this done.

Mr. Peabody shouted out to Two Moms on a Mission. This is a tremendous program that helps many single parents out.

Mr. Peabody stated that he just learned that we have 2 grant writers in our curriculum department. There has also been some discussion about the Town Council using a grant writer. This can also be a way for the school system to obtain grants by working with the Town by sharing resources.

Mr. Peabody stated that he has heard a lot about communications over the past few months. He is looking for proactive communications. We need to look at our methods of communication and upgrade our communications to include news blasts. We do it sometimes because he receives comments about school closings or delays. We can put out more than just this.

Mr. Peabody would like to see an open dialogue with staff. This way, we can gauge their temperament and get their unbridled input without breaching any confidentiality. Maybe we can hold a community conversation or something like this for staff.

Chairman Sirard commended the Board for working hard on our budget. Our conversations on the budget have been respectful. You all did a great job.

Chairman Sirard stated the First Readers held their trivia night. He was unable to attend but heard that it was quite successful.

Chairman Sirard stated we discussed in our Executive Committee meeting holding a Listen & Learn event for our teachers and administrators. This will be an open door policy where they can discuss with us what will make our education system better. We will hold a session just for the staff and one for the administration. Our employees need to know we are available for them to communicate with us. We are reaching out to our employees and hope they will take advantage of this.

11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Continue the Discussion Regarding the Use of Enrico Fermi

Chairman Sirard stated the Executive Committee has formed the advisory committee. Letters will be sent out as appropriate. We have not scheduled any meeting dates yet. We received a significant amount of applications. He thanked the news media outlets for getting the message out to the Enfield community.

Chairman Sirard stated the membership is comprised as follows:

Point of Order:

Mr. Jonaitis stated he knows he was not here at the last Board meeting. Did the Board give the Executive Board the authority to make these appointments without consulting the entire Board? If this was not done, you are in violation of your policy.

Chairman Sirard stated temporary subcommittees of the Board are at the discretion of the Chairman of the Board of Education.

Mr. Jonaitis stated with the approval of the Board.

Dr. Schumann stated the formation of the committee is required by the Board. The Board did give the Chairman permission to form the committee. We will look at the appointment of membership to the committee. His understanding was the Chairman would appoint the membership after the Board approved the formation of the committee.

Chairman Sirard stated that was his understanding as well.

Mr. Jonaitis stated that is why he is asking this question.

Mr. Neville believed the Chairman is responsible for setting the membership for this committee.

Mr. Jonaitis stated the Chairman has the right to setup the standing committees of the Board. He will look at the policy.

Mr. Grady asked if we have the minutes from when this was established. Mr. Neville added that was done several weeks ago.

Chairman Sirard stated pending the resolution to the question raised by Mr. Jonaitis, the advisory committee members are:

Keith Winans – Community Member
Marie Pyznar – Community Member
Michael Pescitelli – Staff Member
Ashley Hurley – Staff Member
Ray Peabody – Board Member
Stacy Thurston – Board Member
Tom Sirard – Chairman
Chris Drezek – Deputy Superintendent
Jeff Schumann – Superintendent

Dr. Schumann read Board Policy #9133 Standing Committees of the Board. “The chairperson, with approval of the Board, may appoint any special committee and/or advisory committees to the Board. Committees considered Special or Advisory will receive their duties at the time of appointment and the committee shall be considered dissolved when its final report has been made to the Board or upon being dissolved by the Board.

The Chairperson of the Board shall appoint up to three (3) Board members to each committee and shall be an ex officio member of each committee. The Standing Committee Chairperson or designee shall report to the full Board items requiring official actions.”

Dr. Schumann added the policy does not address the appointments to put the committee together but line #16 suggests the Chairman will appoint members to the committee.

Chairman Sirard further stated it is the discretion of the Chair that the Board approved the basic formation of the committee. Dr. Schumann agreed the policy references the Chairman's authority to appoint members to the committee.

Chairman Sirard added by extending this to the Executive Committee for input, he has broadened the criteria.

Chairman Sirard looks forward to working with the Future Use of Fermi Advisory Committee members.

Mr. Neville asked about establishing a timeline.

Chairman Sirard stated this will be discussed with the committee members. We will keep this process as open as possible. He is hopeful that this will be done by the end of the year or to at least start the ball rolling. The committee membership will determine the timeline.

12. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Wawer reported that CAFE Day on the Hill will be held on March 5th. If you are interested in attending, please notify Mrs. Zalucki and she will register you.

Mr. Wawer reported that the Policy Committee will meet in March. We have several policies that we will be discussing. You are all welcome to attend and participate.

Chairman Sirard stated the Board's 5 Standing Committees are as follows:

Curriculum Committee is comprised of the following members: Tim Neville (Chair), Ray Peabody and Stacy Thurston.

The Executive Committee is comprised of the following members: Tom Sirard (Chair), Dave Wawer, Vin Grady and Tina LeBlanc.

The Finance Committee is comprised of the following members: Tina LeBlanc (Chair), Dave Wawer and Ray Peabody.

The Policy Committee is comprised of the following members: Dave Wawer (Chair), Peter Jonaitis and Vin Grady.

The Student Issues Committee is comprised of the following members: Lori Unghire (Chair), Vin Grady and Peter Jonaitis

13. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Grady moved, seconded by Mr. Neville that the Regular Meeting minutes of February 11, 2014 be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 7-0-0** passed.

Mr. Grady moved, seconded by Mr. Neville that the Special Meeting minutes of February 12, 2013 be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 7-0-0** passed unanimously

14. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYROLL - None

15. CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS

- a. Invitation to attend the First Readers Recognition Ceremony on March 10th at EHS.

16. **AUDIENCES** - None

17. **EXECUTIVE SESSION** - None

18. **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Grady moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston to adjourn the Regular Meeting of February 25, 2014.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously.

Meeting stood adjourned at 8:23 PM.

Vincent M. Grady
Secretary
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary