

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
JULY 23, 2014**

A special meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was held at Henry Barnard Elementary School in the Board Conference Room, located at 27 Shaker Road, Enfield, CT on July 23, 2014.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 6:10 PM by Chairman Sirard.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chairman Sirard

3. **FIRE EVACUATION ANNOUNCEMENT:** Chairman Sirard announced the fire evacuation announcement.

4. **ROLL CALL:**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Peter Jonaitis, Ray Peabody, Vin Grady (participated remotely), Timothy Neville, Stacy Thurston and Tom Sirard

MEMBERS ABSENT: Lori Unghire, David Wawer and Tina LeBlanc

ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Jeffrey Schumann, Superintendent

5. **Discussion regarding the future Use for the Harriet Beecher Stowe Building**

Chairman Sirard stated that Mr. Grady will participate remotely for tonight's meeting.

Dr. Schumann explained to Board members that the CREC Public Safety Academy has vacated the Harriet Beecher Stowe building. We still owe the State around \$820K for the renovations that were previously done to the building. He has contacted the State about us occupying the building and placing some programs in the building. Moving the expulsion program would not meet the requirements defined for an educational building.

Dr. Schumann stated that we can place the preschool program that is currently held at Hazardville Memorial building and move it to the Harriet Beecher Stowe building. This would meet the educational requirements required by the State. We can also expand the preschool program by including 10 Choice students. This would allow us to expand the preschool program by adding 2 additional classrooms. Choice supports this program expansion.

Dr. Schumann added that the Enfield Child Development Center (ECDC) can also move their program from the Thomas G. Alcorn building to the Harriet Beecher Stowe building which would free up space at Alcorn. The ECDC program would not meet educational requirements required by the State.

Dr. Schumann stated that we can move the Hazardville Memorial Family Resource Center to the Harriet Beecher Stowe building and provide space for KITE (Key Initiatives to Early Education) at the Stowe building. By doing this, Harriet Beecher Stowe would truly become an early childhood educational building.

Mr. Neville asked if Dr. Schumann has heard anything on the universal preschool legislation. Dr. Schumann stated that he spoke with Congressman Courtney and universal preschool is not a mandate yet.

Mr. Grady asked if there are any pre-kindergarten grants available from the State. Dr. Schumann stated there are some grants available. We would receive funding from CREC choice program. We have currently budgeted for the preschool program in the Board's budget. By expanding the preschool program, we will be helping our kids with math and literacy support.

Mr. Neville asked about the time commitment for implementing this. Dr. Schumann stated the State is expecting us to use the Stowe building in September 2014. He would like to ask for a one-year waiver to give us time to plan. He would like to move the preschool program to the Stowe building for September 2015.

Mr. Jonaitis asked if we would need an administrator in the building. Dr. Schumann stated we could use a head teacher to manage the building. We could also house our complementary evaluators at the building.

Mr. Jonaitis is concerned with the time the teachers will need to teach students and manage the building.

Mr. Neville added that we would need a nurse at the Stowe building. We would also need to define the duties of the head teacher.

Chairman Sirard stated we could apply for a waiver from the State to give us time to get this program up and running.

Dr. Schumann added a lot of work is needed in order for us to move the preschool program from Memorial to the Stowe building. PPT's will need to be conducted for each child.

Chairman Sirard stated some of the students require ESL services and by adding Choice students to this program, we may need to increase our ESL services. Some of the students will be bilingual.

Mr. Neville stated we can bring our request to the Commissioner of Education.

Chairman Sirard stated that if the Commissioner does not agree with this, the Town will be responsible for the \$820K.

Mr. Grady asked if renovations would be needed to hold the preschool program in the Stowe building. Dr. Schumann stated some minor renovations would be needed. CREC has left the building in really good shape. It can be returned to an elementary school without too much work.

Chairman Sirard would like us to try to get a waiver. He likes offering ESL services to the students. We will be getting the students from Hartford earlier. He also likes the idea of using a head teacher to manage the building.

Mr. Jonaitis asked about us having our own special education school like the Woodland program. Dr. Schumann stated that we can ask the Commissioner about an outplace program for special education students.

Mr. Neville does not believe that we can link these two programs together.

Mr. Peabody also likes adding the Choice students to our preschool program. He feels that we could also house a special education outplace program at Alcorn. We could eventually generate revenue for the town.

Mr. Neville likes the idea of a preschool program and believes we should proceed with it. The two programs should not be linked together.

Chairman Sirard stated that a one-year waiver is easier to manage than a multiple year waiver. This waiver would give us time to plan.

Dr. Schumann stated that we would provide bilingual services to the students that required it.

6. **Action, if any, regarding the Future Use of the Harriet Beecher Stowe Building**

Mr. Peabody moved, seconded by Mr. Neville that the Enfield Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to request a waiver from the State Department of Education to move the preschool program from Hazardville Memorial to Harriet Beecher Stowe building for the 2015-16 school year.

Discussion:

Mr. Jonaitis has a problem with doing this at a Special meeting. He does not like making decisions quickly. The public has not had an opportunity to voice their opinion about this.

Mr. Grady stated we have had public audiences at other Special meetings.

Mr. Jonaitis asked is this worth the time and money to run this program at Stowe or should we just pay the \$820K.

Chairman Sirard stated we currently have the funds in our budget for 5 preschool classrooms at Memorial. We will add 2 additional preschool classrooms and Choice has grants available for us for the 2 additional teachers that would be needed. Past history has proven that programs have died if the funding is not there. It won't hurt us to try this. If the program fails, we can move the preschool program back to Memorial.

Mr. Jonaitis asked what if the State says no and does not grant us a waiver. Chairman Sirard stated we would then receive a bill for \$820K from the State.

Mr. Peabody would like a formal cost estimate to run the program so we can better understand the process.

Mr. Neville stated we would need time to gather this information. We can present this information at one of the Board's meetings in September. If the program doesn't work, we can pull the program.

Mr. Jonaitis has a hard time accepting this without the numbers to backup the preschool program.

Mr. Peabody agrees but we need to move on this now. We don't have time to wait. Dr. Schumann will submit a request to the State for a waiver to give us time to implement the program at Stowe. We either do this or the taxpayers will be paying for the \$820K.

Mr. Grady left the meeting at 6:47 PM.

Dr. Schumann added that we can come back to the Board with hard numbers.

Mr. Jonaitis does not like to vote on things too quickly. He has been saying this for quite some time that the Stowe building would be vacant soon and we need to discuss it.

Chairman Sirard asked for a roll call vote.

A vote by **roll-call 4-1-0** passed with Mr. Jonaitis in dissent.

7. **Adjournment**

Mrs. Thurston moved, seconded by Mr. Neville to adjourn the Special Meeting of July 23, 2014.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously.

Meeting stood adjourned at 6:50 PM.

Vincent M. Grady
Secretary
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary