

Region #9 Board of Education
Special Meeting
May 20, 2004
Minutes
Filed subject to approval

Present: Bonfanti, Coppinger, Eichhorn, Gmelin, Gombos, Pemberton, Shapiro
Administrators: Fossbender, McLiverty, Voss, Calabro
Others: 20 members of the public
Media: Redding Pilot

Dr. Shapiro called the May 20, 2004 special meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. in Room B107 of the Joel Barlow High School

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bill Oppenheimer, Redding: expressed a concern that the proposed reductions requested by the Redding Board of Finance were light in relation to the results of the referendum and his fear that the next referendum would also be defeated. He suggested the Region #9 Board consider not filling the position of Director of Curriculum for the next year.

Frank DeSalvo, Redding resident and member of the Redding Board of Finance: commented on the letters to the editor in the Redding Pilot which were critical of the Board of Finance for not being tough enough and requesting larger reductions.

Elise Broach, Easton resident and member of the Easton Board of Finance: asked that the Board not take away programs that are currently supported which might cause Easton to vote the budget down.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON POST PROM INSURANCE

The Joel Barlow PTSA was advised by their insurance carrier that students attending the Post Prom should sign a "hold harmless waiver" The school and PTSA has made this information known to students and parents, and are collecting the signed waivers in the school. Mrs. Gmelin and Mrs. Eichhorn expressed a concern that students will be turned away from the Post Prom if a "waiver" is not on file. Mrs. Gmelin noted that many of the students are not Barlow students, but guest of students and they, too, would be required to have waivers signed in advance. They asked that every effort be made to get waivers for all students. The school administration assured the Board of Education that every effort will be made to get waivers for every student and guest who will attend the Post Prom.

As is the custom, the Board of Education was asked to provide the services of a custodian to assist with set-up and clean-up for the Post Prom event.

Motion: That the Region #9 Board of Education donate the services of a single custodian for the purpose of assisting with the set-up and clean-up for the PTSA sponsored Post Prom of 2004. Gombos, Gmelin. Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON BUDGET CUTS FOR THE 2004-2005 PROPOSED BUDGET

After the Region #9 budget defeat, the Redding Board of Finance requested a \$23,000 reduction in the Redding portion of their budget. The requested reduction would be increased by \$17,000 from the Easton share of the budget.

The administration submitted a list of recommended reductions that totaled \$40,000. These included:

1. Special Education, reduction I paraprofessional salary, grant funds to offset costs, \$15,000
2. Special Education, reduction in tuition/private school, reduced estimate of cost, \$13,000
3. Operations/Maintenance Physical Plant, reduction in snow plowing, \$2,000
4. Operations/Maintenance Physical Plant, reduction in repair of stadium, track, buildings, grandstand, \$10,000.

Motion: That the Region #9 Board of Education approve the reductions recommended by the Head of School resulting in an operating budget of \$15,403,218, or a 6.64% increase over the previous year. Gombos, Pemberton.

The suggested recommendations were discussed. Board members each expressed their thoughts and comments on the budget and the recommendations.

Vote on motion: Approved. 6.00-0-1.11. Mr. Bonfanti abstained.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Frank DeSalvo, Redding: noted that two of the reductions were the result of new information and lower cost, and asked how that money would have been allocated had the budget been approved. Response from Dr. Fossbender was that the money would have remained allocated to Special Education needs.

Mary Pat Cieri, Redding: suggested that Dr. Fossbender make know the effects of the reductions of last year and what the impact was on the school.

Bill Oppenheimer, Redding: noted that his comment/suggestion made at the beginning of the meeting was ignored and agreed with those who write letters to the editor that the comments of the public are ignored. Dr. Shapiro responded that she was “shocked” at Mr. Oppenheimer’s suggestion that the public is not listened to because the many requests from the Oppenheimers, whether from Central Office or from board members, are always answered. Dr. Fossbender responded to Mr. Oppenheimer’s comment on the position of the Director of Curriculum. He explained that each district in ERG A has a dedicated person for curriculum development, and that given the direction of education, tests, evaluations, etc., a dedicated person is necessary. He added that he could not lead the districts without a Director of Curriculum and achieve the high standards expected.

Kay Oppenheimer, Redding: commented that there are three districts, but only five schools.

Nick Simeonidis, Redding: offered his congratulations to the faculty and staff for CAPT score achievements.

Elise Broach, Easton: thanked the Board of Education for their efforts to reduce costs without reducing programming. She added that she felt many people voted against the budget because of

the difficulties with the building project. Mr. Calabro has scheduled a platform discussion on the building project, including the history, current status, and end results. The discussion is open to the public and scheduled for May 26, at 7 pm

ADJOURNMENT

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Eichhorn, Secretary

Reported by Mary Maday