

Region 9 Board of Education
March 21, 2006
Meeting Minutes

Filed subject to approval

Attendance: Bonfanti, Coppinger, Gombos, Lewis, Pemberton, Poltrack, Shapiro, Stone
Administration: Fossbender, Calabro, Haig, Craw, Mas, Sullivan
Media: Redding Pilot
Student Representative: Tim Lewis
Others: 25 members of the public and staff

Mrs. Pemberton called the March 21, 2006 meeting to order at 7:41 pm

PUBLIC COMMENT

Elizabeth Burgess, Redding: statement opposing the proposed location for a new stadium from a group of neighbors. (a copy of the letter is attached)

Dick Wieland, Redding: opposed to venture capitalist operating in and on public places; the proposed stadium opens the property to commercial ventures of all kinds.

Mary Lou Pampel, Redding: expressed concern for the neighborhood and town of Redding, asked the board to consider how the proposed stadium will change them.

STUDENT REPORT

Tim Lewis reported on school activities.

PRESENTATION OF FALCON PRIDE PROJECT

Jay Contessa, Falcon Pride, presented information on a proposal for two athletic fields in the front area of the school. The proposal included a new stadium with bleachers, press box, and lights. Both new fields would be astro-turf surfaces. It is the intent of Falcon Pride to raise funds for the project. The cost analysis for the project will include the costs of maintenance. Mr. Contessa had a power point presentation and architectural maps indicating the layout of the proposed fields. Discussion followed. No action was taken.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Lang, Redding: question regarding the need for the additional fields, the maintenance costs, the issue of private funds creating something the taxpayer will be responsible for, and suggested upgrading the current stadium facility as an alternative.

Dr. Fossbender suggested that all questions regarding the Falcon Pride project be submitted in writing to Mr. Calabro by email.

Dick Wieland, Redding: requested full disclosure of what the Falcon Pride organization is and what their responsibility will be. He objected to having a private capital project for the school.

Susanne Krivit, Redding: question regarding the availability of the rest room facilities, and asked if additional facilities were planned for the stadium.

Kathryn Riodan, Redding: statement that prior projects have not been well managed, question regarding the costs involved in maintain the new fields, and suggested a renovation of the existing stadium.

Gail von Dwingelo, Redding: suggested a study regarding the need to widen Turney Road and addition of sidewalks to determine if that would be necessary.

Kent Stivers, Redding: asked the board to consider the school's neighbors before making any decision.

Steve Masloski, Redding: expressed concern about the noise issues, especially the P.A. system.

Mary Lou Bourque, Redding: as a realtor, buyers are most interested in the school's academics not the athletic facilities.

Laurie Masloski, Redding: expressed concern about safety for neighboring children and what the outside activities would bring to the site.

TEACHER NONRENEWAL

Motion: move to accept Dr. Fossbender's recommendation for the nonrenewal of the contract of Lee Skalkos who has successfully served the students and school community. However, the person she is replacing this year is returning to Joel Barlow High School next year from a child-rearing leave. Gombos, Shapiro. Approved. Unanimous.

STATUS OF BUILDING PROJECT

Mr. Poltrack reported the FOC recommended proceeding with a referendum for an additional \$2,000,000 in short term borrowing to complete the project. Outstanding invoices are approximately \$1,200,000, some of which may qualify for state reimbursement. The \$100,000 bond held by the Town of Redding is expected to be returned, \$50,000 within six months and the remaining \$50,000 within a year, after the issuance of the Certificate of Zoning Compliance. Mr. Poltrack will request the issuance of the certificate at the Zoning meeting on Wednesday, March 21, 2006. In addition, \$800,000 is the estimate for litigation settlement and related fees. Currently there are five outstanding lawsuits, and work ongoing toward comprehensive settlement.

Director of Finance Sullivan is working with the SFU (School Facility Unit) on reimbursement of the project.

The timing of the referendum for additional funding was discussed. The First Selectman of Redding recommended a vote separate from the vote on the Town's & Region's budget. Dr. Fossbender noted that the additional funding cannot be included in the regular operating budget. The referendum requires a Public Hearing and a specific requirement for notification. It was not clear if there was sufficient time available to hold the referendum prior to the vote on the budget. This issue will be clarified with the Town Clerks of Easton & Redding.

Motion: that the Region #9 Board of Education move forward with a request for authorization for funding of up to \$2,000,000 in short term borrowing to pay open invoices, obligations and legal expenses related to the building project. Poltrack, Coppinger. Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION OF MEDICAL RESERVE TRUST AND REQUEST FROM EASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Medical Reserve Trust agreement with the three boards of education as originally established allowed member boards to borrow against the fund should the need arise. Dr. Fossbender recommended that the Region board review and re-affirm the trust agreement. The FOC reviewed the agreement at their meeting prior to this meeting, and recommended approval of the agreement with minor modifications. Those modifications were discussed and agreed to.

Currently the Easton Board of Education has extraordinary medical claims and is experiencing a shortfall in their reserve fund of \$331,000. Mr. Allen, Chairman of the Easton Board of Education, was present with a request to borrow \$170,000 from the Region's reserve fund.

Motion: move to authorize the Chair to approve the Medical Reserve Trust Agreement, technical edits notwithstanding. Poltrack, Stone. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move to approve the transfer of up to \$170,000 from the Medical Reserve Trust account to the Easton Board of Education Medical Trust account in accordance with the agreement. Coppinger, Poltrack. Approved. Unanimous.

REVIEW OF EXPULSION PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

Mr. Craw presented additional information regarding the costs of student expulsion cases. Discussion followed.

Motion: move that the Region #9 Board of Education no longer engage in stipulated agreements prior to the hearing. Poltrack, Gombos. Motion failed. Voting for: Poltrack, Gombos, Shapiro. Voting against: Coppinger, Bonfanti, Pemberton, Stone, Lewis.

2006-2007 OPERATING BUDGET PROPOSAL

Discussion of the current proposal followed. The motion and amendments made at the previous meeting follow.

Motion: move to accept the administration's proposed budget of \$17,913,153, or a 9.97% increase over the current budget. Gombos, Poltrack.

Motion: move to amend the motion to accept reductions in scenario #2, \$78,174. Gombos, Poltrack

Motion: move to amend the motion to accept reductions in scenario #4 of \$25,000. Gombos, Poltrack.

Motion: move to amend the motion to accept reductions in scenario #4 of \$12,670. Gombos, Poltrack.

This brings the budget to \$17,736,560, representing a total 8.89% increase; 2.19% for debt and 6.7 for operating.

Vote on the motion and amendments: **Motion approved, 6.89 to 1.11. Mr. Bonfanti voted against the motion.**

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Dr. Fossbender provided a copy of President Bush's budget related to education.

HEAD OF SCHOOL

Mr. Calabro provided a written report.

Mrs. Haig presented information on out-placed special education students, projected to 2013. This was discussed briefly.

DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Ms. Mas provided a written report. She added that she and Jonathan Budd had a meeting with the State Department of Education, Research, Testing & Assessment to discuss the scoring methods of the CAP test. The results of the CAP test will not be available to the schools until mid-August.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

Mrs. Sullivan submitted the financial report.

AGENDA ADDITION

Motion: move to add to the agenda a report from the Pension Committee. Coppinger, Gombos. Approved. Unanimous.

PENSION COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Coppinger reported the Pension Committee met recently to discuss open issues. There is a need to have trustees for the pension fund, and this must be in place to liquidate the Anthem stock. The Committee is also moving forward to find a financial manager for the fund.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jonathan Budd, JBEA: on behalf of the JBEA, Mr. Budd thanked the board members for their support of the teacher's concerns and will support the proposed budget. The JBEA is also concerned about the state teacher pension fund and that the legislature continued to under fund.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: move to Executive Session for discussion of pending litigation: consideration of action to enforce or implement legal relief or right pertaining to the Joel Barlow Building project. Invited to attend Executive Session – Administration and members of the FOC. Coppinger, Shapiro. Approved. Unanimous.

The meeting recessed at 11:40 pm

RECONVENE

The Chair reconvened the meeting in public session at 11:48 pm.

No action taken in Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: To adjourn Coppinger, Stone. Approved. Unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 11:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Huntley Stone
Region 9 BOE Secretary
Recorded by Mary Maday

LETTER READ DURING PUBLIC COMMENT, MARCH 21, 2006

The following statement is from a group of concerned families that live near the Joel Barlow High School building:

We have reviewed Falcon Prides' plan for development of the area in front of the school and want to make you aware that we oppose the plan due to the detrimental impact the proposed project will have on the surrounding community, not to mention the school's bucolic setting.

Joel Barlow's stadium is currently located in a relatively spacious and secluded site on property that was secured for the high school specifically for that reason. Falcon Pride, however, proposed to build a new stadium in the middle of a neighborhood, and it will be in such close proximity that the public address system will be heard inside the homes of those living closest to it. The new, lighted stadium will not only be used by the school, but is anticipated to be available in the evenings and on weekends to outside groups. These are the evenings and weekends when neighbors of the school expect to be able to enjoy the peace and quiet of their homes, as do all residents of Easton and Redding. But if the stadium is relocated to the site proposed by Falcon Pride, there will be no peace and certainly no quiet for the neighbors of the school, which is largely what drew us to Redding in the first place.

To be clear, we do not oppose the development of athletic fields in front of the school as was approved by the Zoning Commission during the recent building project. We only ask that it be done in a way that shows real consideration of their close proximity to people's homes, and point out that the baseball and multipurpose field that were intended for this area were not to include a public address system, lights, or the intensification of usage now being proposed by Falcon Pride.

We appeal to you now because we are your neighbors and because we believe that once you fully appreciate our concerns that you might urge Falcon Pride to select a different location for the new stadium, perhaps even at its current one. If you elect to do this, you will maintain the good will of your neighbors and we can all avoid the rancor that would ensue if this plan in its present form were to move forward.

Signed:

Mary Lou Bourque, 102 Black Rock Tpke

Betsy and Colin Burgess, 110 Black Rock Tpke

Jim Caraluzzi, 98 Black Rock Tpke

Peter and Carla Gregory, 40 Turney Road

Jim and Louanne Lang, 98A Black Rock Tpke.

Rich Regan and Gail von Dwingelo, 106 Black Rock Tpke

Ken Stivers and Susanne Krivit, 86 Black Rock Tpke

Richard and Gail Wieland, 44 Turney Road

Jim and Ronald Winter, 85 Black Rock Tpke

George and Susan Gregor, 67 Turney Road

Rob Sickinger and Sue Steneck, 124 Black Rock Tpke

Steve and Laurie Masloski, 99 Black Rock Tpke