

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 14, 2015**

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 April 14, 2015.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Peter Jonaitis, Raymond Peabody, Lori Unghire, Vin Grady, Tina LeBlanc, Timothy Neville, Stacy Thurston and Tom Sirard

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dave Wawer

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

6. **BOARD GUEST(S)**

a. **Susan Boucher**

Board members welcomed Dr. Sarah Faulkner, our STEAM Coordinator and Enfield High School Earth Science Teacher Susan Boucher to the Board meeting. Dr. Faulkner stated that Mrs. Boucher is one of our exemplary teachers.

Mrs. Boucher stated this award is through the American Association of Petroleum and Geologists. There are approximately 36,000 members to this organization. She submitted an energy curriculum proposal based on sustainable and renewable energy she has been teaching in her classrooms and in the afterschool programs she conducts. She was awarded the Eastern United States Teacher of the Year and then went onto the national competition where she received an honorable mention.

Dr. Faulkner added that Mrs. Boucher is being humble. She came in second place in the nation.

Chairman Sirard and Board members congratulated her for receiving this prestigious award and for representing Enfield so proudly.

b. **Enfield Legislators**

Dr. Schumann stated we received notification that the Enfield Legislators are unable to attend tonight's meeting. They have extended an open invitation for the Board to visit with them at the State Capital. We will be happy to arrange this for any Board member.

7. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

- a. Student Representatives Report – as presented
- b. STEAM Wing Tour – as presented
- c. April Events – as presented

Dr. Schumann added that we have invited BUZZ Robotics to visit us after their Nationals competition.

8. AUDIENCES

Shannon Grant, Yale Drive – Mrs. Grant thanked everyone involved with the Invention Convention. It was very successful and appreciates the partnership with the Enfield Public Schools. She stated the Future Use of Fermi Committee has not completed their assigned charge and she does not want the Board to vote on this. There are too many assumptions. The Fermi building can accommodate the middle school students. There may be ADA issues at JFK that the committee has not considered. Regular maintenance at Fermi is not being done. Based on what she has seen, the committee is prepared to return the Fermi building over to the Town. The committee has not taken into consideration the casino construction in Springfield and the possible increase of population in Enfield in the very near future. Enfield of today will be different in the future. She believes maintaining JFK may be the more financial burden in the long term.

Donna Dubanoski, Betty Road – Mrs. Dubanoski stated she is here about SBAC testing and Common Core. The Governor is looking for ways to cut the budget. She would like the Board to put Common Core on hold. The State has spent millions on advertisements for Common Core. She was shocked to hear that parents cannot opt their children from SBAC testing. The schools need 95% participation for these tests. If students are sitting in the classroom and not taking the test, will this count towards the participation rate. Our schools do not provide adequate place for learning during these testing periods. The SBAC test is about a curriculum change. Our teachers need to be able to teach and not base their performance on student testing. Extreme computer knowledge is needed to take these tests and this is another cost we must deal with. She urged Board members to look at the cost of Common Core. This needs to be stopped along with all of the expenses that go along with it. She thanked the Board.

Kristin Johnson, Washington Road – Mrs. Johnson thanked our teachers for everything they do for our students. Their role in our children's lives is important. She hand delivered a letter to their child's principal opting her child from SBAC testing. She spoke with the Chief Academic Officer about opting her child from the SBAC testing and was told this would not be allowed and students are required to take the tests. She was informed by her child's principal that her child would need to sit in the classroom quietly during the testing. Both she and her husband met with the Superintendent and stated the school was in direct violation of security of the testing environment. The Superintendent informed them that his directives come from the State Department of Education. She would like to know why her child is being used as a pawn in this process. Why is the administration lying to us about opting out of testing? Opting out is a movement to instill learning for all students. Your duty is to protect the students. These standards were imposed on a Federal level. Standardized testing is not the way. She urged Board members to reclaim education and to research Common Core. She thanked the Board.

Liz Davis, North Maple Street – Ms. Davis thanked the Board for what you. She echoed the comments from Mrs. Grant and would like to see us use Fermi as the middle school. She is here about fingerprinting our volunteers. The parent involvement policy urges parent involvement in the schools that benefit our students. The policy does not list that fingerprinting is required. Why is Enfield doing this, no other towns are doing this? She is all for security and safety. Background checks are needed for citizens, not for parent volunteers. Clarification about this is needed. This policy was adopted back in 2009. Why did it take 5

plus years to implement this practice? Thank you for everything, it is truly appreciated.

9. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Neville attended the LEGO Celebration. It was truly spectacular. The program is phenomenal. The students are so poised and are very creative with their projects. Kudos to everyone involved with this program. This is an example of some of the good things that are going on in our schools.

Mr. Neville toured the JFK Innovation Lab. This is being funded from a grant from the State. The lab was setup based on input from LEGO and MassMutual. They are using technology in a creative way. He would love for the Board to see a demonstration on this.

Mr. Neville will submit questions from the Town Council for additional data to the Board Chairman. He would like the administration to address these questions and include the response to all Board members. The Town Council members are looking for clarification on some budget items. Chairman Sirard would like Mr. Neville to submit this request to him.

Mr. Neville stated the STEAM Wing Tour will be impressive. It is a true tribute for all of the hard work that has been done. He urged all Board members to attend this tour if they can to see the results of our labors.

Mr. Neville attended the KITE meeting where we reviewed the goals. The process is long but he enjoyed it. He commends the group for all of the work they do for our children.

Mr. Neville addressed Mrs. Grant about the Fermi Use Committee. He has been asking for a report from the committee for some time. It has taken a long time to get the information that was requested. The public is looking for a conclusion and deserves one. He would like this to be done as quickly as possible.

Mr. Neville stated that Board members have all received phone calls and e-mails about the volunteers being finger printed. Some of this is misinterpretation. This is not a State Law. He was a member on the Policy Committee when this policy was adopted in 2009. A question has been raised about this policy. The last time the policy committee met was in December 2014. We have a meeting scheduled for this week on Thursday. This policy affects our volunteers and our parents. He is concerned with the lengthy Policy Committee agenda and does not see how all these items will be addressed. He would like to trim the agenda down. Holding the meeting at 10:00 Am is not a good time for the public to attend.

Mr. Jonaitis stated that Mrs. Grant's comments were spot on and he thanked her. He also agrees with Mrs. Dubanoski regarding her comments on Common Core. This was something he asked Dr. Schumann about a while ago. He assumed we were allowing our students to opt out of SBAC testing. He also thanked Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Davis for their comments. He appreciates all of your comments made tonight.

Mr. Jonaitis agrees with Mr. Neville about the finger printing policy. He looked at the agenda and could not believe it. He will attend the Policy meeting and will make a motion to address the finger printing policy first.

Mr. Jonaitis added that the Future Use of Fermi Committee is taken too long. They have been waiting to receive information and this should not have happened. Now the building is falling into disrepair. He remembers discussing an addition at JFK many years ago and there are items buried in the ground that will need to be addressed just like at Enfield High.

Mr. Peabody thanked Mrs. Boucher for her work with geo science education. This is a key

topic to move our country forward with energy. This is fantastic that she was recognized by her peers.

Mr. Peabody attended the Parent Leadership Academy class with the Mayor. We discussed the Board and Town Council working together. This is a great group of people and he supports them and their efforts. If you get a chance, look into this group.

Mr. Peabody also attended the LEGO Celebration. Our children are great presenters. They speak from their hearts. If you have an opportunity again, please attend this next year. You will be impressed by what our students are doing.

Mr. Peabody attended the Easter egg hunt on the Town Green. This event was put on by Two Moms on a Mission. They are doing a lot for our community and our students. They are raising funds to support Safe Grad. This all ties into some of the other great programs being offered that benefit our kids like the First Readers program.

Mr. Peabody attended the Ice Cream Social and book fair at Henry Barnard. This is what school is all about.

Mr. Peabody agrees with Mr. Jonaitis, Mr. Neville and Mrs. Davis that the volunteer policy does not mention the need for finger printing. He would like to know why we started doing this and why now? We need a common sense approach. This is a high priority item and should be dealt with promptly since field trips will be starting again and volunteers are needed. We need to make it easier for working parents to be able to get into our schools.

Mr. Peabody stated the budget information on our website is not easy to find. This is an area that needs to be addressed. We need to schedule a workshop to understand where our money is going and what it is going towards. We could then present this information to the Town Council for them to use to make an informed decision regarding the budget.

Mr. Peabody stated the Fermi Use Committee asked for information in May 2014. We are now starting to get this information. He appreciates the input from everyone tonight.

Mr. Peabody thanked Mrs. Grant for her work with the Invention Convention. He understands Mrs. Dubanoski's concern with Common Core. Some States have had issued implementing Common Core. He thought STEAM was addressing some of this. He also understands Mrs. Johnson's concern with opting out of SBAC testing. Our superintendent has gone toe-to-toe with our commissioner regarding teacher evaluations and saved us a significant amount of money in this area. These are some of the things we are doing behind the scenes.

Mr. Peabody stated during the JFK orientation, the curriculum team and teachers came up with an alternative method for teaching math to help our students learn.

Mrs. Unghire thanked the audience for attending tonight's meeting and for your comments. She takes all of your comments to heart and admires your passion for your children.

Mrs. Unghire attended the Memorial PTO meeting. They have a lot of things going on at the school and the new principal is great.

Mrs. Unghire attended the LEGO Celebration. That is one of the fun parts of being a Board member. It was great to interact with the students and see their work.

Mrs. Unghire also attended the Easter Egg Hunt. That event was a lot of fun. This event was sponsored by Two Moms on a Mission, The Enfield Public Schools and Shop Rite. She thanked them all for their involvement.

Mrs. Unghire will attend the CREC Council meeting this week. She congratulated the EHS Student Representative Christine Luksic on her award. She looks forward to the BUZZ Robotics presentation and hearing about their upcoming competitions. She also congratulated Mrs. Boucher for her award.

Mr. Grady attended the Internet Safety Presentation at Parkman School for grade 5 students and parents. They gave everyone some good information. Parents need to be involved with what their kids are doing online. It is amazing what our kids can view with some of these different applications out there. This event was sponsored by KITE and LEGO.

Mrs. LeBlanc congratulated Mrs. Boucher for her award. She has heard many wonderful things about her as a teacher. She congratulated her for all of her hard work going into receiving this award – she is an outstanding teacher.

Mrs. LeBlanc attended the LEGO Celebration. She was also very impressed with the student's projects. It was great to see them and interact with the students.

Mrs. LeBlanc added that they are in the process of redoing the murals at JFK that are around the hub. They are truly phenomenal. The JFK Art Teacher is in charge of this project. The students are doing these after school.

Mrs. LeBlanc would like the Legislators to come to us. She is not in favor of going to the State Capitol to see them.

Mrs. LeBlanc agrees with Mrs. Davis about volunteer finger printing. She likes to volunteer at our schools and understands about safety. We need some guidelines. Overnight field trips are totally different. She is hoping the Policy committee will resolve this.

Mrs. Leblanc addressed Mrs. Grant by stating she does not agree about using Fermi as a community center. She does not want to see any of our schools going back to the town unless there are some extravagant savings. She will not support Fermi being a community center.

Mrs. LeBlanc addressed Mrs. Dubanoski and Mrs. Johnson's concerns for SBAC testing and Common Core. She tried to help her son with his math work and needed help to understand it. Her older child needed to help him. Some kids do not test well and standardized testing hurts our kids. She believes that parents should have the option to opt their child from testing.

Chairman Sirard congratulated Mrs. Boucher. You represent us well, thank you.

Chairman Sirard stated the Board subcommittees will not make the decisions. They do the work for the Board and will update the Board so they can make informed decisions. The some of the Board committees are back logged. Policies are about laws. We need to be in compliance with the laws. The policies steer the ship and then will come the administrative regulations. There are a lot of items listed on the Policy agenda. We started to evaluate and re-evaluate ourselves and we are meeting our obligations. We have a Policy meeting scheduled for this Thursday.

Chairman Sirard appreciates your comments on Common Core and SBAC testing. This shows that you care about what is going on in our schools. He wished that we were not so test driven but we are. The State is threatening our State funding and can take over the Board of Education if we are not in compliance with them. The State Representatives are the ones that have passed this down to us and are responsible for this.

Chairman Sirard stated the budget cycle is backwards and it is broken. He is concerned about the State funding this year. Please ask our legislators to fund K-12 education. College education is separate.

Suspend the Rules to move an Item on the Agenda:

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

Mr. Peabody moved, seconded by Mr. Neville to suspend the rules and move Item on the agenda.

A vote by **show of hands 8-0-0** passed unanimously.

Mrs. Thurston moved, seconded by Mr. Grady that the Enfield Board of Education moves Item 11a before Item 10.

A vote by **show of hands 8-0-0** passed unanimously.

11a. Approval of Head Start Enhancement Grant, Head Start Services Grant and Head Start Link Grant

Mrs. Clement and Mrs. Bowles gave the Board an update about Head Start Program and the Head Start Enhancement Grant, Head Start Services Grant and the Head Start Link grants they are applying for.

Mrs. Clement thanked the Board for their continued support of Head Start.

Mrs. LeBlanc moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Enfield Board of Education approves the Head Start Enhancement Grant, Head Start Services Grant and the Head Start Link Grant as presented.

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

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Continued Budget Discussion

Mr. Neville stated we are in the hole for \$2.9 million. The impact document that was posted on the website lists potential areas we will need to cut to make this amount up. We would need 2/3 of these potential cuts which is unbelievable.

Mr. Peabody would rather discuss this at a budget workshop.

Mr. Neville would like us to schedule a budget workshop.

Chairman Sirard asked if there are any dates available for the Board to meet. We are in a tough financial spot. The legislation is looking at the ECS formula again. The Superintendent produced a list of educated areas to cut from for us to work with. We need to work with the Town Manager. He does not see any other options for the Board.

The Board agreed to meet on Monday, April 20th after the STEAM Wing Tour at Enfield High School.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated we can meet at 5:00 PM after the tour.

Mr. Jonaitis stated that he has been asking for a meeting for quite some time. Now we will get together and will not accomplish anything. He will not be able to meet on Monday.

Mr. Neville is not ready to make any cuts yet. He still feels Town Council members will work with us. He would like to Superintendent to bring to us the bare minimum of cuts. This is the worst level of cuts he has ever seen the Board needing to address. The reason for not doing this sooner was all about timing. He believes discussions are still occurring with council members. They are asking questions so they can better understand our needs. We are behind the eight ball with IT costs.

Chairman Sirard stated that half of the increases to the budget are for insurance and benefit costs.

Mr. Neville stated these costs would be worst if we did not negotiate them.

Mr. Jonaitis stated we need to keep in mind contracts or new programs we are paying for every year. We need to look at things more carefully in the future. We can't keep going back to the taxpayers and asking them for more money. We are responsible for providing the best education that we can afford. We need to look at the costs now and in the future.

Mr. Peabody stated anytime we have added something, we have eliminated something. We have an idea of what the State will eliminate. He added that 51% of our budget is funded locally, 43% came from the State and 3.9 % comes from federal and private grants.

Mrs. LeBlanc would like to discuss at the budget workshop prioritized cuts and how deep the cuts will go.

Mr. Grady stated based on the list we were provided by Dr. Schumann, any cuts will make our classrooms larger and the loss of teachers and programs. We would be destroying our school system. We presented a budget format that was more budget friendly as requested by the Town Council. We only added one position for the new culinary arts program at the high school. Cutting \$2.9 million is not being cut from the Police Departments budget of the Public Works Department budget. The Education Budget is cut every year.

Mr. Peabody echoed Mr. Grady. The budget proposal did not list quantifiable and qualifiable value added for our students. We need to show our test scores and what we have accomplished. The numbers were not given. We do not have the commitment from the community. IT costs are constantly changing. We cannot lease any hardware due to budget ramifications. There is some efficiency that we can do that will help with the costs. We need to bring our yearly operating costs down.

Mr. Neville stated we are willing to work with the ITPC to reduce the numbers. Meeting has been our biggest problem so far. The Superintendent needs to present the needs by prioritizing the cuts. He knows what the impacts will be. He would like this to be presented to the Board. The public has the right to know about these cuts. Any cuts made will be horrific. We need the Town Council to work with us and he believes they will. We need to educate them. We have contractual obligations with our budget. We cannot do this alone and we can't afford any more cuts. The Board has come up with an honest budget. He is willing to educate the Town Council about our needs.

Mrs. Thurston is very concerned about any potential cuts that will affect our students. This is something we go through every year. We want our kids to succeed. Cutting \$2 million dollars is not in the best interest for our kids.

Mrs. LeBlanc does not see a political divide on the Board. We will all disagree on some items

but our common goal is to do our best and due diligence. Cutting \$2.9 million will increase class sizes and a lot of heart ache. She appreciates everyone working together. We all want what is best for our kids.

Mr. Peabody stated this was the first time there has been a budget impact document. There is a Town and School budget. At the town-wide budget meeting last year, no one attended. We need you to attend these meetings. The Board works well together and builds consensus. We are a force to be reckoned with when it comes to our kids.

Mr. Jonaitis stated it is the job of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent to come up with any cuts. They have the knowledge to do this and know our needs. Contracts add to our budget costs and we need to be mindful about this in the future. We all want to do the best for our kids. We have made great changes in our school system and are doing the best we can with what we have. Vocational education and alternative education programs offer great opportunities for our students. Some of our kids in the program at Alcorn are succeeding. You need to look underneath and see the kids we are missing.

Mrs. LeBlanc added that Mr. Jonaitis has stated in the past that he enjoyed working with kids that were struggling. She added that the school's budget is not all funded by the Town.

Mr. Peabody stated we have a partnership with Asnuntuck for vocational programs with machining. There are more things that we can do but are limited by our budget restraints.

Mr. Jonaitis stated he has discussed this before bringing in other business and is glad to hear Asnuntuck is offering this kind of a program. He would like other companies to offer intern opportunities for our students after graduation to get them employed.

Mr. Peabody stated last year's business engagement group met with Dr. Schumann, Ms. McKernan, the Mayor and business leaders where they outlined their needs and what they were looking for in employees.

Mr. Neville stated that Dr. Schumann has been a huge advocate for working with the community. LEGO is just one of our partners. They have brought in a lot of money for us. Grants supporting the program will help greatly. We need to wrap this discussion up. We are all frustrated. We can continue this discussion on Monday.

Chairman Sirard stated the Board will come up with a budget we need and will submit it to the Town who will determine what they can afford to give us. This is how the process works. He understands the need for vocational education programs but we can't afford it. He doesn't blame the Town. He blames what is being forced upon us by our legislators. We are working hard with the Town Council on the budget.

Chairman Neville stated we will continue this discussion on Monday, April 20th after the STEAM Wing Tour.

Mrs. LeBlanc added at 5:00 PM.

11. NEW BUSINESS

a. Approval of Head Start Enhancement Grant, Head Start Services Grant and Head Start Link Grant

This item was previously addressed on the agenda.

12. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. **Building Committee** - None

b. **Future Use of Fermi**

Chairman Sirard reported the Future Use of Fermi Committee will meet again. The Board will make the decision about this. The committee has been struggling to receive the requested information and have been working with the information they have. The committee will make a presentation to the Board. He also would like this to be completed. He will keep the Board informed about this.

Mr. Jonaitis would like to know if the committee is still waiting to receive anything else.

Chairman Sirard stated the committee just received a rough estimate for the science wings at Fermi. We could continue to request itemized details.

Mr. Jonaitis wants to know if the committee needs any additional information that will help us make our decision.

Chairman Sirard believes we have everything for Fermi except for what has been mentioned about JFK.

Mr. Jonaitis would recommend this item be addressed soon. If additional information is needed, please say this publically so everyone will know the committee is trying to get it.

13. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Neville moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 24, 2015 be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 7-0-1** passed with Mrs. Unghire abstaining.

14. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYROLL - None

15. CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS

a. Invitation to attend the Memorial Day Parade – May 24, 2015

16. AUDIENCES

Mary Scutt, Yale Drive - Mrs. Scutt stated she has spoken with representatives about magnet school funding. Her concern is local Boards have been complaining about the costs associated with magnet schools. Her child is receiving a good education at a magnet school. The State has not properly funded magnet schools and that is why they look to local boards for the money. She does not want to see public schools pit against magnet schools. Magnet schools offer different opportunities for our kids. Working together is best for everyone. She addressed the finger printing of volunteers. This has made it very difficult for schools. The schools have seen a decrease with volunteers and this will impact book fairs and field trips. This needs to be resolved quickly. She thanked the Board.

Bethan Ouellette, Betty Road – Mrs. Ouellette stated she is here about Common Core and SBAC testing. The kids are rushed with the strategies for math. Parent nights are being offered to help parents to understand these math strategies so we can help our children. Her child is very frustrated and hates math because of Common Core. Is this really helping our kids? The finger printing policy still needs to be addressed and she is glad that the Board is still looking into this. Our PTO's provide a lot for our students like book fairs so all children can go home with books over the summer. PTO's have provided iPads and field trips for the

students. The high school consolidation was a group effort. Community members received a lot of information about this. The budget cuts have wakened us all up. The State mandates will affect us all and we need to education the public about these. We should share these potential cuts to the public so they will be well informed.

17. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

18. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Grady moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston to adjourn the Regular Meeting of April 14, 2015.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously.

Meeting stood adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Vincent M. Grady
Secretary
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary