

# **DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUES**

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2010 - 7:00 PM**  
**Administrative Center - 63 Beaver Brook Road**

Attendance: G. Cooper, I. Fox, K. Molinaro, S. Podhajski, J. Scozzafava, R. Taborsak and Drs. Dylewski, Glass and Pascarella and Ms. Emmett Thompson from Administration

Absent: E. Alberts, R. Austin, M. Fazio, R. Jannelli, K. Gailliard and Mr. Longo

## **CALL TO ORDER**

The Chairperson, I. Fox, called the meeting to order at 7:09 pm and those assembled recited the pledge of allegiance.

## **RECOGNITIONS**

Award DHS Diploma to the family of WWII Veteran Thomas Davis Kraska

The Board congratulated the family of Thomas Davis Kraska and presented them with his Danbury High School diploma. Mr. Kraska, lifelong Danbury resident, joined the Navy at 17 years old serving a distinguished service career. His niece Joan, along with her husband, shared his picture; thanks everyone and accepted his diploma. Mayor Boughton joined in honoring Mr. Kraska. Patrick Waldron, Director of Veteran Affairs was also in attendance.

Nancy Berman, 2011 Teacher of the Year.

Ms. Berman, teacher at ACE, told the Board that she is truly honored to accept this award not only for herself but for the entire ACE family. She is proud to be a Danbury public school teacher. Recognized in the audience was Karen Rezendes a past recipient of this award.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - None

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

**MOTION** - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education approve the items on the Consent Calendar, as recommended, Exhibits 10-132 through 10-135.

## **MINUTES**

Special Board Meeting Minutes, 8-11-10

Special Board Meeting Minutes, 8-31-10

**PERSONNEL**

Accept Leaves of Absence: MaryBeth Allo Fanny Rodriguez  
Brian Bardo Yolanda Toledo  
Amy Gardner Linda Triebe

Accept Resignations: Robert Altavilla Sarah Jordan  
Gregory Clark Evin Liljengren  
Ninette Duval Erik McKay  
Jennifer Gonzalez-Smith Charles Manos  
Heather Gray-Merrill Glen Mourning  
Stephanie Huber Alison Targett Eaglin

Accept Non-Renewal: Amanda Haggas

Accept Retirements: Joyce Emmett Bernard Simons

**New Hires:**

Vilma Belato	Morris St.	.4 Bilingual
Casey Bock	DHS	Math
Matthew Calvanese	AIS	Grade 1
Virginia DiLeo	DHS	1 Yr Long Term Sub-Spanish
Lindsey Dunbar	Ellsworth	Grade 3
Diana Gomez	Ellsworth	1 Yr Long Term Sub - AM/PM K
Kathryn Guidone	DHS	1 Yr Long Term Sub – English
Melissa Hettenbach	Great Plain	Social Worker
Brian Ho	6 Elem. Schools	Music (Strings)
Lisa McCarthy	BVMS	.4 Spanish
Victoria McClelland	DHS	Chemistry
Stephanie Moy	CRC	Elem. Tech. Leader
Marc Poliquin	Stadley Rough	Grade 3
Alyse Ramey	KSI	.5 - Grade 5
Caitlin Ryan	MRP	.5 – Kindergarten
Amy Schock	DHS	English
Randall Skandera	RPMS	7th Grade SPED
Donna De Grazia	MRI - Preschool	Nurse
Daniel Scavone	DHS	Athletic Director

**DONATION**

Accept \$1,000 donation from Ms. Jane Katch to the Family Literacy Center

**Motion passed unanimously at 7:35 pm.**

**EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE** - None

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Danbury High School:           Nadine Edwards, Board of Governors President  
  Sebastian Ramirez, Vice President  
  Shaquilla Taylor, Treasurer  
  Rebecca Leonard, Secretary

Nadine Edwards told the Board that the first day of school was great; new students and faculty were in the hall and it seemed to be successful. She also said the new attendance policy is being implemented. Shaquilla Taylor said the level offices were relocated and the new locations shared. Rebecca Leonard said the new Freshman Academy in “D” building, level 4 has a new administrator, Mr. Donovan. Sebastian Ramirez told the Board that the Advisory meets every Monday after second period.

**DISCUSSIONS**

**City Council Possible Action on 2010-2011 Appropriation**

A discussion ensued regarding the first meeting in June when the Board passed administration’s raises; the second meeting in June the raises were upheld. Following this meeting, the Common Council held a meeting in July and at that meeting they established an Adhoc Committee to review what the Board did in June. At the Council meeting on August 25<sup>th</sup> there was a motioned to reserve \$35,300 out of this year’s current appropriation. This action is on the agenda for this Thursday. (At this point the floor was given to Mayor Boughton.)

Mayor Boughton explained to the Board that this is not a reflection of the Board’s authority, ability, or statutory authority to determine how to allocate their money. The action to be taken on Thursday night will probably make no difference. This is the rationale:

1. There is a precedence being set; if salary increases go to non-union in Board then the City non-union would need to get a raise; its equity and we cannot afford increases with the economy the way it is.
2. Negotiations – the first question asked when they go into negotiations is “what did the administrators get” and that becomes the baseline for you and it works off of that. The Council understands they cannot tell you what to do and how to spend your money; they can only appropriate the money.

The Mayor stated that the Board can issue the money for raises but the Common Council does not have to appropriate them.

Mr. Fox brought up two points: First - can the Council really do this but he doesn’t believe they need to get to that issue because the raises and the Board’s rationale behinds those raises have a very solid foundation. Second - he wanted to address some of the points in the Adhoc report. The report failed

to reflect some of the Board's rationale and decisions; one point brought up was affordable in this era where we are cutting positions and issuing raises. The largest single item of this amount refers to stipend being paid to our Human Resources Director for legal services. The Board debated over this and before making a decision they asked our Finance Director back to do an analysis on what our legal costs were given our use of our very expensive outside attorney to see what we could actually save if more work would be done in-house. The analysis came back to the Board that there would be approximately \$70,000 savings each year on legal fees if we did more work in-house than using outside counsel. The raises were considered as a group not individually. If you look at the budget line that consists of these people, the Board has been able to reduce the FTE in the administrative level over the years. One analysis done was to take a look at those five budget lines over the past four years. The salary lines are down about \$1 million since 2006. Salaries have been down over the past few years as a result of reorganizing, retirements, not filling positions and redistributing the work to current administrators.

Mr. Taborsak told the Board that that he sees City Council and the Mayor usurping the responsibility and the power the State gives us. I know this is a legal matter and stated that the court could be petitioned by the Board to render decision on this matter.- he asked our Human Resource Director, Ms. Thompson, if Tom Mooney, our outside attorney, has been asked about the legality of this. Ms. Thompson replied that she contacted the chief lawyer representing the State Department of Education and was that advised there is no regulation that permits or allows the City Council to undertake this kind of action. There have also been quite a few legal opinions rendered particularly in regards to what the City Council is allowed to do with respect to budget allocations. Once the allocation has been made, and the law is fairly clear, the City Council cannot then come back and explain how that money should be spent. The Board has full discretion to spend appropriated funds in the manner that they see fit. Mr. Taborsak asked was there any precedent throughout the State on what the City Council and Mayor is doing, or is this the first? Ms. Thompson replied that this was their first experience with it. Mr. Taborsak stated that \$35,000 in court cases is a no winner for anybody, but it is a question of what our responsibility is and what the City's responsibility is.

Ms. Molinaro addressed the Mayor stating that the Board did not take it lightly spending taxpayer's money and would challenge your group to save as much money as this District has over the past two years. If you could reward them with a 2-1/2% increase or 1-1/2% increase in their salary, let's see what they could come up with cost savings because our group came up with the cost savings. Also stated was the Board is down about \$1 million dollars for the last two years.

Mr. Scozzafava said the Council cannot tell us where to spend the dollars but can cut the money. He voted for pay raises but he understands where the Mayor is coming from that there is no money.

Mr. Taborsak clarified that he did not contact Tom Mooney but asked Ms. Thompson if she contacted him on this matter and she talked to the State lawyer not Tom Mooney. Big issue is not withholding the appropriation should be in the court....where is the line. Mr. Scozzafava said we cannot go to court regarding this issue.

The Mayor explained when Dr. Pascarella submitted the Board's budget the raises were clearly delineated. The Council asked Dr. Pascarella if he was giving raises to his administrators and his response was I don't know, I'll have to see. So their feeling, giving the chance to re-vote on the

appropriation or mend the appropriation because they were not given all the information they felt was necessary. All involved is concerned about what next year will bring and the likelihood of the Council giving money next year.

Dr. Pascarella stated that there is clearly a technicality and technicalities make rich lawyers and for us to be adversaries with the town at this time is not in the best interest of our kids. We need to go forward and I'm more worried strategically where we are for next year and if working together needs to happen, I advise us to do that and do it quickly so that we can begin our strategies and move forward. The decision to go to a lawyer is one for the Board but I don't see where that adds value to what we do here relationship wise, school wise, reputation wise, or just business in trying to run schools which you all know is difficult enough and running the town.

Mr. Taborsak said he wants to clarify he was not advocating to go forward with legal actions. He was just pointing this out. Chairperson Fox reiterated we all have to communicate and work together. Ms. Podhajski said she was against the raises but agrees with Dr. Pascarella that we need to move forward, accept Common Council's decision and work together to give kids a quality education in Danbury.

Mr. Fox thanked the Mayor for coming this evening. Mr. Fox also recognized that Common Council member Mr. Ben Chanise was in the audience.

**Recess at 7:54 pm**

**Reconvened at 8:01 pm**

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

### Enrollment (+219)/Staffing/Start of School Updates

The number of students on October 1st will be accurate. Strategically we had to add some positions from the funds we received from the \$1.2 second stimulus. We seem to have an exceptionally high number of ESL students, approximately 300. Dr. Glass stated on the same date last year to this year we are up 365 students. We are monitoring enrollment on a daily basis sometimes twice a day. Student increase is spread throughout every grade in the district. Dr. Pascarella said one school had an additional 4 students arrive today all in the same grade; so schools who only have two sections are much more impacted than those who have three sections. October 1st numbers will be the official numbers.

### Even Start Grant

The Board approved for a one year time period a collaborative venture with Head Start and what used to be called Even Start is now Early Head Start which is now a program for our young ladies who have had children. The normally range of students is between 14-17 year olds. Basically, a lot of expenses have been picked up through the early head start grant. We still applied our 4-year original Head Start grant which was over and renewed. Only two communities in the State were given the grant. There is one position currently being negotiated with Head Start to see how we can fold that into the mix for this year. The regular credit program is included in our adult education as a line item so there is no significant budgetary impact on the program but grant would enhance it.

### Charter School Applications

The Committee working on the restructure and looking at enrollment patterns, we know the middle schools are growing to the point where there is going to be running up to 1,300 –1,400 students. Currently they are running approximately 1,100 each. We are looking at options; we started with STEM as a way of balancing out enrollment between the two middle schools however within the next 2 years we have to look at what we are going to do. This application had to be distributed to us because it is part of Race to the Top. My interest in this application is due to administrative changes at the State level. Connecticut is behind in their Charter offerings. If they approve it, it is cued up for the possibility of funds that may come into the State. They would be local funds from our State and then federal dollars that could flow into the State for charter schools. Dr. Pascarella and the Committee will see if they will send in this extensive application. State has another alternative called, Innovative schools which we are not interested in.

Dr. Glass added, with apprehension to state in public, there is interest in helping us to an expanded a Magnet School Program to K-8. It would be wise for us to do it because it would draw down on the two middle schools. If you put the two concepts together we could expand and create a Stem Academy off-site from RPMS and also expand the Magnet School which should be enough to help the two middle schools. Mr. Podhajski said she thinks expanding the Magnet School is a good idea because we offer so much to the kids there and when we let them go her concerns are that they will just get lost once in middle school. Likes the idea of making it a K-8. Is it possible to use the Mill Ridge property? Does money come to refurbishing existing property? Dr. Pascarella said yes there has been money but then the State stopped it. Adding on to the current Magnet School is not possible due to the wetlands. Plan is to submit to the Board the possibility to do the application which is due October 29<sup>th</sup>.

### Update on American Carrera Tech

Regard lighting in schools. There is some solar energy in some schools and when we went to the sub-committee there was concern on how this would impact the new roofs to put the units on them. One unit is a free standing unit the other is one that has to be put in the fabric of the roof. Engineers sent their materials to Mr. Palanzo's office and he is vending it out. Another question was the price competitive. CL&P gave extension for lighting and clean energy. Mrs. Molinaro wanted to remind the Board that American Carrera Tech comes from a preferred list from CL&P and also from the grant office so these people have already done work so it seems redundant to go back out to bid since they are on the premier list.

Ms. Podhajski offered her thanks to administration and teaching staff; she read that Danbury was among the 15 poorest districts in the State that received praise for increasing student achievement at a rate faster than the State as a whole.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

#### Hiring an additional 1.2 FTE for special subject areas

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by R. Taborsak that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent to hire an additional 1.2 FTE for special subject areas (art, music, physical education) for the current school year (as part of the Education Jobs Fund Program).

Mr. Scozzafava said he was hoping these new hires will not receive pink slips for next year. Dr. Pascarella stated that he cannot answer that question, but hopes we can avoid that. Dr. Glass is working on adding art, music and physical education which also give teachers their prep time, contractually needs to meet; 1.0 for specials; .2 for ELL students and piloting in 5 elementary schools. Mr. Fox asked what if we do not adopt this, how would it affect next year? Dr. Glass states contractually we need 1.0 the other .2 would be for two additional hours to add literacy help for the children. If it doesn't work, we will not continue for next year.

**Motion passed unanimously at 8:40 pm.**

National School Lunch Program Services to St. Joseph's School

MOTION - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by S. Podhajski that the Board of Education approve an agreement between the Danbury Board of Education and St. Joseph's School for National School Lunch Program Services for the period September 1, 2010 through June 15, 2011. Furthermore, that the Board of Education designates the Superintendent of Schools as the authorized representative and signatory.

**Motion passed unanimously at 8:41 pm.**

School Food Service Agreement for Head Start

MOTION - K. Molinaro moved, seconded by S. Podhajski that the Board of Education approve an agreement between the Danbury Board of Education and Connecticut Institute for Communities, Inc (CIFC) for School Food Service Agreement with Head Start or the period September 1, 2010 through August 31, 2011. Furthermore, that the Board of Education designates the Superintendent of Schools as the authorized representative and signatory

**Motion passed unanimously at 8:42 pm.**

Rogers Park Middle School Field Trip to Puerto Rico

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by S. Podhajski that the Board of Education approve the Rogers Park Middle School 8<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish II student field trip to Puerto Rico, January 13-18, 2011

Ms. Molinaro asks that little classroom time be interrupted. Students out only 1-1/2 days, however in Puerto Rico they will spend a day in school. Mr. Scozzafava asked how many teachers – last year was four teachers and one paraprofessional. Mr. Fox concerned late arrival and attending school early the next day. Mr. Taborsak had much discussion regarding majority of the students left back in the classroom will be affected with teachers on the trip and school days being missed. Ms. Cooper asked if student couldn't come up with full amount with fundraising, what they do to help. All fundraisers money is available if they cannot go on one trip can be applied to another. The Principal

at Rogers Park Middle School added this is a unique opportunity that some students may never experience.

*In favor:* G. Cooper I. Fox  
K. Molinaro S. Podhajski  
J. Scozzafava  
*Opposed :* R. Taborsak  
*Absent:* E. Alberts R. Austin  
M. Fazio R. Jannelli  
K. Gailliard

**Motion passed at 8:54 pm.**

## **INFORMATION**

### **Back to School Guide & Calendar**

It was stated that on the table in back of the Board room there are copies of the Back to School Guide and Calendar. Chairperson Fox asked does this insert cost money. Dr. Dylewski said he did not believe the Danbury News-Times charges but producing it costs money. He also inquired about going on-line to save money, Dr. Dylewski explained it is also available on-line and Dr. Pascarella said that this serves as the official notification of all school policies and information.

### **Mill Ridge Educational Center**

Renamed Mill Ridge to Mill Ridge Educational Center.

## **BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

### **2010 CABA/CAPSS Convention, November 19-20, 2010 at Mystic Marriott**

Dr. Pascarella said he and Dr. Glass will have a presentation at this convention. Mr. Fox asked do they want to send a Board representative. Ms. Podhajski thinks someone should go. Mrs. Molinaro will be the Board's and attend the convention.

### **CABA Update**

Soliciting nominations for CABA officers so if anyone interested, please submit your name. They also are asking for a representative from each Board to serve as a liaison. Ms. Podhajski volunteered.

## **BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS**

### **Sites and Facilities – Joseph Scozzafava, Chairperson**

Mr. Scozzafava stated that they will be having a meeting before the next board meeting.

### **Operations/Policy Committee – Robert Taborsak, Chairperson**

Mr. Taborsak said meeting with Human Resources Director regarding the procedure of hiring.

### **Superintendent's Evaluation Committee – Kathleen Molinaro/Eileen Alberts, Co-Chairpersons**

Ms. Molinaro stated Dr. Pascarella is working on his evaluation. Will have a meeting shortly (next Monday).

Dr. Pascarella advised the Board that there will be an Interim at Rogers Park Middle School to cover Tina Hislop's position and an Interim for Charlie Manos, who recently resigned. Mr. Scails will be out the end of October for 6-8 weeks for knee surgery.

Mr. Fox asked how the opening of King Street/Mill Ridge went. Dr. Glass said remarkable. Mrs. Cronin was in all summer overseeing the construction. Dr. Glass and Mrs. Cronin visited all the classrooms. Mr. Scails walked the halls in both buildings with Dr. Glass, kids were on task it was a wonderful team effort to get this to happen. Staff has embraced the leadership and the atmosphere is good. Dr. Pascarella shared with the Board the construction of REACH and ENDEAVOR which went well over the summer.

Mr. Fox asked if there were any problems with transportation with Mill Ridge students to King Street. Dr. Glass said none arose.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by S. Podhajski that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing confidential personnel matters. **Motion passed unanimously at 9:15 pm.**

Attendance: G. Cooper, I. Fox, K. Molinaro, S. Podhajski, J. Scozzafava, R. Taborsak and Drs. Dylewski, Glass and Pascarella and Ms. Thompson from Administration

Absent: E. Alberts, R. Austin, M. Fazio, R. Jannelli, K. Gailliard

Dr. Pascarella asked Ms. Thompson for an update on current ongoing negotiations. Discussion ensued.

MOTION: J. Scozzafava moved, seconded by R. Taborsak, to return to public session. **Motion passed unanimously at 9:45 p.m.**

### **PUBLIC SESSION**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

J. Scozzafava moved, seconded by R. Taborsak, that the Board of Education adjourn the September 7, 2010 meeting. **The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 9:46 p.m.**

---

Kathleen Molinaro, Secretary