

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
OF THE SPENCERPORT CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Date: April 9, 2013
Spencerport, New York

Members Present: Mr. Bracken, Ms. Gillette, Ms. Tyler, Mr. Sweeney, Mr. Hutton, Mr. Young

Absent: Mr. Oberlin

Others Present: Mr. Milgate, Mr. Crumb, Mr. Zinkiewich, Mr. Wood

The Study Session of the Board of Education of the Spencerport Central School District was called to order at 7:10 p.m. E.D.S.T. by the President, Mr. Sweeney, in the Board of Education Conference Room in the Administration Building.

1. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

The Board of Education members and the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Mr. Hutton and seconded by Mr. Bracken that the Board approve the Study Session agenda.

Vote of the Board: Yes: 6

Yes: 6

No: 0

3. BOARD RECOGNITION

Utica National Titanium Award

Mr. Crumb shared that our school district has once again received the Utica National Titanium Award, the highest level of recognition, from the Utica National Insurance Group. In doing so, he recognized Mr. Drake, Director of Facilities, for his efforts in helping our district achieve this accomplishment with his leadership. Mr. Drake shared his thoughts and discussed how we approach numerous safety related aspects of our district and thanked the Board of Education for the recognition.

4. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

There were no requests for Privilege of the Floor.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Old Business

5.1 Approval of the March 26, 2013 Board of Education meeting minutes.

New Business

5.2 Clerks and Inspectors for May 21, 2013 Budget Vote

Co-Chairpersons of the Annual District Elections:

Valerie Lupiani – District Office

Deb Ferraro – Terry Taylor School

Barbara Strine – Wm. C. Munn School

Board of Elections Inspectors:

Ron Young – District Office

John Steeves – Terry Taylor School

Robert Collins – Wm. C. Munn School

District Office Clerks:

Eileen Smith, Deb Olmsted, Donna Bianchi, Marcy Clapper, Lori Eichas, Sandy Bernhart,

Cheryl Snyder, Mary Jean McQuilkin

Terry Taylor School Clerks:

Sue Mosher, Amy Lehman, Linda Siracusa, Maureen Hosey, Darlene Soper

Wm. C. Munn School Clerks:

Chris Davis, Kathy Rodriquez, Joyce Knutowicz, Ann Marie Ademack

5.3 Budget Amendment – Donation from Taylor Parent Teacher Organization

The district received a donation from the Taylor Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) in April 2013, amounting to \$7,900.00, to support the expenditures of twelve cafeteria ceiling fans at the Taylor Elementary School during the 2012-13 year.

A motion was made by Mr. Hutton and seconded by Mr. Young to approve the Consent Agenda.

Vote of the Board: Yes: 6

Yes: 6

No: 0

6. BOARD OF EDUCATION

6.1 President's Report and Communication

Mr. Sweeney shared that we had a good meeting with the Budget Focus Group this evening.

6.2 Board of Education Member's Report

Ms. Gillette shared that the BOCES dinner is tomorrow night. Mr. Sweeney also noted that Spencerport is hosting the Spencerport Chamber of Commerce luncheon this month.

6.3 Discussion of Resolution Regarding "High Stakes Testing"

Mr. Sweeney asked Board members to share any reflections on their previous discussion and whether or not there are any potential next steps that the board may take.

Mr. Hutton shared that after the conversation at the previous meeting, he is concerned about the amount of energy we put in and the amount we receive in return from the State Department of Education. For example, is there a valuable way to hear how we can improve?

Mr. Bracken shared that he feels there is a systematic problem with the Common Core approach and the "one size fits all" approach regarding the amount of time teachers spend in and out of the classroom, the amount of time it takes for administration, and the value of the feedback offered. He further shared his concerns about consistency across the State and challenged whether what we learn from these exams is any different than what the teachers already know. In addition, Mr. Bracken shared his concern on the impact this has on students with disabilities. He feels we should express a concern and share this as a district and lend our voice that Spencerport recognizes this as an issue.

Ms. Gillette shared that she is in support of State testing and does believe they are flawed in many ways. She noted further that her experience with post graduate students fosters her perspective and the experiences she has had in hiring people indicating how unprepared they are with their math skills. Many of the hiring experiences that she has had are not American students and it concerns her that American students are not competitive in the market. Ms. Gillette noted that her colleagues see this in their experiences as well in the Technology and Medical industries. She further shared that supporting students on how to test is a life skill and she wants to support students with these skills. She feels that the Board of Education should be an advocate to help fix the flaws. She believes raising the bar is important. Ms. Gillette closed by saying that she would be in support in championing improvements that the Board can support but not in making a statement that we don't support testing.

Mr. Hutton noted that he is not against the testing but would appreciate better data as a result of the testing.

Mr. Young shared that his understanding of the testing now is to make sure students are being prepared to reach a common level. What he senses from home, however, is that teachers are focusing more on teaching to the test and he is concerned that the State Education Department is not the best source or institution to tell us how to test. Similar to how the State has let schools determine how to grade teachers, they should allow us to do the same for students.

Ms. Tyler noted that she felt the administrators were positive about the testing but noted that improvements are needed. An example of this was making sure that the tests are fair. Ms. Tyler also shared that at this point she felt it would be extreme if a resolution was made to remove or get rid of testing. She also suggested that how testing is presented to students by teachers should not be conveyed as "high stakes" to avoid making students nervous. Providing feedback on how to better handle testing is something Ms. Tyler said she would be supportive of.

Mr. Sweeney acknowledged that this is a conversation occurring in many school districts. He shared that his position on this situation is that the amount of testing is a greater concern of his and not testing in general. He suggested that looking at benchmarks and limiting the amount of testing would be an interest of his. While Mr. Sweeney noted the value of the Common Core Standards, he has concerns about the costs associated with the testing mandates and the pace at which the Common Core Standards are being rolled out along with the assessment. He further noted that he isn't against the Common Core Standards or testing, but the process that the State has used. Mr. Sweeney summarized that the Board is agreeing that testing is necessary, that it is necessary to get information back at the district level to be useful as a return on our investment, and that there is general concern that the testing process is flawed.

Ms. Tyler shared that her recollection from the panel discussion was that the Common Core Standards is a good thing because that is what is being taught rather than teaching to the test.

Ms. Gillette suggested that as a Board we ask for a first year waving of any penalties as a district.

Mr. Crumb shared that our work on the Common Core Standards has been occurring for several years. From a flawed perspective, he shared that the teacher/administrator evaluation system, connected at the same time, is a greater concern of his. Mr. Crumb shared that raising the standards is important and it is incumbent on the part of the school district to use the feedback from the testing to inform our work in the future. He further noted that the "high stakes" exams are more at the High School level where students need them to graduate and we are focused in our discussions on grades 3-8 testing.

Mr. Zinkewich shared that teaching with the end in mind is critical, especially when considering the college and career readiness aspects of the Common Core Standards. He noted that challenging students early is crucial and will be a critical component for us if we are to prepare students for their future.

Mr. Sweeney provided a suggestion to make some sort of resolution or public voice as a Board of Education. He offered to make an effort to draft a resolution with the Superintendent that captures the Board of Education's common thoughts. He offered to share this out to the Board of Education members for feedback. It was noted that he would accept examples from Board members as part of his effort to prepare the draft. Mr. Sweeney closed by thanking Board members for their participation in this discussion.

7. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

7.1 Adoption of the 2013-2014 Budget and Resolutions

Mr. Crumb presented the proposed budget with the most recent State Education adjustments to our projected revenues. He shared that at our last meeting we were proposing a forecasted tax levy increase of 4.05% and a tax rate of 3.49% which represented a 3.53% increase in our budget. After providing an explanation of the increased State Aid, our proposed budget reduction restorations, and new instructional and operational recommendations, Mr. Crumb summarized our new proposed budget. He shared that tonight's final recommended budget represents a 2.75% tax levy increase and a 2.2% tax rate increase which represents a 4.08% increase in our budget. He noted that this change is due mainly to the increase in State Aid. The recommendation was to approve a budget with expenditures of \$71,844,058 and dissolve the Property Loss Reserve (\$813,190) and appropriate funds to reduce the 2013-2014 tax levy. In addition, approve use of \$323,894 from the Capital Reserve for buses and motor vehicles, and create a new Capital Reserve for technology and classroom equipment (five year term, \$4 million dollar maximum contribution). Mr. Bracken asked for clarifying

information on the impact of the use of the Property Loss Reserve. Ms. Tyler asked if there is a summary available of what has been reduced. Mr. Crumb shared that he would send that information out. It was shared that the Budget Focus Group was supportive of the recommendations. Mr. Hutton shared his appreciation of the work of the Cabinet in putting together the presentation. Mr. Sweeney reminded Board members that this is our last meeting to review the recommendation.

A motion was made by Ms. Tyler and seconded by Mr. Hutton to adopt the 2013-2014 Budget and Propositions as presented.

Vote of the Board: Yes: 6

Yes: 6
No: 0

Further Discussion:

Ms. Gillette asked for clarification on the use of the reserves and our continued reliance on them. Mr. Crumb shared that we have worked hard to use the reserves effectively with the guidance of our financial planners. He further shared that the hope is that the retirement system numbers will continue to come down and this will result in less of a reliance on reserves. He noted that we will continue to look at this in a balanced way. Mr. Sweeney added that his interest is to continue to reduce the amount of appropriated fund balance that we use each year. Mr. Sweeney further suggested that the Audit Committee work on researching what would be an appropriate target for the use of reserves and fund balance. Mr. Young suggested that a slight increase in the proposed tax rate might help us to continue to work towards sustainability. After some discussion, there was a recommendation to reduce the amount of reserves used by \$80,000 and adjust the tax rate to 2.44% and the tax levy to 2.99%. At the end of the conversation, the Board of Education supported the original projections of 2.2% on the tax rate and 2.75% on the tax levy for communication purposes as presented by the Superintendent.

8. MEETING EVALUATION

Comments were shared about the quality of the conversations at the meeting tonight.

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:25 p.m. a motion was made by Ms. Gillette and seconded by Ms. Tyler to move into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel.

Vote of the Board: Yes: 6

Yes: 6
No: 0

Mr. Sweeney moved the meeting out of Executive Session and back into Study Session at 9:49 p.m.

10. ADJOURN

Motion was made by Mr. Young and seconded by Mr. Bracken to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 p.m.

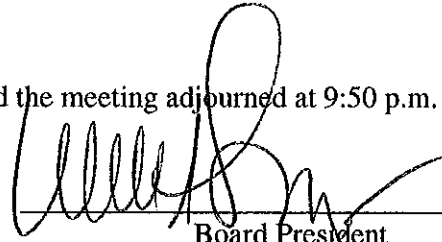
Vote of the Board: Yes: 6

Yes: 6
No: 0

As there was no further business, Mr. Sweeney declared the meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.



District Clerk



Board President