

BERLIN BOARD of EDUCATION
July 18, 2002
MINUTES
Special Meeting

Present: Joseph Annunziata
James Baranowski
Gary Brochu
Pat DeVivo
John McIntosh
Kevin Murphy
Kevin Porter
John Richards
Janice Zaccardo

Absent None

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Brochu at 6:55 p.m. in the Board of Education (the "Board") meeting room at 238 Kensington Road, Berlin, CT.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

B. Audience of Citizens (Part 1 of 2)

Mr. Brochu asked if anyone had come intending to address the Board, as the Board would be involved with Executive Session as its first order of business, to interview Griswold Elementary Principal candidates.

Mr. Paul Czepiga, 98 Norton Road, said he was a member of the Board of Managers for the YMCA. He expressed concern over the Board's plan to charge for building usage next year, noting that this was a change for the YMCA's after school program. He said the rate for the program would increase by \$15 per week, per child. Mr. Czepiga asked that the Board reconsider their fee schedule, or the organizations that would pay for utilities and/or custodial services. Mr. Brochu asked if the administration could confirm the rate increase was the result of the Board's new fee schedule and told Mr. Czepiga that he would be notified should this matter come before the Board as an agenda item in the future.

Mrs. Roseann Silvia, 55 Mooreland Road, said she was a 5-year resident of Berlin and had a Grade 1 student at Griswold school. She expressed concern over the building usage fee schedule, specifically for Daisy troops and the YMCA. She asked the Board to reconsider the fee schedule, and Mr. Brochu made the same offer to contact her should the issue come before the Board, as was done for Mr. Czepiga.

II. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Moved by Mr. Annunziata, seconded by Mrs. Zaccardo to enter executive session, for the purpose of conducting interviews with finalists for the Griswold School Principal vacancy, at 7:10 p.m.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 8:0**

Present in the executive session: Board members Annunziata, Baranowski, Brochu, DeVivo, McIntosh, Murphy, Porter, Richards, and Zaccardo. Also in attendance, Superintendent Paskiewicz, Director of Curriculum Ford, and, for their interview, two finalists individually.

Note: Mr. Murphy excused himself at 7:25 p.m. to attend another meeting. He returned at 8:30 p.m. to rejoin the executive session

Moved by Mr. Baranowski, seconded by Mr. Richards to return to regular session at 8:55 p.m.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 8:0**

I B. Audience of Citizens (Part 2 of 2)

Mr. Brochu reconvened the regular session by asking if anyone would like to address the Board in the audience of citizens.

Ms. Judy Procko, 231 Robbins Road, brought forth concerns about the YMCA latchkey program, and the new fees they will incur as part of the Boards' Budget Reduction Plan. She stated how much her family has benefited from the Program, noting the safe environment it provided. She claims that the imposed fees would add an additional \$200.00 per month and would like the Board to be aware of the hardship this would cause.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting of June 24, 2002.

Moved by Mr. Richards, seconded by Pat DeVivo to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 24, 2002, as amended for minor changes summarized by the Board Secretary.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 8:0**

Corrected copies of the minutes were distributed to the Board members.

IV. FINANCE

A. Policy Change – Use of School Facilities – Second Reading

Mrs. DeVivo began the discussion by asking if the YMCA would fall into the category of “G” or “H” under the revised policy. This was clarified; those distinctions would be made by Mr. Paskiewicz or Mr. Czuchta as needed. Mr. Richards stated that there are no fees for the first five groups. As an example, the PTOs will continue to be supported without incurring a fee. Mr. Murphy asked if the YMCA fit into category “G”. Mr. Paskiewicz and Mr. Czuchta both agreed that the YMCA falls into the “H” category. Mr. Brochu added that in addition to Budget issues the Board also needed to update it’s building use Policy stating that the new policy could go into effect by August 26, 2002.

Dr. McIntosh again expressed concerns with the Superintendent having the ability to waive fees. His argument is that the Superintendent should not regulate any dollars that go back to the town. Mr. Richards said that the Town has no expectation of the money to be generated by the fee schedule, as it a new item being proposed at this time. Mr. Paskiewicz asked that the Boards’ attorney look into this issue further to address Dr. McIntosh’s’ concerns. This led to the following action.

Moved by Doc McIntosh, seconded by Mr. Murphy to table the motion to approve the second reading of the revision to Board Policy KG, and the fee structure as recommended.

**FAVOR: Annunziata, Baranowski, DeVivo, McIntosh, Murphy
Porter, and Zaccardo
OPPOSED Richards
MOTION CARRIED: 7:1**

This item is expected to return to the agenda of the next regular meeting, on August 26, 2002.

V. OLD BUSINESSA. Budget for 2002-2003

Mr. Brochu reported that the State has adopted their Budget of which an additional \$236,431 was given to the Town of Berlin for an adjustment to the ECS and transportation grants. He noted that the Town had anticipated \$100,000 of this revenue increase in the approved Town budget, making \$136,431 as additional available revenue. By law \$16,000 must be forwarded to the Board and used for transportation. The remainder is Town revenue that the Council can decide how to propose allocation of, subject to potential Town Meeting approval depending on the size of any portion of the Town's budget being adjusted over \$25,000. Mr. Brochu said the Town Council voted on July 16, 2002 to postpone giving any of the additional funding to the Board, unless it guarantees that 100% of funds so added were used to restore programs the Board has approved reductions to, as voted on by the Board previously.

Mr. Paskiewicz said that he had first learned of the potential additional funding by reading reports in the paper. The Town Council had not contacted his office, or the Board President, to make the Board aware of the possibility of additional funding.

The Superintendent said that after learning of the potential for additional funding, he was prepared to recommend to the Board that \$97,000 of the \$136,000 be used to restore the co-curricular programs planned on being eliminated from the McGee Middle School. In addition, he recommended that the remaining \$39,000 be used to add an additional Grade 4 teacher at Griswold School, to alleviate the overcrowding issue. He stated that these recommendations have been placed on hold, pending a final decision being reached by the Town Council as to the availability of additional funding.

Mrs. DeVivo asked for a point of clarification regarding the legality of the Council directing funds given to the Board. Mr. Brochu responded by stating that the stipulations on the Board's spending are, in fact, illegal. He further added that he presented the Council with the hypothetical hiring at Griswold and he was told that the spending of even \$1 outside the restoration of programs planned to be reduced would cause the Council to not fund the Board at all. The unknown delay for future Council action on this matter means that the new Principal at Griswold School will have to begin the school year without knowing how many sections there will be for fourth grade thus creating many scheduling problems. Mr. Richards feels that planning can in fact take place, though acknowledged that the planning for two different scenarios was not going to be efficient and is a lot to ask the new principal.

Doc McIntosh said the Council was concerned over the additional staff need at Griswold school. He said that with 105 kindergarten students, why were there to be 6 sections? Mr. Paskiewicz said that dropping one section would not be worthwhile, as the sections meet for ½ days. Thus, there would not be a full teacher savings and it did not free up a classroom. The expectation that future kindergarten classes will increase resulted in the decision to stay with the current 6 sections and maintenance of the existing staff,

rather than to place someone on ½ time and risk losing that teacher. Mr. Annunziata asked for a point of order and requested the Board return to the agenda item.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for July 30, 2002; Mrs. DeVivo asked if the decision is made to give the Board the \$136,000 would a Special Meeting for the Board be scheduled. Mr. Brochu said a special meeting would be appropriate, perhaps to be held on August 5, 2002. Mr. Richards added that even if all of the \$136,000 potential funding were given the Board, it does not fully offset the current Board budget shortfall of \$253,000, which excludes the proposal of an additional \$45,000 for the Grade 4 teacher.

VI. PERSONNEL

A. Appointment – Griswold School Principal

Moved by Mr. Baranowski, seconded by Mr. Annunziata to approve the appointment of Ms. Laurie Gjerpen as the Principal of Griswold School.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 9:0, including the Board president

Mr. Brochu praised the work of the reading and interview committees, who sent two highly qualified candidates for the Board to consider. In fact, it is unfortunate that the Board did not have two opportunities available, as both were such strong candidates.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Textbook Adoption – Berlin High School

Moved by Mr. Murphy seconded by Mr. Baranowski to approve the adoption of the textbook, How Stuff Works, by Marshall Brain, published by Hungry Minds.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 8:0

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

**Moved by Mr. Annunziata, seconded by Mrs. DeVivo to adjourn the meeting
at 9:50 p.m.**

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 8:0**

Submitted by,

John M. Richards, Secretary
Berlin Board of Education

JMR:aeg (Original; 7/20/02, revised 8/23/02)