

MINUTES

Date of Meeting: November 26, 2013

Type of Meeting: Work Session

Place of Meeting: Long Beach Middle School Auditorium

Members Present: President Patrick E. Gallagher
Vice President Dennis Ryan
Board Member Darlene Tangney
Board Member Stewart Mininsky
Board Member Roy Lester

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Mr. David Weiss, Superintendent
Dr. Kenneth Graham, Assistant Superintendent –
Curriculum and Instruction
Mr. Michael DeVito, Chief Operating Officer
Ms. Carole Butler, District Clerk

I. Call to Order/Pledge-President Gallagher

Call to Order/Pledge

President Gallagher called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM and led the community in the Pledge of Allegiance. The next meeting, originally scheduled to take place at West School, will be held in the LBMS auditorium.

II. Presentation of Work Session Topic – Facilities Study Group

**Work Session Presentation
Facilities Study Group**

- Superintendent Weiss explained that study of the facilities had begun prior to Superstorm Sandy. Members from civic associations, PTA, unions, and community organizations were given the responsibility of examining the base use of buildings with all possible alternatives. No recommendations were requested of the committee. 80% of budget is fixed expenses. Superintendent Weiss thanked the committee members for their service. Timeline starts with tonight's presentation and concludes with narrower options being presented at a public forum on January 21st.

Presentation – 2013-14 Facilities Study Group Presentation

Presenters: Dr. Kenneth Graham, Ms. Jackie Miller, Ms. Kim Ashmead, Mr. Kevin Mannle, Ms. Sandy Schneider, Ms. Gerri Maquet, Dr. Michele Natali, Ms. Vivian Fiallo, Mr. Mark Morgenstern, Mr. Michael DeVito, Ms. Karen Sauter, and Ms. Brenda Young.

Highlights include: Goals, Buildings, Emerging Ideas, and Options with Advantages, Concerns. Copies of the Presentation can be located on the District website and in the office of the District Clerk.

The Board of Education requested a moment of silence in remembrance of Mrs. Colleen Mininsky, wife of Board Member Stu Mininsky, who recently passed away.

III. Board of Education Discussion of Work Session Topic

**Board of Education
Discussion of Topic**

The Board of Education members chose to wait to hear what the public had to say about the presentation.

IV. Questions and Comments from the Public on Agenda Items Only

**Questions and
Comments from the
Public**

Facility Study Group Members spoke first.

- Gerri Maquet – 523 State St – expressed her appreciation for creation of the committee; discussed her challenging personal experience as a member of the committee, particularly since she had supported the fight for East School years before. Other committee members had to push their biases aside as well. She still does not support the closing of any school. Board of Education makes final determination.
- Steve Freeman – President CTA – committee was not given financial considerations to deal with; spoke of the contentious sale of Magnolia School; the unsuccessful attempt of implementing the Princeton Plan; hoping that all staff reductions will be through attrition; with substantial monies in reserves, closing or repurposing to save money is not reason enough.
- Steve Candon – 10 W. Beech St – thanked Superintendent; reiterated the challenge of putting personal feelings aside; charge is now to the Board; commended Board members as volunteers; they must continue to ask for public input.
- Other members of the public spoke:
- Eddie Vrona – 7 Oswego Avenue – EAB – thanked presenters and wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving; expressed his disapproval of 5th graders in MS; thought West should remain open after spending all the FEMA monies to fix it.

Questions and Comments from the Public on Agenda (continued)

- June Schechter – 444 E. State St – cautioned the Board of Ed on enrollment numbers which fluctuate; Administration should have a building; wanted further investigation of financial implications of school closing.
- Matthew Adler – 410 E. Broadway – thanked committee for its hard work; discussed enrollment fluxes from state aid numbers not just a decrease; consider possibility of impact if full day Pre-K; maximizing of class sizes is not necessarily positive.
- Billy Snow – 733 E. Pine St – President, CSEA, commented on the array of options, noting that the newer buildings, West, Lido, HS and MS who were most effected by the storm, have modernized classrooms. Suggested East and Lindell Schools should be considered for restructuring for cost savings. Education is the most significant factor in the decision and then number 2 is costs savings. Requested some of the savings be awarded to staff members.
- Angelo Lomonte – 458 East Beech St – thanked committee; requested more hard data, financials, facts regarding class size; weighted matrix; asked about status of Administration building (alternate use); should issue be tabled until monies are determined.
- MaryBeth Thurston – 528 East Bay Drive – thanked committee for their hard work; 3 HS children; bought my house near East School; worried about property values if school closes; requested real estate broker address public.
- Brette Ocampo – 160 Riverside Blvd – we need to keep all schools in case we need to use them again in another storm; numbers not dwindling at East School.
- Maureen Vrona – 7 Oswego Ave – EAB – thanked committee; asked about the analysis of physical plant usage for the Princeton Plan; do all plans fit into the buildings (more work needs to be done); asked to see the options with real numbers.
- Peter Schack – 424 E. Broadway – asked that since presentation did not include financial details, when will be able see the savings numbers.
- Sherri Fackler – 120 Coolidge Ave – commented that education should be #1 priority; does not support increase in class size; worried about movement of students especially after Sandy; kids need a sense of stability; students are number 1 concern, not administration location.
- Kerri Gustavson – 551 W. Walnut St – thanked committee; suggested it was too soon after Sandy to make changes; class size numbers are significant.
- Julie Simms – 25 W. Broadway – thanked committee; asked how options will be narrowed down; would appreciate less options; what are the best practices, studies; which options give the most flexibility in the case of change in enrollment.

V. Board of Education Comments

- Board Member Lester discussed his prior experience with East School, the reorganization in 1998; Newsday had article about how districts cope with school closings. There is no way to remove emotion from school closings. Not enough data presented tonight; merely brainstorming session. He will ask the Superintendent to eliminate poor educational options and reject them; will ask for best educational option and the costs associated with that. Trusts Superintendent's judgment as educational leader of the community.
- Vice President Ryan thanked the members of the committee and the attendees. Commented on emotional component of school closings; knows importance of educational value of repurposing. The disruption is his main concern; we need to think of least disruptive plan. Ruling out plans that move students every year. Based on past experience with school closing, this is an emotional experience. Trying to do the right thing for everyone not just those in attendance. Temple closed in town, maybe library site. Waiting to hear of Superintendent's recommendation
- Board Member Mininsky promised that there will be complete and total transparency on any figures – enrollment, dollars – on any decision that is made whether we close a school, do nothing, or postpone it. Everything will be told to the public.
- Board Member Tangney wants all costs associated with all options. Values Weiss' opinion on best educational option and with Mr. DeVito on the best financial option. All of that information should be given for all suggested options not just the best ones; full transparency.
- President Gallagher stressed that education is #1 factor in decision, but educators do not always agree on what that is. Clarity will be difficult. Declining enrollment had been taking place for a while before Sandy. This discussion came up 5 years ago with the issue of the bond; this is not a new topic. Administration Building is not funded by the state (building aid) like a school. Maple Ave. building was not brought up in presentation.
- Vice President commended HS on the play, Almost Maine.

VI. President Gallagher called for a motion to adjourn at 9:18 PM.

Adjournment

Motion by: Board Member Gallagher

Seconded by: Board Member Ryan

Approved: 5-0

Minutes submitted by: _____

Carole Butler, District Clerk
December 10, 2013