

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
January 2, 2008
7:00 p.m.

Albany High School

PRESENT: Mr. William Barnette
Dr. Mark Barth
Ms. Judy Doesschate
Ms. Teneka Frost
Mrs. Barbara Gaffuri
Ms. Melissa Mackey
Mr. Wayne Morris

Dr. Eva. Joseph
Mr. Jeffrey Honeywell
Dr. Joseph Dragone
Mr. James Matthews
Ms. Linda Jackson-Chalmers

ABSENT: None

Call to Order:

Board Counsel, Jeffrey Honeywell, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Selection of Chair Pro-Tem

Mr. Honeywell called for a motion to appoint the Chair Pro-Tem for the meeting. Upon motion by Mr. Barnette and second by Ms. Doesschate, the board voted unanimously (7-0) to appoint Mr. Honeywell Chair Pro-Tem.

Board of Education Elections

Mr. Honeywell announced that at the general meeting held on November 6, 2007, Melissa Mackey was each elected to a four-year term from January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2011.

Administration of the Oath of Office to newly elected Board Member

Mr. Honeywell proceeded to administer the Oath of Office to Ms. Mackey.

Election of Officers for the 2008 Calendar Year

Mr. Honeywell called for nominations for the office of President of the Board of Education. Mr. Morris nominated Teneka Frost for the office of President. Ms. Frost accepted the nomination.

The Board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Mr. Honeywell declared Ms. Frost President of the Board of Education.

Ms. Frost called for nominations for the office of Vice President of the Board of Education. Mrs. Gaffuri nominated William Barnette for the office of Vice President. Mr. Barnette accepted the nomination.

The Board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Ms. Frost declared Mr. Barnette Vice President of the Board of Education.

Ms. Frost called for nominations for the office of Secretary of the Board of Education. Dr. Barth nominated Barbara Gaffuri for the Office of Secretary. Mrs. Gaffuri accepted the nomination.

The Board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Ms. Frost declared Mrs. Gaffuri Secretary of the Board of Education.

Appointment of Officers

Ms. Frost called for a motion to appoint district officers as follows:

- Clerk of the Board – Catherine Cutting
- District Treasurer – Tishawn Terry-Garcia
- Deputy Treasurer – Christine DeWitt
- Tax Collector – Christine DeWitt
- Extra Classroom Treasurer – Christine DeWitt
- Internal Claims Auditor – Internal Claims Auditor – Joseph Ferrandino

Ms. Doesschate made a motion to approve the appointment of officers.

Dr. Barth seconded the motion.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Other Appointments

Ms. Frost presented additional appointments for approval as follows:

- Purchasing Agent – Beth Labunski
- Records Access Officer – James Matthews
- Asbestos LEA Designee - Anthony Catalfamo
- Independent Auditing Firm – Cusack & Company
- Board Counsel – Girvin & Ferlazzo Law Firm
- District Physician – Jay Kravitz, M.D.

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve other appointments.

Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Designations

Ms. Frost recommended the approval of designations as follows:

- Official Bank Depository – Key Bank, N.A.
- Official Newspapers – Times Union & Daily Gazette

Mr. Barnette made a motion to approve designations.

Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Authorizations

Ms. Frost called for a motion to approve authorizations for the 2008 calendar year as follows:

1. The Board of Education authorizes the Assistant Superintendent for Business Affairs, to certify employee payrolls.
2. The Board of Education authorizes the Interim Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, to approve conferences, conventions and workshop attendance for the 2007 calendar year.
3. The Board of Education authorizes the Interim Assistant Superintendent for Business Affairs, to approve property tax refunds and tax roll adjustments up to \$2,500 either mandated by court order or directed by the County of Albany Real Property Tax Service. (The Board of Education will be notified of all refunds and adjustments approved during the preceding month pursuant to this authorization at each regular Board meeting.)

4. The Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent of Schools, to approve budget transfers up to \$10,000. (The Board of Education will be given a report of all such transfers pursuant to this authorization at each regular Board meeting. Transfers over \$10,000 will require Board approval.)
5. The Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent of Schools and, as necessary, the President of the Board of Education to execute grant applications.
6. The Board of Education authorizes the President of the Board to approve all overnight, out of state and out of country field trips.
7. The Board of Education authorizes the reimbursement of pre-approved transportation expenses for the 2007 calendar year at the current allowable IRS mileage reimbursement rate of **\$.505** per mile through December 30, 2008.
8. The Board of Education authorizes the District Treasurer, Deputy Treasurer, and the Central Treasurer of the Extra Classroom Activity Fund as individuals designated to sign checks.
9. The Board of Education authorizes the use of corporate credit cards for the following individuals:

Eva. C. Joseph – Superintendent of Schools

Beth Labunski – Purchasing Agent

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve authorizations.

Ms. Doesschate seconded the motion.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Bondings

Ms. Frost called for a motion to approve a blanket bond in the amount of \$1,000,000 for all District employees.

Mr. Morris made a motion to approve bondings.

Ms. Doesschate seconded the motion.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Schedule of Meetings for 2008

Ms. Frost presented the schedule of Board Meetings for the 2008 calendar year, designating the first Tuesday of each month as the date of regular board meetings and the third Thursday of each month as the date for round table meetings. Exceptions are indicated on the schedule along with reasons for these exceptions. Dr. Joseph indicated there is only one meeting in December due to the round table schedule so close to the holidays. If there is a need to have a meeting at this time one will be scheduled.

Ms. Doesschate made a motion to approve the schedule.

Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the schedule.

Board Committee Membership

Ms. Frost presented the listing of the 2008 Board Committee Membership for approval. Dr. Joseph noted the schedule of meetings would be changed to accommodate board members when necessary. Following discussion membership on the committees was changed as follows: Policy Committee – Mr. Barnette, Dr. Barth, Ms. Frost; Audit Committee – Ms. Doesschate, Ms. Mackey, Mr. Morris; Facilities Committee – Mr. Barnette, Mrs. Gaffuri, Mr. Morris.

Mrs Gaffuri made a motion to approve board committee membership as discussed.

Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

School Liaisons

Ms. Frost presented the listing of 2008 School Liaisons for approval. Following discussion the listing is as follows:

William Barnette – Eagle Point Elementary School, Giffen Memorial Elementary School and North Albany Academy.

Dr. Barth – Abrookin Vo-Tech and Albany High School.

Ms. Doesschate – Pine Hills Elementary School and Sheridan Preparatory Academy.

Ms. Frost – Arbor Hill Elementary School, Harriet Gibbons High School and Philip Livingston Magnet Academy.

Mrs. Gaffuri – William S. Hackett Middle School, Montessori Magnet School and School 19.

Ms. Mackey – Adult Learning Center, Delaware Community School and Philip J. Schuyler Achievement Academy.

Mr. Morris – Albany School of Humanities, Stephen & Harriett Myers Middle School and Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology.

Dr. Barth made a motion to approve the listing as revised.

Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

SUPERINENDENT'S REPORT

- Student representative is not present this evening due to illness.
- Congratulations to Ms. Mackey.
- Thank you to last year's officers, particularly Mr. Morris.
- Congratulations to elected board officers.
- In response to discussion at the last board meeting related to textbooks, follow-up with the principal, the superintendent is assured that all students have the textbooks necessary for their courses. The principal will contact the parent individually to address concerns.
- On January 23, 2008, the City Council PTA is hosting in partnership with the district a forum on school choice. The forum will take from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology. A flyer with this information will be distributed to parents.
- Board members received information related to Open House schedules at Magnet Schools.
- Donell Foreman, a graduate of Albany High School, attending Pace University, will play Seaweed J. Stubbs for a national tour of the Broadway hit Hairspray. Congratulations to Donell.
- ELA testing will begin next week for grades 3, 4 and 5 and grades 6, 7 and 8 the following week. Information reminding parents about good habits that can support their children during these testing periods.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Student representative was not present for the meeting. There was no report.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Edward H. Brown, Jr. addressed he board relative to the Achievement Gap Resolution adopted in the fall of 2006.

ROUTINE CONSENT ITEMS

Ms. Frost presented the Routine Consent Items, including Proceedings of Meetings, October 2, 2007, October 18, 2007, November 7, 2007, November 15, 2007, December 4, 2007 and December 20, 2007; Resignations; Vacated Positions, Creation of Position, Leaves of Absence; Transfers; Appointments (Administrative Appointment, Miscellaneous Appointments, Albany Evening High School-Fall 2007-08, Coaches – Winter 2007-08, Tutors – 2007-08, Civil Service and Emergency Conditional Appointments); Treasurer’s Report, Budget Transfers under \$10,000, Budget Transfers over \$10,000, Budget Status Report - November, Extra Classroom Activity Report; and Tax Collector’s Report. In addition, 403B Compliance – Administrative Services-OMNI Services, E-Rate Bid Awards, Financial Review – Child Nutrition Program – H.M.B. Consultants; Committee on Special Education, Subcommittee on Special Education, Committee on Pre-School Special Education, Appointments to Special Education Committees, Resolution Authorizing Referrals to the Special Education Committee (New York State Education Law Chapter 378); Contracts for Grants and Special Projects: The Reading and Writing Project Network, LLC (Columbia University) elementary schools, The Reading and Writing Project Network, LLC (Columbia University) middle schools, The Addiction Care Center of Albany Community Education, Albany City Council PTA, Albany NAACP – Student Theater Outreach Program, Capital District Sponsor-A-Scholar, Inc., Family and Children’s Services of the Capital Region, Inc., Park Playhouse II, St. Anne Institute, Two Together, Inc., Albany YMCA; and Attendance at Conferences.

Mrs Gaffuri made a motion to approve the Routine Consent Items. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. Mr. Barnette requested that the Committee on Special Education be set aside. Ms. Mackey noted as a point of full disclosure, she is an education partner with Two Together, Inc. Mrs. Gaffuri asked that the Addiction Care Center of Albany Community Education Contract and the St. Anne Institute Contract be set aside.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the Routine Consent Items absent those set aside.

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve Committee on Special Education. Dr. Barth seconded the motion. Discussion followed relative to the issue of the board not concurring with the recommendations of the special education committees. By approving the recommendations the board is saying that it agrees with the recommendations that they have not seen. What happens when parents do not agree with the committee’s recommendation? Counsel advised that special education has very specific procedures for parents relative to due process rights. Board action is essentially a pro-active role in approving the recommendations as required by law. Board members were advised that parents are fully aware of their right to due process and often times look for board approval in order for services to be made available for their children. The issue of parents being informed that there is no recourse following board approval will be investigated by the administration to insure that parents have clarification of their rights related to due process.

The board voted 5 ayes, 1 nay (Mr. Morris),
1 abstention (Mr. Barnette) (5-1-1) to approved the motion.

Dr. Barth made a motion to approve the contract for The Addiction Care Center of Albany – Community Education. Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

The board voted 6 ayes, 0 nays,
1 abstention (Mrs. Gaffuri) (6-0-1) to approve the motion.

Mr. Barnette made a motion to approve the St. Anne's Institute contract. Ms. Doesschate seconded the motion.

The board voted 6 ayes, 0 nays,
1 abstention (Mrs. Gaffuri), (6-0-1) to approve the motion.

FACILITIES PROJECT REPORT

Discussion Item Related to the Facilities Project

Change Order – School 19 Sub-flooring

Dr. Joseph advised this issue is being presented to the board for consideration as a time sensitive matter so that the School 19 renovation project is not delayed. Mr. Gifford advised during the demolition of the building it became apparent that the sub-flooring in the older portion of the building needed to be replaced. Mr. Gifford advised issues such as this are anticipated, given the age of the building and past experience. The resolution being presented for approval this evening indicates the maximum amount expenditures to be allocated to these repairs. Mr. Gifford advised the final change order would be presented to the board for approval. This expense is covered in the current budget.

- Is the replacement required on all levels of the building? All three levels in the older sections of the building need additional repairs.

Mr. Morris made a motion to approve the resolution.

Dr. Barth seconded the motion.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Action Item Related to the Facilities Project

Change Order – School 19

Ms. Frost presented change orders for School 19.

Ms. Doesschate made a motion for approval.

Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Bid Award

Ms. Frost presented the bid award for window replacement at Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology and Geffen Memorial Elementary School.

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion for approval.

Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

- Were there only four bids on these projects? The district received five. One did not have the amount written in and the bid was disqualified.
- Was that a disappointment that there were only four bids? This is very specialized work. The facilities team worked very hard to get five vendors to bid the job. There were very few contractors who do this work. This was a very good representation. We have repeated the pattern again of not only the project coming in below the anticipated amount and bids were very close.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

ACTION ITEM

Strategic Planning Process – Action Team Contract

Ms. Frost presented the Soar Point Associates proposal for the provision of consultation services to facilitate the action team process for strategic planning for approval.

Dr. Barth made a motion for approval.

Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

- Discussion followed relative to a timeline where recommendations are presented to the Board in September rather than a more compressed timeline. The 6-9 month timeline is a guideline. Depending on the logistics for any given action team and how they come together and how they meet, that time is there if necessary. The co-leaders for the action team, the level of training and the skills that they develop through that training will serve the action teams well. One of the things that the facilitators talked about was the importance of that two-day training for the co-leaders so they develop the skills necessary to facilitate the work for their action teams. The better trained and the better skills of the co-leaders, the less time the consultants need to be on site and the more expeditiously the process can take place.
- What is the facilitative role that the district plays? In terms of preparing data for the action teams, requests will be considered on an individual basis, based on the need. Requests should be accommodated through administrative and support staff personnel.
- Is it realistic to expect that people would be available for 16 hours of training as co-leaders? The district will make accommodations for these people similar to the strategic planning session. The facilitators are reluctant to change the process.
- Has there been any progress in recruiting co-leaders? There are co-leaders from the district staff. There are several calls in to others who participated in the Strategic Planning Process. However, there are no commitments at this time. Updated information will be presented to the Board at the next board meeting.
- If someone goes through the training would they be certified in the Cambridge Method? This is a modified process based on the experience of the facilitators. There would be no certification.
- Has the contract been reviewed by counsel? This is a similar agreement to the previous contract. Counsel has reviewed this contract and is recommending approval.
- The contract notes the two-day training would be provided to action team co-leaders and members. Will teams need to be identified before training would take place? It would be necessary to have a considerable amount of planning to have the teams in place for training in February. Team co-leaders would be presented to the board at the next board meeting for approval.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Board Committee Reports

No reports

Board Member Items

Mr. Barnette noted that board committee reports are presented after the board approves items such as change orders for the facilities project. Mr. Barnette suggested that as the board addresses facilities items, input from the facilities subcommittee could be included in that conversation. This applies to all committees. The board agreed that when the board is taking action regarding issues that come before board committees prior to being presented to the board that the members of the committee provide input from the committee before action is taken. Discussion followed relative to procedure for board committees.

Dr. Barth asked for a status report on the school safety effort in the high schools and possibly school safety status in the middle schools. Dr. Barth asked when this could be placed on an agenda. Ms. Frost noted this item would be considered with other items for future agendas.

Ms. Doesschate thanked Dr. Joseph for the excellent letter to Darlene Mengel concerning the impact of charter schools and expressing the concerns of the district very well regarding the continuing applications and the continuing fluctuations in enrollment.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. The board adjourned at 9:05 p.m.