

Tentative minutes of the **Bethel Board of Education Regular Meeting** held on **October 18, 2007**, in Board of Education Conference Room E.

Attendance: Jen Larsen

Administrative Attendance: Gary Chesley, Teri Yonsky, Pat Cosentino, Bob Germinaro, Kathleen Gombos, Gary Lawlor, Kevin Smith

M. Knickerbocker, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

1. **Call to Order**

A. Roll Call for Quorum

Board Members Present: S. Carlsen, F. De Nigris, S. Holmberg, W. Kingston, M. Knickerbocker, A. Pedone, R. Renner (arrived 8:10 p.m.)

Board Members Absent: J. DeRosa, S. Holmes

BHS Representatives: Y. Monda

B. Pledge Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America

2. **Approval of Minutes**

A. October 4, 2007

Motion by M. Knickerbocker: Move to approve the minutes of October 4, 2007 as corrected.

Seconded by A. Pedone

AYE: S. Carlsen, M. Knickerbocker, A. Pedone

NAY: None

Abstain: F. De Nigris, S. Holmberg, B. Kingston

Motion Carried

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**TOWN OF BETHEL
TOWN CLERK**

3. **Board Recognition/A Salute to Excellence**

A. Gifts to School System

Bethel High School

- Art materials donated by Lucie Voves, President, Church Hill Classics, Monroe, CT

4. **Correspondence**

- Memo from M. Dwinells, Senior Naval Science Instructor, Bethel High School, regarding NJROTC Enrollment.
- Letter to the First Selectman regarding the Bethel Education Foundation's greenhouse project.
- BHS Building Committee Meeting Minutes of October 11, 2007.

- Letter to Board of Education from Bill Hillman regarding PTO.
- FOI request to Board of Education from Bill Hillman regarding Candidate Forum.

Mr. Knickerbocker thanked those who worked to make the greenhouse project possible and hopes the project will move forward with great speed. Mrs. Holmberg also noted the tremendous effort and time it took to put the greenhouse project together.

**Motion by S. Holmberg: Move to the Bethel Education Foundation greenhouse project.
Seconded by A. Pedone
Motion Carried Unanimously**

Mr. Carlsen would like Board members to substitute for Mrs. Holmberg if she is unable to attend any BHS Building Committee meeting.

5. BHS Representatives Report

Yeji Monda, BHS Representative, reported next week is homecoming week. The bonfire will be Friday night and the game, parade, and dance will be Saturday. PSAT's were this week and ACT's will be next Saturday. Last Saturday the Quest for the Best band competition was held.

6. Administrative/Board Member Update

1. Pandemic Flu Presentation

Betty Avery, Health Coordinator, presented information on preparation and prevention of the Pandemic Flu.

Larry Craybass commended the Dr. Chesley for getting the word out. He said they are in the process of updating the Health Department website to provide more information.

Dr. Chesley informed the Board he sent an email to the principals regarding MRSA. The custodians will be cleaning every desk and cleaning football equipment this weekend. Dr. Chesley thanked the Bob Germinaro, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds, Sherri Holmberg, and the fire department for coming to help during the flooding at the high school.

Dr. Chesley announced Bethel has won awards for the CABA Award of Excellence and Honorable Mentions for Educational Communications.

Teri Yonsky, Director of Fiscal Services, informed the Board First Student Company has purchased Laidlaw nationwide and will be Bethel's bus company. This year Bethel will be going out to bid for the food service in January. Next week, the high school cafeteria has planned something for each day of spirit week.

Mr. De Nigris asked why the First Selectman and Andrew Morosky, Town Engineer, didn't go to Bob Germinaro with the work orders. Mrs. Yonsky explained that she, Bob Germinaro, and Andrew Morosky met to reconcile the work orders and agree on what is outstanding and everyone is on top of it.

Mrs. Pedone requested a Facilities Subcommittee meeting be scheduled prior to January.

**Motion by A. Pedone: Move to add Personnel to the agenda.
Seconded by S. Carlsen
Motion Carried Unanimously**

7. **Consent Calendar**
A. *Health Services Report*
B. *Tuition Contracts Report*
C. *Enrollment Summary – Oct 1, 2007*

**Motion by R. Renner: Move to accept the Consent Calendar.
Seconded by A. Pedone
Motion Carried Unanimously**

8. **Audience Participation**

Phil Gallagher gave accolades to Teri Yonsky, Director of Fiscal Services, for the best quality of information they have received. Mr. Gallagher commented on the Community Report regarding State Aid and commented on PTO activities.

Jen Larsen, 128 Grassy Plain Street. Mrs. Larsen stated the school PTO's that are in the buildings have no political ties. The Central PTO is separate from the building PTO's. Mrs. Larsen said the building PTO's are not politically active.

9. **New Business**
A. *Discussion: Community Report*

Mr. Kingston stated the report is a valuable tool and on the whole is very well done. Mr. Kingston said his issue with the report has nothing to do with content. It is the relationship with the Board. About two years ago the Board voted unanimously to have the report available to the Board for review to allow Board members to voice any concerns. Mr. Kingston would like to re-institute the Board's review of the report. Mr. Kingston does not want things going to the community under his name without him seeing them.

Mr. Knickerbocker said the process of having nine editors became too cumbersome. A discussion took place at a later meeting on whether or not to have a community report. It was agreed that a review would not be needed in order to get the report out in a timely manner.

Mr. Carlsen stated there was no resolution and no member of the Board may speak for the Board of Education unless by resolution of the Board of Education.

Mr. De Nigris agrees if Dr. Chesley were publicizing an opinion of the Board. However, The report is informational. He has not heard of any complaints on any content in the Community Reports. Mr. De Nigris remembers the conversation and although there was no resolution, everyone was in agreement that if the report was going to get out in a timely fashion, the Board would abandon its review. The reports are informational, they give an update on what is going on in the schools, or informs the community about action the Board has already taken on record. Mrs. Holmberg agrees that the report is informational and also remembers the conversation about the review process.

Mrs. Pedone also remembers the conversation about the review process and agrees the report is informational and is based upon any policies, resolutions, motions made, or procedures that have been in place. She does not remember anything that has come out in the report that has not either been discussed by the Board as whole or in subcommittee.

Motion by A. Pedone: Resolve the superintendent is empowered to issue a report to the community without review.

Seconded by S. Holmberg

AYE: F. De Nigris, S. Holmberg, W. Kingston, M. Knickerbocker, A. Pedone, R. Renner

NAY: S. Carlsen

Motion Carried

Motion by B. Kingston: Move to amend the motion to add "as prepared by Superintendent, Dr. Chesley" to the report.

Seconded by S. Holmberg

Motion Failed

Dr. Chesley said the report was called the Superintendent's Report. About five years ago, the Board of Education requested it be the Community Report from the Board of Education.

Mr. Kingston said his entire objections would disappear if it were called the Superintendent's Report.

Motion by B. Kingston: Move the *Report to the Community* report be changed to be the *Superintendent's Report to the Community*.

Seconded by A. Pedone

AYE: F. De Nigris, S. Holmberg, W. Kingston, M. Knickerbocker, A. Pedone, R. Renner

NAY: S. Carlsen

Motion Carried

Motion by S. Carlsen: Move to amend the motion to add "therefore, no input from any Board of Education members should be put in the report without approval of the Board as a whole.

Seconded by B. Kingston

AYE: S. Carlsen

NAY: F. De Nigris, S. Holmberg, W. Kingston, M. Knickerbocker, A. Pedone, R. Renner

Motion Failed

Mr. Carlsen stated that Mr. Knickerbocker submitted a one page report and signed as Matthew Knickerbocker, Chairman. This is a violation of the original resolution but also the constraint on the Chairman that only the Board speaks and the Chairman speaks for the Board only by specific Board order.

Dr. Chesley informed Mr. Carlsen the Superintendent's evaluation is a public document. Mr. Carlsen stated the information in the report is the Chairman's interpretation of the Superintendent's evaluation. Dr. Chesley said paragraphs were taken verbatim from the evaluation. Mr. Carlsen feels it is inappropriate to put into the newsletter without prior Board authorization.

Dr. Chesley pointed out the EMT article in the Community Report was a summary from Sherri Holmberg, Board of Education member, who worked on the EMT course and curriculum. Arleen Pedone, Board of Education member, has given information on CAFE to the Community Report. These are informational pieces. This is done routinely.

Mr. Kingston feels the evaluation that was embedded in the report should have been submitted for Board approval. Mr. Knickerbocker stated the evaluation was a public document the Board voted on and was previously released to the press.

Mrs. Holmberg feels that this whole discussion goes against the Board's commitment to work together and give each other trust and respect and the common goal of working in the best interest of the children in this town.

Mr. De Nigris said the evaluation was reviewed and approved by vote of all the Board members and is public record.

Mr. Carlsen said he has no recollection of seeing the evaluation and requested the Chairman email the document to the Board. Several Board members said they do not need the document because it was received by all Board of Education members in the past.

10. Personnel

A. *Resignations*

**Motion by A. Pedone: Move to accept the following resignation:
Kaylyn Guardarrama, High School Spanish Teacher
Seconded by F. De Nigris
Motion Carried Unanimously**

11. Reports to the Board

A. *Curriculum*

1. Presentation: Human Geography Textbooks – BHS

Tabled.

11. Adjourn

**Motion by M. Knickerbocker: Move to adjourn at 9:00 p.m.
Seconded by S. Holmberg
Motion Carried Unanimously**