

SOUTH PLAINFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

125 Jackson Avenue
South Plainfield, NJ 07080
908-754-4620

The Minutes for the Committee of The Whole Meeting on Wednesday, October 12, 2011 at 6:00 P.M. in the Roosevelt Administration Building gymnasium, 125 Jackson Avenue:

Due to a water emergency at the Administration Building, the meeting was moved to the Roosevelt Elementary School, 135 Jackson Avenue.

I. CALL TO ORDER

President Giannakis called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. in the gymnasium of the Roosevelt Elementary School, 135 Jackson Avenue, pursuant to the terms of the Sunshine Law.

II. SALUTE TO FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was recited.

III. ROLL CALL- Mark Resnick

Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Present: Mrs. Byrne, Mr. Farinella, Mr. Hubner, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Sorrentino, Mrs. Boyle and Mr. Giannakis

Mr. Seesselberg arrived at 6:30 p.m.

Absent: Mr. Stevenson

Mrs. Byrne left at 9:55 p.m.

Also Present: Dr. Bowen, Dr. Cocchiola, Mr. Resnick and Messrs. Zitomer and Roselle, Legal Counsel

IV. BOARD PRESIDENT

In accordance with the terms of the Sunshine Law, adequate notice of this meeting was posted in all school buildings, the Administration Building, Borough Clerk's office, Police Headquarters, Public Library, four newspapers and W.C.T.C. on May 5, 2011. Please be advised that there is **No Smoking on school grounds - inside or outside.**

V. AGENDA ITEMS ONLY:

A. Agenda Additions and/or Deletions

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Laurie Erstel said it has been her privilege to be a part of the coaching staff for the Girls & Boys Varsity Bowling Teams for the past fourteen years. She thanked the Board for their support of that volunteer position. Recently she was informed that the procedure re for appointing coaches had changed and that now the Athletic Director could only appoint currently working teachers to these positions, not retired educators, regardless of their qualifications. Mr. Fech had been introduced as the Head Bowling Coach at Meet the Coaches Night on September 12th and was asked by Mr. Czech to come to his office the following day. When he arrived, Mr. Fech was informed of the new procedure for hiring coaches and was told that two applications had been received and that his services were no longer needed and that he should step down and let it go. Mr. Fech was blindsided and hurt. She feels that this action is sending a message to our students that it is okay to dismiss people regardless of their qualifications, knowledge or their feelings.

Mr. Giannakis pointed out that the Bowling Coach was not fired; that every year coaches must reapply and there is no tenure or guarantee of rehire.

VI. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

VIII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

RESOLVED, pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, that the Board meet in closed session at 6:10 p.m. to discuss confidential matters pertaining to personnel, negotiations, student matters and/or attorney-client privilege. It is expected that the matters discussed in closed session shall be made public as soon as the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

MOTION: Mrs. Miller SECOND: Mrs. Boyle VOTE: 7-0
Absent: Mr. Seesselberg and Mr. Stevenson

The Board returned to public session at 7:08 p.m. with all members except Mr. Stevenson in attendance.

Mr. Hubner asked Dr. Bowen why he made the recommendation for Coach Schulte in Personnel Resolution #31. Dr. Bowen responded that there is an internal form process to be followed; then he personally interviews the recommended candidate to be sure he/she meets his expectations. He said that Mr. Schulte had been riced and requested that the discussion be held publicly. Dr. Bowen said he expects some additional details from the High School and advised that he still has the right to withdraw the recommendation. Dr. Bowen said the Athletic Director feels Mr. Schulte has the background, skills and experience to have a positive effect on the players, both in character and skills. Dr.

Bowen said in Mr. Schulte's case, there have been some questions on performance. Dr. Bowen said he has Mr. Schulte's personnel folder and can share that with the Board and attorney. Dr. Bowen said if there is documentation that is true regarding negative performance, he asked if non-appointability offenses would apply to one year, two years or for the rest of his career. He said Mr. Czech feels that if Mr. Schulte did anything inappropriate; he is rehabilitated and eligible for his recommendation. Dr. Bowen said that if Mr. Czech and Dr. Pedersen sign that form, that is telling him that the person has overcome their difficulty and are able to do the job. Mr. Hubner asked if was possible that Mr. Czech was not aware of all of Mr. Schulte's questionable code of conduct and asked whether or not Mr. Czech had reviewed Mr. Schulte's personnel file. Dr. Bowen to his knowledge, there was no review of the file. Dr. Bowen asked Mr. Czech to come to the podium. Mr. Czech said he had not reviewed the file. Mr. Hubner said if neither Mr. Czech or Dr. Pedersen has reviewed the file and are not aware of all the facts, then it is really Dr. Bowen's recommendation. Dr. Bowen said this is the Board's Committee of the Whole meeting, which is a workshop to review the agenda which is put forth in draft form. Dr. Bowen reserves his option to withdraw this appointment. Mr. Giannakis asked Mr. Czech if he had reviewed the file and found documented incidents, would that have changed his recommendation. Mr. Czech said he told Dr. Bowen that the only thing he could judge Mr. Schulte on was that he coached football this past season and he has had the opportunity to see him as a Physical Education teacher. Mr. Giannakis said Mr. Czech has been the Athletic Director in the past and asked if he has ever reviewed any disciplinary files on a coach. Mr. Czech said he had not. Mr. Sorrentino said he wanted to share his personal experience with Coach Schulte. He said he was firm, fair and consistent and the kids learned football and did well. Mr. Seesselberg asked if Mr. Schulte's demeanor and interaction with the students could be monitored to prevent past practices. Mr. Czech said he would be at all Freshman, Jr. Varsity and Varsity home games, but would not be at all away games to observe Mr. Schulte, but said there are Athletic Directors from other schools and officials who would be present to report any incidents. Mrs. Miller said since Mr. Schulte did not get the position last year; is there anything that could cause hard feelings. Mr. Czech said he has observed Mr. Schulte as part of his job and has not found any problems. Dr. Bowen said there is some record of dissatisfaction in Mr. Schulte's file and asked if Mr. Czech was aware of it. Mr. Czech said he had heard about some incidents and had addressed them with Mr. Schulte. Dr. Bowen said there was a problem with inappropriate language used by Mr. Schulte and his evaluation stated that failure to comply could affect his coaching contract. Bowen listed several other comments listed in his evaluation which clearly laid out the expectations of that position. Dr. Bowen said he has to decide between now and when the agenda next goes to the Board whether to uphold or withdraw his recommendation. He said he does not want to embarrass anyone by putting a name on the agenda without the support of the Board. Mrs. Boyle said they went over all this information last year with Mr. Bugey who wrote the evaluation. He said he reviewed the evaluation with Mr. Schulte, who was going to work to improve those areas. Mr. Bugey brought back his name last year for rehire. Mr. Hubner spoke of an incident he witnessed when Mr. Schulte put a student into play who had been suspended for one game. He also said it is illegal to have prayers and also saw that happen. Mr. Hubner said there are things that are not in the file that people who make the decisions should be made aware of.

Mr. Giannakis announced that the Board was changing their format for Committee Meetings and that the committee meetings would be held as a Committee of the Whole. He asked Mrs. Byrne, Chair of the Buildings & Grounds Committee, to report.

Buildings & Grounds Committee

The following items were discussed:

- The monthly Report from Sodexo showing projects completed
- The meeting with the Athletic Director, Principal, Architect of Record, Mr. Resnick, Mr. Olobardi and Mrs. Byrne regarding field conditions
- Infrared Roof Survey of the High School, Grant School and the Administration Building

Mrs. Boyle said that the Board was not informed of the cost of the roof surveys until they saw the expenditure on the bill list. She also commented on the poor conditions of fields and said Jost Field is a disgrace and is full of crabgrass which should have been taken care of. Mrs. Byrne stated that one of the reasons the fields hadn't been mowed was continuing rainfall and resultant wet ground. When equipment moved into the field, it became bogged down and had to be removed until the ground dried. Mr. Czech has pictures showing these conditions. Mrs. Boyle said it didn't rain for four weeks straight. We played ball on that field and it was never mowed. Mrs. Boyle also spoke about an evacuation last year at the High School and that there were students in classrooms who never heard the announcement to leave the building and the Board was promised by the previous Superintendent that the problem would be rectified. There was another evacuation situation this week and some students never heard the announcement again and said something could have happened to a student. Mrs. Boyle questioned the accuracy of the Sodexo Report. Mrs. Byrne said Mrs. Boyle was getting dramatic again. Mrs. Boyle said you have to be dramatic around this place. Mrs. Byrne suggested that Mrs. Boyle address her concerns to Mrs. Mahoney, the Sodexo Manager, and see if a work order was ever put in regarding the speakers. Mrs. Boyle asked why Mrs. Mahoney was not here. Mrs. Byrne said she would have been here but the meeting was changed from Tuesday to Wednesday and she is attending a class in Toms River. Mrs. Boyle began speaking and Mrs. Byrne said "enough already." Mr. Seesselberg asked about having an updated facilities report done since the last one was done over three years ago. He mentioned a broken fence at the Roosevelt Elementary School. Mrs. Miller said last year the Board had discussed the traffic issue at Roosevelt School and talked about putting in another exit. Mr. Seesselberg said it is probably a funding issue, but we will see if we can address it. Mr. Hubner referred to the roof report and asked if we are fixing them. Mrs. Byrne said minor repairs have been done, but anything major would have to be bid out.

Dr. Bowen informed the Board that if the Roosevelt Administration Building still did not have water in the morning, employees would be told to report to work at noon.

Committee of the Whole Meeting
October 12, 2011

Mr. Giannakis asked Curriculum/Technology/Student Activities Committee Chair, Mrs. Miller, to begin her report.

Curriculum/ Technology/ Student Activities Committee

I. Technology

- Smart Board Report
- Conversion to Office 2010
- Assistive Technology

Mrs. Miller asked Mrs. Stoeckel, Supervisor of Technology to speak about the handout she had prepared regarding the number of Smart Boards in the district. Mrs. Stoeckel said we did purchase a number of technology items with the ARRA and Pandemic Grant funds. Mr. Giannakis asked if all schools had the same number of smart boards and felt all grade levels in the elementary schools should have the same curriculum and technology. Mrs. Stoeckel said it has a lot to do with a teacher's comfort level with a laptop and projector. Mrs. Stoeckel said we are expecting two dozen more smart boards shortly. Dr. Cocchiola said we are making an effort to equalize the distribution between the schools and that more teachers are requesting smart boards. Mr. Seesselberg said he shares the concerns about everyone having the same curriculum and technology as Mr. Giannakis. Mrs. Stockel also had prepared reports on updates on technology training and Assistive Tek. Mr. Giannakis asked why our email addresses for the district are so long. Mrs. Stoeckel said she has worked on international projects and having the nj.us in the address helps to identify where we are from. Mr. Giannakis asked Mrs. Stoeckel to research how much it would cost to convert to an easier and shorter email address. Mr. Seesselberg said we should be able to use the spboe.org domain for email. Mrs. Stoeckel will check on this. There was a discussion on whether there were any additional costs associated with the I-pads purchased for Special Education students with ARRA funds.

II. Student Activities:

- Requests for overnight trips to Paris and Rome were discussed. The request was withdrawn. The trip will be requested again next year and will give the students more time to fund raise. Mrs. Miller said there was a request for a trip to Peru but the Committee has reservations about the political climate and safety of the students.
- The Student Leadership Retreat/Trip was discussed and approved.

III. New Business – Curriculum

The following items were discussed:

- Request to reinstate the Cooperative Education program in the High School
- October 12 Single-Session Day Report
- New Lesson Plan Procedure status

- Grade K-4 report card revisions
- Language Arts Supervisor
- Unified Plans & School-Based Objectives
- Language Arts Supervisor (discussion postponed to November meeting due to lack of time)

Dr. Cocchiola said the High School Principal made a request for a Business Teacher to attend a workshop to receive her certification to supervise a Cooperative Education Program. He said if this we reinstate the program, we would need to hire a 3/5 teacher since the teacher in charge would only be able to teach two classes and the rest of time would be spent supervising the students in the work program. Dr. Bowen said we would need to budget an additional \$75,000 for salary and benefits for another business teacher. Mr. Sorrentino supports bringing this program back and said it offers good options for students.

Mr. Parisi updated the Board on the activities for professional development during the In-Service today and the new Lesson Plan Procedures which should be in place by November 18th.

Dr. Cocchiola said there were some inconsistencies between the meaning of the letters S, N & I on the K-4 report card and the meaning of those letters in the permanent record. The report cards have been revised.

Mrs. Miller asked that the Unified Plans & School Based objectives be posted on our website. She thanked Dr. Cocchiola for completing the NCLB application and submitting it and said she thought he did a great job.

Mrs. Miller asked Dr. Cocchiola to update the Board on the activities planned and held during the “Week of Respect.”

Public Relations Committee

I. Fall Newsletter

Mrs. Miller distributed copies of the “Community Contact” which is also on the website. She thanked Dr. Cocchiola for putting it together and said he did a great job. She said there will be no hard copies of future editions. She reviewed some of the items that will be featured in the Winter Newsletter.

II. Website – New items/Features

Mrs. Miller asked Mrs. Stoeckel to provide an update on our website. Mrs. Stoeckel said the website has been up since July and she reviewed a lot of new features and information that is now available. All staff members have the capacity to have individual websites. Mrs. Byrne said they discussed at a prior meeting customizing the link so that parents can

choose the information they want to view. Mrs. Stoeckel reviewed the process for parents to register for this feature. Mr. Hubner asked about the individual staff webpages. Mrs. Stoeckel said this would give the teacher the opportunity to share information on what is going on in their classroom, list rules, announce birthdays, etc. Dr. Cocchiola said teacher participation at this point is voluntary. Dr. Cocchiola said he received an email from a 2008 graduate of the High School who asked if we have anything on our website to acknowledge our former students who serve in the armed forces. Dr. Cocchiola said he thinks that is something we should consider.

Finance Committee

Mr. Giannakis asked Mr. Hubner, Finance Committee Chair, to begin his report.

The following items were discussed:

- Development of a Tentative Budget Timeline Schedule via DRAFT Worksheet
- U.S. Hoops update
- NCLB Grant Audit
- Tom's Automotive

Mr. Hubner asked if all budget work sessions would be in the Committee of the Whole format. Mr. Giannakis said he felt the Finance Committee should do a few preliminary work sessions before bringing it to the full Board. Mr. Hubner asked Dr. Bowen if he has heard anything about when the new Business Administrator will start. Dr. Bowen said he had spoken with Mr. Olobardi today and that he expected that he will be held for the sixty days required by his contract and will be here on or about December 1, 2011. Mr. Hubner asked if the District Accountant II position would remain vacant until Mr. Olobardi comes in December. Mr. Resnick said Mr. Olobardi is in the process of looking over the resumes of the people who were interviewed and we should have something on that soon. Mr. Hubner said the full Board received a copy of the bill list and asked the procedure for asking questions about it. Mr. Giannakis said any Board Member with a question should contact Mr. Hubner who will compile a list of questions raised and send the list to Mr. Resnick to research.

Mr. Hubner asked for an update on U.S. Hoops. He said they are a for-profit organization and they use our facilities on Saturdays and Sundays. Dr. Bowen said he has done some research and found that they pay for custodial overtime fees but not for the rental of the space. We are in the process of gathering facts to see if that is in violation of the policy or compliant with the policy. Mrs. Boyle said she has been saying for two years that they have been running a business without paying for the rental of the space, only paying \$35.00 an hour for the custodial overtime. Mr. Giannakis suggested that we tell them they have until the end of November with the current arrangement and then we need to put a contract into place. Mrs. Byrne agreed with Mrs. Boyle that they shouldn't be running a business out of our schools. Mr. Seesselberg said he also agreed. Mrs. Tirone said they have permits approved by the Business Office and have been pre-billed through

December. Mr. Giannakis asked that the policy be reviewed. Mr. Resnick said as he understands it, children from South Plainfield do not have to pay. Mr. Hubner asked Mr. Zitomer about preparing a contract. Mr. Zitomer said the contract should include a “hold harmless” clause in case a child gets hurt. Mrs. Boyle said the contract should state that students from South Plainfield will not be charged.

Mr. Hubner said he had asked that the Sodexo Maintenance Contract be reviewed to make sure they have the number of employees stated in the contract. Mr. Resnick said Sodexo has supplied us with payroll documentation. He said there had been a problem with them not paying prevailing wage, but that has been rectified. Mr. Hubner referred to the \$50,000 payment received from Sodexo. Mr. Zitomer said he believed that was paid because Sodexo was not properly staffed. Mrs. Boyle said Sodexo was supposed to have 37 employees, but only had 34 and that is why we keep asking to have that verified. Mr. Hubner asked Mr. Resnick and Mr. Zitomer to make sure that Sodexo is compliant with the terms of the contract. Mr. Hubner referred to the Audit of the NCLB grant for the 2008/2009 school year and asked if that account is reconciled. Mrs. Miller asked if there is any new information regarding the cost of parts through Tom’s Automotive.

Policy Committee

Mrs. Miller, Policy Committee Chair, spoke briefly about each of the following mandated policies.

1. Policy #0142 – Board Member Qualifications, Prohibited Acts and Code of Ethics
2. Policy #5512 – Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying
3. Policy #2431.4 – Prevention and Treatment of Sports Related Concussions and Head Injuries
4. Regulation #2431.4 – Prevention and Treatment of Sports-Related Concussions and Head Injuries

Mrs. Miller said Policy #0142 is being revised to include that all Board Members must have a criminal background check within 30 days of election or appointment. This also applies to all current Board Members. Board Members will be reimbursed for expenses. Mr. Giannakis said any Board Member who has not yet been fingerprinted must do so as soon as possible. If you have been fingerprinted through your employment, you may archive the information. A Board Member can be removed from the Board for non-compliance.

Mrs. Miller said there is a minor revision to Policy #5512.

Mrs. Miller explained the changes regarding Policy & Regulation #2431.4 – Prevention and Treatment of Sports-Related Concussions and Head Injuries. She said we must have

a training program that follows the NJ DOE Guidelines for trainers, all staff members that coach and nurses. We also now have to distribute the NJ Dept. of Education Concussion & Head Injury Fact Sheet and Parent/Guardian acknowledgement, which has to be signed, to all student athletes. Any student who has had a concussion or head injury must have written medical release clearance in order to return to play which is then sent on to our school physician. Mrs. Miller this Policy and Regulation must also go to all sports teams who use our grounds including the Recreation Department. Mr. Seesselberg asked when this policy would go into effect regarding providing this information to outside groups who use our facilities. Mr. Zitomer responded that it would be effect after the Board adopts the Policy and Regulation at the second reading.

X. AGENDA APPROVAL

RESOLVED, that the agenda for the regular public meeting on, as may have been modified, is hereby approved.

MOTION: Mr. Seesselberg SECOND: Mrs. Boyle VOTE: 8-0
Absent: Mr. Stevenson

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mrs. Boyle said over two years ago she suggested that area businesses pay for signs advertising their company at our sports fields as a way to raise money. Mrs. Boyle said when the Van Driver's Contract was negotiated, they asked that they be paid a salary rather than hourly rates. She said they have now asked if their hourly rates can also be shown on their paychecks.

Mrs. Boyle said Meet the Coaches Night is held in September. All parents and coaches for all the seasonal sports throughout the year are invited. They are from the past year and said just because a coach comes, it does not mean they are being renewed. They must apply every year and just because you had the position last year it does not mean you will get appointed this year.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Diana Joffe, SPEA President, said when a staff member is RICED, whether it is public or executive session, it is the responsibility of the Board and public to be accurate about the facts. She said Mr. Schulte is not here tonight and if he had been, this meeting would have been different. She said the comment Mr. Hubner made about Mr. Schulte praying with the kids was inaccurate. Ms. Joffe said he does what many other professional coaches do, and that is to get on one knee and have the kids focus and calm down before they play. Ms. Joffe said before anyone speaks about a staff member, they better be sure what they are saying is accurate.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

By a unanimous voice vote, the meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

MOTION: Mr. Sorrentino SECOND: Mr. Farinella VOTE: 7-0
Absent: Mr. Stevenson and Mrs. Byrne

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Resnick
Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary