

**ENFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 13, 2009**

A regular meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was held at Town Hall in Council Chambers, located at 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, CT on January 13, 2009.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** The meeting was called to order at 7:32 PM by Chairman Greco.

2. **INVOCATION OR MOMENT OF SILENCE** Judy Apruzzese-Desroches

3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** Judy Apruzzese-Desroches

4. **FIRE EVACUATION ANNOUNCEMENT** Chairman Greco announced the fire evacuation announcement.

5. **ROLL CALL**

**MEMBERS PRESENT** Joyce Hall, Vincent Grady, Judy Apruzzese-Desroches, Tom Arnone, Greg Stokes, Susan Lavelli-Hozempa, Charles Johnson and Andre Greco

**MEMBERS ABSENT** Patrick Droney

**ALSO PRESENT** Dr. John Gallacher, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Anthony Torre, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Christopher Drezek, Business Manager; EHS Student Representative Bryan Flanagan and FHS Student Representative Samantha Reid

6. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Grady moved, seconded by Mr. Johnson that the regular meeting minutes of December 9, 2008 be approved. There were no corrections. Motion passed by a **show of hands 7-0-1** with Ms. Hall abstaining.

7. **BOARD GUESTS**

a. **Recognition of Fermi High School Students**

Chairman Greco introduced Ms. Patty O'Brien, the North Central Regional Director for the Alzheimer's Association. Ms. O'Brien stated in October, they held a "Memory Walk" in Enfield. Enfield volunteer Lynn Daniels asked if they could call one of the high schools and see if any young adults would like to help out. The morning of the walk, Nick from Fermi arrived and stated that he would do what ever they needed him to do. Nick helped with unloading cars, setting up tables and obtaining signatures on the sign. Nick went around and had people sign the sign. We were truly amazed at how many signatures Nick obtained. This sign is brought to every walk and displayed. The Enfield walk was a huge success. We need young volunteers like Nick.

Ms. O'Brien presented Nick Prajzner a plaque - 2008 Outstanding Volunteer at the Enfield Memory Walk and a mug that states "I'm a Champion for Alzheimer's". Ms. O'Brien thanked Nick for volunteering and stated that he will receive two tickets to an upcoming Rock Cats game and will be our guest.

Nick Prajzner thanked Ms. O'Brien for the gifts. Ms. O'Brien thanked Mr. Newton for suggesting that she recognize Nick at the Board meeting.

Chairman Greco stated the next two Board guests are being honored for their musical talents. They were both accepted into the Music Educators National Conference's 2009 All Eastern Ensembles - Tyler Reese for the Trumpet and Spencer Reese for Tenor vocals. Chairman Greco stated that he has attended several awards ceremonies over the past few years and both Tyler and Nick have been recognized again and again for both academics and extra curricular activities. Mr. Reppucci, the Fermi Band Director was unable to attend tonight. Chairman Greco will present the awards to the students.

Chairman Greco stated that the Enfield Board of Education recognizes Spencer Reese for his performance at the MENC All Eastern Honors Chorus for 2009 – Tenor Vocals and presented him with a certificate.

Chairman Greco stated that the Enfield Board of Education recognizes Tyler Reese for his performance at the MENC All Eastern Jazz Band for 2009 – Trumpet and presented him with a certificate.

Chairman Greco stated that the Enfield Board of Education recognizes Nicholas Prajzner for volunteering at the 2008 Alzheimer's Memory Walk and presented him with a certificate.

Chairman Greco thanked the Fermi students for their accomplishments and stated that they all whole heartedly deserved to be recognized – you are all stars. Thank you.

#### **b. National Mentoring Month**

Chairman Greco stated it is national mentoring month and introduced our Mentoring Coordinator, Mrs. Susan Hart. Mrs. Hart has done a phenomenal job with our mentors and our mentoring program. Mrs. Hart hosted the wonderful reception for mentors this evening. Chairman Greco spoke to several mentors tonight and they all said the same thing, they are getting something back from their mentees. Chairman Greco stated that Mayor Scott Kaupin will read a proclamation honoring National Mentoring Month.

Mrs. Hart thanked the Board for allowing her to hold a reception in the lobby and to be placed on the agenda. Mrs. Hart stated that her job is to recruit, train, mentor and support adult volunteers to come in and spend one hour a week with children. Our mentors do a wonderful job. Mentors support and give students a reason to come to school and to succeed. Mrs. Hart stated that we are always looking for mentors. Our mentors are all volunteers. In Enfield, we have 56 mentors that volunteer 30 hours per year. This equals 1,680 volunteering hours that Enfield students receive each year. Mentors are with a student for up to 9 years. Mentors do many different types of activities with their mentees. We use the philosophy – share what you know.

Mrs. Hart believes we are coming into an era of community service and is excited to be a part of this. Mrs. Hart thanked Mayor Kaupin for coming and for proclaiming National Mentoring Month. Mrs. Hart thanked the school counselors and teachers for being her eyes and ears in the schools. Mrs. Hart thanked her mentoring team. Mrs. Hart had the mentors that were present state their name, how long they have been mentoring in Enfield and what they have gotten out of mentoring. Fifteen mentors were present.

Mayor Scott Kaupin thanked Mrs. Hart for the invitation to honor our mentors and for your support and dedication to the program. Mayor Kaupin read a proclamation for National Mentoring Month – January 2009 – expand your universe, mentor a child.

Mrs. Hart thanked Mayor Kaupin and her mentors. Chairman Greco thanked Mrs. Hart and Mayor Kaupin.

**c. Inter-Library Loan System**

Chairman Greco introduced Henry Dutcher, our Town Librarian and Pat Roehl, our Fermi High School Librarian. Chairman Greco stated that they are here to discuss our inter-library loan system.

Mrs. Roehl thanked the Board for having them present at the Board meeting. Mrs. Roehl stated that she represents all of the library media specialists in Enfield. Last April, Mr. Dutcher sent out an e-mail regarding an inter-district library loan system. This would enable teachers and students to have access to materials from the Enfield Public Library. They can check the books out by using their library cards and the book(s) will be sent via a courier to the student/teacher. The program started in October 2008. The books can also be returned via courier. This is another way to meet our student's needs. The public library card is on the student's I.D.

Mrs. Roehl thanked Dr. Gallacher and Mr. Torre for their help and support. Mrs. Roehl thanked Mr. Dutcher.

Mr. Johnson asked if students are aware that they can also receive library books from other State libraries. Mrs. Roehl stated that this program is limited to just the Enfield Public Library for school deliveries. Mr. Dutcher stated that students can come to the library if they are looking for materials from other libraries in the State.

Ms. Hall asked if the Central Library has requested books from the schools. Mr. Dutcher stated this can be done but we have not requested anything yet.

Mr. Johnson stated this might be useful during the summer months. Mr. Dutcher stated we have always done this with the help from Jim Bowman, the elementary librarian.

Mr. Arnone asked if it is a computer database system between the school and the library. Mr. Dutcher said that they are not able to access the school's system.

Chairman Greco thanked them for coming tonight.

Mr. Dutcher thanked Board members for relocating their Board meeting in February. The audio system will be upgraded. This will improve the telecasted productions on E-TV.

**8. CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS**

- a. Press Release regarding a Public Information Session on February 4, 2009.

**9. AUDIENCES - None**

**10. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Mr. Stokes congratulated the Fermi Students, Mrs. Hart and the mentors for all that they done. Mr. Stokes publicly thanked the Town Council for supporting the purchases of the curriculum materials.

Mr. Johnson encourages you to attend student musical performances that are held every month in our schools. Mr. Johnson thanked Mrs. Hart for what she has done with the mentoring program and encourages people to volunteer. Mr. Johnson congratulated the Fermi students and would like to see additional students be recognized for their efforts at Board meetings.

Mr. Flanagan thanked everyone for coming tonight. Mr. Flanagan congratulated Nick, Tyler and Spencer for being so involved in the community. Classes at EHS resumed after the break and students are getting ready for mid terms.

Mr. Arnone agrees with Mrs. Hart regarding volunteerism and hopes to see it increase in our community and schools. We have great community service clubs in our schools like the Leo Club and the Community Service Club as well as our student representatives. Mr. Arnone recognized 360 Federal Credit Union for donating money to Prudence Crandall for books. Mr. Arnone congratulated Leehna Ware for scoring 1,000 points at Fermi. Mr. Arnone stated that Leehna is a good student, tremendous athlete and a wonderful person.

Mr. Grady thanked Mrs. Hart for handling our mentoring program. Mr. Grady extended congratulations to our Fermi students for their accomplishments. Mr. Grady attended a data meeting at Henry Barnard last month and was amazed at what our teachers are doing and encourages Board members to attend one. Mr. Grady attended the 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade concert at Stowe School earlier this evening and it was fantastic! They have 56 students that are involved. Mr. Grady extended kudos to Mrs. Carne.

Ms. Hall stated that BUZZ Robotics is holding a fundraiser on Friday, January 16<sup>th</sup> at Mount Carmel. The pasta supper starts at 5:00 PM. Please support this event and Buzz Robotics.

#### **11. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

- a. EHS Football – as presented – *(Mr. Bernstein stated that we have a tentative schedule set. We will still award students for academics and athletic accomplishments if we are not accepted into an existing league. Mr. Arnone asked about the scrimmage and scores being kept. Mr. Bernstein stated a scrimmage game can be held as long as it is held prior to any State games. Athletes can wear their uniforms and the game can be played as usual with officials. The game will not count towards any standings – it will be considered a scrimmage.)*
- b. School Cancellation Information Via E-Mail – as presented
- c. UNH Internship Program – as presented
- d. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – as presented
- e. Fermi Water Damage – as presented
- f. Grants Report – as presented

#### **12. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches reported that the Demographic Advisory Committee (DAC) is meeting weekly. Committee members received a report from Dr. Peter Prowda and this report will be discussed at the January 27<sup>th</sup> BOE meeting. Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches would like to invite DAC members to attend the next Board meeting. DAC members at the request of the Finance Committee are looking at tactical opposed to strategical changes relative to the demographic information. Committee members are looking at a variety of things related to the budget, redistricting and closing a school. All DAC minutes and agendas are posted on the website.

Mrs. Lavelli-Hozempa thanked the Audit Committee for their work and is pleased to see that one of their recommendations is coming to fruition and looks forward to Mr. Maiorino's presentation. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn about becoming a teacher. Mrs. Lavelli-Hozempa encourages audience members to call 253-6539 to learn more about the workshop.

Chairman Greco reported that the cameras at Fermi, Enfield and JFK are complete. The access controls are installed and functioning. The alarms have been installed and tested. Chairman Greco has toured each school and adjustments have been made and the project will be

completed by the end of the week. By our next meeting, the job will be 100% complete. Chairman Greco stated that we have not heard back from the State regarding the second round of security grants for the elementary schools.

**13. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS AND PAYROLL - None**

**14. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None**

**15. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Approve New Course – UCONN Individual and Family Development**

Mr. Stokes moved, seconded by Ms. Hall that the Enfield Board of Education approves new course – UCONN Individual and Family Development as presented.

A vote by **roll call 8-0-0** passed unanimously.

**b. Public Schools of Choice Policy #5117.1 – Community Feedback Sought**

Mr. Johnson stated that the policy asks for us to solicit community feedback by January 31<sup>st</sup> regarding participation in public schools of choice. If you have any interest either pro or con, please contact central office.

Dr. Gallacher stated that we received one letter for magnet school participation. Dr. Gallacher stated the difficulty from a budget view point is that anyone can apply to participate at a CREC magnet school and we will be billed for it. It would be nice if the State Legislators would set a deadline for participation that would coincide with our budget. This way we would not be so surprised with the dollar amount for magnet participation.

Ms. Hall stated that we will need modifications to Policy #5117.1 Public Schools of Choice to deal with transportation to schools that we do not participate with. Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated that we need to clarify that we are only responsible for payment to CREC magnet schools. This policy needs to be re-looked at. Mr. Johnson will place this policy on the next policy agenda.

**c. Budget Discussion**

Chairman Greco stated that this will be discussed in two parts. The first part will deal with this year's potential shortfall with our current budget.

Chairman Greco asked Mr. Drezek what the current shortfall is for the 2008-09 budget. Mr. Drezek stated that he originally reported to the Board that we were short approximately \$1.1 million. The paraprofessional situation is still the same and we are short \$260K. The pension contribution due to the Town is approximately \$492K. The Board is aware of the OCR complaint at Fermi and the required corrective actions that are needed. Mr. Drezek stated the real number needed is \$675K.

Chairman Greco stated that we went from \$1.1 million to \$675K. Mr. Drezek stated we can anticipate receiving \$730K which would leave us short approximately \$675K. We could use \$260K from the excess cost grant to offset the paraprofessional shortage cost if the Board and the Town agree.

Chairman Greco asked if the Town is aware that we are requesting funds from the Excess Cost Grant. Mr. Drezek stated that we have not formerly requested that yet, but we have had discussions with the Town Manager regarding funding. Mr. Drezek stated that in the past we

have only asked the Town for around \$25K because we were able to absorb any shortages within our budget.

Chairman Greco asked about the number of paraprofessionals. Mr. Drezek stated that currently we have 97 paraprofessionals and will be short around \$670K.

Mr. Stokes asked for the number without using any of the Excess Cost Grant. Mr. Drezek stated that would be \$1.1 million.

Chairman Greco asked for other areas we could draw from besides the Excess Cost Grant. Mr. Drezek stated we have a spending freeze across the district and have cut down on the number of items purchased. We have put a hiring freeze on all non-essential positions. With our current heating situation, we do not have to pay for heat if it drops below 20° other than flipping a switch to oil. The company we use will monitor the price of oil and gas. The principals are aware that we are only purchasing essential items.

Dr. Gallacher stated that the Town received a grant for energy assistance for approximately \$74K and hopes the Board will be given credit for this. Representative Jarmoc applied for a grant for us and we have not heard anything yet regarding this. We also receive funds for the Project Choice students and this money may also be used. Mr. Drezek stated the Project Choice funds should be approximately \$175K and can be used towards anything the Board would like. Mr. Drezek is anticipating that the Town will forward this to us.

Chairman Greco stated he needs official numbers to work with. Mr. Drezek stated that he will put something together for Board members. Mr. Drezek stated we are still waiting for retirement numbers.

Mrs. Lavelli-Hozempa asked about the new fuel contract and the contract dictates whether we use fuel or gas. Mr. Drezek stated that is correct. Mrs. Lavelli-Hozempa stated last year the tanks at all the schools were topped off and we have not used any oil yet. Mr. Drezek stated that is correct. Currently, we are using natural gas and when we start to use oil our tanks are already filled. We would see a cost savings here. Mr. Drezek believes we will use our current filled oil tanks in February. Once Mr. Drezek receives the word, he will notify Board members.

Mr. Johnson asked about the feasibility of selling the oil in our tanks. Mr. Drezek stated this is something we can discuss. We signed a 24 month contract along with the Town.

Mr. Arnone asked if the price of gas has to go up in order to use the oil. Mr. Drezek stated there is a formula they use. Mr. Drezek will give Board members a copy of the contract.

Chairman Greco asked if we will see any savings on diesel fuel. Mr. Drezek stated this is done on a calendar year basis and we locked in at \$1.36 per gallon for diesel fuel. We have increased the amount of regular gasoline used opposed to diesel used. We have more vans and special education vehicles being used. There will be some savings here and Mr. Drezek will pass on the numbers once they are finalized to Board members.

Ms. Hall asked if the vans are for Out-of-Town use. Mr. Drezek stated this is for In and Out-of-Town use. Ms. Hall asked about transportation provided by CREC. Mr. Drezek stated CREC picks and chooses when they will transport. Mr. Drezek is working with CREC for the next school year for transportation.

Mr. Stokes stated his concern is that we have a lot of hypothetical situations. Board members need to sit down and address this before time gets away from us. We need a plan. Chairman Greco agreed and stated that we need to present something to the Town Council.

Mr. Drezek asked for guidance from the Board. Chairman Greco stated that Board members would like to see the Administrator's recommendations and take into consideration the spending freeze, the hiring freeze of non-essential personnel, heating grant, Project Choice funds and savings on diesel. Board members will look at these first and any additional administrative recommendations. This way we can show that Board members are doing our due diligence.

Ms. Hall stated that we are not to use the entire Excess Cost Grant funds and many of our shortcomings are due to special education costs. Chairman Greco stated that he wanted to know what our budget shortcomings were before we used any of the Excess Cost Grant funds.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated that we always put a freeze on spending. We need to think outside of the box. Can we conduct teacher meetings every other week or via conference calls or maybe put curriculum writing on hold. We need to look at the little things. Can we replace a teacher that is leaving with a long term substitute? These are the kinds of things we need to look at.

Mr. Johnson stated that every year we end up going through the same budget crisis every year and asked why? Are we not using the correct figures? Mr. Drezek stated that we are faced with unexpected expenditures. This year the Finance Committee froze the budget because of unexpected costs. Special education costs are different now than they were when we set the budget for this year. The pension situation was not something that we were expecting to happen. Next year, pension costs will go up. These are unanticipated costs that have caused the budget to increase. Unfortunately, these are costs that we were not able to predict. We had the numbers that were available to us when we set the budget.

Dr. Gallacher stated that our Town Charter does not allow us to have a contingency fund to draw from. Last year we received less than 1% and we are looking at costs that are coming in around 4%. We can place a moratorium on field trips for savings. We spent \$54K last year for field trips during the second half of the year. The bulk of the money goes to personnel. By contract, we need to fill some positions.

Mr. Arnone would like us to be fair to the students and not take away field trips. We are in extraordinary times and should be able to use our CIP funds. We have nowhere to go except to ask our Town Council for help. Mr. Arnone agrees that we need to look at creative ways for funding.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches and Mr. Arnone asked if we can use our CIP funds. Chairman Greco stated that we can ask the Town Council to take the money out of the CIP and place it in the general fund and we can ask them to they take the money out of the general fund to help offset any shortfalls in our budget. It is a two step process, but it can be done.

Mr. Drezek stated there are some existing funds in some of the CIP accounts: School Boilers - \$490K; Heating System Repairs/Upgrades - \$840K; School Computers & Media - \$11,392K; Paving/Window Replacement- \$100K. The Board will need to approach the Town Council with a request and a special appropriation will need to be done. If we use the funds set aside for any of these projects and if any emergency repairs are needed, we will not have the funds available to use.

Ms. Hall asked if the \$74K heating allowance from the State had been included in any of the numbers presented tonight. Mr. Drezek stated no. The Town Council will need to make a special appropriation to the Board.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated that we need to make every attempt before going to the Town Council.

Mr. Johnson does not want us to sacrifice our infrastructure because we need the money this year.

Mr. Stokes stated we have a budget shortfall and we need to look at our overall operating procedures. Quick fixes will help out but we are sacrificing the long term for the short term. We need to look at the overall operating procedures and we need to sit down with the bargaining units. We need to work closer with the Council for our budget. We are the largest department they have.

Chairman Greco asked Mr. Drezek when he would be able to produce a list of possible areas that can impact the budget shortfalls. Mr. Drezek and Dr. Gallacher will put something together for the next Board meeting. Chairman Greco asked for this item to be placed on the next BOE agenda.

Chairman Greco moved the budget discussion to the 2009-10 Budget. We need to submit a proposed budget to the Town Manager by February 28, 2009. When we met with Council Members at Asnuntuck regarding the budget and what we could expect for 2009-10, the mayor told us to expect a zero dollar increase.

Chairman Greco stated because of where the State is we need additional time to prepare our budget. We do not know what the State formula will be, nor do we know what we will receive from the State. Anything we produce will negatively impact effect us. Chairman Greco does not want to revisit what happened during last year's budget season.

Chairman Greco agrees with Mr. Stokes that we need to approach all of our bargaining unions for concessions, freezes or some other creative means to reduce our personnel costs for 2009-10. Before we do anything, we need to talk to the members of the DAC and our bargaining units. Chairman Greco is proposing that we give to the Town Manager a zero dollar increase budget which is essentially a copy of our current budget today minus the \$8 million dollars for personnel, facilities and utilities that will be moved to the Town as part of the merger. They are looking for the first page of our budget. By doing this, it will give us an additional 90 days to finalize our budget.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches agrees with Chairman Greco's recommendation. The zero dollar increase is really a \$4 million dollar cut. Chairman Greco stated that is correct.

Ms. Hall asked if we are required to flush it out before the budget hearings are scheduled. Chairman Greco believes the budget hearing presentations will be shorter than last year. Ms. Hall stated that we will be forced to live with the \$4 million dollar budget cut. Ms. Hall stated that layoffs will be unavoidable without help from our unions. Foxwood's is taking salary cuts starting with the top by 10% and all the way to the bottom by 4%. Ms. Hall further stated that she spoke to a mentor that works for Webster's and they are closing some of their branches but are guaranteeing no layoffs. Ms. Hall would love to be able to guarantee no layoffs but we need help from the unions in order to do this.

Mr. Stokes agrees with everything that has been said. We need additional time and looks forward to the DAC presentation. Mr. Stokes stated we need help from everyone to make a difference. There will be better days ahead of us.

Ms. Hall agrees that she would not have wanted to miss any field trips when she was in high school. Ms. Hall further stated that the students raised the money for field trips.

Mr. Arnone stated that cutting the budget by \$4 million dollars is a big deal. This is an injustice to the taxpayers. Mr. Arnone encourages taxpayers to contact Board members and come to

Board meetings and voice their opinions. We can hardly make ends meet now and we are cutting our budget by \$4 million.

Mr. Johnson stated that we are not trying to be irresponsible. Companies are laying personnel off and salary cuts are being made. These are difficult times and we need to understand taxpayer's point of view. We are trying to be as responsible as possible and make this as palatable as possible for everyone. This is a difficult situation.

Chairman Greco stated that no Board member wants to cut \$4 million from our budget. We are trying to buy us some additional time to come up with a budget. We need information from the Unions, the DAC and the State and without this information, we will not be able to put together our proposed budget.

Ms. Hall stated if the Federal Government comes through with more support to schools, we would be more than happy to pass it along.

Mr. Stokes commented that he hears Mr. Arnone's concerns. Last year we went through many heated discussions. We need a calm level headed Board to find the needed avenues to fund the budget. Mr. Stokes likes the idea of doing the budget once. This will give us an additional ninety days to work with the administration and staff. Mr. Stokes would like the Board room filled because we are honoring our students. Mr. Stokes asked community members give Board Members the benefit of the doubt. Come to Board meetings and support us. Don't come outraged.

**16. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None**

**17. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Grady moved, seconded by Mr. Stokes to adjourn the Regular Meeting of January 13, 2009. All ayes, motion passed unanimously.

Meeting stood adjourned at 9:50 PM.

Joyce P. Hall  
Secretary  
Enfield Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary