

**ENFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 8, 2010**

The Enfield Board of Education held a Special Board meeting on Tuesday, June 8, 2010 in the multi-purpose room at Henry Barnard Elementary School located at 27 Shaker Road, Enfield, CT.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** The Special Meeting was called to order by Greg Stokes at 6:30 PM.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** Greg Stokes

3. **FIRE EVACUATION ANNOUNCEMENT** Greg Stokes

4. **ROLL CALL**

Present: Judy Apruzzese-Desroches; Vincent Grady; Joyce Hall (arrived at 7:20 PM); Stacy Thurston; Peter Jonaitis; Tom Sirard; Donna Szewczak; Chuck Johnson and Greg Stokes

Also Present: John Gallacher, Superintendent and Tony Torre, Assistant Superintendent

5. **EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR MATTER(S) RELATED TO LITIGATION – ACLU LAWSUIT**

Mr. Sirard moved, seconded by Mr. Johnson that the Enfield Board of Education goes into executive session for Matter(s) Related to Pending Claims/Litigation – ACLU Lawsuit.

A vote by **show of hands 8-0-0**, passed unanimously.

Dr. Gallacher, Mr. Torre and Attorney McCarthy joined the Board in executive session.

Ms. Hall arrived at 7:20 PM while the Board was in Executive Session.

No Board action occurred while in Executive Session.

6. **MOTION TO RESCIND AN ACTION PREVIOUSLY TAKEN – SPECIFICALLY THE DECISION NOT TO APPROVE CONTINUATION OF APPEAL PROCESS TO THE DECISION OF THE U.S. DISTRICT COURT BANNING GRADUATION AT THE FIRST CATHEDRAL**

Chairman Stokes stated we are back in public session at 7:43 PM.

Mr. Sirard moved, seconded by Mr. Jonaitis that the Enfield Board of Education rescinds an action previously taken – specifically the decision not to approve continuation of appeal process to the decision of the U.S. District Court banning graduation at the First Cathedral.

A vote by **roll call 5-4-0**, motion passed with Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches, Mr. Grady, Ms. Hall and Mrs. Thurston in dissent.

7. **APPROVE CONTINUATION OF APPEAL PROCESS TO THE DECISION OF THE U.S. DISTRICT COURT BANNING GRADUATION AT THE FIRST CATHEDRAL**

Mr. Sirard moved, seconded by Mr. Johnson that the Enfield Board of Education approves an expedited appeal of the trial judge's decision.

Discussion:

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches asked for clarification to be added to the motion to include "trial judge's decision banning graduations at the First Cathedral".

Mr. Sirard moved, seconded by Mr. Johnson to clarify the original motion that the Enfield Board of Education approves an expedited appeal of the trial judge's decision banning graduations at the First Cathedral.

Discussion Continued:

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated this is wrong in so many different avenues. From the very beginning she wanted to hold graduations in town. To rescind that vote and to choose to hold graduations at the First Cathedral not knowing what we are walking into and not having all the answers to all the questions is wrong. We still do not know all of the financial obligations and the insurance coverage. We do not know what this will cost the district. We are the Board of Education and should be focused on the delivery of education. This is a community celebration and an important event but it is not the primary reason, focus or activity of the Board.

Mr. Grady agrees with Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches. This Board may leave future Boards with a huge financial obligation. The Board's decision tonight could cripple us. We do not have all of the answers to our questions. Mr. Grady does not support this.

Chairman Stokes stated the decision was made to hold graduations at home. We rescinded that decision due to the overwhelming response from the community. We represent them and we made a decision to represent the majority. We are elected by the majority and we should listen to the majority. Chairman Stokes stated it is the right thing to do.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated that she wished that was the case but she does not believe it is. She believes members of the Board did not like the ACLU and saw them as bullies and wanted to stand in front of the bus to get hit regardless of what that meant to the community. The ends do not justify the means. Board members need to look at the big picture. We are walking into something and people do not realize how big or how long this will last.

Mr. Sirard stated Board members originally voted to bring graduations back home. Then we were accused of not doing our due diligence. We did our due diligence and we found a location that was a fiscally sound decision based on the information. We are doing what we were elected to do.

Mr. Jonaitis stated he originally stated the process wanting to bring graduations back home. Mr. Jonaitis changed his opinion and it had nothing to do with the ACLU. He did not take this on because of the ACLU.

Mr. Grady asked Board members if we are doing our due diligence now without knowing all of the facts and what this will cost the taxpayers of this town. We are going in blind. We are taking a chance and we lost.

Chairman Stokes stated we chose a graduation site and someone sued us. Chairman Stokes does not agree with the premise of why they are suing us.

Mr. Jonaitis stated that he presented a multitude of places to hold graduations. The First Cathedral was the most affordable off-campus site.

Mrs. Thurston stated when this started she wanted to do this for the students. This is what the students wanted. If this was February and we were in the same situation, she is not sure what her decision would be. If we had more time and had the answers, maybe Mrs. Thurston's decision would be different. With two weeks to go, the students deserve to know where their graduations will be held. This is why Mrs. Thurston has done what she has done.

Chairman Stokes asked Mr. Sirard to re-read his motion.

Mr. Sirard stated his motion was to approve an expedited appeal of the trial judge's decision of the district court for banning graduations at the First Cathedral.

A vote by roll call 5-4-0, motion passed with Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches, Mr. Grady, Ms. Hall and Mrs. Thurston in dissent.

Chairman Stokes stated our administrators and principals are working overtime to prepare for graduation. The legal matter will continue. The administration has some creative plans and the community supports it. Some will be disappointed that we will not be at the First Cathedral. We will have one of the best graduations because we have some of the best kids in this Town. Let's celebrate that.

8. 2010 LESTER J. BODLEY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Ms. Hall moved, seconded by Mr. Grady that the Enfield Board of Education recommends Kevin Riendeau and Jessica Cerrato as recipients for the Lester J. Bodley Memorial Scholarship at Enfield High School.

A vote by roll call 9-0-0, motion passed unanimously.

9. APPROVE EXTENSION OF FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER GRANT

Ms. Hall moved, seconded by Mr. Grady that the Enfield Board of Education approves the extension of the Family Resource Center Grant.

A vote by show of hands 9-0-0, motion passed unanimously.

10. PROPOSED NEW POLICY #6130.1 REDUCTION OF RACIAL, ETHNIC AND ECONOMIC ISOLATION – FIRST READING

Mr. Johnson explained that the policy for the reduction of racial, ethnic and economic isolation pertains to the letter we received from the State for Alcorn School being racially unbalanced.

Mr. Johnson moved, seconded by Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches that the Enfield Board of Education accepts the proposed new policy #6130.1 Reduction of Racial, Ethnic and Economic Isolation as a first reading.

A vote by show of hands 9-0-0, motion passed unanimously.

11. ACTION IF NEEDED, ON REQUESTING FY09-10 EXCESS COST FUNDS - None

12. CONTINUE WORK SESSION IF NEEDED, FOR ARRIVING AT THE ADOPTED BUDGET FOR FY10-11
- None

13. ACTION, IF NEEDED, TO APPROVE THE BOARD'S FY10-11 ADOPTED BUDGET - None

14. **ADJOURNMENT**

Dr. Gallacher stated based on the adoption of the budget last night, we will start the process for recalling teachers back that were non-renewed and that were not reduced in the budget.

Mr. Grady moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston to adjourn the Special Meeting of June 8, 2010. All ayes, motion passed unanimously.

Meeting stood adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Joyce P. Hall
Secretary
Enfield Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary