

**MINUTES**  
**ROCKY POINT PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**  
**April 20, 2005**

**Meeting called to Order at 7:41 PM**

Pledge of Allegiance

Present: Geraldine Thalen, President  
Howard Gimple, Vice-President  
Jane Bonner, Trustee  
Michael Matera, Trustee  
Joseph Sanseverino, Trustee  
James J. Gerardi, Superintendent of Schools  
Carla D'Ambrosio, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction  
Michael Ivanoff, School Business Official  
Irene Pedota, District Clerk

Absent: None

Mrs. Thalen said that it was wonderful to see so many people in the audience who are actively interested in what is going on in the district. Mrs. Thalen then announced that Mr. Gimple would be taking over the meeting tonight.

Mr. Gimple introduced Legislator Daniel LoSquadro who reported that due to several traffic control problems on County Road 21, driver feedback devices will be installed on CR 21 to make drivers aware of how fast they are traveling as they pass the elementary and high schools. Legislator LoSquadro commended fire department volunteers for their service and dedication to the community, and urged the Board to pass the resolution that would grant volunteer firefighters a 10% tax exemption without further delay.

Mr. Gimple thanked Legislator LoSquadro. He explained that because the Board is responsible for controlling a large portion of the community's tax bills, they wanted to make sure before they decided to grant the exemption that they were doing the right thing. For this reason, the Board agreed to hold a public hearing during this meeting to discuss the issue. Mr. Gimple asked if anyone was opposed to granting the exemption:

- Mrs. Charlene LaCascia said that while she respects what the volunteer firefighters do, she has volunteered to serve the community in several ways as a volunteer, and she wouldn't expect to be compensated for her efforts or receive a reduction in her taxes.
- Mr. Matera said that one of the first questions discussed was whether or not the exemption was written in stone, or if it could be reviewed every year. He added that wording in the Miller Place School District resolution allowed for the exemption to be reviewed every year. Harborfields granted the resolution last year, but this year reviewed it and decided not to grant the exemption. Mr. Gallino and Mr. Pulick both said that they believed the exemption could be reviewed every year.
- Mrs. Barbara Sweeney, a resident of Sound Beach and the President of the Sound Beach Civic Association, announced that the Civic Association held an emergency meeting where they voted unanimously to back the fire department. She added that she has been a resident for the past 27 years, and has supported the school budget because she believes in the children of the community. She expressed her opinion that it is now time to give back to the volunteer members of the community who risk their lives by granting the exemption.
- Mr. Gimple said that he wanted to clarify that the Board was never against the firefighters. They just wanted to make sure they were doing things correctly.
- Mr. Edward Hudson said that he has also volunteered for many different organizations, but that those cannot be compared to the commitment displayed by

volunteer firefighters who risk their lives to help other members of the community.

- Mr. Willie Smith said that he believes there is a misconception with regard to people thinking that the Board is opposed to granting the exemption. He said that he believes that the Board is attempting to do the right thing in investigating how the exemption would impact all of the taxpayers of the community.
- Councilman Kevin McCarrick said that this is a very lucky community to have a room filled with volunteers from the fire department and other organizations. He explained that the exemption is necessary because it provides an incentive for new people to join the fire department and that the members who have made a commitment for twenty or more years deserve the lifelong exemption.
- Sound Beach Fire Department Commissioner Robert Pulick said that an article in the North Shore Sun misquoted information with regard to how much the exemption would cost the average homeowner. He explained that the commissioners of the Rocky Point and Sound Beach Fire Departments met with the Board to discuss this issue and explained that the impact would be minimal and would currently cost the average homeowner four to six dollars per year.
- Rocky Point Fire Department Commissioner, Anthony Gallino, commended the Board for holding a fact finding committee meeting a couple of weeks ago and for agreeing to hold a public hearing on the subject tonight.
- Mr. Gimple expressed his appreciation for the time and effort shown by all volunteers in the community.
- Mr. Gimple announced that the public hearing with regard to the exemption for volunteer firefighters would be closed at this time. Additional questions or comments would be taken after the regular meeting.

#### **Mr. Michael Ivanoff presented a summary of the 2005-2006 budget:**

Mr. Ivanoff explained that this was the fourth time the budget has been presented to the public at a Board Meeting. He announced that the total for 2005-2006 proposed budget is \$53,662,240, which is a 7.35% over the 2004-2005 budget for an increase of \$3,672,338. He further explained that the budget included increases in contractual obligations, such as transportation, special education, increased enrollment, and employee benefits. Mr. Ivanoff reported that the estimated tax rate would be \$185.56 per hundred dollars of assessed evaluation. This represents an increase of \$9.63 per hundred over last year's tax rate of \$175.93, which equals a 5.72% increase. Mr. Ivanoff explained that when compared to other districts in Suffolk County, Rocky Point is in very good shape. Mr. Ivanoff also reminded everyone that the Budget Hearing is scheduled for May 10, 2005 at 7:30 PM and the Annual Budget Vote will be on May 17, 2005 from 7:00 AM to 9:00 PM in the high school.

Mr. Gimple asked if there were any questions:

- Mr. Matera asked how much was currently left in the general fund balance. Mr. Ivanoff replied that he would get back to him with the exact figure.
- Mrs. Sparks asked if we had a total for non-funded state mandates. Mr. Ivanoff replied that approximately \$1.8 million could be attributed to non-funded state mandates.
- Mrs. Basilice asked how many seats were available and who the candidates were for the School Board. Mr. Gimple replied that incumbents Geraldine Thalen and Michael Matera are the only people who have submitted petitions to run, and unless there is a large write-in vote, they will be re-elected.

#### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

**Mrs. Carla D'Ambrosio congratulated Mrs. Susan Wilson and Mr. Michael Poveromo for their involvement in the Career Advisory Partnership brunch that was held earlier in the day at the East Wind. She explained that the event was funded entirely by donations from the CDM, Booster Club, and PTA. There were over 100 people in attendance, 60 of which were our high school students. Students were able to participate in a round robin discussion and had an opportunity to speak individually to guests who represented many different careers. It was a**

**marvelous experience for our students, and she thanked Mrs. Wilson and Mr. Poveromo for all their efforts.**

## **MINUTES**

Upon a motion made by Michael Matera and seconded by Joseph Sanseverino, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Minutes of the following Board of Education Meetings be accepted as presented: **Regular Meetings, March 14, 2005, March 21, 2005 and Special Meetings, April 4, 2005, April 5, 2005 and April 11, 2005.** All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

## **TREASURER'S REPORTS**

Upon a motion made by Joseph Sanseverino and seconded by Geraldine Thalen, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education accept the Treasurer's Reports for the month of **February 2005** as presented. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

## **EXTRA-CLASSROOM ACTIVITY ACCOUNT TREASURER REPORT**

Upon a motion made by Geraldine Thalen and seconded by Jane Bonner, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education accept the Extra Classroom Activity Treasurer Report for the month of **February 2005** as presented. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

## **FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Upon a motion made by Jane Bonner and seconded by Michael Matera, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education accept the Financial Reports for the month of **February 2005** as presented. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

## **RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE 2005-2006 SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET**

Upon a motion made by Michael Matera and seconded by Joseph Sanseverino, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approve the Rocky Point Union Free School District Budget for the 2005-2006 fiscal year pursuant to Education Law Section 1716 in the amount of \$53,662,240. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

## **RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT THE PROPERTY TAX REPORT CARD**

Upon a motion made by Joseph Sanseverino and seconded by Geraldine Thalen, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education accept the attached Property Tax Report Card associated with the adopted 2005-2006 fiscal year budget.

Discussion ensued. Mr. Sanseverino asked Mr. Gerardi to explain the purpose of the Property Tax Report Card. Mr. Gerardi explained that the document, which is prescribed by law, is sent to each homeowner in the district and includes the amount of the proposed budget, the estimated school tax levy, the rate of increase, enrollment growth, and CPI percentage increase. Mrs. Thalen asked when homeowners could expect to receive the document. Mr. Gerardi replied that it would be mailed out on May 2, 2005. There was not further discussion.

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.



Revised:

#2320 - Attendance by Board Members at Conferences, Conventions and Workshops  
#2330 & #2330R – Compensation and Expenses

#3281 – Use of School-Owned Materials and Equipment

New:

#6162 & # 6162R - Compensation and Expenses  
#6581 – Use of Credit Cards  
#6582 – Meals and Refreshments  
#6583 – Use of Cell Phones

Discussion ensued. Mr. Gerardi explained that as a result of the Roslyn situation, the State Comptroller said that Board of Educations should revise existing policies. Mr. Gerardi added that he would like to go on record that this Board rarely attends conferences or charge meals, and in the last five years, he can remember just two times when the Board brought in pizza when they were working late. He assured the community that there is nothing wrong with the financial situation of the district. There was no further discussion.

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

**TAX EXEMPTION FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS/AMBULANCE WORKERS**

Upon a motion made by Geraldine Thalen and seconded by Jane Bonner, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approve the attached resolution granting a property tax exemption to volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers residing within the Rocky Point School District.

Real property owned by an enrolled member of our local volunteer fire department and/or local volunteer ambulance company shall be exempt from taxation to the extent of ten (10%) per cent of the assessed valuation of such property for the School District in which the property is located or such other superseding amount as shall be approved by amendment to the enabling State legislation which is in effect on the effective date of this law and which may be adopted thereafter, exclusive of special assessments.

Such exemption shall not be granted to an enrolled member of the volunteer fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service residing in the Rocky Point School District unless:

1. The applicant resides in the School District which is served by such Fire Department or incorporated volunteer ambulance service;
2. The property is the primary residence of the applicant;
3. The property is used exclusively for residential purposes; provided, however, that in the event any portion of such property is not used exclusively for the applicant's residence but is used for other purposes, such portion shall be subject to taxation and the remaining portion only shall be entitled to the exemption provided by this Resolution;
4. The applicant has been certified by the Chief of the Fire Department as an enrolled member of the Fire Department for at least five (5) years or the applicant has been certified by the authority having jurisdiction for the incorporated voluntary ambulance service as an enrolled member of such incorporated voluntary ambulance service for at least five (5) years;

5. Application for such exemption shall be filed with the Assessor of the Town of Brookhaven on or before the taxable status date on a form prescribed by the State Board of Real Property Services;
6. The Volunteer Fire Department and the Incorporated Volunteer Ambulance Service shall file lists of its enrolled members eligible for the exemption provided by this Resolution with the Town Assessor of the Town of Brookhaven on or before the taxable status date on a form prescribed by the State Board of Real Property Services;
7. This Resolution shall apply to assessment rolls prepared on the basis of taxable status dates occurring on or after the enactment date of this resolution.

Discussion ensued. Mr. Sanseverino asked if the district would be provided with a list of the firefighters that were being granted the exemption. Mr. Gallino and Mr. Pulick agreed that it would be provided to the district. The Board agreed to amend the resolution to include that the provision for a list to be provided to the Superintendent of Schools.

**AMENDED TAX EXEMPTION FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS/AMBULANCE WORKERS**

Upon a motion made by Geraldine Thalen and seconded by Jane Bonner, the following amended resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approve the attached resolution granting a property tax exemption to volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers residing within the Rocky Point School District.

Real property owned by an enrolled member of our local volunteer fire department and/or local volunteer ambulance company shall be exempt from taxation to the extent of ten (10%) per cent of the assessed valuation of such property for the School District in which the property is located or such other superseding amount as shall be approved by amendment to the enabling State legislation which is in effect on the effective date of this law and which may be adopted thereafter, exclusive of special assessments.

Such exemption shall not be granted to an enrolled member of the volunteer fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service residing in the Rocky Point School District unless:

1. The applicant resides in the School District which is served by such Fire Department or incorporated volunteer ambulance service;
2. The property is the primary residence of the applicant;
3. The property is used exclusively for residential purposes; provided, however, that in the event any portion of such property is not used exclusively for the applicant's residence but is used for other purposes, such portion shall be subject to taxation and the remaining portion only shall be entitled to the exemption provided by this Resolution;
4. The applicant has been certified by the Chief of the Fire Department as an enrolled member of the Fire Department for at least five (5) years or the applicant has been certified by the authority having jurisdiction for the incorporated voluntary ambulance service as an enrolled member of such incorporated voluntary ambulance service for at least five (5) years;
5. Application for such exemption shall be filed with the Assessor of the Town of Brookhaven on or before the taxable status date on a form prescribed by the State Board of Real Property Services;

6. The Volunteer Fire Department and the Incorporated Volunteer Ambulance Service shall file lists of its enrolled members eligible for the exemption provided by this Resolution with the Town Assessor of the Town of Brookhaven and the Superintendent of Schools of the Rocky Point School District on or before the taxable status date on a form prescribed by the State Board of Real Property Services;
7. This Resolution shall apply to assessment rolls prepared on the basis of taxable status dates occurring on or after the enactment date of this resolution.

Roll Call

Ms. Thalen	yes
Mr. Gimple	yes
Ms. Bonner	yes
Mr. Matera	yes
Mr. Sanseverino	yes

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

**ADDENDUM TO TAX EXEMPTION FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS/AMBULANCE WORKERS**

Upon a motion made by Jane Bonner and seconded by Michael Matera, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approve the following addendum to the resolution granting the tax exemption to volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers residing within the Rocky Point School District.

Any enrolled member of the Fire Department of incorporated voluntary ambulance service who accrues more than twenty (20) years of active service and is so certified by the authority having jurisdiction for the volunteer service shall be granted the exemption authorized by this section for the remainder of his or her life so long as his or her primary residence is located within the School District;

Discussion ensued. Mr. Matera explained that he is voting against this resolution because he is concerned that granting a lifetime exemption to firefighters after 20 years of service may cause some members to decide there is no incentive to stay in the department and as a result, the fire department would lose their most senior and experienced personnel. In addition, although the exemption may not result in a significant amount at this time, it may not be prudent to grant a lifetime exemption when we can't be sure what financial burdens lay ahead for the district. Mrs. Thalen asked if members had to re-apply every year or if the district would have the opportunity to review the resolution every year. Mr. Matera replied that the law was unclear and that Miller Place wrote that it could be reviewed every year into their resolution. Mrs. Thalen asked what happens if a member who was granted an exemption sells his house and moves to another house in the district. Mr. Gallino and Mr. Pulick replied that they would be provided with a list of names and addresses each year. Mrs. Thalen also said that she hopes that members who are granted the lifetime exemption will stay with the department and that it will provide incentive for new members to join. Mr. Gimple thanked Mr. Matera and the Commissioners of the Rocky Point and Sound Beach Fire Departments for all of their work to make sure the members of the Board had all the information necessary in order to vote on this resolution. There was no further discussion.

Roll Call

Mr. Matera	no
Mrs. Thalen	yes
Mr. Gimple	yes
Ms. Bonner	yes
Mr. Sanseverino	yes

Roll Call Vote: 1 Nay – 4 Ayes – Motion carried 4-1.

**COMMITTEES ON SPECIAL EDUCATION/PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

Upon a motion made by Michael Matera and seconded by Joseph Sanseverino, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education votes to arrange for appropriate services pursuant to the recommendations of Schedule 4-20-05-A and 4-20-05-B. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

**PERSONNEL**

Upon a motion made by Joseph Sanseverino and seconded by Geraldine Thalen, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education accept the attached Personnel changes. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

**RESOLUTION TO AWARD BID FOR BOND ISSUE RELATED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

Upon a motion made by Geraldine Thalen and seconded by Jane Bonner, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Rocky Point Schools, upon the recommendation of Architect John A. Grillo, and the Superintendent of Schools, award the following contract to the lowest responsible bidder as follows:

**Contract No. 1: HVAC Reconstruction**

We recommend award of Contract No. 1 to the lowest responsible bidder as follows:

JNS Heating Service  
1320-1 Lincoln Avenue  
Holbrook, NY 11741

In the following amounts:

1.	Base Bid	\$ 181,540
2.	Alternate No. 1 – Pump and Water Alarm	13,990
3.	Alternate No. 2 – Asbestos Abatement	22,700
4.	Alternate No. 3 - Fuel Tank Upgrades	<u>11,730</u>
4.	Total Recommended Award:	\$ 229,960

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

**Mr. Gimple asked if there were any further questions or comments before the Board moved to Executive Session:**

- Mrs. Battillo thanked the Board members for accepting the resolution granting exemptions to the firefighters.
- Mrs. Pat Sparks thanked retiring teachers Mr. Basileo, Mr. Holmes and Mrs. Wekerle for their years of dedication to the children of the district and expressed her best wishes for happiness during their retirement.
- Mrs. Sparks also thanked Mr. Gerardi for his commitment to the community and for taking over the reigns during a difficult time for the district. She commended him for his accomplishments, which include the completion of a new middle school, full-day kindergarten, many improvements to the JAE and high school

buildings, and for supporting so many important programs for the children of the district, and she expressed her best wishes for his retirement.

- Mr. Gerardi thanked Mrs. Sparks.

There were no further questions or comments.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 8:59 PM a motion was made by Michael Matera and seconded by Joseph Sanseverino to go into executive session to discuss particular personnel matters. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Pedota  
District Clerk

The Board returned to Open Session at 10:54 PM.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 10:55 PM a motion was made by Geraldine Thalen and seconded by Jane Bonner for the Board of Education to adjourn the meeting. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Gimple  
Vice President