

**MINUTES
ROCKY POINT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
October 24, 2005**

Mrs. Thalen called the meeting to order at 7:40 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

Present: Geraldine Thalen, President
Joseph Sanseverino, Vice-President
Howard Gimple, Trustee
Michael Matera, Trustee
Carla L. D'Ambrosio Ed. D., Superintendent of Schools
Sherry J. Alessandro, Asst. Supt. for Human Resources/Administration
Michael W. Ivanoff, Director of Finance and Operations
Irene Pedota, District Clerk

Absent: Jane Bonner, Trustee

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Rocky Point High School Principal, William B. Caulfield announced:

- The Guidance Department has been busy meeting with seniors to finalize post-secondary plans, and they are already processing early decision applications with November 1st deadlines.
- College representatives have been visiting for the past month, and students have had the opportunity to speak with them regarding admissions.
- Over 125 seniors attended the Fall College Fair at Suffolk County Community College last Thursday, where they were able to speak with representatives from over 300 colleges from all over the country.
- Please remember to visit the guidance website often for up-to-date scholarship and activity information.

Rocky Point Middle School Principal, Joseph Centamore announced:

- Sixth graders visited the Vanderbilt Planetarium on October 17, 2005.
- Over one hundred people turned out to observe Venus and Mars last Friday night during Astronomy Night.
- The seventh and eighth grade chorus will be performing in the Hurricane Katrina Benefit Concert this Friday night. The Concert will be held in the high school auditorium beginning at 7:00 PM.
- Mock ELA Assessments will be administered on November 2 and 3 to students in grades six, seven, and eight.
- Dr. Centamore took the opportunity to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Joseph A. Edgar School Principal, Carol Tvelia announced:

- Last Friday afternoon, over 480 third, fourth, and fifth grade students attended a Hurricane Relief Dance at JAE and collected over \$925.00 for hurricane victims.
- Mrs. Tvelia thanked disc jockeys Jonathan Yacko and Joseph Puricelli for donating their time and talent.
- The PTA PARP (Parents As Reading Partners) program begins on October 24, 2005. All proceeds will go to hurricane victims.
- Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled for the end of November.
- New York State Social Studies tests will be administered on November 17 and 18.

Frank J. Carasiti Elementary School Principal, Paul Read announced:

- Kindergarten students will participate in Harvest Day Bingo tomorrow beginning at 8:30 AM in the cafeteria.
- On Wednesday, all first-grade students will be picking pumpkins in the fields around the school.
- The annual Harvest Day Parade will be held on Thursday, October 27, 2005 at 10:00 AM. Students and staff will march around the high school track, and the high school band will perform.
- Mr. Read thanked Jane Bonner, Kathy Shea and the Shared Decision Team for obtaining the speed signs, which parents appreciate and hope will cut down on speeding and make people aware of how fast they are traveling in front of the school.

Leonard Kies, Athletic Director announced:

- Homecoming was wonderfully successful. Mr. Gerardi was welcomed back as our Grand Marshal.
- We are approaching the end of a successful high school fall season. Boys Varsity Soccer secured a berth in playoffs. Girls' Varsity Tennis finished in second place, with a 9-3 league record. Varsity Football was ranked number 10 by *Newsday* for small schools.

Music Director, John Gallagher announced:

- The high school marching band performed at Hofstra last Thursday evening. As always, students represented Rocky Point in a very positive manner.
- "An Evening of American Jazz" to benefit victims of Hurricane Katrina will be held this Friday evening, October 28, 2005, in the high school auditorium beginning at 7:00 PM. Many teachers have donated their time and talent by volunteering to chaperone or to perform in a jazz ensemble. Many guest performers will also be featured.

Dr. Carla D'Ambrosio, Superintendent of Schools announced:

- The first Superintendent's Forum of the year will be held on Thursday evening, November 3, 2005 at 7:00 PM in the Middle School library. Topics to be discussed include New York State mandates and grade three through eight testing.

- Dr. D'Ambrosio introduced Anja Groth, the district's new Director of Instruction, and English Coordinator, Nicole Waldbauer, and welcomed them both to Rocky Point.
- Dr. D'Ambrosio introduced Elena Lynch-Dobert and announced that Ms. Lynch-Dobert would speak about child nutrition.

Elena Lynch-Dobert, School Lunch Manager:

Ms. Lynch-Dobert presented an overview of the Rocky Point School Lunch Program. She explained that 97% of school lunch programs are self-supporting and must pay for salaries, supplies and equipment. Only 3% of the districts in the state receive funding. Rocky Point is not one of these. She explained that the success of a lunch program is measured by the percentage of student participation, whether or not the nutritional needs of students are met, ensuring that staff is knowledgeable and customer-friendly, meeting federal and state regulations, and by generating enough revenue to cover operating costs.

Ms. Lynch-Dobert further explained that the school lunch program grew out of the Depression and that the program was expanded in the 1960's to help children in need. School lunch programs are reviewed every five years by the federal government. Recent changes include a requirement that schools must have two food safety inspections per school beginning in July 2005 and schools must develop a school wellness policy by June 30, 2006.

Mrs. Thalen thanked Ms. Lynch-Dobert and asked if there were any questions with regard to the school lunch program. There were none.

AUDITOR'S REPORT PRESENTED BY MR. STEVEN WAGNER AND MR. PETER RODRIGUEZ OF COUGHLIN, FOUNDOTOS, CULLEN, & DANOWSKI, LLP

Mrs. Thalen introduced Mr. Steven Wagner, of Coughlin, Foundotos, Cullen, & Danowski, LLP (the district's external auditors).

Mr. Wagner presented an overview of the report, which was completed at the beginning of October. The report is prepared once a year to audit the district's financial statements, and transactions are reviewed to make sure that the district is complying with state and federal laws. Mr. Wagner further explained that the audit was conducted for the purpose of expressing opinions on the Rocky Point School District's basic financial statements and that the audit includes the examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, as well as the assessment of accounting principles used.

Mr. Peter Rodriguez also explained that the purpose of the audit is to examine the district's policies and to make recommendations. Mr. Rodriguez referred to various recommendations that were made last year, which have since been implemented by the district. Mr. Rodriguez presented recommendations that should be put into practice this

year, including procedures for budget transfers, updated billing for employee life insurance, payroll tax returns, the authorization of journal entries, extraclassroom activity funds, and salary certification.

Mrs. Thalen asked if there were any questions from members of the Board of Education:

- Mrs. Sanseverino asked for an overview of the district's fiscal health.
- Mr. Rodriguez replied that the district is in a good financial position.

Mrs. Thalen asked if there were any questions from the audience:

- Mr. Michael Sanchez asked if anyone was stealing from the district and if so, would the external auditor be responsible to report it to the authorities.
- Mr. Rodriguez replied that the external auditor is hired by the Board of Education and its goal is to express an opinion on the district's financial statements. The auditors looked at 350 different transactions and none of those appeared to be out of order. The samples were well documented. He explained that if something was found and brought to the attention of the Board of Education and was told that the Board did not want to go any further, then he would go to the proper local authorities.
- Mrs. Thalen assured Mr. Sanchez that the Board has not heard of any improprieties.
- There was a question by Mr. Sanchez with regard to how external auditors are hired. Mr. Rodriguez explained that districts must request RFPs (Requests For Proposals) every five years.
- Mrs. Thalen asked if Mr. Sanchez was satisfied. Mr. Sanchez replied that he was.
- Mrs. Thalen said that at last month's meeting, two members of the audience had a question with regard to the placing of \$2,000,000.00 into the retirement fund, and she asked Mr. Rodriguez to explain why this was a good decision.
- Mr. Rodriguez explained that effective July 1, 2004, New York State authorized the use of a new reserve fund for employee retirements to offset the cost of future increases. The message from New York State is that costs will continue to increase, and when the increase comes about, the reserve fund will enable the tax rate to remain level against that expense.
- Mr. Lagnena asked if the money that was set aside in the retirement reserve fund was in addition to the applied fund balance. Mr. Rodriguez replied that it was in addition.
- Mrs. Thalen reported that in addition to the information that the Board receives from the New York State School Boards Association, they would be attending a daylong training workshop on November 5, 2005 specifically for finances.
- Mrs. Thalen thanked Mr. Rodriguez and Mr. Wagner for their informative presentation.

Mrs. Thalen asked if there were any other questions before the start of the regular meeting:

- Mr. Sanchez announced that he would like to take the opportunity formally request the establishment of a Rocky Point gymnastics team.
- Mrs. Thalen asked if he had attempted to meet with Mr. Kies to discuss it.
- Mr. Sanchez replied that Mr. Kies asked him to get a list of interested students. Mrs. Sanchez said that if he were Mr. Kies, he would post a list in front of each physical education class.
- Mrs. Thalen said that Mr. Sanchez would have to show that there is an interest.
- Mr. Sanchez replied that he does not have access to the students in school.
- Mr. Thalen explained that Mr. Kies needs to see how many students would be interested and that it is not Mr. Kies' job to post a list.
- Mr. Kies added that he has had several conversations with Mr. Sanchez regarding equipment, etc. Mr. Kies explained that he needs to see a list to determine age groups, etc. He added that even schools that utilize private gyms also have the equipment and auxiliary gyms within their districts.
- Mr. Sanchez referred to four young ladies in the audience who are eligible to compete at the varsity level. Mr. Sanchez asked the Board to appropriate money to start the team.
- Mrs. Thalen explained that the Board could not do that, but encouraged Mr. Sanchez to continue to meet with Mr. Kies.
- Mr. Sanchez asked if it was a violation of Title IX.
- Mrs. Thalen replied that she is the biggest supporter of adding girls' sports. She explained that a process must be followed, as was the case when football came about.
- Mr. Kies asked Mr. Sanchez to continue to meet with him to discuss his proposal. Mr. Kies said that interest in the program must be gauged.
- Mr. Sanchez referred to cheerleading tryouts as a gauge since over 100 children try out for cheerleading every year. He added that "everyone knows that cheerleaders are frustrated gymnasts."
- Mrs. Thalen advised Mr. Sanchez to come up with a proposal and to set up a meeting with Mr. Kies to understand what it is that he needs to move forward. She added that she would like to see the young ladies compete and that it would please her to no end to see Rocky Point students in gymnastics.
- Mrs. Thalen thanked Mr. Sanchez and the girls for coming to the meeting.
- Mrs. Dawn Kruse thanked the board for helping to resolve a problem that she had with a bus last year. This year, however, she is experiencing another problem with constantly having a different bus driver every day, which in turn results in inconsistent pick up times.
- Mrs. Thalen referred her question to Mr. Ivanoff. Mr. Ivanoff asked Mrs. Kruse if she contacted Laidlaw with regard to this problem.
- Mrs. Kruse replied that she tried to resolve the problem last year but did not get results until she came to the Board and that she is being told that the driver is not a permanent driver so she gets pulled for field trips, sports, etc.
- Mr. Ivanoff advised Mrs. Kruse to call his office to set up a meeting so that he could take it up with Laidlaw.

- Mrs. Krase said that it has been a problem for the last two years and is now getting worse.
- Mrs. Patricia Scalone, on behalf of the Rocky Point School Related Professionals' Association and in honor of National School Boards' Appreciation Month, announced that a \$500.00 donation has been made to the Habitat for Humanity in the Board's name to assist the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Mrs. Scalone thanked the Board for their dedication.
- Mrs. Thalen thanked Mrs. Scalone for such a thoughtful gift.
- Mr. Daniel Vedder, on behalf of the Rocky Point Teachers' Association and in recognition of the Board's dedication to the students of Rocky Point, announced that a donation in their names has been made to the "Hope for Ryan" fund. Mr. Vedder explained that Ryan is the three-year old grandson of former Rocky Point Schools Superintendent, Frank Carasiti, who has been diagnosed with a form of leukemia.
- Mrs. Thalen thanked Mr. Vedder.
- Mr. William Caulfield, on behalf of the Rocky Point Administrators' Association, presented each Board member with a token of appreciation for all of their hard work and dedication. He added that in spite of the fact that they are required to give so much of their time to listen to complaints without receiving much credit or any salary, we are fortunate to have such outstanding people to serve on our Board.
- Mrs. Thalen said that people say that all we do is make enemies, and that while she has made a few, they do get thanked by members of the community and being on the Board is not a thankless job.
- Dr. D'Ambrosio thanked the members of the Board for continuing to move the district forward from a good district to a great district and for their dedication to the students.

MINUTES

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Minutes of the following Board of Education Meeting be accepted as presented: **Regular Meeting, September 19, 2005**. All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

SCHOOL TAX LEVY

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the tax levy of \$31,568,685 for the 2005-06 school year be approved. All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

BOND ISSUE PROJECT CHANGE ORDER

Upon a motion made by Howard Gimple 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 accept and approve the attached change order with reference to bond issue related project.

Discussion ensued. Mrs. Thalen reported that the change reflected a \$3,747.00 decrease in spending due to lower than expected costs. There was no further discussion.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

PLACEMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENT

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approve the District's entering into an instructional contract with the East Moriches School District to provide educational services, including related services, to a special education student for the 2005-06 school year; that the East Moriches School District will pay tuition, estimated to be \$28,850.00 for such services in accordance with the formulas established by the Commissioner of Education; that the East Moriches School District will provide all transportation services for such student; that the student will begin attending the Rocky Point School District with an effective start date of September 1, 2005 pending final approval of the instructional contract in accordance with Section 2042 of the Education Law and that the Board President is authorized to sign such contract.

Discussion ensued. Mrs. Thalen asked why it was that this resolution would be effective September 1, 2005. Mrs. Manitta explained that this is a student who has been attending Rocky Point for the past four years. There was no further discussion.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

PLACEMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENT

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approve the District's entering into an instructional contract with the Sachem School District to provide educational services, including related services, to a special education student for the 2005-06 school year; that the Sachem School District will pay tuition, estimated to be \$71,943.00 for such services in accordance with the formulas established by the Commissioner of Education; that the Sachem School District will provide all transportation services for such student; that the student will begin

attending the Rocky Point School District with an effective start date of September 1, 2005 pending final approval of the instructional contract in accordance with Section 2042 of the Education Law and that the Board President is authorized to sign such contract.

Discussion ensued. Mrs. Thalen asked the same question with regard to the date of the contract. Eileen Manitta replied that these contracts were formerly done by her office and now must be done by the District Office. Mr. Sanseverino asked how the rate of tuition was determined. Ms. Manitta explained that it depended upon the level of services provided. There was no further discussion.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

**ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS: SPECIAL EDUCATION/
PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT MEMBERS**

Upon a motion made by Howard Gimple 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 approve the appointment of Mary Cook and Gabrielle Costantino as Parent Members to the Committee on Special Education/Preschool Special Education. (In accordance with the Commissioner’s Regulations, Part 200 and the provisions of the Education Law, Section 4402.)

Discussion ensued. Mrs. Thalen asked why we are constantly adding parents to this committee. Mrs. Manitta explained that we are required to have parent members at CSEs. Unfortunately, we keep tapping into the same people. It is very difficult to find people to attend due to work schedules, etc. Mrs. Thalen asked how parents are solicited to serve on the committee. Mrs. Manitta explained that they ask parents whose children have graduated or they ask parents from other districts. They also use teleconferences when parent members are unable to attend. There was no further discussion.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

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

Upon a motion made by Joseph Sanseverino 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 votes to arrange for appropriate services pursuant to the recommendations of Schedule 10-24-05-A and 10-24-05-B.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

PERSONNEL

Upon a motion made by Michael Matera and seconded by Howard Gimple, 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 4-0.

Mrs. Thalen asked if there were any questions or comments before the Board moved to Executive Session:

- Mrs. Veronica Gilbert had a question with regard to the resolution that was presented at last month's meeting pertaining to non-resident students.
- Dr. D'Ambrosio explained that the policy required clarification pertaining to foreign exchange students.

There were no further questions or comments.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:07 PM, a motion was made by Howard Gimple and seconded by Michael Matera for the Board of Education to go into executive session to discuss particular personnel matters. All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Pedota
District Clerk

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

RESOLUTION FOR A DISTRICT EMPLOYEE TO REPORT FOR AN EXAMINATION

Upon a motion made by Howard Gimple 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 resolution:

WHEREAS, a certain employee made known to the Board of Education has recently exhibited unusual behavior in the discharge of his/her duties as a member of the teaching staff of the Rocky Point Union Free School District;

and

WHEREAS, such behavior has raised issues with respect to this employee's mental capacity to perform this employee's duties and responsibilities,

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to Section 913 of the Education Law,

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that this employee is directed to report for an examination to determine his/her mental capacity to perform the duties required of such employee, the same examination to be performed by Dr. Michael Schwartz on or before November 30, 2005 or any adjourned date. All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10:12 PM a motion was made by Michael Matera and seconded by Joseph Sanseverino for the Board of Education to adjourn the meeting. All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Carla L. D'Ambrosio, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools