

**MINUTES
ROCKY POINT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
December 19, 2005**

Mrs. Thalen called the meeting to order at 7:43 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

Mrs. Thalen opened the meeting to questions or comments from the audience:

- Ms. Ernestine Franco asked Board members if anyone had read a report that was completed by Stony Brook University and that was printed in the *Times* in November regarding school taxes on Long Island.
- Mrs. Thalen replied that she had read it and would be happy to make copies available to other board members who would like to read it.
- Ms. Franco asked when the board actually starts to talk about the proposed budget.
- Mrs. Thalen replied that the board begins to work on the budget in January.
- Dr. D'Ambrosio added that as soon as the dates for these meetings were confirmed, the information would be posted on the website.
- Ms. Franco asked the expiration date of the current teachers' contract.
- Mrs. Thalen replied that it expired on June 30, 2005.
- Ms. Franco who was involved in the negotiations.
- Mrs. Thalen explained that the board's current policy is to have an advisor who represents the board meet with the school's attorney and the teachers' union.
- Ms. Franco asked how someone would go about putting up a proposition to freeze the teachers' contract for three years.
- Mrs. Thalen said that she didn't think that would happen in today's climate. She explained that the way to successfully negotiate with an association is to look at past history and issues relating to education. Mrs. Thalen added that none of the board members think that a proposal to freeze teachers' salaries would be reasonable.
- Mr. Gimple asked why Ms. Franco believed that it would be reasonable.
- Ms. Franco explained that fifty percent of teachers make over \$80,000.00 and seventeen earn over \$100,000.00 while taxpayers don't make that kind of money. She added that her problem is not that teachers don't deserve it, but that if the tax base isn't able to support it, it doesn't matter that the teachers deserve it. She added that she becomes frustrated when she hears that teachers don't make enough money. She asked if the only action available to taxpayers was to defeat the budget.
- Mrs. Thalen explained that the best way for someone to take action would be to get involved on the school board.
- Ms. Franco said that for the past six months, she has been trying to learn everything about school boards, and she believes that school boards are responsible for the major problem with school taxes.
- Mrs. Thalen explained that when she first became involved with the school board, New York State paid for 65% of our total budget. Over the past ten years or so, we have reached the point where New York State is paying less than 35% to fund the schools, so there has been a major shift in who pays for education. In

addition, we are paying so much to New York State and some of that money goes to upstate schools.

- Ms. Franco said that on a local level, it should be the responsibility of the school board to make it feasible for people to pay for education. She believes the only people who will be able to live on Long Island will be teachers.
- Mrs. Thalen replied that most people who live in the area are not teachers. She added that the district has changed in recent years as a result of large new homes being built and more affluent people moving into the district. She added that the board is not standing there picking the pockets of the taxpayers in the district. Everyone on the board is looking to get the best education for our children with the money that is expended. The board is trying to stay competitive with other districts and offer teachers a reasonable salary. If salaries are frozen, it will be difficult to find qualified teachers when we go looking for them.
- Ms. Franco asked if Mrs. Thalen was saying that if teachers don't get a 3% raise that it would mean that they would go elsewhere.
- Mrs. Thalen replied that she was saying that the board had to be fair and that they want to have people working for the district that will be doing a good job. In order to do that, the district has to provide the type of environment that will attract good teachers. The board would like to say that there will be no tax increase next year, but it isn't reasonable to expect that in this environment.
- Ms. Franco said that she feels that it won't be possible for the children who we are educating now to afford to live on Long Island.
- Mr. Gimple replied that if we used Ms. Franco's system, not only would they not be able to live on Long Island, but they wouldn't be able to compete with graduates from other districts when they go to look for jobs because they won't be as qualified as students from other districts.
- Mrs. Thalen thanked Ms. Franco for coming to the meeting and for politely expressing her views.
- Mrs. Johannesen said that after having the opportunity to be in the audience for each of the building's holiday concerts, she wanted to say how much she enjoyed each of them. She thanked the music teachers for all of their work and Mr. Matera for allowing her to sit with the board in the front of the auditorium within a few feet of her daughter's performance.

There were no other questions or comments.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Susan Sullivan, Assistant Principal – Rocky Point High School:

- Congratulations to Rocky Point High School Varsity Cheerleaders and coach, Mrs. Anna Spallina, who won first place at a cheerleading competition that took place at Walt Whitman High School this past Sunday.
- The Singing Santas, under the direction of Brooke Bonomi, performed to a packed auditorium on Saturday night. Money that was raised at this concert will go to the nurses' "Needy Family Fund" and the senior citizen prom.
- The annual high school holiday concert will be held on Wednesday evening, December 21, 2005, at 7:30 PM in the high school auditorium.
- Mrs. Sullivan extended her best wishes to everyone for a happy, healthy holiday season and new year.

Joseph Centamore, Principal – Rocky Point Middle School:

- Dr. Centamore announced that they were waiting to hear the results of a character education grant that the middle school submitted recently. He explained that only ten out of one hundred schools are chosen each year.
- He is proud to announce that five middle school fall athletic teams received sportsmanship awards.
- The PTA is currently running the winter book fair.
- The middle school had two outstanding nights of holiday concerts. The students did an incredible job.

- The Singing Santas concerts for middle school students will take place on Friday during two different assemblies. Dr. Centamore thanked the high school administration and staff for making it possible for middle school students to attend.
- ELA assessments for students in sixth through eighth grades will occur after the holidays during the week of January 17, 2006.
- Dr. Centamore wished everyone a healthy and happy holiday season.

Carol Tvelia, Principal – Joseph A. Edgar School:

- Mrs. Tvelia thanked Mrs. Johannesen for her kind words regarding the concerts. Two hundred sixty-one students from grades three, four and five performed in last Tuesday night’s concert.
- A holiday play will be presented tomorrow entitled *The Elves Impersonator*.
- Twenty-three students from JAE will participate in Stony Brook University’s Celebration of Technology Fair in January.
- ELA assessments will be administered during the week of January 9, 2006.
- Mrs. Tvelia also expressed here best wishes for a healthy, happy, and safe holiday season.

Paul Read, Principal – Frank J. Carasiti School:

- They have finished collecting data for the Literacy Collaborative program for kindergarten students. The results show that thirty-three students are struggling. The goal for this year is to reduce that number by at least 10%.
- This year, the nurses started a program called “Secret Santas” to assist struggling families. They will be able to supply twenty-one families with six, seven or eight gifts each. The program involved the entire staff. One of the children will receive a bicycle. Mr. Read thanked Port Jeff Sporting Goods for making a generous contribution.
- Mr. Read also extended his wishes for a happy holiday season.

PRESENTATION BY KARL SPIELMANN, SCIENCE COORDINATOR, HIGH SCHOOL – “MECHATRONICS”

Mr. Spielmann presented an overview of “Mechatronics.” He explained that Suffolk County Community College was awarded a \$2.38 million community-based job-training grant by the US Department of Labor. Suffolk Community College was the only institution selected in New York State and the award is the largest grant in the college’s history. Mr. Spielmann added that Rocky Point High School has been invited to partner with Suffolk County Community College and that the primary purpose of the grant is to build community colleges’ capacities to equip workers with the skills that local industries require for success. Training proposals that were selected will prepare workers for jobs that are expected to experience high growth in industries where demand for qualified workers is exceeding supply.

Mr. Spielmann further explained that the college previously recognized the critical need for integrated job training in areas such as mechanics, electronics and computer programming. These areas are collectively referred to as “mechatronics” and are increasingly used in industry’s integrated approach to manufacturing and are the types of training that are requested by local employers.

The project will provide training to Rocky Point High School students in shortage areas including automation, control systems, tolerance, specifications and instrumentation, machining processes, as well as incorporate a focus on basic skill deficiencies such as math and writing. Training will result in six-month and one-year certifications and an Associate’s Degree program will be designed to enhance career ladder progression and eventually enable students to transfer to Stony Brook, Farmingdale, and other four-year institutions to pursue advanced degrees.

- Mrs. Thalen asked what would be expected from the district and Rocky Point students.
- Mr. Spielmann replied that Rocky Point students would be able to participate in the initial six-month mechatronics training certification at no cost to the district or students.
- Mrs. Audette asked how the program would be introduced to students.
- Mr. Spielmann replied that this spring, they are planning to invite Festo Corporation to present workshops during science classes at the high school to introduce interested

students to the world of mechatronics. The program would be open to all students at this point.

Dr. D'Ambrosio thanked Mr. Spielmann for his presentation, Mr. Sanseverino for bringing this opportunity to the district, and the board members for their support.

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, November 28, 2005**. All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

TREASURER'S REPORTS

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept the Treasurer's Reports for the month of **October 2005** as presented. All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

EXTRA-CLASSROOM ACTIVITY ACCOUNT TREASURER REPORT

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept the Extra Classroom Activity Treasurer Report for the month of **October 2005** as presented. All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Upon a motion made by Joseph Sanseverino 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 **October 2005** as presented. All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

ESTABLISHMENT OF AUDIT COMMITTEE

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 establish an Audit Committee pursuant to Education Law Section 2116-c.

Discussion ensued. Mrs. Thalen asked Mr. Ivanoff to explain the need for this resolution. Mr. Ivanoff explained that as a result of what has occurred at Roslyn, the state passed a law that requires Boards of Education to form this committee effective January 2006. Mr. Ivanoff added that additional information will be made available on the district's website and that the district would be looking for volunteers to serve on this committee.

Mrs. Thalen asked if there were any questions.

- Mrs. Johannesen asked which qualifications were necessary to serve on the committee.
- Mrs. Thalen replied that the qualifications would be discussed and that it is expected that some of the board members will serve on the committee and other members of the community would be invited to serve as well. She suggested to Ms. Franco that she might like to serve on the committee. Mrs. Thalen explained that additional information will be posted on the website as it becomes available.
- Dr. D'Ambrosio added that the Audit Committee would serve as an advisory board to the External Auditor.
- Mrs. Thalen added that for many years before she served on the board, a decision was made to have both internal and external auditors. Now all districts are required to do so. Community members will be invited to serve on the board that have accounting backgrounds. Everyone will hear more information in January.

There was no further discussion. All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

DONATION FROM COUNCILMAN KEVIN MCCARRICK

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 accepted the donation in the amount of \$2000.00 to be used for the music program for the Rocky Point School District from Councilman Kevin McCarrick.

Discussion ensued. Mrs. Thalen asked what the district planned to purchase with the donation. Dr. D’Ambrosio replied that one of the more expensive musical instruments would probably be purchased. Mrs. Thalen thanked Councilman McCarrick for the generous donation.

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 12-19-05-A and 12-19-05-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 additional questions or comments before the board moved to executive session.

There were none.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:25 PM, a motion was made by Howard Gimple and seconded by Joseph Sanseverino 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 9:45 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Michael Matera and seconded by Howard Gimple at 9:46 PM 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