

MINUTES
ROCKY POINT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
June 16, 2015

Mrs. Sullivan called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. in the auditorium of Rocky Point High School.

Pledge of Allegiance

Present: Susan Sullivan, President
Scott Reh, Vice President
Sean Callahan, Trustee
Melissa Brown, Trustee

Also Present: Michael F. Ring, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
Deborah DeLuca, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent
Susan Wilson, Executive Director for Educational Services
Gregory Hilton, School Business Official
Patricia Jones, District Clerk

Absent: John Lessler, Trustee

Dr. Ring welcomed those in attendance to the special meeting. Dr. Ring explained that the Board of Education scheduled the meeting and public forum for the purpose of reviewing a proposed Facilities Capital Project and associated Bond Referendum. Dr. Ring provided a brief overview of the meeting protocol and invited Mr. Christopher Malone, Director of Facilities, to the podium to begin the presentation.

Mr. Malone announced that the PowerPoint presentation to follow included a brief history of each of the four school buildings and a by-school Priority I and Priority II presentation of the proposed projects. Following Mr. Malone's summary presentation, Mr. Malone opened the floor to questions and/or comments from the trustees of the Board of Education.

- Mr. Reh inquired about the RPHS solar energy Priority II proposal for \$1,416,000 and asked what said project encompassed. Mr. John Grillo of JAG, the architectural firm for the projects, provided Mr. Reh with the information sought. Mrs. Sullivan inquired as to why solar panels were only being considered at the high school. Mr. Grillo explained solar panels may only be affixed to roofs/replacement roofs aged at five years or less. Noting that the high school has a flat roof, Mrs. Sullivan voiced her concerns that it was her understanding that flat roofs may present a danger for supporting solar panels. Mr. Grillo responded in detail regarding the structuring of the panels and advised that the panels come with a twenty-five year warranty.

Detailed discussion ensued among the trustees and Mr. Grillo concerning diesel generators, the purposes for same, and possible effects in the event of weather-related occurrences such as Hurricane Gloria.

- Mr. Reh inquired about the plans for the egress to the nurses' office from the monitor area in the lobby of the middle school. Dr. Ring responded the purpose of the doorway was to provide egress in an emergency situation for the front hall monitor stationed in the middle school lobby.
- Mr. Reh requested additional information regarding the addition of a 6th grade entrance portico at the middle school. Dr. Ring explained converting the 6th grade entrance into a main entranceway in the mornings for parents dropping off students would aid in alleviating traffic as the students are being dropped-off for extra-help and that the portico would also provide cover from inclement weather.
- Mr. Reh inquired if the cost of the parking lot paving line item pertained to parking lots district-wide and whether or not it included the paving for the proposed bus-lane only modification under consideration.
- Mrs. Brown asked for details regarding the installation of a stairway along the south end of the tennis courts, new bleachers, and the installation of sports lights in the lower back fields.
- Mr. Callahan requested more detailed information concerning the Johnson Management Control System and the proposed replacement of Class V wells. Mr. Grillo responded in detail to Mr. Callahan's questions and concerns.
- Mr. Callahan asked for additional information, i.e., locations and types of lighting proposed for the exteriors of the buildings.
- Mrs. Brown asked for the probable effective date of a conversion to natural gas. Mr. Grillo explained that National Grid is involved and as a result, the district is at the mercy of the utility company. Mr. Grillo estimated that the conversion was at least "two years out."
- Mr. Callahan requested additional information pertaining to the proposed installation of front porticos on the three entranceways to the high school. Dr. Ring responded the porticos would provide cover in inclement weather for students during drop-offs. Dr. Ring mentioned that the further the drop-offs are from the road the less traffic congestion on Rocky Point-Yaphank Road.
- Mrs. Sullivan requested additional information regarding the proposed "bus only" entrance into the high school and the probable loss of student parking in the creation of same. Dr. Ring provided Mrs. Sullivan with an overview of the proposals for the "bus only" entrance lane.
- Mrs. Brown inquired about the proposed door-ajar security system at the high school. Mr. Grillo advised that at the present time there is nothing in place to alert staff if someone was to insert objects such as rocks in a door for the purpose of keeping it ajar and unsecured. Mrs. Sullivan inquired if additional staff would be required to monitor the new safety measures associated with the door-ajar security system.
- The trustees engaged in detailed discussion concerning the locker rooms and the boys and girls bathrooms. Mr. Grillo responded to the trustees' questions and concerns. Regarding the installation of handicapped accommodations, Mr. Grillo noted that the State Education Department "called the shots." Mrs. Sullivan inquired as to when the high school boys' locker room was last renovated. Mr. Grillo responded that the last renovation pre-dated his tenure as school architect. Mrs. Sullivan requested that the bathroom renovations include a complete retiling of the floors to prevent the "mish-mosh" currently in place.
- Mrs. Brown opened the discussion of air conditioning of the auditorium. Noting the high costs associated with air conditioning and that it was not a year-round necessity, Mrs. Brown inquired as to whether or not the district should spend the

monies. Dr. Ring advised of the possibility of utilizing the auditorium during the summer months for summer programs. Dr. Ring also noted that during the months of May, June and September, the middle school cafeteria can be particularly hot. Dr. Ring pointed out that the opening of the doors of the cafeteria to allow for airflow poses a security issue. Dr. Ring mentioned that the high school auditorium is not used as much as it could/should be due to the heat. Mrs. Sullivan commented that she was in attendance at the recent Eagle Scout Induction Ceremony held in the high school auditorium and that it was a virtual inferno. Mrs. Sullivan recommended that the high school auditorium be air-conditioned and utilized for all district functions as necessary.

- Mrs. Sullivan asked if the trustees would be able to view preliminary plans of the proposed porticos at the front entrances of the high school. Mrs. Brown voiced her agreement with Mrs. Sullivan's request noting a visual would aid the trustees in reaching a decision.
- The trustees engaged in detailed discussion concerning the proposed movement of the JAE playground. Citing both the pros and cons of this movement, Mrs. Sullivan asked if it was still considered necessary. Dr. Ring summarized the advantages and the disadvantages of the movement of the JAE playground and responded that it was ultimately the board's decision as to which direction they would recommend be taken.
- Mrs. Brown opened the discussion concerning the proposed installation of high netting behind the backstop and bleachers of the varsity baseball field. Both Dr. Ring and Mr. Grillo provided the reasons for erecting the netting. Dr. Ring shared that the construction to support the netting was expensive. Citing the high cost of the netting, Mr. Callahan asked if a less expensive system was available. Mr. Grillo offered that the overhang of the backstop might be extended. Discussion ensued. Mr. Reh asked if Mr. Grillo could provide the cost figures for each of the options discussed.
- Mrs. Brown inquired and Mr. Hilton confirmed that the NYS building aid for the projects under consideration is anticipated to be 70.2% of the project costs.
- Mrs. Sullivan announced that she, personally, had a new addition to the proposed capital projects list - a music room at JAE. Noting that the trustees were seeing this proposal for the first time, Mrs. Sullivan shared that the music room in JAE is currently located in the basement and that this location has not been amenable to her for quite some time. Noting that this room was inaccessible to some students, Mrs. Sullivan outlined her suggestions for the renovation of two current JAE classrooms to become the new music room.
- Mr. Reh stated that he, too, had an addition to the capital projects list he wished be considered, electronic message displays in front of each of the buildings. Mr. Reh asked if the cost of this addition could be researched. Mr. Grillo advised that he would look into the cost. Mr. Grillo also advised that this particular project was not "state aidable."

Mrs. Sullivan thanked the trustees for their contributions to the discussion. Mrs. Sullivan opened the floor to meeting attendees for questions and/or comments.

- Mrs. Franco shared her disappointment with the low turnout of district residents at this special meeting. Mrs. Franco also shared her disappointment in what she perceived to be the district's failure to promote more vigorous advertising of the meeting. Referencing the legal notice the district posted in the *Village Beacon Record*, Mrs. Franco expressed her opinion that said legal notice was "too small."

- Mrs. Franco asked if the district could provide an estimated monetary run cost for air conditioning in the high school auditorium and if said cost would be included in the annual budget. Mr. Grillo responded that the projection costs would reflect costs based upon “run by the hour.” Mr. Callahan responded that the district is looking into solar panels to offset the cost of the air conditioning.
- Mrs. Franco noted a change in this PowerPoint presentation pertaining to the renovation of the JAE cafeteria proposal from the PowerPoint presentation in March of this year and asked why the proposal changed but the amount of same did not. Mr. Grillo provided Mrs. Franco with the explanation. Referencing the FJC classroom six feet and five feet sink stations, Mrs. Franco asked for an explanation of the notation “present cost : \$3800 per station.” Following discussion, Mr. Callahan assured Mrs. Franco that the board and the district would not bond an item that was deemed to be unnecessary. Mrs. Sullivan stated that she wished to reconfirm that the board continues to have questions pertaining to facets of the proposed capital projects and that by no means should anything at this juncture be considered “a done deal.”
- Referencing Mrs. Sullivan’s proposal to move the JAE music room from the basement to the main floor, Mrs. Franco inquired about the loss of the two current classrooms that would be affected by this change. Dr. Ring explained that due to lower student enrollment and the redistribution of room usage, Mrs. Sullivan’s plan was doable.
- In her final remarks, Mrs. Franco urged the trustees to keep in mind that although the capital projects were 70.2% state aid-able, it was still taxpayer monies being used to fund the projects
- Ms. Melanie Connelly spoke in detail regarding the proposed changes to be made to the doorway to the middle nurses’ office from the main lobby. Ms. Connelly asked if anyone had done a walk through of the area or inquired of building personnel the impact said proposed changes would have on the nurses and staff. Mr. Grillo replied in the affirmative. Ms. Connelly urged Mr. Grillo and the trustees to visit the area when school is in session and filled with students. Ms. Connelly recommended that the trustees take into account the building principal’s input as to what would be best for this area. Ms. Connelly stated that she had calculated that moving the main lobby greeter’s desk from one side of the lobby to the other would solve the safety situation, spare the destruction of the nurses’ office and ultimately save the district \$35,000.00. Mr. Grillo responded that it was the goal of the district to build a secure vestibule and the capital projects proposals submitted for consideration did indeed achieve that goal.
- Further referencing the health office in the middle, Ms. Connelly shared her concerns regarding the lack of windows therein and asked how the students could escape in the case of fire or other emergency. Mr. Grillo advised that guidelines do not require egress windows in the nurses’ office.
- Mr. Ed Casswell asked if the district would be paying rent for the proposed solar panels; Mr. Grillo responded that the panels would be owned by the district therefore no rental payments were required.
- Mr. Casswell requested that the PowerPoint presentation slide pertaining to District-Wide Priority I projects be brought back up on the overhead projector. Referencing the security cameras line item, Mr. Casswell asked for a more detailed description of same. Mr. Casswell also asked for additional information pertaining to the door-ajar security system line item. Discussion ensued. Both Dr. Ring and Mr. Grillo responded in detail to Mr. Casswell’s specific questions.

- Dr. Pinkenburg noted that there was nothing in the proposals to improve the academic performance of students. Citing the variety of improvements recommended, particularly the recommended air conditioning of the auditorium, Dr. Pinkenburg shared his belief that it was the responsibility of the board to put the needs of the students first, as students were in the classrooms for eight hours per day, not in the auditorium. Dr. Pinkenburg asked why 1.5 million dollars was being expended on the boys' locker room. Mr. Grillo responded that the locker room needed to be completely gutted, i.e., floors, walls, ceiling, among other items. Mr. Grillo also cited a cost of \$300.00 per locker.
- Dr. Pinkenburg asked why a portico was needed at the 6th grade entrance to the middle school. Dr. Ring responded that the installation of the portico was proposed to assist in the alleviation of the long lines of traffic on Rocky Pont-Yaphank Road as parents dropped off students for morning extra-help, etc. Referencing the idea to re-route the buses, Dr. Pinkenburg referred to it as an "exercise in futility."
- Dr. Pinkenburg spoke in detail regarding the proposed removal of the handicapped ramp currently in place at the JAE library and a proposed lift as its replacement. Dr. Pinkenburg was not in support of the proposed lift.
- Dr. Pinkenburg stated his strong opposition as a parent to the proposed repositioning of the playground at JAE. Dr. Pinkenburg commented that this would prevent the children from playing on the green fields and asked what repercussions it would present in the face of a lockdown.
- Dr. Pinkenburg voiced his disappointment with the recently installed artificial turf, citing its discoloration after only a few years.
- Ms. Bea Ruberto, referencing the proposed addition of artificial turf on the Varsity Baseball and Softball fields, shared her belief that it was "not the most environmentally best thing to do." Ms. Ruberto said that she understood the benefits of completing state aid projects but said projects should not be undertaken simply because they are aid-able. Referencing the LEEDS exemption, Ms. Ruberto shared her belief that programs such as this teach the students what is environmentally friendly.
- Ms. Ruberto questioned the need to spend four million dollars on generators and asked if the district really needed to do so.
- Mr. Joseph Nowaski shared his thoughts on what he perceived to be the importance of going ahead with the proposed projects. As a former longtime employee familiar with all four of the school district buildings, Mr. Nowaski presented the possible pitfalls of doing piecemeal work and urged the district to move forward with the capital projects as, in his opinion, "they must be done."
- Ms. Subject shared that she was concerned with the loss of available space for the students to run around if the JAE playground project was to go ahead as proposed. Ms. Subject urged the trustees to consider an additional lunch period to be allotted to the JAE students as this would allow more playtime. Mrs. Sullivan assured Ms. Subject that the board was both listening and hearing wherein Dr. Ring shared that a fourth lunch period would be implemented at JAE beginning in September. Dr. Ring also shared that there was hope that a third lunch line would also be implemented so that students could get their lunches quicker and have more playtime during lunch recess.
- Ms. Subject requested clarification of the often used term, "aid-ability." Dr. Ring responded in detail touching upon principal and interest, full cost vs. RP cost, etc.

- Mrs. Heely inquired about the proposals for handicapped accessibility at various locations at JAE. Mr. Grillo responded handicapped accessibility was included on the Priority I lists at each individual school. Mrs. Heely asked what the outcome would be if the Capital Projects do not go forth or if they do and are ultimately voted down by district residents. Dr. Ring responded to Mrs. Heely's question.
- Mrs. Franco inquired as to what the next steps would be moving forward in this process. Mrs. Sullivan stated that the board was not in any rush to "tear through" the process; that the board plans to take its time as it obtains follow-up information and visits and revisits various areas and schools in order to diligently move forward. Mrs. Sullivan assured all that the board would present their findings at a later date.
- Ms. Connelly thanked the trustees for listening to each and every speaker and "for giving of their time." Ms. Connelly thanked everyone for not "shutting us down."

There were no further questions or comments.

Dr. Ring and the board trustees provided a recap of the items to be followed-up upon and summarized those areas to be revisited. Mr. Grillo shared information as to what other surrounding school districts have done regarding solar panels. Mr. Callahan recommended a walk-through be done just before the July 9th BOE Reorganizational Meeting takes place. Mr. Reh concurred stating that a large amount of money is involved and that there would be no rush to reach a final decision. Mr. Reh also stated that the trustees would conduct a building-by-building review and that every item would be revisited. Mr. Reh thanked everyone for their input and shared that he appreciated their comments. Noting that the voters of the district would ultimately cast their votes on the finalized proposal, Mr. Reh said that the trustees wished to make the best choices possible for the district. Mrs. Sullivan said she realized that the trustees were unable to make everyone happy, but that they would do their best. Mrs. Sullivan noted that the Sayville SD sent a brochure home to every district resident in order to keep them apprised of the circumstances of their capital projects undertaking. Mrs. Sullivan recommended that Rocky Point do the same in order to provide ongoing support and communication. Dr. Ring assured Mrs. Sullivan that a bond brochure would go out to every household in the district.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:01 p.m. Sean Callahan made a motion and Melissa Brown seconded to adjourn the meeting.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Jones
District Clerk