

**NORTH SALEM CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
NORTH SALEM, NY 10560**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
September 21, 2005**

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of the North Salem Central School District of North Salem, New York, was held on Wednesday, September 21, 2005, in the North Salem Middle School Cafeteria. There being a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Ms. Hart.

Board

Members:

Douglas
Giamundo
Hart
Hershman
Martell
O'Meara
Palma

Present:

Ms. Carla Palma, President*
Ms. Alison Hublard Hershman,
Vice President**
Ms. Lisa Douglas
Ms. Norma Hart
Mr. Paul Giamundo
Ms. Marie L. Martell
Mr. John O'Meara*

*Arrived at 6:06 p.m.

**Arrived at 6:30 p.m.

Also Present:

Dr. Peter R. Litchka, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. MaryJo Hauser, Assistant Superintendent for
Pupil Personnel Services
Ms. Sylvia Fassler-Wallach, Director of Finance
Mr. Kenneth Waldron, Director of Facilities,
Operations, Maintenance, and Transportation
Staff and community members-approximately 50

Executive Session:

At 6:01 p.m. on motion made by Ms. Douglas, seconded by Ms. Martell and carried 4-0, the Board entered executive session for the purpose of discussing legal and specific personnel matters. Ms. Hart was appointed Clerk *Pro Tem* for this executive session. Mr. Jeffrey Kehl, Esq. and Mr. Marc Sharff, Esq. were also present for this session.

Reconvene to Public Session:

At 7:30 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Hublard Hershman, seconded by Mr. O'Meara and carried 7-0, the Board reconvened to public session.

**Middle School/High School
Roundtable:**

Middle School/High School Roundtable

There were approximately twenty-five (25) community members in attendance for this section of the meeting. Several items were brought up for discussion, including, but not limited to the following:

- music in our schools
- the district has excellent teachers
- the possibility of having future Board Agenda topics for discussion listed on the webpage
- sound system in the middle school cafeteria
- should be more emphasis on Science and Technology
- District of Excellence

Pledge of Allegiance:

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Ms. Palma welcomed all present.

**Reception for New Employees
and Newly Tenured
Educators:**

Ms. Palma stated that this evening they are going to adjourn into a reception process. Dr. Litchka began the first part of the presentations for the evening by recognizing those teachers who have reached the milestone in their career of receiving tenure. Dr. Litchka then made the following statement to the six individuals being honored: "This is not the beginning of the end of your career, or part of your career, but it is the end of the beginning." He congratulated the teachers on reaching this milestone and noted that the future is in their hands with this generation. He added on behalf of the Board and administration, this is a wonderful opportunity to recognize the excellent staff that we have here in North Salem. We think that when we provide someone with tenure that they are the best.

With that he asked each of the teachers to come up to be recognized. The following teachers received tenure:

Joel Cassidy, Special Education Teacher-Middle School/High School

Kristal Castellano, Special Education Teacher-Pequenakonck Elementary School

Dan Collea, Science-Middle School/High School

Gail Maisel, School Social Worker-Pequenakonck Elementary School

Laura Pandolas, Mathematics-Middle School/High School

Suzanne Platt, Mathematics-Middle School/High School

As each teacher stepped forward and was congratulated by Dr. Litchka, the Board of Education members and Assistant Superintendents, they were presented with a certificate.

After a round of applause, Ms. Palma stated that she would like to add to the kind words that Dr. Litchka had just mentioned. As she addressed the teachers, she stated that you are the stewards of our children and we thank you for that and we look forward to all the skills and all the wonderful attributes that you will instill in our children. We wish you well and we are happy that you are with us.

For the next part of the recognition, Dr. Litchka recognized our new staff members. As he announced each new staff member, if they were present, he asked them to please stand to be recognized. After all new names were read everyone applauded. Once again, Dr. Litchka welcomed all new staff. He added that we not only have excellent teachers in our district, but we also have excellent support staff, whether it be administrators, bus drivers, teacher aides or clerical workers. From the moment that the children are picked up in the morning to the end of the day when they are dropped back off with their parents, there is always an adult there to help them. Ms. Palma welcomed everyone into our family. We will now adjourn and go next door to the high school cafeteria for some refreshments. (See attached program from the evening with all new staff members listed.)

None.

Comments on Agenda Items:

Acceptance of Minutes:

On a motion made by Ms. Hublard Hershman, seconded by Mr. O'Meara and carried 7-0, the Board accepted the minutes of the August 17, 2005 Board of Education meeting.

President's Report:

Ms. Palma stated that this evening we had a *Roundtable* discussion. She then thanked everyone for their participation and for providing their input on the topics that were discussed. Ms. Palma suggested that a summary would be provided and perhaps posted to the web, and then we can talk about what the next steps are once we have all the items disaggregated and see what the perspective is from the views of the administration.

Board Member Reports:

Ms. Martell thanked the Board for giving her and Paul the opportunity to attend the Academy for School Governance this past weekend in Albany. She stated that there were meetings for both new school Board members as well as veteran members. Ms. Martell gave an overview of the topics discussed and noted that she would provide information in the next Board packet. Among the many topics discussed were School Law and Ethics with actual case studies, Introduction to the Governance Team, School District Finances-Roles and Responsibilities, Fiscal Fitness-A Guide to Monitoring the School District's Budget, and The Board Superintendent's Team. This was informative as well as of tremendous value. We were also provided the opportunity to network with other districts. Mr. Giamundo was able to go to a veteran meeting as it was on high school with the Assistant Commissioner and Ms. Martell stayed for the new Board member part of that particular session in order for both of them to be able to absorb as much information as they could to be able to report back to the Board. Ms. Martell then proceeded to turn it over to Mr. Giamundo who would give a brief summary of the high school part of it. Mr. Giamundo noted again that there was a part of the convention for veteran Board members. He stated that he attended a veteran presentation on What's Happening in High School, given by Deputy Commissioner of Education, James Kadamus.

Mr. Giamundo noted that it was wonderful to hear from him, he was very informative and made himself available after the presentation. He went on to say that so many things have changed. Mr. Kadamus mentioned how good the state is in general. He stated that we have 92% of our students taking the SATs. He then began to talk about the new Math sequence, at which point the audience proceeded with a round of applause. It is not going to be exactly like the old math 1-2-3, it is going to be that procedure, but there are going to be some changes. In the year that they start this there will still be some openings for Math B. But they are going to have the traditional 1-2-3 with some changes. One of the items talked about was the following question: How much is a person's college education worth? He stated that a college education today is worth \$1 million dollars. He went on to state that Math is the greatest single indicator to your success in college. Mr. Giamundo said it was incredible the number of school systems in the state that have safety issues. Mr. Giamundo reiterated Ms. Martell's sincerity in thanking the Board for allowing both of them the opportunity to attend the conference.

There followed a brief discussion regarding information on a seminar that Mr. Giamundo received in the mail from Southern Westchester BOCES, which was to take place in Elmsford entitled "Dine and Network" to be held on October 6, 2005. It was noted that there is a Board meeting that evening.

Ms. Douglas noted that the Audit Committee had met. She stated that she

Board Member Reports:

(continued)

would save that update, noting that Ms. Fassler-Wallach is listed on the Agenda for a discussion on Update on Gasoline.

Mr. O'Meara stated that Ms. Palma, Mr. Giamundo, and he had a meeting of the Board sub-committee to investigate the turf field question. Mr. O'Meara gave a quick overview. Mr. O'Meara reported that they did two things. They went through and took every question that had been put forth in writing at the meetings and in the minutes and put them all in one place. In addition, they made an outline schedule of exactly how they think this might proceed. This will be the last chance to get any questions out. Mr. Giamundo is going to organize a meeting of the Facilities and Fields Citizens' Advisory Committee. There is a difference between the two committees. The mission of the sub-committee is to investigate the question of a bond for the turf field, and bring forth a decision as to whether or not we will in fact bring it to a bond. The Facilities and Fields Committee spent the last few years researching this issue, they have a lot of information, and they also did a lot of good work last year.

That committee is a standing committee to deal with the buildings and grounds and the entire campus. First meeting will be dedicated to this question again. They will meet hopefully the week of October 3rd to look through all the questions and they propose that roughly October 15th, they will report to the Board. (It was noted that they would have to look at the scheduling of the Board meeting.) Mr. O'Meara will facilitate a discussion on all of these questions. Immediately following that there will be another sub-committee meeting to regroup and figure out what to do with the information and they will ask Mr. Giamundo to put together a second meeting with the CAC. At the first meeting in November they will bring a formal discussion on putting together a referendum. They will discuss what to include in said referendum or not, put our arms around what the referendum will look like if there is one; hopefully take a motion that night on whether or not to proceed on that rough picture. It is not a vote to put it out yet but it is awfully close. The next piece on the schedule is to have a public meeting to discuss it in the middle of November. Then roughly at the end of November we will vote on whether or not to proceed with the bond. If the answer is yes, the month of December would be spent with our staff, as well as consultants, to put together actual documents with a target date of roughly the beginning of February as a public vote or not. Mr. O'Meara then proceeded to read the list of questions and stated that if anyone else had any other questions to add, please get them to Mr. Giamundo, Ms. Palma, or him.

Ms. Palma noted that Curriculum Committee put forth their mission statement and stated that they highlighted some ideas for agenda topics that they will finalize as they have their first meeting coming up this week.

Ms. Palma stated that the Policy Committee also put together some lists of policy items that were discussed last year, as well as the fact that they still have a mission there. Ms. Palma said that she would be in touch with Mr. Jeff Kehl to set up a time for him to meet with the Policy Committee to touch on some of the topics that they will look for his legal feedback on.

Ms. Hublard Hershman noted that the Finance Committee has a meeting on Friday morning to put together a preliminary mission statement.

Ms. Hart stated that they have put together the mission statement for the Kindergarten CAC, which she passed around for everyone to read. Ms. Hart

Board Member Reports:

(continued)

mentioned that there was one question that came up and she asked if it could be asked of legal counsel and the Policy Committee. The question was whether or not we could have parents sign off not to receive every single policy. Ms. Hart said they wanted to check as to whether or not it would be legal if the policies were available on the internet. In that respect, they would not have to hand out a Code of Conduct to every parent, every year. Because we do have it posted, so long as the parents sign that they knew where to get the information and then they could have a hard copy if they wanted one.

Superintendent's Report:

Dr. Litchka stated that he had a number of things to share. In both schools, students are involved in a lot of efforts to help with the relief of the Hurricane victims. The high school is being led by the National Honor Society, Student Council, and Leaders Club. At the middle school level, the student forum will be selling mardi-gras beads donated by the PTO. There are also activities going on as well at Pequenaconck Elementary School.

Next, he stated that the Superintendents met last week, and there are a number of national and state efforts that are going on as well. At the upcoming state conference on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, we will be discussing the regional efforts to help out the victims of not only Katrina but Rita, as well.

Earlier this week, Ms. Hublard Hershman and other members of the Advocates for the Arts met with him to discuss plans for the celebration of the renovation of the auditorium. They penciled in a rough date of November 30 for this celebration. We will get more information out once everything has been finalized. It will be a celebration of giving and receiving, plus the collaboration of putting together student performances. It is going to be an evening of celebration, recognition, and thanks. Dr. Litchka stated that he is meeting on Friday with the music teachers and the principal at the high school level and then with the staff at the elementary school. Circle your calendar and we certainly will get you more information.

Dr. Litchka went on to report that there had been a meeting this week with the District-Wide Safety Team. Every year we have to review our district safety plan for the district. We are going to start meeting and reviewing the whole safety plan and the crisis management plans as well. Dr. Litchka mentioned that we need a Board member on the committee. Ms. Martell and Mr. O'Meara will be added to the committee.

This week Dr. Litchka had the opportunity to meet with one of the town board members and was reminded that our Board of Education and the Town Board were going to get together and have a joint meeting this year. Ms. Palma stated that there had been a request from one of the candidates to meet with the Board. At a previous Board meeting we had some discussion on this and it was decided that we would wait until after the election process to put that on as an Agenda item. We are having a presentation in October with regards to the tax apportionment. Ms. Palma mentioned that she had extended an invitation to Mr. Sy Globerman to attend that Board meeting as well.

Dr. Litchka made an announcement about Homecoming, the bad news was JFK could not play at our soccer game that was scheduled for 2:00 p.m. So, we are going to have our first-ever night athletic event outside. Next Friday

Superintendent's Report:
(continued)

starting at 5:00 p.m. is the community celebration and Pep Rally, recognizing athletes around 7:00 p.m. Starting about 8:15 p.m. we will have lights on the soccer field, which are going to be paid for mostly by the Boosters.

As mentioned earlier, Dr. Litchka will be going to the state Superintendents Conference on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday; he is on the House of Delegates. First meeting is at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday. Some of the topics that are going to be discussed are surging fuel prices, update on state budget outlook, as well as school finance reform.

Dr. Litchka stated that Ms. Martell, Mr. Giamundo, Ms. Hauser and he will be attending an event sponsored by the Westchester-Putnam School Boards Association tomorrow night. There will be an update from the lawyer who represents the New York State School Boards Association on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and its implication on school districts.

In addition, prior to this event, Dr. Litchka will be going to SUNY New Paltz to attend an event honoring Mr. John Vassak. On October 19th John Vassak will be honored by the Mid-Hudson School Study Council at Anthony's Pier 9 in New Windsor. He mentioned that there had been some discussion as to changing the date of the next Board meeting. He added that if the Board meeting is changed to October 20th, we would be able to attend this event.

Ms. Palma noted that they would come back to calendar later in the meeting.

Dr. Litchka extended a warm welcome to Mr. Ken Waldron, our new Director of School Facilities, Operations, Maintenance, and Transportation.

Ms. Jennifer Wilson, our Technology Director through the RIC will be coming on board next Wednesday.

Update on Gasoline - Ms. Sylvia Fassler-Wallach

We talked about the gasoline prices at the Audit Committee meeting. The forecast in gasoline prices is having an effect on everything, not just the cost of gasoline. We encumbered an additional \$250,000.00; we took it from every code to hold the money so that it could not be spent.

Some districts are putting a freeze on all spending; this might be something to talk about. Ms. Palma requested information on the type of consumption historically that we have had in the past; gallons and the pricing from last year versus current so that we can get a little analysis done. Just to reiterate, Ms. Fassler-Wallach stated that the increase is not just on fuel prices, every delivery that we get, every food bill, paper delivery, etc. has a fuel surcharge added to it. Ms. Palma suggested to Ms. Fassler-Wallach that, if after the analysis is done, she feels that a freeze on spending is the right way to go, please feel free to make that recommendation.

Discussion Items:

(Please note that discussion items one and two were switched on the Agenda.)

Mold - Dr. Peter R. Litchka

Dr. Litchka proceeded to provide the Board with an update on our mold issue in the middle school/high school. On the first day of school with students, September 7th, we were informed that there was mold throughout the school.

Discussion Items:

(continued)

(Please note that discussion items one and two were switched on the Agenda.)

Ms. Fassler-Wallach made contact with an environmental group to come in that day and take a look at it. On that Friday they sent a report to me, which was in turn provided to the Board.

On September 13th we also had a representative from BOCES who oversees this to come in. We walked around and he concurred with the first report. On September 15th, at the monthly meeting of the Superintendents, Dr. Litchka asked who else has had problems with mold. He received a list and will be working with them on how they resolved this issue if it is similar to the issues that we have had. Last Saturday Dr. Litchka approved overtime for two (2) custodians to come in and identify the mold, clean it and monitor it. On September 20th we had another meeting with two representatives from TBS, which does a lot of our HVAC work, Ken Waldron, Pat Cyganovich, and Nick Lamberti from BOCES, were all present. We began talking about how we could resolve this, the cause of it, what we can do now, and what can we do for the long haul. It seems to me that the early indications is that we may have a leaky roof in the middle school wing. The HVAC system, particularly in the library, is not working properly. We have had a lot of damage to books in the library. This weekend on Saturday, Ken and a couple of his workers, along with our librarian are coming in to catalog all the books that have been affected by the mold. Ms. Fassler-Wallach is going to look into the insurance piece of it.

Two things that are being suggested to us are:

- get an infra-red scan of the roof
- bring the HVAC people in and take a good hard look at all the air conditioning units to see if they are running properly

Ms. Palma asked that the Board receive a monthly status checkpoint, monthly summary in their packets and then come back to them on a quarterly basis and give them an update in terms of what you are seeing and the development of your maintenance plan. Dr. Litchka suggested that perhaps we could put Ken on the Agenda at the first Board meeting every month to do an update on facilities, maintenance, etc.

Citizens' Advisory Committees

Ms. Palma mentioned that we are having our Roundtable discussion on October 6th. The Board is going to prepare mission statements and items of concentration in preparation for that particular meeting. The mission statements will be available to everyone on the evening of the meeting. The goal would be to get participants to join the committees. Dr. Litchka asked that his name be removed as Administrator on the Technology CAC and that Ms. Jennifer Wilson be added. Mr. O'Meara mentioned that for the Facilities and Fields CAC, Mr. Giamundo is listed as the chairperson and the Mr. Ken Waldron should be the chairperson for that committee.

Action Items:

Consent Agenda

On a motion made by Ms. Hublard Hershman, seconded by Mr. O'Meara and carried 7-0, the Board approved the Consent Agenda as stated, in accordance

Action Items:
(continued)

with the following:

Appointments

Administrative

Sylvia Fassler-Wallach, probationary appointment (thirty-two [32] weeks remaining), Business Manager, effective September 26, 2005, at current salary

Non-Instructional

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education authorizes the extension of the agreement for the 2005-2006 fiscal year for the legal services of Kehl, Katzive & Simon, LLP, pursuant to the firm's letter of proposal dated June 20, 2005 at an hourly rate of \$228.00; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this resolution take effect immediately.

Nancy Brooks, emergency conditional probationary appointment, 4.5 hours per day, food service worker, Step 1, CSEA cafeteria scale, effective September 14, 2005

Joel Cassidy, Co-Advisor, VAASA

Bill Fischer, Coach, JV Boys Soccer

Linda Heckman, Coach, JV Volleyball

Stacy O'Donnell, Co-Advisor, VAASA

Amendments

RESOLVED, that the following resolution dated August 17, 2005, be amended to revise the personnel appointment listed hereunder, effective September 1, 2005 through December 1, 2005, as follows:

Patrice E. Milillo from Step 1, Lane A to Step 1, Lane D

and, be it further

RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately.

RESOLVED, that the following resolution dated July 5, 2005, be amended to revise the personnel appointment listed hereunder, effective September 1, 2005, as follows:

Elizabeth Loughran from a salary of \$80,628.00 to a salary of \$80,440.52
and, be it further

RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately.

RESOLVED, that the following resolution dated July 5, 2005, be amended to revise the personnel appointment listed hereunder, effective for the 2005-2006 school year, as follows:

Megan DeVito, Team Leader-First Grade Pequenakonck Elementary School
and, be it further

RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately.

Ms. Hublard Hershman extended her congratulations to Sylvia.

On a motion made by Ms. Hublard Hershman, seconded by Mr. O'Meara and carried 7-0, the Board approved the following:

Authorization to increase the Reserve for Tax Certiorari Fund by \$124,268.69 for 2005-2006

Action Items:

(continued)

**Comments on Items not
on the Agenda:**

Mr. Tom Pedane was recognized. He noted that a lot of people have spent a lot of time working on renovating the auditorium. He stated that he was very pleased to see that a lot of things have occurred there. He then mentioned that he was curious about the capstones back where the handicapped zones are. He suggested that someone should take a look at this work. He then reiterated that he was very pleased with the renovations in the auditorium, it looks terrific. It was stated that the company would not be paid until the work had been fixed to our satisfaction.

None at this time.

Old Business:

New Business:

Mr. Giamundo stated that he would like to propose that the Board think about moving into executive session at the end of their meetings; the community should not be inconvenienced by the Board. He also proposed a possibility of having Executive Session on Saturdays. He then suggested that perhaps something to aim toward is to develop a cap on the length of the meetings. If we want to increase participation from the community, we need to think about changing the procedures of our meetings.

No need for executive session at this time.

On a motion made by Ms. Hublard Hershman, seconded by Mr. O'Meara and carried 7-0, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

**Consideration of Executive
Session:**

Respectfully submitted,

Adjournment:

Marsha S. Freer, District Clerk

