

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

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, June 7, 2006**

A Special Meeting of the Board of Education of the North Salem Central School District of North Salem, New York, was held on Wednesday, June 7, 2006, in the Pequenaconck Elementary School Multipurpose Room following an executive session and a reception to honor. There being a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at **9:00** p.m. by Ms. Carla Palma.

Board

Members:

Douglas
Giamundo
Hart
Hershman
Martell
O'Meara
Palma

Present:

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

Also Present:

Dr. Peter R. Litchka, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Michael Courtney, Assistant Superintendent
Ms. Mary Jo Hauser, Assistant Superintendent
Ms. Sylvia Fassler-Wallach, Director of Finance
Dr. Patricia Cyganovich, Principal Middle/High School
Mrs. Roberta Reiner, Principal of PQ
Mr. Henry Sassone, Director of Physical Education
Barbara Lavrakas, Asst. Principal of PQ
Community and staff members
Student Representative: Leigh Smadbeck

Absent:

Mr. John O'Meara

Absent:

Reconvene to Public Session: Ms. Carla Palma called the meeting to order at 9:00 PM

Pledge of Allegiance:

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Ms. Carla Palma welcomed all present. This is a regular meeting.

Student Representative: Leigh Smadbeck, a Senior, is graduating this year. We want to thank her for her contribution as a student volunteer to the board.

Chris Dos Santos is not here today because he is doing his Science Research Presentation.

BOARD REPORTS

Board of Education has been interviewing for an interim superintendent and should be ready to make an announcement in the next few days.

On Thursday, May 11th, Paul Giamundo and Marie Martell attended an Education Forum with Richard Mills the Commissioner of the Education Department and Linda Sanford, Senior Vice-President at IBM and Chair of the Business Council of NYS. Commissioner Mills spoke about his recent visit to China. He spoke about how we are losing high skilled high pay jobs overseas. 14 million jobs will not be filled. Innovation will keep us ahead of the curve in New York. Technology is the future – an analogy was given of how you were able to open the hood of a car and see what was wrong with it, today everything is computerized. We must continue to move forward with technology so our students are better prepared for the working environment.

June 20th, per Dr. Litchka, is very important. Everyone come out and vote.

Ms. Carla Palma: Come out and execute your legal right to vote.

NUTRITION COMMITTEE

Teal Stamm: I am very concerned about the health and well-being of our children. 30-40% of all children born in 2000 will develop type 2 diabetes. We demand the best for our children, so why not demand the best food for our children at school. We should do this sooner rather than later. Many of the foods our children consume daily are not only void of nutrition but contribute to health problems. Children are developing abdominal fat as young as the age of 6. Highly processed foods are not found in nature; including artificial colors, artificial sweeteners, partially hydrogenated fats, trans-fats. These “fake” foods are causing so many of the illnesses we deal with every day. They can be cheaper than fresh foods. We are spending more to treat disease caused by poor nutrition than it would cost to purchase the better foods. Everything children eat goes into every cell of their bodies. It affects their behavior, academic performance, ability to focus and attitudes. We need to provide foods to our children that nourish them. The school district is responsible for the foods our children consume during the day.

Ms. Diane Balch: Co-chair of health and nutrition committee: we have a wellness policy that needs to be in place by fall. Page 8 of the Wellness handout. The law requires that we have a board member involved, a parent involved, students and teachers involved in this matter.

This overview could be used as a guideline. There would be less food coloring, less sugar and sweeteners, no hydrogenated fats, more fruits and vegetables.

I am handing out the Katonah-Lewisboro wellness policy. We probably will be using the same food company as they use. Other nearby school districts have detailed plans for healthy foods. We need to try to have this in place by fall.

We have over 250 signatures on a petition for healthy foods. The Westchester coalition for better school foods provided this handout.

Mr. Michael Moore: There was passion at the meeting for getting the document

created. We are concerned that the document is being diluted by legal consultants deleting items. Nothing is more important than they are well-fed. Without good nutrition they can't perform well. Our committee is small and growing. Everyone has been very helpful, but there needs to be a real effort to get this document together and make sure it has some punch. We have to stay on top of the new company so it doesn't trickle back. Let's communicate better and let's take care of these kids.

Ms. Carla Palma: The nutrition committee is very important to the school. Everybody wants to do the right thing. The board is required to put a document in place. I would suggest that we take another look at it. If it is not quite in the place we want it to be, we can always amend it. We can continue it as a work in process.

Mr. Michael Moore: We have good people out there that are willing to do whatever it takes.

Ms. Diane Balch: The PQ kids are going through the lunch line, rushing through lunch and then getting back in line to buy snack. There are grants available if you have clear plans for improving the food. Kids will eat good food if presented as fun food.

Ms. Susan Merims: consultant: Some districts say this is what you will and will not serve. Others have practices and guidelines. The document from the nutrition: district stress lower fat foods, no high fructose corn syrup, fiber rich grains, more fruits and vegetables. A lot of things you are asking for might show up in the food service contract for next year. You may not find available some of the products you would like to serve. Aramark has a farm-to-school program.

Parent: who is deciding on what foods are being served in the school? This whole idea of flexibility blows my mind. If you put fruits and vegetables next to potato chips, they will pick the chips.

Ms. Susan Merims: School lunch programs must be self-sustaining by law. This is just the beginning; If given the opportunity to take salad, some will take it and others will imitate them.

Dr. Litchka: this document must be a living document that can change over time. There is a lot of concern among superintendents that if we make the rules too strict that we will lock ourselves in. This is a learning process. We all need to be educated. We all need to change a little at a time. When we put this policy together, the committee itself really wanted to make it flexible. We wanted to include our staff as well. If we are all doing wellness together, we can make a significant difference in the lives of our children and adults. The committee, including students, teachers, parents administrators and board members, will be making a presentation to the board twice a year. The policy must be workable and doable. We are heading in the right direction and can make changes along the way.

Ms. Diane Balch: Phasing things in is going to be difficult. It includes fizzling

out. It might be better with a new food service company to make all the changes up front. The speakers at the Stone Barnes program insisted that we have to ask for the things we want from the food service providers.

Teal Stamm: The statistics show that this generation of children will not outlive their parents because they are developing abdominal fat, diabetes and plaque in their arteries and hearts. Research on line has shown me resources that will help us find farms and other providers that can do what we want.

Ms. Diane Balch: Some of the districts are even demanding organic milk.

Mr. Brown: Nobody on the school board wants trans fats in food, but doesn't want to be painted into a corner. If we put gram by gram and ounce by ounce into the policy, it requires 3 readings (6 weeks) before it can be enacted.

Ms. Carla Palma: What role does the food service manager have in making sure that the foods are appropriate.

Ms. Susan Merims: If you want to serve anything that is not listed, we need contents and cost. Organic milk, for example, will cost more than 40 cents. We want recipes. No peanut butter in Thai noodles because someone might be allergic to peanuts. Food service has to be profitable: pay for equipment, repairs.

Ms. Diane Balch: We think the Katonah packet is more extreme. There are a lot of children who are sensitive to food additives. It can cause hyperactivity. I think that additives should not be available in our schools.

Ms. Susan Merims:: I go to a food show and there are 25 vendors selling water with sweeteners.

Parent: Three years is too long for my boys to be going through the process. If people are not happy with it they can pack their lunches. It needs to happen and it needs to happen now. How is the food service company selected? It is a bid based on a document. Who is choosing the food?

Ms. Susan Merims:: The wellness policy committee makes that decision. Only one of four companies invited to bid chose to submit one. This company is the same as the one that provides for Katonah-Lewisboro.

Student: I want to hear what other board members have to say.

Ms. Lisa Douglas: I agree that you don't want trans-fats in K-12, my concern is the 7-12th graders on sport teams are going to need a soda. That is my opinion. They are running around and expelling a lot more energy.

Student: I think moderation is the key. Students will get used to it. The school has a responsibility to provide really healthy foods. If a school can take away a students 5th amendment rights for the good of the school, changing the food

service should be easy.

Ms. Alison Hublard Hershman: I agree with the wellness committee. If you offer better choices they will be selecting better choices, but they always have an option.

Ms. Marie Martell: I am concerned about the high school-age. My student was in school from 7:30 – 5:30 today. There needs to be something in the vending machine to get them through the day and after school. The school is just one avenue. If it doesn't look or taste good, the kids won't eat it.

Mr. Paul Giamundo: I went with Diane, Dr. Michael Courtney, Ms. Sylvia Fassler-Wallach and a few other people to John Jay. It was a good setting. Even a high school student would be happy with it. If we can entice students to stay on the campus, it is a safety issue. They mentioned they have whole wheat pasta and fruit drinks with no sweeteners. Diane picked up a container of chocolate milk and said that the sugar level was unacceptable. We are going to have to tweak this document. This is nutrition education. Appropriately train the kids. The closer we get to starting the better it will be.

Parent: what would be the downside to us using the same bid spec as a district we aspire to?

Dr. Litchka: just this evening we have heard a lot of opinions.

Ms. Susan Merims: the bid spec used by Katonah-Lewisboro is 2 years old. This type of bid spec is the type that will be starting now. We do not have a wellness policy as good as theirs. That is what is making the difference for them.

Ms. Carla Palma: Is it possible to work with the vendor and the committee to sit down and go through the bid spec?

Ms. Susan Merims: That was done the day the bid walkthrough was done. I think the vendor's intentions are similar to what you are looking for. They took you to Katonah-Lewisboro because they thought that was an example of what you were looking for. The secondary school will have a deli and salad bar (made-to-order).

Ms. Carla Palma: I feel comfortable that the product we would be getting from the vendor who did bid will be good quality. The vendor does the whole process including the vending machines.

Mr. Paul Giamundo: They will try to get locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables.

Ms. Carla Palma: We give them a price, and they take on the risk. Because they are in this business and can buy by scale they can get better pricing.

Mr. Andrew Brown: Page 6: "The use of food and/or opportunities for physical activities as an incentive in schools will not be encouraged."

Dr. Peter Litchka: Research shows that kids in elementary grades need the recess time. Traditionally, recess has been denied to children who misbehave. We want to discourage this.

Ms. Carla Palma: We do not want to always say if a child is bad, recess is the thing that is going to be taken away.

Mrs. Roberta Reiner: There may be part of a recess used for children who missed part of their school time. There may be recess detention if a child has created safety issues on the playground.

Student: Where is the time in High School besides freshman health for nutrition education?

Dr. Peter Litchka: Create opportunities and a culture that promotes physical activity in students and staff. Are there things before, during or after school that we could do for students and staff?

Ms. Carla Palma: Science curriculum, home economics. The point of the policy is to incorporate wellness and nutrition into the program.

Parent: Is it possible to shut down the vending machines during the lunch period.

Ms. Carla Palma: the HS and MS machines are on timers to prevent the sale of snack foods until half an hour after the last lunch.

The vending machines are privately owned by the school. They were paid for by three parents and a grant from the dairy company. Aramark will stock and maintain the machines. It is a win-win situation. We don't have control over what is in the little peach baskets.

Ms. Carla Palma: the nutrition committee needs to continue meeting and to meet with the new vendor once they are selected.

CAC REPORT ON TECHNOLOGY

Ms. Jennifer Wilson: Ms. Lois Shaw will be giving us a short presentation on technology.

Ms. Shaw: I joined the committee last year before Ms. Wilson. I have seen the last couple of years that there is a relationship between technology and education and technology and business. My family has seen results from technology. My son's fourth grade teacher assigns weekly themes. My son always hated editing, but he loves to cut and paste. Combined with the strong curriculum, the technology has been great.

Ms. Jennifer Wilson: The CAC met 6 times this year. Its philosophy is looking at what is best for the district. We have been focusing on putting together a 5 year long-range technology plan that we hope to have ready by November or December.

**PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

Dr. Michael Courtney

Overall any plan is geared to improving the teaching and learning, Teacher needs, and aligning objectives with NY State. We have a multi-stakeholder committee that comes up with a plan each year. There are approximately 6 strategies:

1. Through professional development team (13 members). They help plan thematic strands throughout the 3 days
2. Collaborative groups meet on district professional development days.
3. Study groups
4. School based activities
5. Thematic activities
6. Putnam/NW teacher center and BOCES

Last year, **Dr. Marcia Tate** did a whole day with us. She returned in April and fine-tuned the strategy

The strands were: reading and writing 5-12, understanding by design K-12; reframing curriculum; technology in the classroom; and understanding the research project, 6-12 teachers.

We do a full evaluation of these strands. All strands came out strongly.

Collaborative learning included behavioral therapy, safe dating relationships, potential field studies; PQ science inquiry, reading fluency, smart boards, full-day kindergarten

School-wide: lots of training on MS elements; PQ balanced literacy and training for the LA and math.

Study Groups: We took advantage of a myriad of workshops through BOCES. A number of our teachers also take workshops at the teachers' center. Quite a bit is offered.

For the money we are using here, I think we get a pretty good bang for our buck. The success of it is the multi-stakeholder process. As you will see at our final strategic planning meeting on curriculum, some of these will be imbedded in that.

Ms. Marie Martell's work with hidden intelligence has been great.

We need to focus more on the social and emotional learning as well. There is a need to look at these issues.

Our theme for next year is beyond the tests, support for the whole student. Jennifer Wilson's wealth of knowledge will offer teachers more technologies. We will be using Atlas curriculum mapping so they can be online. Those guides are behind. We are really activating this.

A big part of the next step will be school improvement planning. Many of the strategies and approaches will be in the plan and some of the different strands will be repeated. Teachers should be implementing the strands into their teaching. More than half of the classes that took Marcia's classes are using her strategies.

Hidden Intelligence: Teachers were provided with spreadsheets to help them ascertain the learning styles for their students. Kaleidoscope will be used in 6-9th grades next year. A lot of the focus this year has been on understanding the new tests, what they will entail, how to score, etc. There has been some interest this year on social and emotional issues and Marcia will be on call for this.

Basically, the attendance of the teachers in all the professional development activities is contractual. They have to do it. Quite a few people are attending at BOCES. I have that information for you to put in your packets

Science curriculum K-12 will be addressed during the summer and implemented in the fall.

This is an opportunity to communicate what the decisions were made, since we don't have a large audience. On May 23 & 24th, the board met on the reductions. On May 30th, we put in place a budget representing almost a 2% reduction off the budget presented to the voters. We hope now that the voters will support this budget.

**2006-2007 BUDGET
HEARING**

Mr. Brown: Thank you for the courage shown in doing this budget.

Goal mutual exchange of ideas with Town of North Salem.

**AGENDA TOPICS FOR
JUNE 14TH JOINT
MEETING WITH TOWN
OF NORTH SALEM**

Ms. Alison Hublard Hershman: Legislative – how often does Town board meet with State Legislators relative to education:

Dr. Peter Litchka: Questions regarding how education is funded in the state of NY

Ms. Carla Palma: Farm exemptions how is this affecting our tax collections for both the schools and town. How often do they consider and validate that the establishments actually qualify

Mr. Paul Giamundo: Tax Services: Certifications procedures

Ms. Carla Palma: North Salem probably has fewer reservoirs than the town. Do they have plans in the books to support us?

Ms. Marie Martell: Dr. Peter Litchka's safety committee results.

Judith Schurmacher (incoming new board member) Designated Shelter status

ACTION ITEMS

A. CONSENT AGENDA:

Tax Refund

Ms. Alison Hublard Hershman made a motion for approval of tax refund; **Ms. Lisa Douglas** seconded it. It was carried unanimously.

Personnel Issues

Personnel recommendations and resignations, retirements: and leaves **Ms. Alison Hublard Hershman** made a motion to accept; **Ms. Lisa Douglas** seconded it.

Accept appointments: **Ms. Lisa Douglas:** Ms. Carla Palma has concerns about gentleman being hired as guidance counselor. Motion to Amend **Ms. Alison Hublard Hershman**, seconded by **Ms. Lisa Douglas:** Tina Nicodemo, Howard Johnson, Patrice Milillo and Eric Pechenko be voted on first; carried unanimously.

Motion to accept Mr. John Davis: **Ms. Lisa Douglas** made motion, **Ms. Marie Martell** seconded.

Ms. Lisa Douglas: He is coming to us highly recommended. Our administrator believes he will be a huge asset to our district. What kind of search was done?

Ms. Mary Jo Hauser: We put it on the web, and chose seven candidates to interview. Mr. Davis was heads above everyone else.

Ms. Carla Palma: When you have a one-year leave replacement it is hard to get experience.

Ms. Mary Jo Hauser: Nobody applied who has retired from such a position with lots of experience.

Mr. Paul Giamundo: I think we have to place our trust in our professionals, but we are going to watch carefully to make sure you (**Ms. Mary Jo Hauser**) have made a good choice. four in favor; one against, appointment carried.

Other:

Ms. Alison Hublard Hershman made a motion to pay ½ compensation for Math Club advisor to Amy Reynolds who substituted for Katie Cammann. **Ms. Lisa Douglas** seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

B. TRANSFER OF FUNDS:

Ms. Alison Hublard Hershman made a motion for approval of transfer of funds for Architect and engineer for roof project; **Ms. Lisa Douglas**, Seconded; unanimously approved

C. BUDGET INCREASE:

Approval of Budget increase: **Ms. Alison Hublard Hershman** made the motion; **Ms. Lisa Douglas** seconded, unanimously carried.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS OF CSE/CPSE

Ms. Alison Hublard Hershman made the motion to approve the recommendations of the CSE/CPSE; **Ms. Lisa Douglas** seconded it. Motion was unanimously carried.

E. WELLNESS POLICY

Alison motion to do first reading for wellness policy; Ms. Lisa Douglas second;

Dr. Peter Litchka: we are not ready to ban cupcakes at this time. We are going to address refreshments at parties and celebrations, also at sporting events. Some people want us to stop on a dime on a lot of this and we are going to need some time to change people's minds on things like hotdogs. This policy was deliberately put together to not put us into a box that we can't get out of quickly.

Ms. Carla Palma: It is one thing if a high schooler brings in cupcakes for friends; it is a different thing if a mother brings in cupcakes for a kindergarten.

Ms. Alison Hublard Hershman: The wellness policy says the school district will make decisions on nutrition guidelines. These issues will be addressed. There will be an implementation policy.

Ms. Marie Martell: Drinking fountains will be available during meals and throughout the day.

ACCEPTANCE OF FOOD SERVICE BID AWARD

Ms. Alison Hublard Hershman made a motion for acceptance of the food service bid. **Ms. Lisa Douglas** Seconded; Award date July 1st. Contract puts cafeteria employees on vendor's payroll effective September 1st. Aramark stipulated only 3 accumulated sick days for these people because some of them have quite a few days. We are agreeing that Aramark will only be on the hook for 3 sick days for the first year. If someone is out sick for more than 3 days, the district will be responsible for the additional accrued sick days for one year. Carried unanimously.

BUDGET ADOPTION

Ms. Alison Hublard Hershman made a motion to adopt the proposed budget; **Ms. Lisa Douglas** seconded it. It was carried unanimously.

FUNDS FROM MUSICALS

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Alison Hublard Hershman: Funds from musical goes back into general fund. We have an opportunity to purchase \$5,000 spotlight for \$2,500. In the future, funds should go back into the auditorium to improve the space.

Ms. Sylvia Fassler-Wallach: These things cannot be bought out of a supply code. There is money in other equipment codes that we could use to buy that. It just won't be the student activities equipment code. It's a matter of logistics.

Ms. Alison Hublard Hershman: Do we want to add this as a separate fund balance item? We may lose them if we wait too long.

Ms. Lisa Douglas made a motion to spend \$2500 for one follow spot and accept gift of second; **Ms. Alison Hublard Hershman** seconded; Carried unanimously

Parent: Discussion and questioning of appointments proposed by professionals; Don't disagree with opinion and then approve it.

ROOF REPAIRS

Ms. Marie Martell: Regarding Roof?

Ms. Sylvia Fassler-Wallach: Once term is complete, if there is enough money to complete the roof by the end of October, there will not need to be a bond. Otherwise it would need a referendum to borrow. \$850,000 would be 4-5%. Exel aid. If project is approved in 06-07, we could still get this money for the roof.

EXIT SURVEYS

Mr. Paul Giamundo:

Do we do an exit survey of the graduating seniors? If there were a very simple survey to give to seniors, tell us about your experience. Another survey could be to the parents, tell us how you feel we did for your children. Third survey a year later to students to see how they felt we prepared them for the first year of college.

Ms. Carla Palma: Decide what questions to ask.

Mr. Paul Giamundo: I think it is something basic we could put together to ask of this years graduates.

Ms. Jennifer Wilson: If you want to set up a survey that will give you qualitative and quantitative information, it will take more than a year.

Mr. Paul Giamundo: wouldn't the rest of the board want to know this?

Dr. Michael Courtney: it is not necessarily statistically valid, but it is not difficult to do. I would be glad to do this.

Mr. Paul Giamundo: even if we don't get 100%, I would like to try this. Regarding the parents, I would like it to say, what did the parents think we did for their graduates?

Ms. Carla Palma: Be sure you get a parent or two to be sure that you are asking questions that they are interested in getting the answers to.

OUTREACH TO COMMUNITY

Mr. Paul Giamundo: Two weeks before the election, Dr. Peter Litchka addressed the senior citizens. They were very impressed that the superintendent would come to them. I would be willing to be a link to their luncheons to keep them informed as my schedule allows. We would start with the seniors. Maybe we could have another board member be a liaison to another group.

GRADUATION

Ms. Marie Martell: is there anyone who is not graduating this year?

Dr. Peter Litchka: I will ask again tomorrow what the status is on kids not graduated.

COMPARISON OF SCORES

Ms. Carla Palma: Can we have the dataset of the exam scores on the tests and the correlation between the final and the exams. Also highlight the special ed students so we can see how they are doing on the standard exams. It was a guidance report from Grace.

SCHOOLS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Ms. Lisa Douglas: I want a list of all the schools (students were) accepted to.

Ms. Alison Hublard Hershman made a motion to go into executive session;
Ms. Lisa Douglas seconded. It was carried unanimously at 12:15 AM