

The regular meeting of the New London Board of Education was held in the Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School Library on August 14, 2008.

PRESENT:

DRAFT

Ms. Elaine Maynard-Adams, Vice President
Dr. Christopher P. Clouet, Superintendent of Schools
Mrs. Susan Connolly
Mrs. Elizabeth Garcia-Gonzalez, Secretary
Mr. Alvin Kinsall, President
Mr. William Morse
Mr. James Pearce

ABSENT:

Mr. Anthony Nolan

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kinsall called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Gerald Luter lead the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. STUDENT AND STAFF PRESENTATION/RECOGNITION

Gerald Luter, a member of the NLHS Graduating Class of 2009, was recognized for participating in the Congressional Page Program in Washington, D.C. for the 2008 Summer Session.

4. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATION

7.2.a. Superintendent's Report

The Board received the Superintendent's Report, as submitted in Exhibit 7.2.a.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dr. David Hayes, Ocean Avenue, New London, referenced the article that appeared in The Day today entitled, "More Legal Bang for the Buck or a Power Grab?" Dr. Hayes stated that Siegel, O'Connor charges significantly higher rates than Conway & Londregan – so some money could be saved. But, is Susan Connolly correct when she stated that the Council is confusing value for price. Dr. Hayes asked if Mrs. Connolly is right when she states that the School Board is a co-equal governing body, and he suggested that this is not true. The reason this is not correct is that the Council has the power to cut the school budget significantly. That is not a battle between equals in that respect. But the Board does have something that some people, including Councilor Pero and Mr. Londregan do not recognize. The Board is not simply another department in the City. The school system is not simply like Public Works, Fire or Police or Finance. Article VI of the City Charter, Administrative Services, Section 43 and 44 establishes departments and department heads with appointment power residing in the City Manager. The Director of Law is appointed by the Council. He or she provides legal advice to all City departments, but the School Board is created by an

entirely separate article – Article XI, and appoints the Superintendent to hire teachers and other employees. Therefore, the school system is not simply another department. When Mr. Londregan says he considers the School Board another department, that is not the equivalent of a formal legal ruling. It is simply a personal opinion – not a legal one. Dr. Hayes suggested that the Board should not waste time wondering what the City might do next. They cannot tell you who to hire, where to buy crayons or tiddlywinks. On a separate note, Dr. Hayes asked if the Board approved hiring 3 more \$90,000 plus bodies. If so, it will certainly get some attention that the Board will not enjoy.

Lindsey Blank, Nathan Hale Street, New London, stated that he was out of state when the Board of Education met on the budget, and he believes paperwork was handed out at that meeting. He went to the New London Public Library, but they did not have a copy of the School Budget. Mr. Blank stated that a copy of the School Budget should be available at the library. He came to the Board of Education to get a copy and was charged \$28.50 which he felt was excessive. It would have been easier if had brought a disk and had the budget downloaded to the disk. He suggested putting the budget – minus the salaries - on the website. In reviewing the budget – under new initiatives – he referenced the replacement of 45 lab tables at BDJMS which are a pending safety issue. Mr. Blank stated that phrases like “which are a pending safety issue” should not be in the budget. He also referenced the section “Capital Non-Recurring Expense Fund” and questioned why the lab tables – which are a safety concern – is a lower priority than a playground for the modulars. Mr. Blank asked if the lab tables are going to be removed and the money left over from last year goes to the playground – what will the kids use for science lab tables? In closing Mr. Blank asked if the Board is going to get the lab tables. If not – what needs to be done to get them?

Sara Chaney, Ann Street, New London, expressed the following concerns:

- a. She had hoped that all of the students who were in the Jennings modulars would be going to the new Jennings School.
- b. She was informed that a chain link fence may be put up around Jennings School. Mrs. Chaney stated that she grew up in this neighborhood and played at Jennings in the summertime. Her children also played at Jennings. She had hoped that children in the neighborhood would continue to be able to use the Jennings School playground. Mrs. Chaney added that she has been here long enough to remember when movies were shown in the summertime on a big screen at Jennings for families and suggested that this might be a nice activity to bring back.
- c. The NLHS Graduation was a circus. When the keynote speaker got up to speak someone should have stopped the ceremony and told the entire audience to “shut up.” Evidently they did not know that they should have given the young man the respect to sit and listen to what he had to say. The ceremony was not for those in the crowd – it was not for her – it was for the graduates. As adults we should have given that young man who was speaking and the graduates more respect that evening. She hopes that in 2009 it will be an event to remember and not what we witnessed at this year’s graduation. There should have been ushers to tell people to turn their cell phones off. The rudeness that evening was absolutely horrendous and no one did anything to stop it. It was a reflection on the City of New London and on the adults in New London – not on the young people. The graduates had a right to glide across the stage and do what they wanted to do. While this was not done when she graduated, Mrs. Chaney stated that this is a part of who kids are today. Next year she asked that the administration have more control and suggested sending a letter home to tell parents and family members that if they are not going to be quiet and respectful then do not bother to come to the graduation ceremony. It simply was not fair to the graduates that evening. There were handicapped people in the back who could not see or hear their children and grandchildren graduate. She asked that next year the administration please take more control and let people know that you will not tolerate such behavior.

Responses to Public Comments:

Ms. Maynard-Adams commented about the Board's Budget on the NLPS' website and advised those in attendance that this was an inaugural effort for the Board to publish an abbreviated budget on the web this year. It was available on the web until several weeks ago and, on advice of legal counsel, it was removed because we are facing yet another referendum. We were advised by legal counsel at the Board's retreat in the spring to remove our budget from the website so that we cannot be accused of using public dollars to promote a political position. While I appreciate Mr. Blanks concerns about locating the budget, sadly there are far more issues involved than simply keeping the public informed about how we spend taxpayers' dollars. Hopefully when we get beyond this referendum we can post the budget on the website again.

Mrs. Garcia-Gonzalez:

- a. Inquired about the 3 new positions Dr. Hayes referenced. Dr. Clouet responded that there are no new positions that the Board is not already aware of and has approved.
- b. Referenced Mrs. Chaney's concerns about putting a fence around Jennings School. Mr. Kinsall responded that the fence that is under consideration will only be around the air conditioning units so that it restricts access to this area and does not become hazardous. If we find there is vandalism then we may need to take extra steps.
- c. Commented that she would like to see us show movies in the summer at Jennings like they do at Ocean Beach.
- d. Agrees that the graduation needs to have those in attendance quiet down. She stated that if you look at the different local stations that show area graduations, there is a big difference. The crowd needs to have respect for the speaker otherwise what is the point of having a speaker if you cannot hear their message for the students.

Mr. Morse asked if it is possible to have juniors act as ushers at the graduation and station them every couple of rows during the ceremony so that we do have a quiet atmosphere for the speaker. Although he is disappointed – he is not totally surprised. He asked that the administration consider using juniors dressed nicely and serving as ushers - using peer pressure may be a way to mitigate the noise. We could then show our appreciation to the participating juniors by giving them a party afterwards.

Mr. Pearce apologized to Mr. Blank for not being able to find a copy of the budget and stated that it would be a good idea to have a copy of the budget available at the library. Regarding charging for the copying of the budget, this is common practice and is done by many organizations.

Mrs. Connolly stated that she agrees with everything Dr. Hayes said. Mrs. Connolly asked Dr. Clouet about the status of the science tables. Dr. Clouet responded that he believes we have a plan where we will buy a few of the science tables next year and then a few more in subsequent years. The dangerous tables have been removed. It is a question of prioritizing during a difficult time.

Mr. Kinsall:

- a. Also commented that charging for copies is a common practice. He stated that as a realtor, when he needs to secure a copy of a title or some other documents, he is charged a \$1 a page to help defray the cost of materials and associated expenses.
- b. Stated that he agrees with Dr. Hayes on all but one point, and that is the Board being "co-equal" with the Council. Mr. Kinsall stated that the Board is, indeed, co-equal with the City Council. There is only thing that the City Council can have any control over and that is the bottom line of our budget. Mr. Kinsall thanked Dr. Hayes for his comments. He added that Dr Hayes' comments solidify what the Board has been saying for the last few months. He is pleased to see the public coming out to address this issue.

6. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Mrs. Connolly,
that the Special meeting minutes of June 26, 2008, be approved, as submitted.

Motion carried, 6 - 0

7. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Mr. Kinsall, seconded by Ms. Maynard-Adams,
that the Board of Education add to its agenda item 7.3.i., the establishment of a mini-bank and an ATM at New London High School.

Motion carried, 6 - 0

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Mr. Kinsall,
that the following items, as set forth on the Consent Agenda for the regular Board of Education meeting of August 14, 2008, be approved or received for the record, unless removed by a Board member or the Superintendent of Schools.

ALL CONSENT ITEMS NOT REMOVED HAVING THE UNANIMOUS SUPPORT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION ARE HEREBY ADOPTED WITH A SINGLE ROLL CALL VOTE.

Motion carried, 6 - 0

7.1. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

7.2. BRIEF INFORMATION AND REPORTS**7.2.g. Board Committees**

- 7.2.g.1. Administration
- 7.2.g.2. Finance
- 7.2.g.3. Personnel/Legal
- 7.2.g.4. School Building and Maintenance/Technology
- 7.2.g.5. Special Services
- 7.2.g.6. Early Childhood

7.3.b. State and Federal Aid Eligibility Determination – 3220/3230

The Board of Education approved the 2008-2009 CSDE Consolidated Grant and authorized the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Clouet, to establish a funds accrual account when the grant is approved, as submitted in Exhibit 7.3.b.

7.3.c. State and Federal Aid Eligibility Determination – 3220/3230

The Board of Education approved the 2008-2009 NLPS 2% ECS Grant and authorized the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Clouet, to establish a funds accrual account when the grant is approved, as submitted in Exhibit 7.3.c.

7.3.d. State and Federal Aid Eligibility Determination – 3220/3230

The Board of Education approved the Carl D. Perkins Grant and authorized the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Clouet, to establish a funds accrual account when the grant is approved, as submitted in Exhibit 7.3.d.

7.3.e. State and Federal Aid Eligibility Determination – 3220/3230

The Board of Education approved the Palmer Fund Grant to Support the Martial Arts or Wushu Programs and authorized the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Clouet, to establish a funds accrual account when the grant is approved, as submitted in Exhibit 7.3.e.

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no Executive Session.

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

It was the consensus of the Board to discuss agenda item 7.3.i. next.

7.3.i. Banking Services for Students

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Mr. Kinsall,
that the Board of Education approve the establishment of a mini-bank and an ATM at New London High School to be installed and operated by the Dime Bank.

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Mr. Kinsall,
to amend the motion to read that the Board of Education approve the concept of establishing a mini-bank and an ATM at New London High School to be installed and operated by Dime Bank pending review of the formal agreement that addresses the concerns of the Board, Dime Bank and NLHS.

Vote on amendment:

Motion carried, 6 - 0

Vote on main motion:

Motion carried, 6 - 0

7.2. BRIEF INFORMATION AND REPORTS**7.2.b. Director of Business and Finance Audit Report and Status of the 07-08 Year-End Closing**

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Mr. Kinsall,
to receive the following reports from the Director of Business and Finance

- Audit Report
- Status of 07-08 Year-End Closing

Motion carried, 6 - 0

7.2.c. Student Discipline Report

Motion by Mrs. Connolly, seconded by Ms. Maynard-Adams,
that the Board of Education receive the Student Discipline Report.

Motion carried, 6 - 0

7.2.d. District Improvement Report

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Mr. Kinsall,
that the Board of Education receive the District Improvement Plan Report for the record.

Motion carried, 6 - 0

7.2.e. Human Resources Report: Staffing Readiness for the opening of school

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Mrs. Connolly,
that the Board receive the Human Resources Report on staffing readiness for the opening of school for the record.

Motion carried, 6 - 0

7.2.f. Operations Report: Status of Jennings and Winthrop Schools transition to new facilities

Motion by Mr. Pearce, seconded by Mrs. Connolly,
that the Board of Education receive the following Operations Reports for the record:

- Status of Jennings and Winthrop Schools transition to new facilities
- Status of the readiness of schools for opening day
- Schedule pre-opening tour for Board members

Motion carried, 6 - 0

7.2.g. Board Committees**7.2.g.7. Curriculum Standards Development and Implementation**

Motion by Mr. Morse, seconded by Ms. Maynard-Adams,
that the Curriculum Standards Development and Implementation Report be received for the record.

It was agreed that the position of Department Chair of World Language, who would be responsible for the middle school and the high school, be put in next year's budget as a new initiative and that it be in line with other department chairs in Schedule D of the NLEA Contract.

Motion carried, 6 - 0

7.3. ACTION ITEMS

7.3.a. Negotiations: Teachers

Motion by Mr. Pearce, seconded by Mrs. Connolly, that the Board of Education approve the Sixth-Year Placement of Susan Cash, as submitted in 7.3.a.

Motion carried, 6 - 0

7.3.f. Policy Adoption – 9311 and Student Attendance – 5113

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Mrs. Connolly, that the Board of Education refer the Student Attendance Policy back to the Policy Committee.

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Mrs. Connolly, to amend the motion to read that the Board of Education refer the Student Attendance Policy back to the Policy Committee and that the Board be provided with the specific proposed language changes by the referring Board member.

Vote on the Amendment:

Motion carried, 6 – 0

Vote on Main Motion:

Motion carried, 6 - 0

7.3.g. Policy Adoption – 93111 – Staff Dress Code Policy

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Mr. Morse, that the Board of Education refer to the Policy Committee consideration of a Staff Dress Code Policy.

Motion carried, 5 – 1

Voting No: Mrs. Connolly

7.3.h. Consolidation of Board of Education's Legal Services and Financial Functions with the City of New London

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Mrs. Connolly, that the Board of Education continue its practice of using Siegel, O'Connor, O'Donnell & Beck, P.C. to represent the Board of Education in all legal matters of the New London Public Schools.

as recommended by the Board's Ad Hoc Committee on Legal Services.

Motion carried, 6 - 0

8. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS AND SETTING OF FUTURE BUSINESS

Mr. Pearce requested the following:

- a. An update on the high school accreditation for the next meeting.
- b. A copy of the Audit Report's Management Letter
- c. A copy of the June 30th financial reports
- d. A report on the CMT and CAPT

Mr. Morse reminded the Board that on September 16th at 4 p.m. there will be a Curriculum Committee meeting and the following items are on the agenda:

- a. A presentation from the new BDJMS Spanish teacher
- b. A presentation on the commPACT school which is known as the Shoreline Academy and located at Winthrop School
- c. A discussion of the elementary core math curriculum

Ms. Maynard-Adams:

- a. Requested the June 30th actual vs. budget numbers.
- b. Reminded the Board that it needs to determine its objectives and establish its budgetary parameters in accordance with the timeline set forth in policy

Mr. Kinsall stated that he will be setting a date for a Policy Committee meeting in September.

Dr. Clouet:

- a. Advised the Board that on August 23rd Miracle Temple is doing a Back-to-School Picnic which will be held on Crystal Avenue.
- b. On August 25th the Board members are invited to join us for our Welcome-Back-to-School activities.
- c. On September 8th the State is doing a virtual ribbon cutting of the commPACT Schools across the state with the National Education Association President in attendance. This will take place in Hartford.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Mrs. Connolly,
that the Board of Education adjourn its meeting.

Motion carried, 6 - 0

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Elizabeth Garcia-Gonzalez
Secretary