

**EAST WINDSOR BOARD OF EDUCATION  
EAST WINDSOR, CONNECTICUT  
SPECIAL MEETING  
April 28, 2014  
EAST WINDSOR HIGH SCHOOL – EWHS Auditorium**

**DRAFT**

**I. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER**

Vice Chairman, W. Schultz called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Vice Chairman, W. Schultz led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. ATTENDANCE**

Vice Chairman W. Schultz, Secretary C. Simonelli, W. Raber, K. Bilodeau, N. DeSousa, S. Morgan, R. Reichle, and Dr. T. Kane Absent: Chairman C. Mickey, Dr. George Michna

Also present, C. DeBarge, L. Slate, E. Keleher, H. Thomas, K. Hellerich, J. Smith, L. Foxx, M. McGee, W. Gage, and community members

**IV. ADDED AGENDA ITEMS**

None

**V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Ms. Dale Nelson, 51 Omelia Road, spoke of alternative cuts to the budget:

- Inquiring as to why the district utilizes the services of a consulting firm and a business manager for financial operations
- Work with unions relative to furloughs
- Administrative furloughs should commence immediately and not wait to be conducted until next year's budget

Dr. Kane informed Ms. Nelson that the information she provided was factually incorrect. The district does not have both a financial consultant and a Business Manager. The district eliminated the business manager position. The financial consultant conducts the roles of a business manager without the need to offer benefits, vacation time, etc.

Ms. Carol Sauerhoefer, 6 Pierce Lane, posed the following statistical questions:

- How many students visit the nurse's office on a daily basis? Duration of their stay?
- How many students require tutoring?
- How many students require a paraprofessional?

She also requested examples as to how the EWMS Nurse's Office is not ADA compliant and what the penalty might be for being non-compliant. Dr. Kane stated the restroom is not handicap accessible; the opening is not wide enough for wheelchair entry. She stated that we have not been penalized by the state for non-compliance relative to accessibility.

**East Windsor Board of Education  
Meeting Minutes – April 28, 2014  
Page 2**

If we had, it would be in the form of freezing grant money as opposed to assessing a monetary fee.

Therese Kowalski, 21 Church Street, posed her concerns over the direct impact the cuts may have on our students and their performance, and the concern of decreased property values as a result. She also has a concern with the cuts being made to positions/staff that work directly with students, and the elimination of the band program.

Dr. Kane stated that none of the layoffs/reductions were made lightly. She also noted if the referendum passes, most of the cuts would not occur. The BOE and Superintendent value the work of all our employees.

Ms. Sarah Andrews, 144 Main Street, stated the need for paraprofessionals as they, along with teachers and administrators, are the lifeline to our students. She commends administration for providing coverage due to layoffs, but is concerned as to what will happen next year.

Dr. Kane clarified that all end-of-year lay-off positions with the exception of the EWHS LPN will return for the start of the next school year if the budget passes in the first referendum.

Ms. Marie DeSousa, 10 Rice Road, stated, with no disrespect, she is concerned that as we approach the end of the school year we already have a deficit. She also inquired on the following:

- Update on the work being conducted on the Broad Brook modular project as she has seen no visible activity or progress
- Reason why lay-offs occurred with the lowest paid employees
- Recommendation to review the “top heavy” higher paid employees
- Inquired if advance notice was received relative to the students moving into the district at the end of the school year
- Additional funding set aside for the Broad Brook modular project
- Asked Board members to consider the use of in-state contractors instead of out-of state contractors for future projects

Dr. Kane stated that the modular project is moving along. The money currently in the budget pays for the rental of the current modular. The current rental agreement is coming to an end, hence the need to move forward. She also stated that all project deadlines have been met and, although the state is understaffed and behind in processing the documentation, the town Committees have worked diligently to move the project forward. We have met all imposed deadlines and the delay is due to the state process.

Ms. Karen Stavolone, 2 Juniper Court, stated her concern that her son is confused as to the elimination of the “Wildcat” program/class.

Kathy Parakilas, 12 Joseph Farm Road, stated her concern with the unemployment cost for the layoff. She inquired if there is state reimbursement available for situations when students move into the district at the end of the year and require special needs. She also stated the need for a contingency plan. Dr. Kane explained the deficit: Three (3)

**Regular Board of Education**  
**Meeting Minutes – April 28, 2014**  
**Page 3**

students requiring special needs services moved into the district. A fourth student moved in and required out-of-district services. Also, we had additional students attending magnet schools. Also noted was the Board's concern with the state funding process.

Kelly Meyer, 46 Highland Avenue, inquired if the lay-offs will be reinstated, should the referendum pass. She also inquired if any other positions were overlooked to be cut as a better plan to the situation. Dr. Kane stated the Broad Brook paras and tutors will be back, as will the Broad Brook LPN (pending a passing referendum vote). Two paras at the middle school will not return if the referendum defaults to the 2%. She noted this was the best possible option. Positions were cut even before going to the BOF for consideration. The state regulations need to change in order to change the funding pattern.

Jason Bowsza, 34 Rye Street, stated that he inquired at Tuesday's BOS meeting if layoffs were inevitable. He was told that is not always the case and that by Wednesday people were already notified. He noted his observation that layoffs occurred to staff that did not make over \$21/hr., and also had a concern with the number of town residents that were included on the layoff list. He also inquired as to how far into the school year the BOE budget has been expended. They were told 80% at Tuesday's BOS meeting when the documentation reflects 96%. His final note was to recommend providing lists and conditions, should it go to 2% and to talk about the good things going on to entice the community to go out and vote. Dr. Kane had no recollection she stated the budget was 80% expended. It is 96.26% expended. The 80% figure was provided by the Town Treasurer; she provided the 96.26% figure.

Chris Rodrigue, 14 Sharon Lane, noted in order to get community support, there needs to be a better explanation of the cuts. She also recommended looking at cutting higher paying salaries, i.e. administrators, so as not to directly impact students. She is disappointed that cuts are being made to drama, sports, etc. These are the only activities students are able to "give back."

**VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: DISCUSSION**

1. FY14 Budget – Dr. Kane noted her discussion with the administrative staff relative to the offer of furlough days from the Classified Union. They did not feel the furloughs would work via a student service perspective. Ms. Foxx reiterated this opinion stating Kelly Services is not always able to cover regular subs on a daily basis and that it would be a continuous struggle to cover additional staff. She also noted the specialized training and skill that is required for some of these positions included in the furlough. (Dr. Kane noted Dr. Tudryn's absence this evening was due to a final exam in the course he teaches.)

Vice Chairman W. Schultz noted the obvious, popular question was why the need to make cuts to those personnel who do not make over \$21/hr.? He noted the positive

changes in curriculum, instruction, and test scores. These changes are driven by the higher paid staff, i.e. academic coaches, administration, etc.

W. Raber noted that this situation is not a “kid problem,” but a “state process problem.” He would like to take the emphasis off of the students.

K. Bilodeau inquired if the sending district had expended its portion of the student cost, why East Windsor also had to absorb the same cost again. She stated that it seems as though the state is double dipping.

2. FY15 Budget - Vice Chairman W. Schultz provided a recap of the discussion on the reductions for the first referendum and the reductions to get to 2%, should the referendum fail, noting each administrator will be taking five (5) furlough days. Dr. Kane commended the administrators on the wonderful job they do for the district. When times are tough, the community looks to cut administrative jobs, instead of teaching jobs. It saddens her that fingers are being pointed to see who is more valuable, instead of working together to pass a referendum.

## **VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Chris Rudolph, 42 North Main Street, spoke to his concern over cutting the lower paying jobs and not addressing the higher paid jobs, i.e. Nurse Leader, and inquired the need for an Assistant Superintendent and Director of Curriculum. Vice Chairman W. Schultz noted the Assistant Superintendent is the Director of Curriculum and that we no longer have someone in the position of Director of Curriculum.

Ms. Marie DeSousa, 10 Rice Road, stated her opinion that Dr. Kane was out of line with the reprimand about the community pointing fingers and also with her statement that furloughs are not feasible. No one wants to see anyone lose their job. Dr. Kane noted it was her intent to share her feelings, not reprimand. It does sadden her. These are hard times and no one takes it lightly. C. Simonelli stated she can't remember a budget time when someone in the public didn't call for cuts to administrative jobs. Those positions are not off the table, but these positions help us become a better system and reach mandates.

Chris Rodrigue, 14 Sharon Lane, commended the effort, but if the costs keep impacting the students, we will continue with deficits. She noted the need to entice students to stay in the district and not transfer to magnet schools. Vice Chairman W. Schultz provided clarification that the district pays \$6,000-\$8,000 per pupil to attend magnet schools. The EW per-pupil expenditure is \$13,000.

L. Suzik, 15 Morris Road, stated she is saddened by our school system more than she has been in past years. She stressed the importance of our teaching staff and the difference

**Regular Board of Education**  
**Meeting Minutes – April 28, 2014**  
**Page 5**

they make in a child's life. She requested that we do what we can to keep our students here in our school system. Dr. Kane informed the community they are able to track district progress on the website. There was wonderful progress at Broad Brook this year compared to last year, there was improvement in 2 grades at the middle school, and increased scores in Math at the high school. It is great to see the hard work of the staff move the district forward.

Jennifer Osborne, Wesley Road, inquired if it was true that we laid off staff and are hiring Kelly Services to cover that staff. Dr. Kane informed her that information was incorrect. She noted all layoffs except those previously noted will return. Ms. Osborne also noted that she thought three IT staff is too much for our district, especially with no new computers at Broad Brook. Dr. Kane shared that we received a grant to provide a 1:1 environment to those students in grades 8, 9, and 10 and also two carts (20 devices each) for students in grades 3 & 4. The IT staff will be busy with the infrastructure, etc., (approximately 390 devices) associated with this process. Dr. Kane also noted the computer lab at Broad Brook has been remodeled for the 1:1 initiative.

Denise Friedman, Windsorville Road, inquired if the Broad Brook library aid would be reinstated. Dr. Kane answered in the affirmative and stated the library aid at the middle school would also be reinstated if the referendum passes.

**VIII. ADJOURN**

On a motion by C. Simonelli, 2<sup>nd</sup> by K. Bilodeau, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 p.m. p.m. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann M. Kalesnik  
Recording Secretary

Catherine Simonelli  
Board Secretary

Approved: