

**EAST WINDSOR BOARD OF EDUCATION
EAST WINDSOR, CONNECTICUT
MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING OF
October 26, 2016
EAST WINDSOR HIGH SCHOOL – Room N4**

I. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

Chair C. Simonelli called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair C. Simonelli led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ATTENDANCE

Chair C. Simonelli, Vice Chair Dr. G. Michna, Secretary R. Reichle, K. Bilodeau, W. Raber, D. Swaim, Dr. T. Kane Absent: N. DeSousa, S. Morgan

Also present: Dr. C. DeBarge, A. Paquette, R. Labrie, BOS Liaison D. Nelson, community members

IV. ADDED AGENDA ITEMS

None

N. DeSousa joined the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

V. MINUTES

On a motion by W. Raber, 2nd by K. Bilodeau, the Board voted to approve the 10/12/16 regular meeting minutes. The vote was unanimous.

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

J. Bowsza, 34 Rye Street, reported Kate Carey-Trull as the Democratic nominee to fill the vacancy on the Board of Education.

C. Witzke, 53 Ameilia Road, on behalf of himself and a group of parents, posed their concern regarding the dwindling retention of students in the district. Dr. Kane requested clarification as to where he obtained the statistics noted in his letter. J. Bowsza noted he may have been the source of the student data. Dr. Kane reported the accurate data of June 9, 2016-October 3, 2016 - 112 students left the district for the following reasons:

- 86 students moved out of East Windsor
- 15 students left to attend magnet schools
- 5 students left to attend private or tech schools
- 1 Choice student returned to Hartford
- 3 students dropped out of school
- 1 student is in India
- 1 student transferred to other PreK

Dr. Kane invited both to attend the upcoming strategic planning meetings.

D. Williams, 8 Hayfield Lane, inquired if there was a breakdown of students moving in-state or out-of-state.

F. Neal, 153 Melrose Road, provided a copy of a letter/petition brought before the Board of Education regarding the process in which Dr. DeBarge was appointed to fill Dr. Kane's

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position upon her retirement. She congratulated Dr. Kane on the announcement of her retirement and stated the content of the letter was no reflection of Dr. DeBarge's competency, but felt short changed with the process. She questioned if BOE policy regarding a superintendent search had been violated. She also stated the need for better communication regarding the positive news in the district. She also noted at the end of the last school year a Presidential Academic Achievement Award was given to her daughter at BBES. She received no call, notice, etc.

Chair C. Simonelli noted searches were conducted in the past with no internal candidate. She also provided confirmation from our attorney that the BOE acted within policy when making the recent superintendent appointment. She shared the reasons for the BOE decision:

- Continuity – atmosphere where nothing could be accomplished would result with problems
- Experience and involvement in process
- Same and continuous district vision
- Simultaneously held the role of interim superintendent and assistant superintendent in an excellent manner
- Clear transition to position of superintendent
- It is their intention to have staff rest assured and provided stability
- BOE was unanimous in decision
- Cost associated with a search could be \$15,000-\$25,000 (without ads). Could conduct a search and be presented with a candidate who looks wonderful on paper, but that is not who you get. Why spend the money when we have a perfect candidate here? We have a gem!

The BOE is wholeheartedly in support of Dr. DeBarge.

Dr. Kane encouraged the public to have a voice through the strategic plan by assisting to create the roadmaps.

Dr. G. Michna inquired if Dr. DeBarge would be willing to provide the opportunity to meet with public to get to know her. He believes the dialogue should continue.

H. Watkins, 14 Amelia Road, works in the school district and made the suggestion to have Dr. DeBarge attend a future BBES "Coffee Hour".

L. Obomalayat, 10 Matthew Lane, noted she had worked in a school setting for 25 years. Although she appreciates the struggle of consistency and the cost and time associated with conducting a search, communication is a concern. There must be a better way to share and communicate the positive aspects of the district.

K. Bilodeau welcomed the public to attend BOE meetings to share their concerns regarding budget cuts by parents noted due to voting and participation. We need the community to support their vote. We need to encourage the community to get out there and vote!

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She also shared the intangible cost of bringing in a new CEO can be 2x their annual salary. Why incur costs if someone here can do this work? Happy to have someone on board with such high caliber.

C. Hermes, 12 Pamela Court, supports the letter presented by F. Neal, on behalf of other parents.

S. Andrews, 144 Main Street and C. Witzke spoke of their positive experience with EWHS.

S. Smith, 7 Cobblestone Drive, noted a 2.36% budget increase from FY15 to FY16. What do we cut if we were to do a \$50,000 search? Cut jobs to conduct a search?

Chair C. Simonelli stated they are within policy regarding the manner in which they made the appointment.

N. DeSousa noted as a Board they will disagree on a lot of things, but this is not one they disagreed on.

D. Swaim stated they interviewed Dr. DeBarge and discussed their needs and expectations. “We had Parcels, now we are getting Belichick!”

Chair C. Simonelli noted the Journal Inquirer did not have information when they printed the article on the appointment.

VII. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

D. Couture was not present at this evening’s meeting due to another commitment.

On a motion by W. Raber, 2nd by K. Bilodeau, the Board voted to take the agenda out of order to discuss Unfinished Business: Discussion: Broad Brook Elementary School Modular Project. The vote was unanimous.

Unfinished Business: Discussion

BBES Modular Project Update:

R. LaBrie informed the BOE of the Building Commission’s issue with the playground mulch because the quantity needed was underestimated. Dr. Kane noted a speedy resolution is being sought between Premiere (the company that handled the playground renovation) and the Building Commission so that we can get our students out on the playground.

R. Labrie also noted his responsibilities in connection with the BBES addition project have come to an end.

K. Bilodeau shared her pleasure working with Rich in this capacity and provided kudos to him for his work on the project.

Chair C. Simonelli, on behalf of the Board, stated they couldn't thank him enough for his work on the project.

Mr. Labrie shared the following highlights:

- Renegotiated the cost of old portables (\$164,000 into contingency)
- \$50,000 credit negotiated with ModSpace
- \$390,000 in contingency to date

VIII. PERSONNEL REPORT

The Board reviewed and discussed the current report provided by L. Slate, Human Resource Manager.

IX. FINANCIAL REPORT

A. Paquette reviewed and discussed the current report provided in Board packets:

- Spending is going according to plan
- Upcoming meeting with Town Treasurer to discuss Food Services reimbursements
- Audit underway
- Monthly meetings with Town continue to prove positive
- Auditors pleased with communication
- Awaiting grant funding

X. CURRICULUM REPORT

On a motion by N. DeSousa, 2nd by K. Bilodeau, the Board voted to bypass the report to the next scheduled date. The vote was unanimous.

XI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: VOTE

Filling a Board Vacancy/New Member – Kate Carey-Trull was present and interested in serving as a new Board member.

The Board took the opportunity to ask their individual questions of Ms. Carey-Trull:

K. Bilodeau asked Ms. Carey-Trull, in her own words, why she was interested in serving on the Board. She noted they were working toward good relationships with each other, appreciation of each other and do not want political influence as to how they go about making decisions.

Ms. Carey-Trull shared the content of her letter and resume provided to the Board.

Chair C. Simonelli inquired if the Board was interested in a vote or required time to digest the nomination.

On a motion by W. Raber, 2nd by K. Bilodeau, the Board voted to nominate Kate Carey-Trull as the new Board member. The vote was unanimous.

K. Carey-Trull left the meeting to be sworn in as the new BOE member. She was sworn in by J. Bowsza in the hall outside N4. She returned to the table upon being sworn in.

XII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: DISCUSSION

Alliance Capital Grant Update: The BOF is putting forth a referendum to pay \$143,000 for the abatement of the windows along the front of BBES. The BOF was misinformed that the BOE was willing and able to pay for the remainder of the cost (approximately \$57K). Since there is no line item in our budget for this expense, we will only be able to replace those windows that can be abated.

- The vestibule is scheduled to be completed this week.
- The air conditioning in the cafeteria and offices is in process.
- The remaining lockers are being installed

The issue with the connection between the 10 unit and the original building is being addressed. The windows involved are being tested for hazardous materials. Once testing is completed the connection will be repaired.

The creation of the new Strategic Plan is scheduled for November 1, 12 and 15. Dr. Kane encouraged the community to participate in the process.

EWPS was awarded a \$5,000 AT&T grant to be used in supporting the transition program at the high school.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS: VOTE

Curriculum Updates:

On a motion from G. Michna, 2nd by N. DeSousa, the curriculum updates were unanimously approved.

XIV. NEW BUSINESS: DISCUSSION

Bus Company Update: Attorney McCann, appointed by the court in the disputed estate of Dick Smyth, is overseeing the company. He expects a final decision on the status of the company after the April 2017 court date.

XV. LIAISONS' REPORTS

None

XVI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

C. Witzke stated he was pleased with his son's experience at the high school.

J. Bowza recognized that both the boys and girls soccer teams are headed to States.

S. Andrews commented that there are 10 students participating in co-op football and that her son is having a positive experience in the program.

S. Smyth inquired if there is a minimum amount of students for the high school accreditation.

XVII. MISCELLANEOUS

Dr. Kane informed the BOE of the BBES winner of the Smoothie contest, Liliana DaCosta. She also informed them of the new “Subway” station and taco bar that will go into effect at the high school.

A holiday vendor fair will be held as part of the Wellness initiative for staff.

XVIII. CORRESPONDENCE

Calendars of Events

XIX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by R. Reichle, 2nd by N. DeSousa, the Board voted to enter into executive session at 9:45 p.m. to discuss the appointment, employment, performance, evaluation, dismissal or the health of a public officer or employee, provided that such individual may require that the discussion be held at an open meeting, and to discuss contract negotiations. The vote was unanimous.

W. Raber left the session at 9:45 p.m.

On a motion by N. DeSousa, 2nd by K. Bilodeau, the Board voted to meet past 10:00 p.m. The vote was unanimous.

The Board came out of executive session at 10:21 p.m.

XX. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by N. DeSousa, 2nd by K. Bilodeau, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:22 p.m. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Christine DeBarge
Recording Secretary

Randi Reichle
Board Secretary