

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2007
GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL, GUILFORD, CONNECTICUT**

1. Call to Order

Chairman Bloss called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. Board of Education members present were Keith Bishop, William Bloss, Cynthia Cartier, Barbara Dudley, Louis Iorio, Alan Meyers, Kathleen Nolan and Ted Zuse. Naomi Migliacci arrived later in the meeting. Administrators present were Tom Forcella, Anne Keene, and Nancy Bishop. Also present were Accounting Manager Linda Trudeau, Director of Technology Kevin Mitchill, and GEA President Rose Dostert.

Action on Minutes of:

1.1 October 10, 2006 (Policy Subcommittee Meeting)

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Dudley and seconded by Chairman Bloss, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of October 10, 2006. Ms. Migliacci was not present for the vote.

1.2 December 11, 2006 (Finance Subcommittee Meeting)

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of December 11, 2006. Ms. Migliacci was not present for the vote.

1.3 December 11, 2006 (Regular Meeting)

Upon a motion made by Dr. Iorio and seconded by Dr. Meyers, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of December 11, 2006. Ms. Migliacci was not present for the vote.

1.4 December 18, 2006 (BOE/BOF Joint Finance Subcommittee Meeting)

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Mr. Zuse, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of December 18, 2006. Ms. Migliacci was not present for the vote.

1.5 December 18, 2006 (Policy Subcommittee Meeting)

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Dudley and seconded by Mr. Bishop, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of December 18, 2006. Ms. Migliacci was not present for the vote.

2. Legislative Update

State Representative Patricia Widlitz, State Senator Ed Meyers and State Representative Deb Heinrich provided a report on education issues at the State level to the Board. Senator Meyers reported that the Governor's education commission has recommended a \$1.2 billion increase in state aid to local communities. Guilford would realize a 75% increase in state aid if the proposal were adopted. The report recommending the increase does not identify sources for the funding. He suggested that members of local Boards of Education, educators and community members would need to come to Hartford to show their support for the proposal.

Senator Meyers stated that the education commission is recommending reducing the special education reimbursement for communities by the state from over 4.5 times the average cost to educate a student in a school system to over 3.5 times the average cost.

Senator Meyers noted that the State is seeking a new Commissioner of Education.

Representative Widlitz expressed her disappointment that the education commission has not identified sources other than increased taxes to fund the \$1.2 billion proposal. She also noted that the reported State surplus does not reflect the money owed for unfunded liability.

Representative Heinrich explained that the legislature is beginning its session with a current services budget meaning that there will be no increases in the budget.

Mr. Zuse asked what the status is on potential funding for the turf field at GHS. Representative Widlitz explained that the bill containing this proposal has been resubmitted this year as it was not voted on in the last legislative session. Representative Heinrich added that even if the bill is passed there will be a lengthy legislative and bonding process to follow.

3. Review and Approval of Expenditures for the Month of December Reviewer for the Month: Bill Bloss

Chairman Bloss reported that expenditures as of December 2006 are 40.22% of the Budget compared to 40.55% in December 2005. He reviewed the following warrants: S120106 totaling \$661,265.74; S121306 totaling \$483,736.98; and S122206 totaling \$438,712.03.

Chairman Bloss noted that Warrant S120106 reflects medical, life and disability insurance payments.

Chairman Bloss noted the following payments on Warrant S121306: a prior year encumbrance to Office Depot in the amount of \$843.21 for file cabinets and a service cart and cabinet with shelves; a payment of \$7,342.30 on page 4 to Pearson Education for Algebra textbooks; a payment of \$4,025.7 on page 7 to School Specialty for markerboards; a payment of \$4,789.30 on page 11 to Wells Fargo Financial Leasing; and a payment of \$1,190.00 on page 12 to Renesslaer at Hartford for a workshop for seven administrators.

On Warrant S122206, Chairman Bloss noted the following payments: a prior year encumbrance to Environmental Transactions for radon testing in the amount of \$6,270.00; a payment to CREC on page 7 in the amount of \$43,242.00 for services for six hearing impaired students; and a payment to CIRMA on page 7 for worker's compensation in the amount of \$39,088.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Cartier and seconded by Mrs. Nolan, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the expenditures for the month of December as presented by Chairman Bloss. Ms. Migliacci was not present for the vote.

4. Public Forum for Topics on the Board Agenda Only (three minute limit)

Dede Colcord asked that the Board consider the needs of the district when determining the Budget. She stated her support of World Language, professional development, security and technology. Mrs. Colcord presented the Board with calendar options supporting her opinion that school should begin after Labor Day. She stated that she did not believe there was enough parent representation on the 2007-08 calendar committee.

Suzanne Carlson stated her support of the 2007-08 calendar including the predetermined graduation date, the day off before Thanksgiving and the school start date prior to Labor Day. Mrs. Carlson expressed her support for the proposed Technology Plan, stating that Guilford is far behind other districts technologically. She urged the Board to support the five year plan.

5. Communications

Chairman Bloss noted receiving a communication from Mrs. Colcord regarding the 2007-2008 school calendar and an additional communication regarding the calendar.

Mr. Bishop noted the Guilford Fund for Education Spelling Bee and stated that the Board will have representatives participating.

6. Student Representatives

None

7. Superintendent's Report

7.1 CTFSF Update

Dr. Forcella reported that Fletcher Thompson will be providing a report on facility needs at GHS and Adams based on input from staff and administration on programming needs.

Dr. Forcella also reported that radon testing was done at several schools and the levels were acceptable with the exception of retesting needed in two classrooms.

7.2 Calvin Leete Project Update

Dr. Forcella reported that bid documents are being created by Fletcher Thompson and will need approval from the Standing Building Committee prior to going out. He noted that it will probably not be feasible to begin any work over the February break.

7.3 Town Demographic Study Update

Chairman Bloss reported that the Board of Selectman has not acted on the bids received for the demographic study. The BOS would like to see the proposals revised to eliminate some of the proposed work to better address the needs of the Town.

7.4 Presentation of Proposed FY 2007-2008 Budget

Dr. Forcella presented a PowerPoint presentation on the 2007-2008 Budget. He outlined the Budget development process explaining that the focus is on student achievement. He explained that the proposed Budget is needs-based, examining the current and future needs at the district and building levels. Dr. Forcella stated that the process has been collaborative including administrators and staff in school buildings and the central office.

Dr. Forcella explained that the initial Budget reflected a 8.3%. After adjustments and some reallocations the proposed Budget is 6.42% higher than the 2006-2007 Budget. He stated that the Budget was developed with the district's mission and vision as its guide.

Dr. Forcella summarized the Budget priorities as technology, professional development, facilities and safety and security.

Dr. Forcella reviewed the items from the Strategic Plan that will be addressed in the Budget. They include the following: the World Language program; a local assessment system; student progress reporting; substitute teacher training; arrival and dismissal times; GPS electronic communication; and an alternative schedule for GHS.

Dr. Forcella reported that enrollments are stable in all schools.

The major impact areas for the Budget reflecting the largest increases include the following areas: salaries; employee benefits; purchased services; capital; and transportation. These areas combine for a total increase of \$2,788,165. Also included in this figure is a decrease of \$79,400 in the categories of supplies and materials and tuition for special education.

Dr. Forcella presented proposed staff changes that resulted from the needs-based process. Proposed are the following reductions: two special education teachers at GHS totaling \$100,000 and two special education para educators at GHS totaling \$30,000. Proposed are the following additions: a math teacher at GHS for \$50,000; a technician at GHS for \$30,000; and a .8 elementary social worker for Leete and Cox for \$54,000.

Dr. Forcella summarized the Budget decreases as follows: special education tuition - \$59,600; staff reductions - \$130,000; interns - \$33,000; heat - \$19,800; textbooks - \$32,000; and legal - \$10,000.

Dr. Forcella detailed items included in purchased services, tuition and supplies and materials. He also detailed site improvements included in Capital as follows: cafeteria windows at Jones for \$50,000; intercom and phone system at Leete for \$40,000; paving at Baldwin and Cox for \$150,000; and control system upgrades for \$70,000.

Dr. Forcella explained that the goal is to increase the BOE capital Budget to avoid bonding all of these projects.

In conclusion, Dr. Forcella reminded the Board and the public about the Budget review process including administrator meetings with the Board on January 17 and public hearings on January 29 and 30. There will be a special meeting for the BOE to approve the Budget on February 5.

8. BOARD AGENDA

8.2 DISCUSS Preliminary 2007-2008 Budget

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Cartier and seconded by Dr. Meyers, the Board voted unanimously in favor of addressing agenda item 8.2 Discuss Preliminary 2007-08 Budget following item 7.4 Presentation of Proposed 2007-08 Budget.

Mrs. Cartier asked if the 2nd grade classes at Guilford Lakes will remain at the same sizes as the current 1st grade classes. Dr. Forcella responded that they will and added that enrollments are steady.

Mrs. Nolan asked if the CTFSF anticipates any projects that will need to be bonded. Dr. Forcella stated that the windows at Adams are the highest priority at a cost of \$600,000. Roof projects have also been identified.

Dr. Iorio asked how large a portion of the overall security plan the four-fold proposed increase is for 2007-2008. Dr. Forcella responded that the proposed increase will include video technology and securing doors with electronic access devices.

Dr. Meyers stated that the Budget has been presented clearly and reflects much hard work on the part of Dr. Forcella and his staff.

Dr. Forcella explained the importance of implementing a Budget that accurately reflects the specific needs for each building.

Mr. Bishop noted that the proposed Budget includes a five-year staffing plan including two security positions in future years. Dr. Forcella explained that there are positions identified for the future including adequate staff to meet the needs of students at GHS, a volunteer coordinator, a language arts facilitator, technology support and additional social workers.

Chairman Bloss requested that Kevin Mitchill present a summary of the Technology Plan at a televised meeting so the public can see it.

Mr. Zuse suggested that the January 22, 2007, Workshop Meeting be televised as the CTFSSF will be presenting their report on Adams and GHS. Chairman Bloss stated that the Board will consider this request.

8.1 ACT ON Personnel Items (exhibit)

Dr. Forcella stated that a committee including members of the maintenance staff, the CTFSSF and administrators interviewed and evaluated candidates for the position of Director of Operations/Facilities vacated by Jim Saisa. He stated that 64 applications were received and nine candidates were interviewed. The candidate recommended for the position is Clifford Gurnham, currently the Associate Director of Plant and Facilities Services for the Town of West Hartford, CT.

Chairman Bloss noted that the exhibit states that Mr. Gurnham is an administrator. Dr. Forcella clarified that his position is supervisory but not that of an administrator.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Cartier and seconded by Mr. Bishop, the Board voted eight in favor of ratifying the appointment of Clifford Gurnham, Director of Operations/Facilities, effective January 16, 2007. Mr. Zuse abstained from the vote.

8.3 ACT ON Request from GEA to Offer an Early Retirement Program

Chairman Bloss explained that the district is currently paying for an early retirement program implemented in 2005. He asked for a motion to act on the GEAs request for an early retirement and there was none.

8.4 ACT ON 2007-2008 School Calendar (exhibit)

Mrs. Dudley explained the process that the calendar committee followed in developing the proposed 2007-2008 school calendar. She explained that the committee included 17 people including staff, administrators, and parents. The committee examined various options and narrowed them down to the most sensible choices. She stated that the committee incorporated four snow days into the calendar to make it possible to predetermine the graduation date and not have the date as vulnerable to make-up days at the end of the school year. The calendar was shared with all of the schools and PTOs for their input.

Dr. Forcella explained that if the four snow days are not used he will determine days to take off, beginning with extending the Memorial Day weekend. Statistically, the district has experienced three to four days per year.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Iorio and seconded by Dr. Meyers, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the 2007-2008 School Calendar.

8.5 ACT ON Recommendations from Policy Subcommittee

Chairman Bloss requested that action on the Policy Subcommittee's recommendations be carried over to the February 12, 2007, Regular Meeting.

Dr. Meyers requested that the Policy Subcommittee review and further discuss item 8.5.1 Revisions to Policy 4116: Appointment and Conditions of Employment.

8.6 RECEIVE for POSSIBLE ACTION Recommendations from Policy Subcommittee

Chairman Bloss requested that discussion and possible action on the recommendations from the Policy Subcommittee be carried over to the February 12, 2006, Regular Meeting.

9. Unfinished Business

None

10. Reports of Committees

Mrs. Cartier reported that the Health Advisory Committee will be meeting on January 9, 2007.

Mr. Bishop reported that the Land Acquisition Committee continues to evaluate potential acquisitions for school facilities.

Ms. Migliacci reported that the Language Arts Committee meets monthly from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. She explained that the committee addresses Language Arts across the curriculum.

11. Public Questions (four minute limit)

None

12. New Business

Mr. Zuse asked the Board to consider including the ventilation upgrade that has been identified for Adams into the 2007-2008 Capital Budget. He stated that since the Board is recommending window replacements at Adams, it would be appropriate to also upgrade the ventilation system.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Migliacci and seconded by Mrs. Cartier, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorri L. Hahn
Clerk to the Board of Education