

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2009
GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY, GUILFORD, CT**

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Bill Bloss called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. Board members present were Bill Bloss, Mary Beeman, Keith Bishop, Barbara Dudley, Lou Iorio, Alan Meyers, Kathleen Nolan, Linda Sanacora and Ted Zuse.

Administrators present were Tom Forcella, Anne Keene, Nancy Bishop, Merry Leventhal, Marc Guarino, and Anne Snurkowski. Also present were Business Administrator Andy Potochney and GEA President Debbi Butler.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Iorio and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to go into Executive Session.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to return to public meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Chairman Bloss announced that tentative agreements have been reached with all bargaining units of the Guilford Public Schools resulting in approximately \$750,000 in savings. He further stated that, as a result of the agreements, no employee layoffs beyond those in the original budget are anticipated.

Dr. Forcella reiterated that all groups, including the Guilford Education Association have agreed to concessions. He noted that the leadership of the GEA has agreed with a proposal that will be brought to the GEA Executive Board and then to the general membership. He noted the approximate concessions agreed to by the other bargaining units as follows: \$26,000 from custodians; \$48,000 from paraeducators and clerical personnel; \$10,000 from non-certified staff and \$33,000 from administrators.

Dr. Forcella stated that all GPS employees have worked together as a team to reach these agreements and concluded that the agreements are fair.

Dr. Forcella stated that, as a result of the tentative agreements, money will be put back into supplies and equipment and the middle school sports programs will remain intact. He noted that the district will still eliminate one bus and consolidate routes. Additional savings will come from approximately \$150,000 in stimulus money via the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, the elimination of \$66,000 in medical payments, reductions in site improvements, \$100,000 in insurance payments and other small line item reductions.

Dr. Forcella reminded the Board and the public that the original budget had already reflected reductions in many line items.

Members of the Board made statements regarding the employee agreements and the upcoming budget referendum on May 19, 2009.

Mr. Zuse expressed his appreciation and respect for all bargaining units and staff.

MINUTES – GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MONDAY, MAY 14, 2009

Mrs. Dudley encouraged the public to keep the energy of the evening going and help to get the vote out on May 19.

Dr. Meyers noted that the ultimate beneficiaries of the acts of GPS employees are the children stating that it “takes a village to raise a child.”

Dr. Iorio thanked everyone involved in the process of reaching the agreements. He stated that the Superintendent formed reasonable and equitable solutions that will hopefully result in a successful referendum. He commended the Board Chair for his work. He saluted the teachers who demanded their voices be heard and the actions of all staff.

Mrs. Sanacora thanked everyone involved and noted that she is proud to be a part of the community.

Mrs. Beeman expressed her gratitude to Dr. Forcella for his work in facilitating the tentative agreements with the various bargaining units.

Chairman Bloss noted the excellent job Guilford does in educating our children for less than the average spending of comparable towns, noting accomplishments including ranking at the top of the State in Math scores, and increasing professional development and technology while reducing class sizes.

Chairman Bloss noted that the proposed budget reflects the largest single year cut and the smallest increase since 1993. He added that if this budget does not pass it will affect every classroom in the district because additional cuts will include positions.

Chairman Bloss stated that the agreements reached by staff and faculty were unprecedented. He urged the public to have confidence in the community.

The following motion was made by Mrs. Nolan, seconded by Dr. Iorio and unanimously approved by the Board:

"I move that the Board authorize the Chairman to enter into written agreements with the following bargaining units: Guilford Education Association to save approximately \$626,000 from the 2009-2010 contractual obligations through a combination of reductions in salary increases and an early retirement program; approximately \$48,000 from paraprofessionals and clerical staff through reductions in salary increases; \$33,000 from administrators through increases in health insurance premiums; and \$26,000 from custodians through reductions in salary increases, also agreeing to exempt each of these bargaining units from layoffs beyond those in the original budget, all subject to voter approval of the proposed 2009-2010 Budget Referendum on May 19, 2009."

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Lorri Hahn
Clerk to the Board of Education