

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING  
MONDAY, JANUARY 10, 2011  
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, Keith Bishop, Bill Bloss, Alan Meyers, Chris Moore, Barbara Dudley, Susan Renner, John Ireland and Ted Zuse. Administrators present were Tom Forcella and Anne Keene. Also present was Business Administrator Andy Potochney and GHS Principal Rick Misenti.

**2. Legislative Update**

State Representative Pat Widlitz and State Senator Ed Meyer provided a legislative update to the Board. Both talked about their commitment to try not to see property taxes increase. Representative Widlitz noted that, while it is early in the state budget process, the hope is to either see slight increases or flat funding for education. Both she and Senator Meyer talked about their commitment to not decreasing the funding and holding the line on the Educational Cost Grant.

Dr. Meyers questioned the variations in reporting standards for certain expenses among towns and boards of education in the area, noting that the lack of consistent standards makes it difficult to make reasonable comparisons between different districts. Representative Widlitz suggested that she would look into this practice.

Dr. Moore asked the legislators how much they thought the reimbursement rate for school construction would drop after June 30, 2011. Representative Widlitz noted that it would be important to have all approvals completed prior to the end of the fiscal year. She added that there has not been any discussion yet on lowering the reimbursement rates.

Mrs. Renner asked about Special Education funding. Representative Widlitz noted that there is no budget yet and wouldn't be able to provide many specific answers. She also offered to come back after February 16.

Chairman Bloss noted the rising cost of health care and asked if there is anything the state can do to help at the local level. Representative Widlitz noted that there is currently a healthcare study.

Mr. Zuse brought up the subject of teachers' pensions. Representative Widlitz assured teachers that the state is obligated to fund the teachers' pensions.

Representative Widlitz noted a recent presentation in Hartford that discussed legal drugs that may be harmful to youth including Salvia, K-2, and Liquid Gold. These drugs have hallucinogenic and other negative effects when used.

Senator Meyers added that there are two marijuana bills currently being considered, one for medical marijuana and one to decriminalize the sale or possession of less than ounce.

**3. Action on Minutes of:**

**3.1 December 13, 2010 (Finance Subcommittee)**

**3.2 December 13, 2010 (Regular Meeting)**

**3.3 December 15, 2010 (Special Meeting)**

## MINUTES – GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Monday, January 10, 2011

### **3.4 December 20, 2010 (Special Meeting: BOE/BOF Finance Committees)**

### **3.5 December 29, 2010 (Facilities Subcommittee)**

Chairman Bloss noted that the Board decided at their recent retreat to only vote on minutes where meetings were attended by the complete Board. Individual subcommittee meetings will be approved during those committee meetings.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Dudley and seconded by Dr. Meyers, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of December 13, 2010 (Regular Meeting) and December 15, 2010 (Special Meeting) with changes to be noted including an expanded explanation of the terms of the GEA contract in the December 13, 2010 minutes and the addition of Barbara Dudley to the December 15, 2010, meeting.

Chairman Bloss requested that more detail on the GEA Contract be included in the minutes from December. The following is a more detailed description of the terms of the GEA Contract for Item 8.6 of the December 13, 2010, Regular Board Meeting:

### **SUMMARY OF CONTRACT WITH GUILFORD EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**

1. **TERM:** July 1, 2011-August 30, 2014
2. **GENERAL WAGE INCREASE FOR ALL TEACHERS:** 0.9% in year one, 0.0% in year two, 0.0% in year three
3. **FOR TEACHERS AT TOP STEP** (18+ years of experience, approximately one-third of faculty):
  - a. Year One: Apart from the 0.9% general wage increase in year one, as noted above, there will be no additional increase.
  - b. Year Two: Wage increase of 0.5% in year two
  - c. Year Three: Wage increase of 0.5% in year three.
  - d. Summary: The total increase for a teacher at top step is 1.9% over three years
4. **FOR TEACHERS NOT AT TOP STEP**
  - a. Year One: Apart from the 0.9% general wage increase in year one, as noted above, there will be no additional increase in year one
  - b. Year Two: Step increases will be provided in year two (2.54% cost to the district)
  - c. Year Three: Step increases will be provided in year three (2.22% cost to the district)
  - d. One year will be added between certain steps, leading to one additional year to reach top step
  - e. Summary: The total increase for a teacher with less than 18 years of experience will be 5.66% over the three years of the contract.
5. **HEALTH BENEFITS**
  - a. Co-pays for doctor and hospital visits will increase in years one and two for all teachers
  - b. Premium cost share will increase in years two and three, by 1% each year (18% by year three) for all teachers
  - c. Teachers will have an opt-out provision, paying teachers \$2000-4000 depending on plan to waive health benefits
6. **TOTAL IMPACT TO DISTRICT**

Counting the general wage increase in year one, the salary increases to teachers at top step in

## MINUTES – GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Monday, January 10, 2011

years two and three, and step movement in years two and three, the total increase in this contract over its three years would be 6.14% greater than our current fiscal year, not counting savings from increased co-pays, premium cost share, or teachers opting out of health benefits coverage.

#### **4. Review and Approval of Expenditures for the Month of December Reviewer for the Month: Mary Beeman**

Dr. Meyers presented the expenditures in Mrs. Beeman's absence.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to approve the expenditures for the month of December as presented by Dr. Meyers.

#### **5. Public Forum for Topics on Board Agenda Only (three minute limit)**

Diane Stockmann of the Food Service Department referenced the food service action plan that was discussed at the Finance Subcommittee meeting prior to this meeting. She stated that the food service workers were interested in seeing the plan. Mrs. Stockmann expressed concern on behalf of the Food Service workers that their department is held more accountable for their health insurance expenses than other Guilford Public Schools employees or departments.

Dr. Forcella noted that Food Service is a revenue-generating department.

Dr. Moore noted that the study of the GPS Food Service Department from the Rochelle Group was encouraging and provides Guilford the opportunity to enjoy comparable results as other school districts.

Dr. Meyers assured Mrs. Stockmann that the Board and the food service workers are not adversaries and that everyone should work together.

#### **6. Communications**

None

#### **7. Student Representatives**

Jackie and Jamie DesRosier reported on winter sports, Unity Week, Theatre Arts, and midterms at GHS. They noted a successful food drive and blood drive. The students noted that GHS faculty are participating in Learning Walks. They stated that students and Dr. Meyers would be meeting with local pediatricians on January 27 to discuss the results of the Asset Survey and possible ways for them to help in the asset-building process.

#### **8. Superintendent's Report**

##### **8.1 2011-12 Budget Presentation**

Dr. Forcella presented a PowerPoint presentation to the Board outlining the proposed 2011-12 Budget. He explained that the Budget development process focused on student learning and instruction and included building level and central office reviews, incorporated the district's mission, vision and goals and established the priorities of instruction and classroom instruction.

Dr. Forcella further explained the three main priorities of the Budget as Instruction and Classrooms, Professional Development, and Implementation of the Principles of Learning.

## MINUTES – GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Monday, January 10, 2011

Dr. Forcella noted that enrollments will remain stable next year. He also noted major impact areas to the 2011-12 Budget including salaries, benefits, tuition and heat, representing \$1,045,540 of the total proposed \$1,150,160 increase. He noted that the proposed increase is 2.3% over the current year.

Dr. Forcella spoke about the “Bright Connections” program for children on the autism spectrum that has been considered as an in-house program for Guilford schools. He explained that while it he believes it is an excellent program, due to the initial implementation cost – between \$350,000 and \$446,267 - and the increase the program would have on the budget from approximately 2.3% to 3%, he does not believe this is the right year to begin the program.

Dr. Forcella explained that the program will reduce outplacements, eliminate lengthy bus rides for students, and provide a high quality education in Guilford for students with autism. But the program will take five to ten years to break even and begin to become cost effective for the district and with the current economic conditions he does not recommend initiating the program now.

Dr. Forcella also noted a proposed reduction in staff of 3.4 FTE bringing the two-year total in staff reductions to 17.4 FTE.

Dr. Forcella noted the following savings in the Budget:

- Salaries – 1.01% increase vs. 3.05% in current year
- Electricity - \$39,000 due to contract extension and efficiency efforts
- Building Supplies - \$10,427 from three years of reductions
- Transportation - \$80,200 due to cost containment in Special Education

Dr. Forcella noted that there will also be potential bond issues to be discussed.

Dr. Forcella stated that the \$51,172,123 proposed 2011-12 Budget will be voted on by the Board of Education on January 31, 2011. The Board of Finance will then receive the Budget and the final Town and Education Budget will be voted on at an April 12, 2011, referendum.

Mr. Zuse suggested that the public hearings on the Budget on January 24 and 25 should be publicized including press releases to the local newspapers.

Board members discussed the autism program. Dr. Meyers stated that he was saddened that the program could not be included in next year’s Budget and asked if the program could possibly be regionalized.

Dr. Forcella explained that neighboring towns including Branford and Madison already have programs and that it might be possible, once Guilford has an autism program, that other towns might come to ours for programs and services.

Continued discussions included possibly starting a program mid-year, and starting a program on a smaller scale.

Mr. Zuse stated that he believes it makes sense to spend the money now particularly if there is data available to support that the program will work.

Chairman Bloss restated that it will take a minimum of five years to realize a return on the investment.

The Board noted proposed budget increases in other towns in Connecticut and stated that Guilford is within the average or below many of those preliminary increases.

### **8.2 2011-12 Budget Timeline (exhibit)**

## MINUTES – GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Monday, January 10, 2011

Chairman Bloss reviewed the Budget Timeline which is available on the Guilford Public Schools website, noting Board of Education Public Hearings on January 24 and 25, that the Board will approve the proposed Budget on January 31 and present it to the Board of Finance on February 17. The Town Budget Referendum will take place on April 12, 2011.

### **8.3 State of the Schools Update**

Dr. Forcella noted that the fourth annual State of the Schools address will take place at Guilford High School on Thursday, February 10 at 7 p.m.

### **8.4 Recommendations: Food Service Department**

Dr. Forcella reviewed the recommended plan for the Food Service Department. He summarized the plan, goals and timeline. He noted that the plan will address menu writing, food production, marketing and merchandising, employee issues including training, facilities and equipment, and accounting and other miscellaneous issues.

The goal will be to have the plan implemented this spring. He looks forward to increased participation in the program and other positive changes as result of the implementation.

Mr. Ireland asked if the Rochelle Group looked at facilities equipment like hot water tanks that are no longer needed at some of the facilities. He also stated recycling should be an important consideration when implementing the program.

Dr. Forcella responded that he did not think the group was focused on this type of equipment.

Dr. Moore stated that he would like to see goals and progress included as a part of the food service plan.

Mr. Zuse stated that his goal is to provide a better product for the students in Guilford and he believes this will happen if the Food Service Department, the Administration and the Board work through this change process together to make the program better. He expects that the process may not be easy but it should be worth it and should provide a better lunch experience for kids.

## **9. Board Agenda**

### **9.1 Personnel Item (exhibit)**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously in favor of ratifying the appointment of Nicholas Ripa, Technology Education Teacher at Guilford High School, effective January 24, 2011.

### **9.2 Preliminary 2011-12 Budget Discussions**

No discussion at this time.

### **9.3 RECEIVE Audit Report (Exhibit)**

Chairman Bloss asked that discussion on the Audit Report be carried over to the February 14, 2011 meeting.

## **10. Unfinished Business**

## MINUTES – GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Monday, January 10, 2011

Dr. Moore asked about the High School facilities project. Dr. Forcella explained that a GHS Facilities Options Review Committee has been formed to listen to the options presented by architects Tai Soo Kim to address the facilities needs at the high school. The committee includes representation from the Board of Finance, Selectmen and Education, GPS Administration, and community members.

### **11. Reports of Committees**

#### **11.1 Policy Subcommittee**

Mrs. Dudley noted that the next meeting will be February 28, 2011.

#### **11.2 Facilities Subcommittee**

Mr. Ireland confirmed that bond issues will be discussed by the Board later in January.

#### **11.3 Finance Subcommittee**

None

#### **11.4 Liaisons to Town Committees**

Mr. Ireland reported that the Standing Building Committee discussed the potential bond projects affecting school facilities. He also reported on activities of the Energy Task Force.

### **12. Public Questions (four minute limit)**

None

### **13. New Business**

None

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Mr. Ireland, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn to Executive Session at 10:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lorri Hahn  
Clerk to the Board of Education