June 24, 2015

The Brooklyn Board of Education held its regular monthly meeting on June 24, 2015 in the middle school auditorium. In attendance were: Mrs. Lyons, Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Majek, Mr. Rossi, Mr. DonFrancisco and Attorney Kelley. Also present were Mr. Otto, Board of Finance, Dr. Berry, Superintendent, Mr. Yanku, Middle School Principal and Mrs. King, Elementary School Principal. Members of the BEA, school staff, press and public were in the audience.

1. Call to Order

Mrs. Lyons called the meeting to order at 7:09 PM.

Mrs. Lyons welcomed those in the auditorium and reminded them that the Board of Education would hear comments related to The Brooklyn School and its programs and activities during the Public Comments periods listed on the agenda, but reserves the right to respond at a later date following review, research and investigation if necessary.

1. Comments by:
2. BEA – Mrs. Desabota, president of the BEA distributed a letter to Board members outlining the concerns of the BEA in regards to the 2015-1016 Teacher Assignments. The BEA has asked the Board of Education to hold a Special Meeting to discuss this issue.
3. Local 1303 – None
4. PTO – None
5. Recreation – Mr. Lohbusch gave the Board an update on the fields at the Middle School. The Recreation Department is ready to start the rehab process, in general the lower field will see a total rehab with a new backstop, new fencing with safety guards, new roof on dugouts, new clay bases and mound and over seeding of the entire field. They hope to be completed and ready for play at the start of the 2016 season. The benches and backstop will be removed from the upper field, which will leave 2 regulation soccer fields, and Softball will continue to play a Prince Hill, which was received favorably this past season.
6. Public – Mrs. Atchinson spoke on behalf of a group of parents concerned about the staff changes at the Elementary School. She asked that the memo regarding staff changes be retracted.

Dr. Berry informed the audience that the memo was a requirement of the BEA contract and Mrs. Lyons stated that the teachers could not be discussed during the regular board meeting without notifying them.

Mrs. Dipippo asked the board to not make a hasty decision but to take a look at all the information before getting back to parents.

Mrs. Arrends voiced concern about not receiving the climate survey she had asked for in a timely manner.

Mrs. Novitny asked that ELL also be considered when taking another look at staff changes.

Mrs. Tanner-Bellows asked the Board if a decision had been made regarding her letter to them in May. The letter outlined her concerns with the drop off point of her middle school children. The regular board meeting had been canceled due to lack of a quorum.

Mrs. Lyons stated that bus routes are reworked each year and the issue would be looked at during that process. Attorney Kelley stated that if the issue was not resolved to her satisfaction she could bring it to another board meeting.

A discussion was held regarding the validity of a motion on the floor during the meeting. Attorney Kelley stated he was not at the meeting in that capacity and that it was a regular board meeting which the public was participating in to voice their concerns.

Mr. Rossi stated that it was a meeting in public not a public meeting. He asked that the parents give the board time to look at all the fact before making a decision.

Discussion was held regarding executive session and when a decision might be made on the issue.

Mrs. Lyons thanked the public for attending.

1. Minutes of April 22, 2015

Motion to accept

(Mr. Kelley/Mr. Rossi)

Mr. DonFrancisco asked that the minutes be amended to read that the offer of the discount for the Pay For It cafeteria program was not made to him but in fact was made to Mr. Kelleher.

Motion to accept as amended

(Mr. Kelley/Mr. Rossi)

Vote: Unanimous

Minutes of June 4, 2015 Special Meeting

Motion to accept

(Mr. Rossi/Mr. Kelley)

Discussion was held regarding the minutes. Mr. Otto asked that the minutes be amended to reflect the discussion held relating to the value of evaluations of administrators and the 1, 2 or 3 year renewal of Contracts. The board had agreed to discuss this further in the future. Mr. Rossi amended his motion and asked the minutes be recast and voted upon at the next meeting.

Motion rescinded

No Action Taken

1. Administrative Reports
2. Elementary School Principal – Mrs. King gave a PowerPoint presentation on the STAR assessment. It is the most recent acquisition and communicates expectation for learning and predicts learning difficulties that may arise. It is administered 3 times per year.
3. Middle School Principal – Mr. Yanku’s report on end of year events was enclosed in Board packets.
4. Special Education Director – The current special education enrollment was enclosed in the Board packets.
5. Superintendent – Dr. Berry reported the following

* The 2015-2016 education budget was approved at the town meeting.
* The listing of bills submitted for payment was distributed and discussed.
* Current enrollment report was distributed
* Cafeteria report on Kindergarten meals was discussed. The federal government is now requiring all meals at the elementary be the same size no matter the age of the children. In order to do this the cost must reflect the new size and therefore needs to increase from $1.75 to $2.70. A discussion was held regarding the impact on families. The members of the Board voiced their concern with the jump in price but understood the necessity.

Motion to accept

(Mr. Rossi/Mr. DonFrancisco)

5 Yes/1 Abstain

Motion Passed

* Dr. Berry notified the Board that the Teacher of the Year for 2015-2016 is Lori Gibb. She is deserving of this award and has been notified. There will be a program in Hartford in the fall to present her a certificate.
* Capital projects
* Fire Alarm System: Will start in the Elementary first then move to the Middle School. We will try to manage the different uses of the buildings during the summer months while this effort takes place. It should be completed by the end of August.
* Roof Project: A letter from Department of Administrative Services was enclosed in the Board packets. They are looking for additional items before they will let us proceed. Discussion was held concerning the application process and the formation of the Building Committee.
* 2015-2016 School Calendar was enclosed in the Board Packets. The final version reflects the wishes of the Board.
* Staff Vacancies – The Elementary music teacher and the Speech position had many applicants and filling the positions should not be a problem.
* The Healthy Food Certification paperwork was enclosed in the Board Packets.

Motion to accept

(Mrs. Johnson/Mr. DonFrancisco)

Vote: Unanimous

Mr. Kelley added to authorize the superintendent to file any necessary documents.

1. Public Comments

Mrs. Arrends asked when she might get the answers to the letter she had previously sent regarding various issues including Snow removal and bus issues with the snow.

Dr. Berry stated that she did have information for Mrs. Arrends at the previous Board meeting. Unfortunately it was cancelled for lack of a quorum and she had not seen Mrs. Arrends at that time. She will get that information together again for her.

Mr. Kelley asked that Mrs. Arrends letter be enclosed in the next Board packet and be placed on the agenda to discuss and vote if need be or if it’s a long term discussion the Board can indicate their concerns regarding a resolution and give her a response.

Further discussion was held regarding issues with the parking lots at the school, traffic patterns during pick up and drop off, snow removal responsibilities and crosswalks.

Dr. Berry will speak with Mr. Tusia and the building principals regarding these issues and a resolution will be enclosed with the welcome packets at the end of summer.

Mrs. Lyons would like to schedule a meeting with the town to determine who is responsible for specific areas during a snowstorm.

Mrs. Crowley asked the board to set a meeting date as soon as possible to discuss the teaching assignments so parents can ease their children’s anxiety.

Mrs. Sallum asked if the fence in front of the school, which she suggested previously, would be something that would be considered. Mrs. Lyons stated it might fall under a larger scale capital project at some time.

A question was asked regarding the hiring process and if the jobs had been publicly posted. Dr. Berry stated that some have been posted although no final decision had been made and no name has been announced to the board. There are many steps in the hiring process depending upon the position. As for the reading specialist it has not been finalized although in house staff is aware and Dr. Berry feels that position will be able to be filled from within.

Dr. Berry stated that some jobs had been posted internally and 2 had been posted externally. She stated that one open position will possibly be filled in house and final decisions had not yet been made.

Mrs. Wimmer informed the board that on June 6th Jeff Page got a group of adults and children together and in 3 or 4 hours they completely cleaned the large courtyard. All time and supplies were donated and asked the board to send a letter of thanks.

1. Committee Reports

Budget: None

Policy: None

Curriculum: Mrs. Johnson spent the morning with the committee and was impressed with the work that had been completed on the Language Arts curriculum. Math and Social Studies will be next. She also complimented Denise Nault for her help in revising report cards to coincide with the new standards.

Capital: Mr. Rossi reported that they are done with the process for this year, which included the fire alarm, security and technology. He also commented on the great job Mr. Lessig did putting the technology plan together. Mr. Rossi suggested inviting Mr. Tusia to the next meeting to go over the process of the projects.

EASTCONN: None

High School: Woodstock / Mr. Rossi had a conversation with Mr. Sanford who would like to make it clear that he would like the same offer that NFA had to present to the Board. The members agreed to send Mr. Sanford a letter to invite him to a meeting in the fall.

Killingly / Mrs. Johnson reported information regarding the search for a new principal. She also had brought in a list of Woodstock graduates for the board.

Mr. Kelley would like the honor roll list enclosed in the next packet and any information regarding Brooklyn students who received awards at graduations if possible.

Recreation: Mr. DonFrancisco stated that a nice donation was received from Pierce Care and that Family Fun Day is growing each year. Early bird registration for camp was also a success.

Selectman: None

BOF: Mr. Otto stated there was nothing to report

1. New Business

Discussion was held on a meeting date for the Special Meeting to discuss teacher assignments. Discussion was also held on executive session and proper posting procedures. The board asked for a copy of the memo that the teachers received and a list of the nine teachers involved. A meeting date of Wednesday, July 1st at 7 PM in the Middle School Auditorium was agreed upon.

Motion to adjourn at 10:08

(Mr. Kelley/Mr. Rossi)

Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully Submitted,

Lori A. Malstrom