July 1, 2015

The Brooklyn Board of Education held a special meeting on July 1, 2015 in the Brooklyn Middle School auditorium. In attendance were Mrs. Lyons, Mr. Rossi, Attorney Kelley, Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Majek, and Mr. DonFrancisco. Also in attendance were Dr. Berry, Superintendent and Attorney Alyce Alfano, Shipman and Goodwin.

Members of the teaching staff and public were in the audience.

1) Call to Order

Mrs. Lyons called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

Mrs. Lyons stated that this was a special meeting of the Board of

Education to discuss concerns made by the public. She informed that the Board of Education does not meet outside of public meeting times.

2) Executive Session

Motion to go into executive session

(Rossi /

Opposed: Attorney Kelley; Mrs. Johnson

Attorney Kelley stated that this meeting was scheduled to discuss the issue of teacher reassignments so it did not have to be included in the regular monthly meeting agenda. He stated that he felt that there should be public comments before going into executive session.

Discussion ensued as to whether or not to allow public comments.

Attorney Kelley resigned from his position as a member of the Brooklyn Board of Education and left the meeting.

Attorney Alyce Alfano introduced herself as council in attendance to give the Board of Education legal advice. She stated that the agenda did not have public comments so the Board did not have to allow it.

Motion to allow public comments until 7:35 pm.

(Johnson / Majek)

Unanimous vote to accept

Linda Congdon Marr spoke as a teacher, taxpayer and grandparent in Brooklyn. She stated that the teachers whose assignments had been changed received positive evaluations with no mention of concern or complaints. She stated that it was the people’s understanding that teachers would be discussed in executive session. The teachers who are being discussed have a right to be present, or chose to have the discussion about them in a public forum.

Eric Anderson stated that the kindergarten enrollment is higher than previously stated and he would like the Board of Education to consider adding an additional kindergarten teacher.

Amy Genna stated that teachers can submit a written list of concerns to administrators, and that the kindergarten teachers have concerns.

Michelle Cole asked what happens next, procedurally. She asked if the Board of Education members came back to the public meeting after executive session.

Attorney Alfano informed that the Board of Education members would return to the meeting after executive session, and that there is no time limit on said session.

Jennifer Atchinson stated that the public has not received answers to the questions posed at the last meeting. She said she does not trust the Board of Education because of their lies and twisted language. She also asked if the teachers had a right to request that their meeting be done in front of the public.

Mrs. Lyon informed that it is not the intention of the Board of Education to meet with the teachers at this time. The Board of Education members do not meet outside of their public meetings and have not yet had an opportunity to meet to discuss the changes in assignments.

Attorney Alfano stated that this is not a meeting to discuss personal contracts of teachers. This meeting is to address public concerns.

Mrs. Lyons stated that the members would reconvene in executive session to discuss last week’s questions.

A member of the audience asked when the public would get answers.

Mrs. Johnson stated that Mrs. Lyons is a lifelong resident of Brooklyn and has dedicated years of service of service to the community.

Linda Congdon Marr asked for transparency of the Board of Education. She said the reassignments had previously been called personnel issues, and that the Board of Education cannot hold executive session for those reasons. She listed the reasons in which a Board of Education can go call for executive session.

Mrs. Lyons stated that the reasons are not subject to public comment.

A Brooklyn resident asked if their discussions would be private conversations; not in public.

Attorney Alfano informed that if an employee wants an open session discussion, said employee can request it.

A member of the audience stated that it is a professional courtesy to notify employees of changes in assignment, and that a decision to reassign an employee should be done in writing.

Mrs. Lyons stated that the Board of Education members have not met to discuss the reasons for the reassignments. They only meet at their scheduled monthly meetings. This special meeting was called to discuss the same.

Eric Anderson stated that he does not trust the Board of Education and Dr. Berry. He wants to hear from Dr. Berry why she reassigned teachers. He asked that the members report to the public what was said to gain back their trust.

A member of the audience stated that the teachers had not heard the reasons for the moves.

Linda Congdon Marr asked if the teachers affected by the move would be going into executive session with the Board of Education members.

Mrs. Lyons informed that the teachers affected by the move would not be going into executive session with the Board of Education.

A member of the audience asked who would be making sure each teacher’s best interest is taken into consideration during executive session.

A BEA Union representative spoke out and stated that he will make sure the teachers’ best interest is taken into consideration during the meeting.

Motion to go into executive session at 7:39 pm

(Johnson / Majek)

Unanimous vote to approve

Motion to come out of executive session at 9:10 pm

(Johnson / DonFrancisco)

Unanimous vote to approve

Mr. Rossi thanked the audience members for attending, and for the information given to the Board of Education members so they could have an opportunity to discuss the matter of the teacher reassignments. He stated that the Board of Education members stand in support of Dr. Berry’s decision to reassign some teachers for the upcoming 2015-2016 school year. He informed that there were no disciplinary reasons for the changes in assignment, in fact, the reasons for the changes were all very positive. The members feel that the changes will strengthen student success in the upcoming school year. He stated that the Board of Education has asked Dr. Berry to meet with each of the teachers being reassigned individually to discuss the reason(s)s for the reassignment.

Mr. Rossi also stated that the Board of Education members were not happy with the way the information was given to the teachers. He stated that the members would be talking about ways to improve the way this kind of information is given to the teachers at future Board of Education meetings.

Motion to adjourn at 9:21 pm

(Johnson / Rossi)

Unanimous vote to approve

Respectfully Submitted

Joann M. Engel

Recording Secretary