

West Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education
Regular Board Meeting
February 27, 2013

Present: Ms. Katz, Mrs. Ma, Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez, Mr. Putterman, Mr. Sarzen, Mr. Schmitt, Mr. Zydanowicz, Superintendent List, Student Representative Kendall Teare (Hall)
Absent: Tyree Seymour (Conard)
Regular Meeting – Town Hall – Legislative Chamber

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The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

Roll Call/Pledge of Allegiance/Revision to Agenda Order

John Joyce, 170 S. Main St., addressed the Board to urge them to reject Agenda Item #VI.B.2. Attendance Zone Change for Webster Hill.

Public Communications

Mr. Schmitt moved, seconded by Mrs. Ma:

Motion by Bruce Putterman and Terry Schmitt to Accept and Approve Revised Bylaw 8310 – Second Reading

THAT the Board of Education accept and approve as a Second and Final Reading the following bylaw which was revised by the Board Policy Subcommittee:

8310: Formulation, Adoption, Amendment of Policies and Bylaws

Mr. Schmitt reviewed the bylaw and Mr. Moore was available to answer questions from the Board.

The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Katz moved, seconded by Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez:

Adoption of the Capital Improvement Plan for 2013-2014

Ms. Katz provided an introduction to the Capital Improvement Plan. Mr. Tom Moore, Mr. Chip Ward and Mr. Bob Palmer were available to address questions and concerns of the board.

Board members expressed their excitement, support and concerns about a new or renovated Charter Oak building. Numbers associated with the project were provided and compared to maintenance costs if no action was taken. Concerns about the impact on students and taxpayers as primary stakeholders, the appropriate allocation of funds to effectively reduce the achievement gap and enrollment and redistricting issues were raised. Some clarification was offered about the goals to avoid such concerns and emphasis was placed on the educational value and advantages of early education and the opportunity present to equalize the pre-kindergarten experience.

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Potential clawback provisions were also discussed.

Board discussion also addressed other areas of the CIP and included concerns expressed about funds allocated to security and questions regarding sufficient upgrades. Mr. Moore relayed confidence in evaluating needs and assessing systems to ensure the safety of students. He stated that money would not be a driving factor.

Mr. Zydanowicz moved, seconded by Mr. Sarzen:

THAT the Board of Education amend the motion to remove \$45 million from the CIP budget for a vote at a later date

Mr. Ward clarified the logistical process for the CIP and action taken by the Board and the Town Manager. Board members debated concerns expressed regarding requests for additional time and details and the importance of understanding the culmination of effort and information and the need for expedience in moving forward.

The motion failed 2-5

In Favor: Mr. Sarzen, Mr. Zydanowicz

Opposed: Ms. Katz, Mrs. Ma, Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez, Mr. Putterman, Mr. Schmitt

The motion passed 5-2

In Favor: Ms. Katz, Mrs. Ma, Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez, Mr. Putterman, Mr. Schmitt

Opposed: Mr. Sarzen, Mr. Zydanowicz

Mr. Overmyer-Velazquez moved, seconded by Mr. Sarzen:

THAT if the \$45 million allocation for Charter Oak International Academy is approved as part of the Capital Improvement Plan, the Board of Education will decide whether to recommend that a) the Town Council invest in “renovating as new” and adding to the existing Charter Oak facility or b) the Town Council invest in building an entirely new Charter Oak facility

Mr. Overmyer-Velazquez provided an overview of the background of the committee and discussions and relayed the support indicated by the

Motion to Amend

Vote on Original Motion

*Charter Oak
International Academy's
Building Project*

community for new construction of the Charter Oak facility. Board members expressed their excitement and support for a new construction.

The motion passed unanimously to adopt option b) that the Town Council invest in building an entirely new Charter Oak facility.

Ms. Katz moved, seconded by Mr. Zydanowicz:

THAT the Board of Education review as a First Reading the proposed calendar for the 2014-2015 school year

Dr. Karen List provided an overview of the development of the school calendar.

Board discussion reviewed previous debates of the Board to have school opened or closed on Veterans Day. Dr. List provided history for the current decision to be session. Board members and student representatives shared their perspective on participating in meaningful learning opportunities.

The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. List announced upcoming dates for informational meetings on the magnet schools, training workshops for interested mentors, the CMT and CAPT schedule and a collaborative conference on preventing teen substance abuse. An invitation was extended to all to participate in the Foundation for West Hartford Public School's annual fundraiser, 'West Hartford's Cookin' and noted the significant award received by a fifth grader attending Duffy Elementary School. Dr. List announced the retirement of Natalie Simpson, Braeburn Elementary School principal effective June 30, 2013.

Mr. Putterman provided some perspective on the interest in presenting information to the public on the issue of school athletics safety practices and protocols.

Mr. Tom Moore introduced Ms. Betty Remigino-Knapp and Dr. Patrick Carroll and provided an overview of the training requirements for coaches and trainers in general and specifically as related to concussions. Ms. Remigino-Knapp emphasized safety as the number one priority and reviewed the protocols in place to ensure the safety of student athletes. She stated that football had the largest number of participants and shared the helmet requirements and certification

*Proposed Calendar for
the 2014-2015 School
Year-First Reading*

Superintendent's Report

*Safety Practices and
Protocols in West
Hartford High School
Athletics*

requirements for coaches and volunteers. Data was provided on the percentage of injuries in various sports and comparisons were made with national statistics. The education, training and required professional development series for coaches and trainers and the dissemination of information and education to parents and student athletes were reviewed. Dr. Carroll provided background on the IMPACT program and stressed the importance of comprehensive initial assessments and establishing recovery timelines. He reviewed the contracted services to be provided by Hartford Hospital Rehabilitation Network (HHRN). All were available to address the questions and concerns of the Board.

Board discussion reviewed the updated protocol for an athlete to be cleared by a medical professional to return to play following a concussion. Emphasis was placed on the passion for developing comprehensive preventative safety and the goal of WHPS to be a model district in this area. Any potential discrepancy in the number of injuries between Conard and Hall and the degree of training at the middle school level and within youth sports were discussed. The need for additional injury surveillance and other significant symptoms following a concussion were raised. Dr. List recognized the efforts and work accomplished by Ms. Remigino-Knapp and extended her appreciation.

Dr. List provided background on enrollment, the number of classrooms needed and the space available and the recommendation to spot redistrict students from Webster Hill to Duffy. She shared the difficult decision-making process and meetings with parents of the affected students. She explained the desire at the present time to provide information and the vote by the Board would be taken at the next regular Board meeting with additional enrollment information.

Mr. Ward and Mr. Moore reviewed the enrollment history and charted the steady growth in numbers and the capacity of available space. They explained the redistricting principles and the impact on Webster Hill and Duffy on enrollment and grade sections with the plan to shift 39 students. Proposed next steps were reviewed. All were available to address the questions and concerns of the Board.

Board members questioned the selection of specific streets and the reasons modular classrooms were not being considered. The possibility of sending students to Charter Oak was raised and the reasons for that not being a potential option were provided. The concept of neighborhood schools was discussed and data on all possible street options was requested.

*Attendance Zone Change
for Webster Hill
Elementary School*

Dr. List provided an overview of the plan submitted to promote racial diversity in the Charter Oak and Smith magnet schools that were granted 'Unique Schools' status. This was required by the State Board of Education to qualify for reimbursement for eligible construction costs. Mr. Moore and Mr. Ward presented an abbreviated history of the racial imbalance in the 'Unique Schools' over the past several years and the steps taken to reduce the imbalance including the IB and STEM programs, increased marketing efforts, opting out and Pre-K options. The new approaches and minority percentage projections were outlined with an emphasis on the enhancements planned to attract families. An increased marketing strategy, projected time frames and the costs/benefits were reviewed. All were available to address the questions and concerns of the Board.

West Hartford's Plan to Promote Racial Diversity in its "Unique Schools" – Charter Oak and Smith

Board discussion stressed the strongest appeal to the target market of new families was offering Pre-K programs to secure future enrollment. The strength of the IB program at Charter Oak and the commitment of the staff and faculty was emphasized. Excitement and optimism about the presentation to the State was expressed. Board members shared their enthusiasm about the marketing process.

Dr. Overmyer-Velazquez moved, seconded by Ms. Katz:

Approval of Minutes

THAT the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the regular Board meeting of February 5, 2013

The motion passed unanimously.

Kendall Teare (Hall) reported on the Hall/Conard trip to South Africa, the conclusion of winter sports, outreach programs to middle school students and the upcoming schedule modification due to the CAPT. She shared a complaint about the recently installed WiFi connections not measuring up to expectations.

Report from Student Board Representative

Mr. Putterman announced the following meeting dates:

Announcement of Meeting Dates

1. Tuesday, March 5, 2013, Regular Board Meeting, Presentation of Superintendent's 2013-2014 Budget, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, Legislative Chambers, room 314
2. Budget Workshops/Public Hearing: All to be held in room 314 at 7:00 p.m.
March 13: Budget Workshop #1
March 14: Budget Workshop #2
March 27: Public Hearing Followed by Budget

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Workshop #3

3. Tuesday, March 19, 2013, Regular Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, Legislative Chambers, room 314

John Joyce, 170 South Main St., expressed his appreciation for the delay in the Webster Hill vote and shared the frustration of Webster Hill parents regarding the redistricting options and process

Mr. Sarzen moved, seconded by Mr. Zydanowicz:

That the Board adjourn at 10:43 p.m.

The motion passed unanimously.

ATTEST:

Bruce Putterman, Chairperson Naogan Ma, Secretary
Respectfully submitted by: Ms. K. Lawrence, Clerk of the Board

Comments from Visitors

Adjournment

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