

Approved  
6/12/2013

Board of Education  
Amityville Union Free School District  
Amityville, NY 11701

Special Meeting Minutes - February 27, 2013

Park Avenue Memorial Elementary School - Auditorium - 7:00 PM

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**LOCATION:** Park Avenue Memorial Elementary School - Auditorium

**IN ATTENDANCE:** President Juliet Jordon-Thompson Vice President Lisa Johnson  
Trustee Jeannette Santos Trustee Nathan King

**BOE ABSENT:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Ron Moss  
Trustee Michele Sikhrangkur  
Trustee Mark Epps

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Dr. John R. Williams, Superintendent of Schools  
Dr. Kathleen Gulbin – Asst. Supt. Curriculum & Instruction  
Dr. Mary Kelly-Asst Supt. Technology  
Dr. Stephen Neidell-Interim Asst. Supt. Human Resources  
Mr. Gary Steffanetta, Esq. Guercio & Guercio  
Ms. Nancy Hark, Esq., - Guercio & Guercio

**ABSENT:** Dr. William Fanning-Interim Asst. Supt. Finance & Operations

**CLERK IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs. Judith O'Neill/District Clerk

**COMMUNITY:** 20 members present

1. **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER** by President Jordon-Thompson at 7:00 PM.

A. **Emergency Exit, No Smoking Statement**

*\*In the unlikely event of an emergency, you need to Note that exits are clearly marked. Take a moment to Note the exit nearest to where you are seated. \*Smoking is not allowed on school grounds. \*As a courtesy, please turn off cell phones and pagers during the meeting.*

B. **Pledge of Allegiance** The Board and attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. **Community Input Regarding Board Agenda Items Only** - None

D. **PRESENTATIONS** - None

President Jordon-Thompson welcomed everyone to tonight's budget presentation and announced that Dr. Fanning had an emergency and was not in attendance. The Board and Dr. Williams will entertain questions regarding the budget concerns of the community following the business portion of the meeting. .

2. **BOARD ACTION RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

A. **Approval of Board Minutes** – None

B. **Board Policy Committee** - None

C. **Board Action Recommended by Board of Education:**

**MOTION to AMEND** the Agenda to include Agenda Item 2C-1 made by Vice President Johnson, seconded by Trustee Santos as follows:

1. The Board of Education hereby authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to execute an MOA with the ATA authorizing the extension of the contractual notice deadline set forth in Article XVIII, paragraph 7, of the CBA between the parties from March 1, 2013 to April 1, 2013.

**Motion to AMEND** the Agenda was made by Vice President Johnson, seconded by Trustee Santos.

**Motion CARRIED:** 4 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain.

**MOTION to APPROVE** Agenda Item 2C-1 made by Vice President Johnson, seconded by Trustee Santos. **Discussion:** Trustee Santos asked Dr. Williams what is the difference between this agenda item and the one we had last week. Dr. Williams responded that this resolution does not call for any specifics to be included in the retirement incentive. This resolution only extends the deadline.

**Motion CARRIED:** 4 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain.

**D. Audit Committee** – None

Vice President Johnson asked Dr. Williams about the potential impact the District may have if we lose federal funding. Dr. Williams responded that it is not clear how much funding we will lose. Federal money funds our title one program, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Program and also supports some of our nursing services. A significant portion of our special education program as well as pre school is also funded by federal money.

Arlicia Dennis, 15 Surrey Dr., Amityville - Ms. Dennis asked if there will be any layoffs in teacher staffing. Dr. Williams responded that it is not known at this time how much state and federal aid we will receive. Dr. Fanning has told us that our cap will be approximately 3 ½ % this year. So if the Board stays within the cap, tax rates will increase by approximately 3 ½ % or less. If the cap is pierced, it would require a 60% approval of the public. It is still uncertain and that is why Dr. Fanning does not have anything new to report.

Kathy Ward, 78 Irealnd Pl., Amityville – Mrs. Ward asked about funding programs with local money. Dr. Williams said there are federal regulations that we must follow for Special Ed. We would be required to fund it through local dollars. Dr. Williams was not sure about nursing support. We have to provide certain services to non public schools including nursing services. We are currently providing a full time nurse to non public schools and whether we will be able to continue providing that service is questionable. Title One provides remedial reading and math services. Seven salaries are written off against Title One.

Carolyn Dodd, Amityville – Mrs. Dodd said that a possible solution to some of the budget woes would be to re-examine administrative leave for certain employees. It has been going on for a long time and I think it is time that it ends. We are paying a salary and an interim salary. I never heard of a district that continues this policy for such a lengthy time.

Robert Claps, ATA – Mr. Claps said that the shortfall should not be equated in teachers salaries. Mr. Claps has always tried to attract people to the district. The programs we provide are what attracts people to the district. He said that the students are leaving school without the skills they need. We need more programs.

President Jordon-Thompson responded to Mr. Claps' remarks saying that we have partnered with different universities in offering programs - smart scholars programs, step programs, BOCES programs. I take exception to your remarks personally. As a Board, we look for ways to support our teachers and students. This is a preliminary budget hearing. I have been doing this for nine years and it is a very painful time for all of us. We do not like to make sacrifices to create a budget that we hope the public will approve.

Trustee Santos said that there are other ways to cut expenses besides cutting teachers and textbooks. Other districts do not have so many Assistant Superintendents and some do not have directors. That is where we can cut. I would like for Dr. Fanning to give us a count of how much we would save if we only had two or three assistant superintendents and if we only had three directors which is mandated for us to have. Administration should be cut back.

Dr. Williams said that Dr. Fanning did not say that we will cut back on textbooks. He suggested that we spend our complete allocations on textbooks because the costs are reimbursable so we should spend the entire amount of the reimbursement we will receive. Over the past several years, our administrative cuts by percentage have exceeded the cuts to any other area of employees. We have eliminated the position of guidance director, and an additional assistant principal at the Middle School who was also the administrator of the alternate program and an additional assistant principal of Park Ave. In the central office two of the assistant superintendents are interim superintendents paid hourly with no benefits.

Trustee Santos said that the Assistant Superintendents in other schools are doing triple work so they don't have four they have two. We have a classroom with 27 children and that is impossible. We should not have more than 23 in a class and not more than 21 for the younger children.

Dr. Williams responded that there is no intention to increase class sizes. The only reason that Dr. Fanning suggested that the shortfall of revenue to expenditures represented teachers salaries is because teachers represent and make up the largest employee group. If we do not realize any savings through teachers, we just can't balance the budget. I would much rather see reductions in teaching force or administrative force done by attrition so that we do not have to excess teachers. That is why we hope the Board will consider retirement incentives.

Vice President Johnson said we don't know where the cuts will occur because we have to look at everything and make a decision. The money is eventually going to run out and there may not be public schools.

Dr. Williams said that each year since I have been in this district, there has been a shortfall of revenue to expenditures. Each year Dr. Fanning has to use some of the budgetary reserve moving it to the revenue side and that helps to balance the budget. We will make it this year but next year it will be very hard to get through and in 2015, we are done unless there is some significant money from the state.

Mr. Claps pledged teacher support if the Board had to go above the tax cap.

Vice President Johnson asked Dr. Williams if the building principals had created a budget for their buildings. Dr. Williams said that we used to do that when revenues were more plentiful. We asked them to build a budget from a zero base but we also asked them to list each expenditure that they were proposing. However, it would be a waste of time in this budget environment.

Kathleen Corbett, 111 Bayview Ave., Amityville – Ms. Corbett said that she wanted to see more people involved in the decision making process – principals, administrators and community members. She also said that she wanted to hear about some creative solutions to the budget problems.

Dr. Williams said that principals and administrators have input on the budget. What they do not have any longer is the luxury of a wish list that would involve new money.

Vice President Johnson said that we are here tonight to listen to the community and go back to the table for more discussions.

Trustee King encouraged the community to keep coming to meetings and asking questions and making suggestions. Dr. Fanning has been preparing us for this for a number of years. We are still early in the process before the budget vote. He suggested that we form a committee with community and staff participation to work on solutions.

Trustee Santos asked the community to help the Board in the budget process.

Susan Heenan, 2 Matthew Dr. – Ms. Heenan was concerned about the large class sizes and the loss of teachers and programs.

Rose Tejada Torres, 69 Maple Dr., Amityville – Ms. Torres was concerned about activities and programs that have been cut in the past and also about the cuts that will be coming.

President Jordon said that we are charged to make sound fiscal decisions. We do not want to cut programs and teachers. There are more budget presentations coming before we have to adopt the budget so please come and participate.

Trustee Santos asked the Board to back her request from earlier in the meeting.

3. **BOARD ACTION RECOMMENDED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT**

- A. **Superintendent** – None
- B. **Personnel**
- C. **Business and Finance** - None
- D. **Monthly Finance Report** - None
- E. **CSE & CPSE Action/Meetings/Educational Service Contracts** - None
- F. **Curriculum and Instruction** - None.

4. **REPORTS** -None

- A. **Legal Counsel for the District**
- B. **Superintendent of Schools**
- C. **Board of Education**

**MOTION to ADJOURN** Special Meeting at 8:06 PM made by Vice President Johnson, seconded by Trustee Santos. **Motion CARRIED:** 4Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain.

Respectfully submitted,

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Judith O’Neill, District Clerk