

MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING

BOARD OF EDUCATION

PUTNAM VALLEY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
146 PEEKSKILL HOLLOW ROAD
PUTNAM VALLEY, NEW YORK 10579

TIME: 7:00pm Type of Meeting: **Special Business Meeting**
No. of Pages: 4

Date: March 9, 2011

BOARD OF EDUCATION: President Valerie Fitzgerald
Vice President Guy Cohen
Trustee Joseph Ferraro
Trustee Jeanine Rufo
Trustee David Spittal

PRESENT

ADMINISTRATORS: Dr. Barbara Fuchs, Interim Supt.
Paul Lee, Asst. Supt. for Business & Finance
Natalie Doherty, Director of Special Education
Vincent Burruano, High School Principal
Edward Hallisey, Middle School Principal
Jamie Edelman, Elementary School Principal

OTHERS: Maureen Bellino, District Clerk
Johnmichael Chiriyen, Student Rep. to the Board
Dan Mahoney, Videographer
Reporter from PCNR
Members of the Budget Advisory Committee
Approximately 33 members of the public

The meeting was opened by Ms. Fitzgerald at 7:05pm with the pledge.

CONVENE MEETING

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST

Dr. Fuchs announced that this Budget Session would begin with presentations from the Budget Advisory Committee. Dr. Fuchs praised the committee members for their hard work, noted the members of the committee (member listing attached to the official minutes of this meeting) and described how the committee was organized this year. She noted that there were sub-committees dedicated to higher level courses, full-day kindergarten, the proposed tax levy and use of the fund balance, start-up of an official booster club, the renting of District space to colleges and a group to research what foreign languages the District should offer to its students.

The sub-committee on higher level courses noted that that the District must make decisions on an educational as well as financial level on whether to run an advanced placement or college level course. The sub-committee noted that course enrollment should be twelve or higher. The offerings should be alternated each year so that all students have the ability to take a course they may be interested in during their time at the High School. They also noted that prerequisites should be developed as a requirement for entry and teachers should receive the appropriate training for the courses offered.

The full-day kindergarten sub-committee recommended that the Board include the funds for full-day kindergarten in the 2011-12 budget. They noted that they believed the educational benefit of full-day kindergarten will allow the District to meet the core standards that are now in place at the kindergarten level. The sub-committee members noted that the District has the necessary space available and that the District should move forward at this time also because of the \$300,000 state aid conversion payment that will be received for implementation of a full-day program. The sub-committee noted that their group's recommendation was unanimous.

The sub-committee members that were studying the recommended tax levy and use of the fund balance for the budget were not able to attend this meeting. Dr. Fuchs noted that at the last Budget Advisory Committee meeting they had made their recommendations, which she would be repeating at this meeting. Dr. Fuchs noted that they had recommended a tax levy no higher than two percent and that the Board should be cautious about the use of the fund balance since it will be most likely be needed in future years. Dr. Fuchs asked the members of the other sub-committees that were present at both meetings if she was correct with her statement and they concurred.

Mr. Matt Mello spoke for the Booster Club sub-committee. He began by praising the Middle School teachers (Mrs. Brothers and Mrs. Cohen) for their coordination of the annual sixth grade Middle School blood drive (which was being run this evening). He noted that it was a true community event that involves all the Middle School students and their families, but especially the sixth grade. Mr. Mello noted that to establish an official booster club, a 501(c)(3) organization must be created. This type of organization must follow specific legal requirements and restrictions in its operation. These regulations and restrictions cover what can and cannot be done to supplement the athletic program. Mr. Mello noted that there were already parent groups for various sports' teams and that all the groups should get together to see if there is interest in developing one larger group for all.

Mrs. Barbara Daur reported back for the foreign language sub-committee. She noted that there are grants available for specific languages, i.e. the country of Italy will provide a grant to school districts that institute an Italian program. She noted that she will be presenting the results of a survey that was conducted regarding foreign language offerings in the District at the Board meeting on March 17.

Dr. Fuchs also spoke for the sub-committee that was researching the possibility of renting out District space to a college. She reported that the sub-committee had composed a letter that will be sent to various colleges to ascertain interest in such a relationship with the District.

Dr. Fuchs reminded the community of the issues related to school district funding especially in this difficult economic period. Ms. Fitzgerald noted that she will be attending a meeting with the area legislators that will discuss the funding of education. Ms. Fitzgerald noted the unfunded mandates and explained one of them was that we need to have a bus seat for every student in the District regardless of whether they ride the bus or not. Dr. Fuchs noted that the Putnam Valley Central School District will see staff cuts and the use of the fund balance this year similar to what neighboring school districts have had to do in previous years.

Ms. Fitzgerald and the entire Board thanked the members of the Budget Advisory Committee for their diligence. Ms. Fitzgerald asked for any comments from the Board or the public.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Cooperman noted the he found a two percent tax increase unacceptable. He noted that any grant money that is received by the District is still money that is raised from the taxpayers and that the District should have a zero percent increase on the budget or a rollback. He also stated that he feels he is representing the silent majority in the community. He reported that student to teacher ratios in NYC are 27:1 and in Durham, North Carolina, they are 24:1. He noted that the District must look at its student to teacher ratios as the community cannot support an additional two percent burden.

Ms. Jeannie Denike asked for confirmation that the tax levy with full-day kindergarten included in the budget was 1.7% and 2.7% with half-day kindergarten due to the \$300,000 conversion aid money that would be received by the District from the state. Dr. Fuchs confirmed this information but noted that the \$300,000 is not a grant; it is part of state aid that will be received.

Mrs. Eileen McGinty noted that her family came from the city and chose Putnam Valley because of the student to teacher ratio. She noted that the Budget Advisory Committee believes that full-day kindergarten is sustainable and that even without the conversion aid it is justified.

Mrs. Jeannette Chizzik said that the two percent that is being mandated by Governor Cuomo is too high. She asked that the Board provide the listing of mandates to the community and asked if an appeal has been made to the staff for givebacks. Dr. Fuchs noted that the District must operate under the rules of collective bargaining. Ms. Fitzgerald noted that the District is cutting staff.

Ms. Sharon Haine noted that she has three pre-school children and that she is very happy that the Board is considering full-day kindergarten. She said that within this terrible economy the last place to take from our children should be their education and that full-day kindergarten will add value to the community.

Ms. Fitzgerald announced that the next Board of Education meeting would be held on March 17, 2011. She also noted that there are two Board of Education trustee seats up this year and a District resident that is interested in being placed on the ballot would need a petition signed by 31 qualified voters of the District. It was noted that information and the petitions can be picked up from the District Clerk.

On motion by Ms. Rufo, seconded by Mr. Cohen, there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:07pm. Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN MEETING

#234/11

Submitted by:



Maureen Bellino
District Clerk