

WATERBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES ~ SPECIAL MEETING
Thursday, April 10, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.
Hopeville School, 2 Cypress Street, Waterbury, Connecticut

PRESENT: President Stango, Commissioners Awwad, Brown, Harvey, Hernandez, McEntee, Rodriguez, and T. Van Stone.

ABSENT: Commissioners Hayes and J. Van Stone.

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent Kathleen Ouellette, Chief Academic Officer Anne Marie Cullinan, Chief Operating Officer & Chief of Staff Paul Guidone, and Education Liaison Mary Ann Marold.

SILENT PRAYER

President Stango called the meeting to order at 7:18 p.m. with a moment of silence.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Dr. Ouellette led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ROLL CALL

CLERK: Commissioner Awwad

AWWAD: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Brown.

BROWN: Present.

CLERK: Vice President Harvey.

HARVEY: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Hayes (absent). Commissioner Hernandez.

HERNANDEZ: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner McEntee.

McENTEE: Present.

CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.

RODRIGUEZ: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner J. Van Stone (absent). Commissioner T. Van Stone.

T. VAN STONE: Present.

CLERK: President Stango.

STANGO: Here. And once again, just for the record, Commissioner Hayes and Commissioner Jason Van Stone called with their regrets as they could not be here this evening.

The next item on the Agenda is Public Address the Board on Special Meeting Items only. Is there anyone? Very well, moving onto item number one.

1. COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL PERSONNEL

- 1.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner Harvey and dully seconded by Commissioner Brown, it was voted, by roll call vote, to approve the appointment of Nicholas J. Albini as Vice Principal, Waterbury Career Academy, effective immediately.**

STANGO: Motion has been made and seconded. Any discussion? Superintendent.

SUPERINTENDENT: This gives me great pleasure to welcome Mr. Albini to this position . . . real professional conversations about his career and he's just an amazing professional and certainly a wonderful asset to my team. So let me tell you about Mr. Albini – he's a Waterbury native, a proud graduate of Crosby High School. Nick began his teaching career in 1999 as a Social Studies/English Language Arts/Reading Teacher at Wallace Middle School and after teaching for nine years he became the Supervisor of Secondary Reading/Language Arts at Central Office. In this capacity he's provided leadership to teachers, administrators, in promoting quality instruction in improving the effectiveness of teaching strategies for six through 12 language arts. He's been truly amazing in helping us roll out our new concept based curriculum and he's providing a tremendous support for our teachers and staff. He also, the past three years, has instituted a grade retrieval program at the middle and high school for failing and struggling readers in Reading and English. This program was not only designed to improve the student skills and develop their reading strategies but also to reduce the number of retentions at the end of the year. He has a true commitment to academic excellence for all. He has conducted numerous professional development sessions for Waterbury staff and is a certified trainer in data team and data driven decision making, Common Core . . . making standards work and effective teaching strategies. Mr. Albini received two Bachelors . . . from the University of Connecticut, I'm not surprised, one in Business Administration and one in Social Studies and a Master Degree in Reading from Central and Sixth Year from Sacred Heart. He has many teaching endorsements that will certainly . . . him well in his new role as the Career Academy Assistant Principal. Anyone that has had the opportunity to work with Nick knows that he's just a superior and superb administrator and treats everyone with respect. His colleagues love to be around him, if anyone needs an answer they always go seeking Nick, find Nick. Some of colleagues have indicated that he's a reflective . . . , a professional who took his responsibilities of teaching seriously, a leader teacher, conscientious professional, a tremendous asset to our district in many ways, and a perfectionist, jeeze Nick, I'm not surprised about that. So I'm very, very pleased to present to the Board this evening Mrs. Nicholas Albini as Vice Principal of the Waterbury Career Academy.

applause

STANGO: I don't think anyone could top the Superintendent but if you'd like further discussion. Let's have a roll call vote.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON ITEM #1.1:

Yeas: Commissioners Awwad, Brown, Harvey, Hernandez, McEntee, Rodriguez, T. Van Stone, and President Stango – 8

applause

ALBINI: Thank you Dr. Ouellette, I didn't expect that, had I known I would have probably just made copies and distributed them, it would have been easier for me. However, I do have a couple of "I would like to's", if I may. I certainly would like to thank this Honorable Board of Education for having the faith in me to award this position to me and I certainly will not take it lightly and I plan to devote all of my energy and to perform in my craft very well. I would like to thank the Interview Committee for a very fair and effective process; it certainly makes one prepare for the desired position as it should be. I would certainly like to thank all of my colleagues, I'm going to miss them down in Central Office, they made my day lively and productive. I certainly want to thank Dr. Ouellette, Mr. Guidone, Mrs. Cullinan, Dr. Sequeira, and the four Instructional Leadership Directors – I'll start with Mr. Rice first because I'm in his network but moving to Dr. Johnson's and also Darren Schwartz and Mr. Walston, they've been very supportive and helpful and I'd like to thank them as well. I would like to tell Dr. Padua that you'll have a very supportive person in me and I will do all my best to make that school a very successful school. I would like to congratulate the other candidates that applied for this position, while it was competitive that is over now and now we are colleagues again and I would like to work closely with them so I'd like to thank them and congratulate them on their efforts. While I like to keep my eye on the prize of student success and closing the achievement gap, I do have some unfinished business that I hope that the Board, Dr. Ouellette will allow me to complete some of those – teacher evaluations, curriculum, benchmark assessments, summer school program, so if I can at least get those done I do not want to leave those unfinished for the summer I would appreciate that, Mrs. Cullinan. And finally I'd like to thank my wife for allowing me to be me. I work late and she allows me to, so I thank you.

applause

RODRIGUEZ: Nick, if you don't mind, when we think of a true professional in this district and when we think of the Waterbury School District, one of the first persons that always come to my mind is Nick Albin. And I really mean that. This is the first time, and I never shared this publically, but this is the first time that I'm going to share it and probably the only time, but when my daughter graduated from Maloney Magnet School we were contemplating on putting her in a parochial school and I remember Mr. Albin reaching out to me because my daughter got selected for the North End Leadership Academy Program and you shared a wealth of information. And not only did you share a wealth of information, when we still had more questions you always called me and my wife back right away. And we went to a presentation at North End and you knocked it out of the box and I remember you said something to the affect that if your kids are used to getting A's and B's, when they come to this Leadership Academy Program they may not get A's and B's because they're gonna be challenged and I'll never forget those words and you convinced me to send my daughter to North End and partake in that Leadership Academy and I thank you for that because now she's at Taft and things happen for a reason. So I thank you for all that you do for the students and I know you're going to do wonderful things with Dr. Padua. So thank you so much.

2. COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

2.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner McEntee and duly seconded by Commissioner Brown, it was voted, by roll call vote, to approve of Amendment Number 1 to the Professional Services Agreement with EBS

**Healthcare Services, Inc., d/b/a Educational Based Services, Inc., for
speech language pathology services.**

STANGO: Discussion? Commissioner Brown.

BROWN: I think we really have gotten a lot of information about this contract, I think the Board has raised some systemic issues in terms of the time frame, but I haven't heard anything that really speaks to the underlying need to pass this contract. We have students who need services, we have actually services ongoing and I think the administration and the staff has committed to really working on the timeline to really address some of the concerns of some of the members. So I would urge my colleagues to vote for this. This is the second time this has come before us, it's been transparent, the questions have been answered, and I really think that we really need to move on for the sake of students. So I would urge my colleagues to vote for this tonight.

STANGO: Yes, Commissioner Awwad.

AWWAD: I would just like to take the opportunity to echo Commissioner Brown; I think that the message was sent by this Board at the last meeting, loud and clear. There's an issue regarding timeliness, there were questions around the cost. I appreciate that Commissioner Van Stone may not have his questions totally resolved but to Commissioner Brown's point, the children in the district require these services, we're required to provide them. You're right, we're not required to pass this but we are obligated to provide the services and if this is the manner we're having to do so right now I would be the first one to join you in a show of support about how not to do things but at this point we made that stance and I think it's time to move forward. We're gonna have a new contract come July 1 and hopefully everything will be much better presented at that point. But I will join Commissioner Brown in supporting the motion.

STANGO: Commissioner Van Stone.

T. VAN STONE: Thank your Mr. President. I certainly hope the stand I've made on this contract is not trying to portray me as someone who does not want to offer these services. That has certainly not been my point, I mentioned that tonight to our speakers, by no means is it my intent to hold back these services, I've actually been one who is questioning that we have the resources for these services only about a month ago in regards to our testing. So I've had contact with parents with hearing disabled children, I have many friends, so I just do not want this portrayed as I'm trying not to offer a service. I've made more of a business case for this contract. I don't think the Board of Education and the Education Department is alone in this, I think the City as a whole has some major issues with writing contracts, delivering contracts, and supporting them after the fact, it's not just Education. This City has a very serious problem, just drive by Municipal Stadium if you want to see how bad we do contracts; it's a very bad problem. And the bottom line, as I said last week, we're spending the taxpayers' money, we just don't have \$90,000 checks to write only because we forgot to right a contract amendment. This is poor, poor management and that's the bottom line. Thank you.

STANGO: Further discussion? Commissioner McEntee.

McENTEE: Thank you Mr. President. We're required by law to provide these services so if this contract isn't approved how do we provide those services?

CULLINAN: Speech and language is a service that is IEPd which means it comes through a Planning and Placement Team meeting and is a required service that we need to offer a student with a disability who requires speech and language to meet their academic needs. So we are required to provide this service.

McENTEE: With no contract in place how do we do that?

CULLINAN: Well I think we tried to explain that at the Workshop that you know the department was remiss in not having it done in a timely fashion and there will be safeguards put in to make sure that subsequent contracts don't come in front of you after the fact. But at this point there are service hours that need to be provided for our students.

McENTEE: *(inaudible)*.

CULLINAN: The students have been receiving the services; they haven't provided us with bills from February and March yet; they're behind in their billing.

McENTEE: . . . so what do we do if the Board votes not to approve the contract, how do we provide those services?

CULLINAN: I don't know how we would provide the services. We would be mandated to provide services somehow which would mean we would have to offer compensatory time to students and hire staff to give the students compensatory services either after school or through the summer, we'd have to make up the time that we're required to service them by law.

McENTEE: And those compensatory services might end up costing us more than the current contract?

CULLINAN: Well compensatory services could cause us to pay more. I mean we'd have to find staff to hire to bring them in after school or during the summer or even throughout the school year to make up the time.

STANGO: Commissioner Hernandez.

HERNANDEZ: So in other words if this contract does not go through the kids will have to come in during the summer to make up that compensatory time?

CULLINAN: We have to offer them compensatory time, when that time is provided we'd have to . . . individual based.

STANGO: Commissioner Tom Van Stone.

T. VAN STONE: I appreciate the support many of my fellow Commissioners gave me on what I've done for the last few weeks. I understand the situation, I know how I'll be voting, I have full respect of everyone here that in order to make the system move forward, votes are changed, I respect that fully. I just wanted that said. But I do, the Commissioners who have come forward to support me on this I do appreciate it greatly, and I appreciate all the Commissioners even though . . . voting with this. From my professional standpoint if votes change tonight I'm very content that I have made my

point. I will be sticking to my vote, but I respectfully hope that everyone does what their heart feels they have to do this evening. Thank you.

STANGO: Vice President Harvey.

HARVEY: I really and truly hope, first of all I don't want to hold these kids hostage, okay, but I just hope that someone's listening to what we're saying and to what extent we were ready to go to because of our discontent with this. So, again, I know what I'm looking for and I hope that, this is April, May, June, that you come back and you say yes, we sealed up some of the links on our inner-processes, we have a schedule of payment, we're monitoring things a little bit closer because we don't want to deprive our kids of these needed services or any other services but when we slip internally then we need to look internally to check and see what is going on. So I only hope that someone is listening to what, and watching, what almost happened and I think we can button up some of these items and I would like an update by May or June of what we've done. Thank you.

CULLINAN: I can assure you Commissioner Harvey that we are listening. I don't know if you, you probably do recall that in years past I've come in front of the Board with a very large spreadsheet on all the professional development and out of district expenses, you will be provided with that again, that is definitely part of the process that we'll be looking at again to bring in front of the Board.

HARVEY: Thank you.

STANGO: Commissioner Hernandez.

HERNANDEZ: I have to agree with what Commissioner Harvey said, and I do look at dates very closely and I have brought expired contracts to someone's attention so I would hope also that, it's a hard lesson learned and hopefully we can get on track as far as making sure that when things come to us they are in a timely fashion because we really don't, we are all here for the children and we wouldn't want to hold anything up for their educational needs.

STANGO: Any further discussion? Roll call vote then please.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON ITEM #2.1:

Yeas: Commissioners Awwad, Brown, Harvey, Hernandez, McEntee, Rodriguez,
and President Stango – 7

Nays: Commissioner T. Van Stone – 1

CLERK: Seven/one – motion passes.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Awwad and duly seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:42 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
Carrie A. Swain, Clerk
Board of Education