

Weston Public Schools
Board of Education Meeting
Weston Town Library
July 26, 2010

Attendance:

Philip Schaefer, Chairperson
Ellen Uzenoff
Richard Bochinski
Les Wolf
Dana Levin
Sonya Stack
Denise Harvey

Jerome Belair, Superintendent
Thomas Scarice, Assistant Superintendent
Lois Pernice, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Absent:

JoAnn Keating, Ed.D., Director of Finance & Ops.
Lewis Brey, Director of Human Resources

III. RESUME PUBLIC SESSION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

IV. RECOGNITION - None

V. ITEMS FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Matters Pertaining to Personnel

1. Director of Finance and Operations Contract

MOTION: Moved that the Weston Board of Education extend the contract of employment of Dr. Jo-Ann Keating (the Director of Finance and Operations) for a new term of three years, July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2013. Move that the Board establish the salary and annuity of \$169,705.00, representing a 4% increase. Move that the Board of Education authorize its Chairperson to execute a revised contract with the Director of Finance and Operations incorporating these changes. Motion by Mr. Wolf, 2nd by Mr. Bochinski, all in favor. (7-0)

Mr. Schaefer: Dr. Keating's salary last year – a 2% increase was not taken and was deferred due to economic conditions, etc. The job Dr. Keating has done for this district, certainly in my mind and probably for the rest of the board, for the last few years has demonstrated that she along with the administrators in the system joined forces together to save the district literally millions of dollars as was documented last year. She is quite an asset to the system and we hope she will be with us a long time.

Mrs. Uzenoff: I think she knows how strongly we feel about her caretaking and financial oversight. The suggestions that the Superintendent and Director of Finance have brought to the system have been substantial.

Mr. Wolf: I would further add not only in the financial area, but certainly in the operation area, supervising Dan Clarke with improvements made to energy conservation & things of that nature. Certainly added to the benefit of the Town in terms of the budget and improvements.

Mrs. Harvey: The clarity and presentation of the budget book and the way in which the numbers are set forth in that book and her accessibility in terms of her responses to questions I had and other members of the Board as well.

Mrs. Levin: She has done a terrific job for us and the fact that she has been recognized by her peers in the State attests to the job she has done.

2. Assistant Superintendent Contract

MOTION: Moved that the Weston Board of Education extend the contract of employment of Mr. Thomas Scarice (the Assistant Superintendent) for a new term of three years, July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2013. Move that the Board establish the salary and annuity of \$168,667.00, representing a 4% increase. Move that the Board of Education authorize its Chairperson to execute a revised contract with the Assistant Superintendent incorporating these changes.

Motion by Mr. Bochinski, 2nd by Mrs. Levin, all in favor.(7-0)

Mr. Schaefer: Again, in line with last year, Tom also had a deferred increase of 2% which was not taken. Improvements in terms of curriculum, along with a very consistent game plan for curriculum review has been outstanding work and is a model for other systems around us. This was an important and successful year and your efforts are appreciated

Mrs. Uzenoff: Professional development is so critical in how the curriculum is delivered to our students and I want to be sure we acknowledge you.

Mr. Wolf: All this talk about curriculum – if you recall me asking what this was all about when you talked about 21st Century skills. What you pointed out, which I remember to this day, was somewhat of a challenge – a regression analysis problem where students had to consider relocating a Starbucks store. That type of thinking and moving ahead, turning education around from where it was 5, 10, 20 years ago to what it needs to be – thank you.

Mrs. Harvey: The work that you and Lois Pernice have done, along with the Curriculum Committee, on the TAG Renewal Process – we hope it will be one of the foremost programs in the country. It will be a very exciting program to watch – the expansion of enrichment opportunities for students is all for the better. Thank you again.

3. Superintendent of Schools Contract

MOTION: Moved that the Weston Board of Education extend the contract of employment of Mr. Jerome Belair (the Superintendent of Schools) for a new term of three years, July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2013. Move that the Board establish the salary and annuity of \$232,458.00, representing a 7.5% adjustment to bring his compensation closer to the average salary of superintendents in our DRG . Move that the Board of Education authorize its Chairperson to execute a revised contract with the Superintendent of Schools incorporating these changes.

Motion by Mr. Wolf, 2nd by Mrs. Uzenoff, all in favor.(7-0)

Mr. Schaefer: Again, last year, Mr. Belair had his 2% increase deferred. The Board of Education looked closely at compensation packages for superintendents in our DRG (A). Currently, Weston ranks 2nd from the bottom for Superintendent's compensation. Mr. Belair's compensation is inconsistent with other Fairfield County superintendent's compensation. Based on Mr. Belair's outstanding performance for the past 2 years as Superintendent of our school system, the Board is proposing making an adjustment to his salary to remain competitive with other DRG A school districts. With this proposed adjustment, Mr. Belair's compensation will still remain at the 2nd lowest compensation package for a superintendent in our DRG. The proposed increase for Jerry Belair for 2010-2011 reflects his value to our district; he has gone above and beyond in his efforts to lead Weston Public Schools to new heights as reflected by student achievement. The outstanding academic and extracurricular program that the Weston Public Schools offers and the fiscally responsible approach he has taken to develop a budget that addresses the needs of all Weston students.

Mrs. Uzenoff: It goes without saying we have asked extraordinary things of you during very tumultuous times. I'm not sure those times are over; I think there will be a lot more demands and I'm absolutely convinced you are the person to bring us to the next phase.

Mr. Wolf: The Superintendent evaluation document (which is a public document) says it all and you are to be commended for a job well done. Especially in terms of budget – the last 2 you prepared and the previous one with reduced staff just as a management review process – that was done because it was the right thing to do. It was indicative of the financial affairs of the system. Your outreach to the community has produced results in terms of transparency which gave them an understanding of what the Board is doing – responsibilities to parents, children and taxpayers.

Mrs. Levin: inaudible

Mrs. Stack: As a new Board member, your orchestration with Tom, Lois and Arvid bringing us up to speed was extraordinarily helpful.

Mrs. Harvey: Thank you so much for all your hard work as Superintendent. We all realize we continue to be in difficult economic times and that the budget is really a challenge. We appreciate the extremely hard work you and your staff have put in to present a very responsible budget. Clearly, it is a validation confirmation of your leadership with the rest of your team. You continue to find innovative, creative ways to control costs and we have every expectation you will continue to do so.

Mr. Bochinski: Since Jerry became superintendent 2-1/2 years ago, he has not had any salary change whatsoever. The gap (there was a gap to start with) has grown in the DRG and continued to grow this year. This more aggressive step was necessary to bring it to the lower range of parity that I feel is fair.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Moved that the Weston Board of Education approve the minutes of: Executive and Regular Session June 21, 2010, Special Session June 24, 2010. Motion by Mrs. Levin, 2nd by Mrs. Uzenoff, 6 in favor, 1 abstain.(6-0)

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Strategic Plan Update

Mr. Belair provided background on the process of Strategic Planning, detailing the components of the program, the people involved on the planning team and the development timeline. In this evening's packet is an update highlighting the accomplishments of the plan; Mr. Belair reviewed each strategy and reported on the work that has been done and what we need to continue to focus on. The floor was open for discussion.

The Board highlighted specific areas where they would like additional information, discussed developing goals to be accomplished in the future and the involvement of Dr. John Starr, who the Board previously met with. The Board did agree to engage Dr. Starr's services.

2. Enrollment Update

Mr. Belair reviewed the current enrollment report, noting there are 160 students enrolled in Kindergarten and we will continue to plan on 8 sections. Of the 9 outstanding Kindergarten registration packets, 6 have been returned which are reflected in the 160. The Board discussed the number of students who have left the district as well as the number of new students. Mr. Belair will supply a breakdown in August. With regard to Grade 5, Mr. Belair is recommending the addition of a section which would utilize the 9th staffing

position in kindergarten. The contingency teacher position remains in contingency. A discussion ensued regarding class sizes at the elementary school level.

3. Staffing Update

We currently have 2 elementary positions open; all others have been filled. We have hired a social worker and have chosen Rudd Anderson, current 4th grade teacher, to fill the TAG position. Mr. Anderson will be pursuing his Masters in gifted education. As of this evening, we have a 2nd and 5th grade vacancy and based on our discussions, we will post the grade 5 position tomorrow.

Mr. Scarice outlined the plans to assist Mr. Anderson in his new role and highlighted why he is natural fit for the position.

4. Format for Board Minutes

Mr. Belair reviewed the samples of Board minutes from various local districts – some are very detailed and some only provided a brief synopsis of the topic's discussion and motions. The Board would prefer Weston's format continue as is.

5. ASBO Review of Budget Document

MOTION: Moved that the Weston Board of Education request the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) review the Budget Book of the Weston Public Schools and recommend improvements to this document. Motion by Mrs. Uzenoff, 2nd by Mr. Wolf, all in favor. (7-0)

IX. OLD BUSINESS - None

X. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- 1. Next Regular Board Meeting:** Monday, August 23, 2010
- 2. Focus for 2010-2011 Board Meetings:** Mr. Belair and Mr. Schaefer have discussed that going forward, we will include specific program topics at each Board meeting, providing background, accomplishments and future work. Some examples: a transportation update, technology update, TEAM process, TAG program, differentiation, etc.
- 3. Special Education Audit:** Mr. Belair, Mrs. Pernice, Dr. Keating and Mr. Scarice met with the organization that will perform this program review and are already collecting data. We expect to have a report in November.
- 4. Any Other Matters:** Newsweek did not ask for data from Weston which is why Weston High School was not part of the list of Best High Schools. However, our data now appears on the Newsweek website. CAPT and CMT results, as well as an update on summer academies, technology, curriculum work, transportation, enrollment and staffing, as well as class sizes will be reported to the Board in the near future. An end of year fiscal report will also be presented.

Mr. Belair also spoke to the cooperative work that has been done with the Town, noting the efforts of Erik Haakonsen, Lewis Brey and Dan Clarke.

XI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. **Curriculum Committee:** nothing to report.
2. **Facilities/Plant Operations Committee:** nothing to report.
3. **Finance Committee:** reviewed budget assumptions, next meeting Friday, August 27, 8 a.m.
4. **Policy Committee:** next meeting August 12, 11 a.m., Central Office Conference Room.
5. **Communications Committee:** next meeting will occur in September.
6. **Negotiations Committee:** negotiations are underway.
7. **CES:** no meetings have occurred over the summer.
8. **Weston Education Foundation:** nothing to report.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Wolf, 2nd by Mrs. Stack, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Brighindi
Board Clerk

Approved by the Board of Education:

Chairman

Secretary