

Thursday, May 31, 2018

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held May
31, 2018, at Geraldine Johnson School, 475
Lexington Avenue, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. Present were members Chair John Weldon, Vice President Hernan Illingworth, Ben Walker, Chris Taylor, Sybil Allen, Joseph Sokolovic and Maria Pereira. Secretary Jessica Martinez and Dennis Bradley arrived subsequently as noted.

Supt. Aresta L. Johnson, Ed. D., was present.

There was a moment of silence for the recent passing of a family member of board member Jessica Martinez.

Mr. Walker asked for a moment of gratitude for the speedy resolution of all the emergency situations that prevented the other five board members attending the duly scheduled meeting this past Tuesday.

Ms. Pereira raised a point of order. She said on Friday, May 25th, at 5:24 p.m., Mr. Weldon sent an e-mail to board members cancelling the board meeting because several members could not attend. She said the e-mail indicated all the items to be addressed in

the Regular Meeting would be addressed in a Special Meeting and also added that there was no boycott going on.

Ms. Pereira said all three of those statements are patently false. Ms. Pereira said she followed the state statute to the letter and filed a notice of adjournment on the door of the Aquaculture School, adjourning the Regular Meeting to tonight. She said Mr. Weldon then noticed an unnecessary Special Meeting notice. She said Mr. Weldon eliminated several agenda items, including committee reports and the superintendent's report and agenda.

Ms. Pereira said tonight's meeting should have been an adjournment of the Regular Meeting on Tuesday which would not require a motion to suspend the rules in Policy 9314 regarding public comment.

Ms. Pereira asked Mr. Weldon to make a ruling on her question. Mr. Weldon said Ms. Pereira statement that seven items were omitted from the agenda after he stated to the press and board members that everything on Tuesday's agenda would be on tonight's meeting was incorrect.

Ms. Pereira appealed the ruling of the chair. The appeal was seconded by Mr. Walker.

Mr. Weldon said FOI states that once a meeting has been cancelled, it cannot be reinstituted without 24

hours' notice. He said the Tuesday night event was just a gathering and not a reinstatement of the original public meeting.

Ms. Pereira said that under the Freedom of Information Act all that is required to notice a meeting is it must be filed on the public agency's website at least 24 hours before the meeting. She said the meeting was noticed on Saturday, well in advance of Tuesday's meeting.

Mr. Weldon said his ruling stands.

The appeal failed by a 4-3 vote. Voting in opposition were members Taylor, Allen, Illingworth and Weldon. Voting in favor were members Sokolovic, Pereira and Walker.

Ms. Pereira raised a point of order. She said today's meeting notice was in violation of the Freedom of Information Act. She said there was a notice sent on May 30th to board members, stamped at 11:10 a.m., and then there was another notice sent and stamped at 2:27 p.m. She said the second notice was not filed on the district's website in advance of today's meeting in violation of the Freedom of Information Act.

Ms. Pereira said Ms. Alice Ortiz told her that she received instruction from Mr. Weldon to file the notice with the city clerk and send it to board members. She said since the second notice was not put on the

district's website, the board had to follow the notice that was filed at 11:10 on May 30th.

Mr. Weldon ruled against Ms. Pereira. Ms. Pereira appealed the decision of the chair. The appeal was seconded by Mr. Walker.

In response to a question, Mr. Weldon said he could not check the board's website now to see if Ms. Pereira's claim was true. Ms. Pereira said he was violating state law and ruling against her point of order because it was blatantly visible on the website.

The appeal failed by a 4-3 vote. Voting in opposition were members Taylor, Allen, Illingworth and Weldon. Voting in favor were members Sokolovic, Pereira and Walker.

Mr. Illingworth moved "*pursuant to bylaw 9314 to suspend bylaw 9325 as necessary to allow members of the public to speak at a special meeting to address the board for a total of two minutes on any item or items on the agenda, provided that a maximum of thirty minutes be allowed.*" The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic.

Mr. Walker moved to amend the motion "*to suspend the rules to include suspending the time limit as well.*" The amendment was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The motion as amended was unanimously approved.

Tony Barr said he was appearing on behalf of Dennis Bradley. He said there was a lot of underhanded stuff going on concerning Mr. Bradley and it was not true that Mr. Bradley was trying to change the name of Harding High. He said he not come to a board meeting in six years when we talked about the kids, but it was always Ms. Pereira running her filthy mouth. He said our kids were being confined to prison while being led by black and brown people.

State Senator Ed Gomes said he respected everybody and had no animosity towards anyone on the board. He said he read in the papers about the board members boycotting a meeting. He said whether the meeting was cancelled or boycotted the blame is going to be put on the superintendent. He said the board owed it to the public not to have the dog and pony show it was having. He said it seemed protocol was not followed at the meeting as cited by Ms. Pereira.

Ms. Martinez arrived at the meeting.

Candace King Sadler, a 3rd grade teacher in Bridgeport, said the academic coaches motivate, instruct and strategize with the team to achieve potential in any areas that need improvement. She said coaches also assist with the development of skill sets. She said coaches such as Bill Belichick, Phil

Jackson and Vince Lombardi are applauded. She said the coaches were now on the table and we may be taking them away from the neediest of our children. She said the literacy and numeracy coaches provide instruction for students, parents and teachers. She added she this was her twelfth year as a teacher in the district and we need the board to do their best.

Ben Walker read a statement from a community member, Katrina Mebane Stoogenke, who said she took time off from work to attend the meeting on Tuesday, but was unable to be here tonight due to work. She said she believed the board members who did not attend the last meeting failed their positions. She thanked Mr. Walker, Ms. Pereira and Mr. Sokolovic for keeping their promises made to the children of Bridgeport. She said she was strongly in favor of keeping the name of Harding High and had obtained over 600 signatures in support of this position online. She said great people had come from Harding High and urged the board vote to retain the name.

Ms. Pereira said the president of the Harding High School Alumni Association submitted the revised petition with 603 signatures in support of keeping the name. She said she was providing the petition to the board secretary.

JoAnn Kennedy said she had a sense of déjà vu from last year when meetings were cancelled and the

public did not have a chance to speak. She said she thought the new board was going to work together and do things differently. She said one board member said they would never not come to a board meeting because someone else was not coming. She said that person was lying. She said Luke 17:2 said it would be better for him that a millstone were wrapped about his neck and that person be cast into the sea than that he should offend one of these little ones. She said if the board members did not care about the children they could leave via the door. She said some of the members of the audience have better attendance records than some board members.

Ms. Kennedy added she was proud to attend Harding, was a former cheerleader there, and was in favor of retaining the name of Harding High.

Carmen Lopez, a resident and taxpayer of Bridgeport, said she came out tonight because of appalling news reports from Linda Lambeck. She said the city was a machine town run by a bunch of politicians. She said the mayor was already sent to jail for public corruption and now he wants to be our governor. She said it was reported that Mr. Weldon and Mr. Illingworth paid a visit to Ms. Allen to tell her not come to the meeting.

Mr. Illingworth said Ms. Lopez was saying false information. Ms. Pereira said it was against board policy to interrupt a speaker.

There was much crosstalk among the members at this time.

Ms. Lopez said one report indicated Mr. Weldon was going to be looking into staff conduct and taking action against the staff or superintendent. She said things were chaotic at the meeting. She said Mr. Bradley said it was terrible because it was a politics, but he was out campaigning to become a senator. She said three of the members went to the machine to get their endorsement, so they have a boss.

Ms. Lopez said if she was Dr. Johnson she would have left this crazy town long ago. She said Dr. Johnson was doing us a favor by staying.

Ms. Allen said she worked in many of the schools. Ms. Pereira raised a point of order because there was no response allowed by board members.

Howard Gardner said he been off the board for three-quarters of a year and he was disappointed it looked like the more things changed, the more they remain the same. He said a meeting was cancelled by a minority group on the board. He said the superintendent, wanting to follow the law, moved ahead with the meeting. He said he would think the board had so many issues to deal with that it would not waste one millisecond of brainpower talking about a superintendent who was following the law.

Mr. Gardner said he supported the superintendent. He said he did not agree with Mr. Vallas but he put some very sound financial controls in place in the district. He said he knew Supt. Rabinowitz on an intimate level during her tenure. He said the other two superintendents cannot hold a candle to Dr. Johnson when it comes to putting children first. He said he hoped the community takes notes about the board members planning to run again or run for another office.

Mr. Gardner said he ran for the board to develop a long-term plan for academic improvement. He said the wrong reason for wanting to be on the board was to repay political favors or take orders from Mr. Ganim and Mr. Testa, who do not have the interests of the children at heart.

Maria Pereira said she had distributed a packet she created at her own expense. She said Mr. Weldon unilaterally cancelled the Regular Meeting scheduled for Tuesday after Memorial Day. She said another holiday weekend was when the illegal takeover of the board occurred.

Ms. Pereira said when the board approved the Regular Meeting scheduled calendar in November 2017 the vote was binding on all members. She said it was clear Mr. Weldon orchestrated a boycott of a critical meeting. She added that several people had taken off from work to speak on a variety of issues

and could not be here tonight due to work commitments. She said the Harding people had planned for weeks to get people out to the meeting. She said this was disrespectful to the public, students, parents and staff.

Ms. Pereira said Mr. Illingworth and Mr. Weldon blatantly misled her by telling her that they were out of town through Memorial Day into Tuesday evening, but were able to miraculously visit Ms. Allen on Memorial Day to encourage her not to attend Tuesday's meeting.

Ms. Pereira said Mr. Weldon released a statement which said the executive committee is meeting to discuss disciplining the superintendent for following a full vote of the board. She said Mr. Weldon had no authority to cancel the meeting.

Ms. Pereira said by state statute the superintendent is employed by a board of education collectively, not any individual member. She said board policy makes it clear no individual board member can order the superintendent to do anything. She said the superintendent followed state statute and board policies.

Ms. Pereira said Ms. Martinez made it clear she had a death in the family and that was a very different situation from the other board members.

Ms. Pereira said Dr. Johnson will be receiving an award in June by the National Coalition of a Hundred Black Women for her strong education advocacy. She urged Dr. Johnson be given a round of applause.

Ms. Pereira said the board had worked pretty well together for six months, but then she saw board members making disparaging remarks on Facebook. She said for six months she had not blogged or posted on social media about board members. She urged this be put aside and the board continue moving forward and working together.

John Bagley said as a board member he tried to give young people all he could. He stepped down from the board to step into the ground level to help young people.

Mr. Bagley said the board members needed to lead. He said they were not leading because they were not together. He said the superintendent needed all the support we can give her.

Mr. Bagley said he did not understand who decided the name of Harding needed to be changed. He said he grew up on the East Side and went to Harding. He asked how could we possibly think about changing the name of one of the most successful schools in the state.

Albert Benejan, the PTSO president at Bassick High and chair of the Parent Convention, thanked the board members who came to the convention along with Dr. Johnson. He recognized John DiDonato for participating in a workshop at the convention, along with Angel Resto, Mr. Bradley for his donation, and Jeffrey Postolowski and Janet Brown-Clayton. He said a survey indicated the attendees enjoyed the convention and the keynote speaker.

Mr. Benejan said we all need to work together because we are all here for the children. He said the parents recognized that the board was fighting with each other. He urged there be a policy that board members not attack parents, just as the public is not allowed to attack board members during public speaking. He said Ms. Pereira liked to attack parents. He said Mr. Sokolovic was a bullying person.

Jennifer Wieland said she was a Bassick mom of two graduates with another graduate coming in June. She said she believed the board was supposed to be working together with a common goal. She said board members should remember the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you wish them to do unto you.

Ms. Wieland said she graduated from PLTI, the Parent Leadership Training Institute, which induced how to figure out what the problem was, address the problem and work together to come up with solutions. She said the board members should lead by example.

Ms. Wieland said she raised three productive members of society and urged the board do their job as board members.

Tammy Bogdanyi, secretary of the Parent Convention, thanked the board members who attended the convention. She said last week Dr. Williams informed her last week that she was not a parent of Bassick High. She said that although she does not have a child who attends the school, the PAC bylaws from August 2013 indicate parents include parents and their legal spouses, custodial grandparents and legal guardians. She said on March 3, 2018, she married a man who has a child who is a freshman student at Bassick, which makes her a parent.

Ms. Bogdanyi said she was told she was not allowed in the PTSO room or allowed to use any school supplies or computers. She said the PTSO is funded by Priority Grant money and the paper she used was bought by that grant. She said she had every right to use the items as a parent. She added that she was a parent of Bassick and BMA.

Ms. Bogdanyi asked how a board member was able to walk into a school and demand to see cameras regarding what time she came into the building, what she had in her hand and what time she left the

building. She said they should have just asked her and she would have told them.

Ms. Bogdanyi said our children aren't allowed to bully, but board members are allowed to bully.

Mr. Bradley arrived at the meeting.

Sauda Baraka said Dr. Johnson was an incredible and highly intelligent educator in the district and we should be proud to have her on board as our leader. She said Dr. Johnson is demanding that high standards for our students are maintained. She said it was disconcerting to read there was a discord on the board with respect to her.

Ms. Baraka said she served as the chair of the Facilities Committee on the board and was quite aware of the incredible learning opportunities and 21st century design provided by the building located at 379 Bond Street. She urged the board name the building after Lillian Whiting Hamilton.

Ms. Baraka said when Harding High opened its doors in 1925 the school board was then made up of white men who espoused discrimination and racism. She said in 1983 the Lincoln Elementary School was replaced and renamed for Paul Lawrence Dunbar. She urged the future graduates of the school be given a diploma that bears a name of significance and pride, the first African-American teacher in Bridgeport.

Crystal Mack said the board works for the public. She said Dr. Williams has been professional and caring. She added that she met Thurgood Marshall in 1975 in Washington, D.C. She said she was for equality and equal opportunity in education. She said she was part of the first black family to live in Trumbull. She asked the board members to tell her which one of them had raised a little black or Hispanic child.

Ms. Mack said she has attended PPT meetings. She said students receive fake high school diplomas even though they can't read or write. She said she had the utmost respect for Dr. Johnson, but criticized Supt. Vallas and Supt. Salcedo as being clueless. She said there were bigger problems than fighting over a school name. She also spoke in support of the principals of Read School and Hooker School, as well as Carmen Perez-Dickson. She added that she could not believe the principal of Tisdale School received an award.

Ms. Mack said charter schools cause all the problems by robbing our kids' resources.

Clyde Nicholson said Supt. Johnson was being treated unfairly because it was said she didn't get everything done in one year. He said the same thing applied to Dr. Williams at Bassick. He said if it's not racism, what is it?

Mr. Nicholson said Mayor Ganim or Mario Testa had never attended a board meeting. He said the mayor was going to run for governor, but he won't fund the schools. He said kids are getting shot every day in Bridgeport, but Joe Ganim had plenty of time to run for governor. He said if Mayor Ganim was elected governor he would leave and go back to Alabama.

Mr. Nicholson said he was told they were removing landmines from the Harding High site. He said he observed large trucks coming into the site. He said this should be addressed before the naming of the school. He added that he was willing to contribute \$500 to a lawsuit brought by the board against the mayor for failure to fund the schools.

Kenneth DuBose Sr. said he wanted to speak at Tuesday's cancelled meeting. He said the name of Harding High should be kept.

The next item was discussion and possible action on naming the new high school being constructed at 379 Bond Street.

Dr. Johnson said the naming committee consisted of two community members, a teacher, one administrator, one PAC member and two students. There were meetings held at Hall Neighborhood House, Harding High and Aquaculture School. The panel voted 4-1 in favor of naming the building Warren Harding High School. There was one vote in

favor of naming the building Lillian Whiting Hamilton High School.

Mr. Bradley moved “*we rename the new building and keep the name to Warren Harding High School.*” The motion was seconded by Mr. Walker.

Mr. Bradley said he insisted we follow our policies in order for the community to have a voice in naming the facility. He said he was happy to see the passion it has elicited from the community, especially those who signed the petition in favor of the Harding name. He said his hope is that we build so many new schools that we can highlight wonderful people in Bridgeport who have been pillars in the community such as pointed out by Ms. Baraka. He encouraged the board vote unanimously to keep the Harding name

Mr. Sokolovic said he was about to become very unpopular. He said he understood the passion, but he did not understand how so much effort went into naming the school while the board was facing millions and millions of dollars of budget cuts. He said our priorities are misplaced. He said whatever name the school has it will still be underfunded.

Ms. Pereira said as the only board member who graduated from Harding she had never met anybody from the school who said they loved Warrant Harding, the president. She said the school had been in the East End for 94 years and was part of Bridgeport’s

history. She noted it was not just alumni who were in support of the name, but many current and former staff members. She said blue and gold pride runs in her veins.

Mr. Taylor said because Mr. Sokolovic had not grown up in Bridgeport he does not understand the pride that is attached to Harding High. He said it is not a name, but a legacy.

The motion was approved by a 8-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Allen, Taylor, Weldon, Illingworth, Pereira, Walker, Martinez and Bradley. Mr. Sokolovic abstained.

Ms. Pereira moved that the item on the new advanced career curriculum pathway at Bassick be handled next. The motion was seconded by Mr. Walker and unanimously approved.

Mr. Walker moved that "*we approve the new Bassick advanced career curriculum.*" The motion was seconded by Mr. Bradley.

Mr. Walker said with the assistance of Rep. Stafstrom the plan will be presented at the state level as an economic development plan, while meeting the educational needs of our students. He asked the board members to look at the proposal like we're offering students a major in manufacturing pathways.

Mr. Taylor said he was in support of this. He said he wanted to be sure Mr. Blume's automotive program, which includes free tuition to Gateway College, was not affected.

Dr. Byron Williams, principal of Bassick High, said Bassick is the last piece of the puzzle to be fixed in Bridgeport. Every other high school has had an opportunity to become new again.

Rep. Steven Stafstrom said former board chair Joe Larcheveque and he started talking about this about two years ago. He said after the 2008 recession Connecticut started moving away from financial services jobs that had sustained it. He said currently there was a desperate need to fill 15,000 advanced manufacturing jobs in the state.

Rep. Stafstrom said a company in Bridgeport is one of the three places in the world building precision fuel pumps for backup generators. Its devices are used in the World Trade Center, the embassy in Iraq and the Statue of Liberty.

Rep. Stafstrom said this was a way to put Bridgeport folks back to work. He said the concept could be marketed to employers looking to relocate. He described it as a strategic program with the use of the STEAM program at Claytor School and the advanced manufacturing program at Housatonic Community College. He said after MIT, the University of

Bridgeport graduates more engineers than any other school in New England.

Joe Larcheveque said it was good to be back. He said we know a new Bassick is absolutely necessary, but sometimes getting the idea sold in Hartford and city hall is difficult. He said Richard Dupont, the director of advanced manufacturing at Housatonic Community College, joined in the effort. He said this type of plan was the way to go to work with the state and the city. He said private partnerships were potentially available with manufacturing companies.

Dr. Williams said the staff at Bassick put in very long hours working on the plan. He said the students would not only be college-ready, but also career-ready.

Dr. Williams said the focus of the presentation would be the advanced manufacturing pathway. The pathway would include automotive. He said advanced manufacturing was very computer-oriented.

Dr. Williams said another pathway would be medical career and health and a third would be construction technology and culinary arts. He said the Justice Education Center was footing the bill for a lot that was being done in construction technology and culinary.

Dr. Williams said there will be three pathways, but students will be able to be career- and college-ready by fulfilling the state requirements for graduation.

Dr. Williams said the laborers' union would be participating in the construction technology program. He said an employer near Batalla School was anxious to employ graduates of the new programs at Bassick.

Dr. Williams said 9th grade students at Bassick will be able to sample the different pathways at the school.

Dr. Williams discussed the slide depicting the liberal arts electives available to students who don't go into a pathway.

Dr. Williams said estimates have been made of the amount of students who will be in each pathway.

Crystal Mack was recognized. She said she was very impressed with this and it reminded her of what was available when Trumbull High was opened.

Rep. Stafstrom said the community needed to get behind whatever proposal comes out of the board in order to sell it to Hartford. He said he believed this gives us the best chance to get bumped up the list in Hartford. He said Pratt & Whitney recently announced it has to fill 5,000 jobs in Connecticut now.

Ms. Pereira suggested the board authorize the superintendent to write a letter of support on behalf of the board.

In response to a question, Dr. Williams said the School Governance Council was unanimously in support of this curriculum proposal.

Mr. Bradley said when he became the board chair he reached out to Joe Larcheveque, who insisted they walk through Bassick. He said his heart almost bled when he saw the condition of the school. He said he wanted to commend Mr. Larcheveque for pushing this plan in conjunction with Rep. Stafstrom.

Mr. Walker said the educational specification in the board members' packets is part of the application for the renovation-as-new Bassick project. He noted the School Governance Council was one hundred percent in support.

Mr. Larcheveque said he heard comments that the program would duplicate the approach of the state vocational-technical schools. He said the current vocational technical system could not address the needs of advanced manufacturing in Connecticut. He noted the success of the former Career & Craftsmanship School in the district in engaging students.

Mr. Sokolovic asked if obtaining teachers for the courses would require alternate routes to certification. Dr. Williams said one approach would be working with Housatonic to obtain certifications for those teaching.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Pereira moved *“that the superintendent write a letter on behalf of the Board of Education showing the board’s unanimous support and that Dr. Williams write a letter in coordination with the SGC showing their unanimous support for the new curriculum and pathway that we have discussed and approved here tonight.”*

The motion was seconded by Mr. Bradley.

In response to a question, Dr. Williams said he had no objection to writing a letter with the SGC.

Dr. Johnson suggested three letters be created: one by the board, one from the superintendent and one from the Bassick principal.

Ms. Pereira moved *“to amend the motion to authorize three separate letters coordinated by the superintendent; one from Dr. Williams in conjunction with SGC, one from the superintendent; and one on behalf of the Board of Education.”* The amendment was seconded by Mr. Bradley and unanimously approved.

The motion as amended was unanimously approved.

The next item was discussion and possible action on roof replacement projects at Bassick, JFK, Six to Six and partial roof replacement at Hooker School. Mr. Weldon said this is intended to finalize the projects to get reimbursement for them.

Mr. Weldon said the board members did not receive documents on the matter because none were submitted. He said the item would indicate the board was taking acceptance of the roofs and that they were put in according to specifications.

Mr. Bradley moved *“to accept as complete the roof replacement projects at Bassick High School, JFK, Six to Six and the partial roof replacement at Thomas Hooker School.”* The motion was seconded by Ms. Pereira and unanimously approved.

The next item was discussion and possible approval of the 2018-19 University School contract.

Dr. Johnson said the board was provided with two contracts. One is for special education similar to out-of-district placement. The cost is \$25,000 per student, for 40 students in the 2018-19 school year. The costs will be paid out in ten monthly payments. She said this keeps the district in compliance with PPTs and other state regulations.

Dr. Johnson said the second contract applies to students who are expelled from school. The University School can accommodate up to 30 students at a total cost of \$180,000, also paid in ten monthly installments. The program is run in alignment with the district's calendar.

Dr. Johnson said the contracts are presented to the district in May so the University School may plan for the fall. In response to a question, Dr. Johnson said the matter did not come through a board committee, nor were the contracts reviewed by Shipman & Goodwin.

Margaret Zowine said the special education component had been at a much higher rate and it was agreed under Supt. Vallas to reduce the cost. She added the program has been in place for forty years.

Ms. Pereira said her concern was it was a very slim contract and believed the board's attorneys should look at it to make sure the board was protected. She noted the two contracts total almost \$1,180,000.

Ms. Zowine said the time-sensitive matter was the need to sign teachers at the school to contracts.

Ms. Pereira said she was not opposed to the contracts, but greater protections for the board were needed.

Mr. Illingworth said he shared those concerns. He said he visited the program years ago and appreciates the work that is done. He asked if the program was accredited. He noted accreditation was needed for the district to get reimbursed. He said a former board member, Dr. Kelleher, offered her assistance to help to gain accreditation.

John DiDonato, chief of specialized instruction reform, said during the last five years the state has granted The University School a relationship with the district that is not called accreditation, but it allows the district to report the students attending the school as under our authority. He said the question of reimbursement of tuition is moot because of the cost of tuition does not meet the level required.

Mr. DiDonato said he can report the program provides the requisite number of hours, certified teachers and implementation of IEPs. He said it provides a small environment at the high school level for students who need that. He said of the eight students who graduated this year, two are going on to college.

Mr. Bradley suggested the contracts be approved with the caveat that they are presented to our attorneys or the city attorney's office.

Mr. Taylor said he was probably the only member of the board that attended The University School. He

was so bad he was thrown out of the school. He said the board would be off its rocker to pay \$25,000 a year, which he described as an exorbitant amount. He noted the students could be sent to Fairfield Prep for \$18,000.

In response to a question, Ms. Zowine said the school could not operate for \$18,000 per student and is almost running at a deficit currently. She said the school faces costs similar to the district like clinical psychologists and special education expenses.

Mr. Taylor said he would vote for the contract at \$18,000 per student.

In response to a question, Mr. DiDonato there were alternatives to the program such as CES, Boys' and Girls' Village and ACES, which are out-of-district programs that are much more expensive. He noted the students who attend the school are placed by there by PPTs as the appropriate placement.

Mr. Sokolovic asked that the costs be analyzed to see if the reimbursement rate for an out-of-district placement would be more cost-effective than The University School.

Mr. DiDonato said a more complete analysis would be needed. He said he believed Ms. Siegel reviewed the question that was raised when the contract was negotiated.

Ms. Pereira noted the teachers at the school were not board employees. She said if the item had come through the Teaching & Learning Committee a lot of the questions would have been answered by now. She said she was more than happy to support the contracts following review by attorneys.

Ms. Zowine said the matter was approached the same way it had always been done and no one had ever asked for anything else. She said there were currently 33 students that have been referred to the school by PPTs.

Mr. Taylor said he had no sympathy for an outside agency that was charging us an exorbitant amount of money. He noted he heard people in the audience speak about the need for the board to work together, including a person from Trumbull who spoke for a half an hour that told him I work for them and they can't even vote for me.

Mr. Weldon suggested the Teaching & Learning Committee consider a special meeting to consider the matter.

Mr. Walker suggested the meeting be held at 4:30 on Wednesday, June 6. Ms. Pereira said that way the matter would be ready for the June 11th Regular Meeting.

The next item was on the budget gap.

Dr. Johnson said the last time the board was together it approved the removal of six assistant principal positions. She described the Option A presented to the board, which includes the elimination of the assistant IT director for \$136,786. She added the option includes eliminating the early childhood position, along with combining the math and science directors, totaling \$152,000.

Dr. Johnson said Option A includes a change in transportation policies for Grades 5 to 8 by increasing the busing limit by a quarter of a mile to 1.25 miles, for a \$548,000 savings. She said in-school suspension officers are included to be reduced by six positions, down to twelve, for a savings of \$336,000. Another aspect of the proposal would be eliminating two security guard positions for \$125,000. She added the Xerox contract would save \$26,000.

Dr. Johnson said Option B was also created, which would combine the literacy and the math and science director position, still eliminate the assistant IT director, but would only remove one assistant principal position with the two other administrative positions to be determined.

Ms. Pereira said the agenda item did not indicate what budget year the board was addressing. Mr. Weldon said the agenda items at prior meetings were

listed as budget gap. Mr. Sokolovic said the prior agenda items referenced the budget year.

Mr. Taylor said it was getting late. He moved "*the meeting be adjourned to avoid controversy and get a fresh day to review the technical data.*" Mr. Bradley seconded the motion.

Mr. Illingworth said he was okay with tabling the budget gap items, but the other three items had to be addressed at some point instead of just recycling them through meetings, even though he has to be at work at 6:00 in the morning,

Ms. Pereira said these were her agenda items and they had appeared on the agenda for the third time. She said she would like to address them, but due to her back pain she would be happy to adjourn and postpone the items to the next Regular Meeting.

The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod