

THOMPSON BOARD OF EDUCATION
Thompson Public Schools Auditorium
Monday, January 23, 2017
6:30 P.M.
Special Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order

Chairman William Witkowski called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Members Present:

Thomas Angelo
Shawn Brissette
Kathleen Herbert
Jody Houghton
Donna Godzik
Linda Jarmolowicz
William Witkowski

Members Absent:

Christopher Eichner
Joseph Lindley

Also present were:

Dr. Jolin, Megan Baker, Noveline Beltram, William Birch, Neal Breen, Ian Polun, Scott Sugarman, members of the public, employees of the Board of Education and a representative from the press.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Steven Herbert led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Citizens Comments

Joe Ptaszynski would like to see meeting notifications placed in the Villager, the Shoppers Guide and on the town website. He would also like to have the budget presentations on the school website for people to review along with the financial report.

Mike Krogul would like the Board to be forthcoming regarding the out-sourcing of school buses. He would like copies of the R.F.P. and feels he needs help to rectify his issues. Mr. Witkowski will be in contact.

William Witkowski made a few things clear before the budget discussion began. He stated that there is not \$400,000 left over in this current year's budget. He also stated that the Board saw for the first time on January 17, 2017 the budget presentation and financial report. The Board has not deliberated or discussed or decided on anything yet.

IV. Educational Update

Kathleen Herbert stated that on page 12 regarding new positions, they are all possible to have, but would like to compromise and phase them in over time. As an example, instead of hiring two social workers and two special education teachers, can the Board hire one of each for now to see if the positions are beneficial.

William Witkowski asked for clarification regarding the \$400,000 possible savings. Scott Sugarman explained that the \$400,000 is an out-of-district cost. A couple of students who have been on the budget for multiple years, they are now leaving the district for reasons of aging out, and others who are graduating. The Board has a unique opportunity to use that cost to re-invest in the school by adding new special education positions.

Thomas Angelo asked if the new financial statement handed out tonight includes the new positions. Neal Breen stated that all the recommended positions are budgeted for FY18.

Shawn Brissette asked if there were no added positions into the budget, would the increase be at zero percent. Neal Breen stated that if no new positions were added, the special education budget would increase as the district would have to out-place students at a cost to the district.

Shawn Brissette asked if there is a need for a pre-school teacher or more kindergarten help. Ms. Beltram stated it is hard to predict how many students will be coming into the district as of now. Kathleen Herbert stated she would possibly like to see three kindergarten paras hired as full time instead of all five.

William Witkowski does not agree to hire a full time assistant principal or a preschool teacher. He would like to hire more paras, a reading interventionist, IT technician, and would like more clarification on the Certified Behavior Analyst.

Donna Godzik asked why the proposed Math Interventionist and proposed Reading Specialist are necessary in the budget. Christopher Scott stated that students in the middle school are scoring below average in math and reading. He believes the two new positions will not only help the students who are scoring low, but those teachers could also focus on the gifted students.

Thomas Angelo stated that the \$400,000 is confusing for the budget process. Mr. Angelo would like to see a budget increase in facilities, hire a security/truancy officer, have more technology upgrades, textbook upgrades, and an increase in the arts. Dr. Jolin stated that those accounts do have an increase budgeted already.

Dr. Jolin will give an alternative budget presentation, without adding the proposed special education positions, see what our out-of-district costs are now as well as the BCBA cost, and see what hiring full-time paras would cost.

Shawn Brissette would like to have the bus RFP's analysis when it is completed. Dr. Jolin stated the Board may have that at the next meeting.

Thomas Angelo asked Noveline Beltram if adding full time paras would decrease the number of kindergarten classrooms. Ms. Beltram stated that the added kindergarten classroom this year was only to decrease the student enrollment in each classroom.

William Witkowski stated that the teachers' union are still considering the state insurance plan and needs a recommendation from the insurance consultant. Neal Breen will keep looking into this.

Donna Godzik stated that the other unions are interested in the state plan as well.

Thomas Angelo and Donna Godzik asked about having Board meetings on Saturdays.

Jody Houghton asked about the high budget increase in the high school athletic department. Megan Baker explained the increase is for new equipment for the fitness room.

Donna Godzik would like to see the cost of substitute teachers and paraprofessionals per day. Neal Breen will provide comparisons with other districts.

The next meeting will be on Monday, January 30th at 6:00pm.

V. Citizens' Comments

Joe Ptaszynski asked what the salary increase is for the teachers' union is, how many paraprofessionals the district has, and if they are both special education and regular education. William Witkowski will get the number of paras.

Pat Dumas expressed her concern with out-placing the school busses. She stated that the cost of field trips and sport trips will be a lot more expensive if out-servicing. Dr. Jolin thanked Ms. Dumas for her concern.

Steven Herbert suggested to post meeting agendas on the Town Website.

Jessica Bolte asked if the Board has looked into the Care for Kids program which the State may cut.

William Witkowski thanked Bill Birch for giving the tour of the complex.

VI. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned by Linda Jarmolowicz, seconded by Donna Godzik at 7:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Danielle M. Pederson
Recording Secretary, Board of Education

BOE approval of minutes: March 13, 2017