

THOMPSON BOARD OF EDUCATION
Thompson Middle School Media Center
Tuesday, June 23, 2015
7:00 P.M.
Special Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman William Witkowski called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

Members Present: Members Absent:

Thomas Angelo	Robert Bentley
Christopher Eichner	Ellen Corrado
Kathleen Herbert	
Jacqueline Lajoie	
Joseph Lindley	
Donna Lynch	
William Witkowski	

Also present were:

Dr. Jolin, Megan Baker, William Birch, Barbara Macauley, members of the Public, employees of the Board of Education and a representative from the press.

II. 2015-2016 Thompson School Budget Cuts

The Board of Education held a workshop on possible areas where cuts to the budget could be made to make up the \$300,000 cut from our requested 2015-2016 budget by the Board of Finance. We are doing this in response to the two (2) failed referenda. We used as our starting point a list developed by Neal Breen and Dr. Jolin in April 2015.

Dr. Jolin stated that Mr. Breen suggested that he could eliminate \$50,000 from the special education budget and the Transportation Director adjusted down her estimate of cluster bus stops for Ellis Tech and Killingly Vo-ag students from \$50,000 to \$38,000. This gave us a starting point of \$88,000, leaving a balance of \$212,000 to make up.

Teaching positions were tabled until the next meeting when we will have class size information. Class sizes and enrollment in Elementary and Middle School at Putnam and Killingly were also requested for the Board's analysis.

The BoE discussed closing the facility at night, charging more for Town and other organizations usage. This would require analysis of costs and revisiting our current fees. Dr. Jolin will assign this task to the appropriate person.

Pay for Play for Sports was raised although it is a painful subject when the objective is to educate the whole child. Deb Spinelli questioned when does the school require the payment? Is it before tryouts or after the child is accepted onto a team. She also stated she has trouble fielding a team for some less popular sports. Killingly has a pay to play program and is charging \$100 per year per child.

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Dr. Jolin said he would obtain Killingly's policy also stating that if we have one hundred High School athletes that would amount to \$10,000. Joe Lindley stated that we essentially have a pay to play program in place with all our fund raisers, raffles and ticket sales.

Kathleen Herbert suggested that we revisit an idea raised several years ago. That being closing off a section of the building. Our enrollment although steady is even lower than it was when we brought that idea forward.

Chris Eichner again raised the issue of paying Social Security on part-time and temporary employees. Dr. Jolin said he would have Mr. Breen look into that issue.

Chris Eichner also suggested that we have eighth graders take ninth grade classes. It would equate to having Advanced Placement classes for the Middle School.

After a lengthy discussion, Mr. Lindley commented that the cuts made over the past 6 years have been absorbed by the school staff and made invisible to the parents and citizens of the town. He recommended no further cuts to the teaching staff and students and recommended cutting those items that would have a direct impact on the tax payer instead of the student. He recommended cutting house to-house stops and clustering our bus stops. Charge Recreation, and other organizations our costs for using the facilities. Discontinue funding other Town activities and fund just our own activities.

He also stated that seeing the town budget always gets passed easier than the school budget that we should shift the cost of using the facility to the budget that is more likely to get passed.

Summary of Action Items for Dr. Jolin:

Get firmer estimates on facility usage and fees

Provide BOE with Class sizes at Thompson School District, Putnam and Killingly (Elementary & Middle Schools)

Provide BOE with Killingly pay for play Policy

Investigate paying Social Security to substitutes

Investigate pay to ride.

III. Citizen's Comments:

If you say that you are cutting school sports you will get every parent out to vote. Sports aren't everything, but they are an important part of the school spirit.

Have you considered pay to ride. Some schools charge to ride the school buses.

Also the Town possibly needs to consider breaking down the ballot into three pieces, The Town Budget, School Budget and Capital Budget.

Class sizes in the Elementary school were given verbally.

One citizen did not like the idea of seniors on the bus with younger children. Also, he didn't like the idea of children walking too far to a bus stop because our Town does not have adequate sidewalks.

Another citizen asked if we could meet in another room because it was hard to hear the Board from the back.

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There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted
Kathleen Herbert
Secretary, Board of Education

BOE approval of minutes: December 14, 2015