

Thompson Public Schools Joint Meeting

Thompson Board of Education Thompson Board of Finance Thompson Board of Selectmen

Thursday, March 9, 2017
Thompson Public Library Community Center Room 1
6:00 P.M.

Special Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order

Chairman William Witkowski called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Members Present BOE:

Thomas Angelo
Shawn Brisette
Jody Houghton
Joseph Lindley
Donna Godzik
Linda Jarmolowicz
William Witkowski

Members Present BOF:

Raymond Faucher
Susanne Witkowski
Rhonda Rooney
Larry Groh, Jr.
Orla McKiernan-Raftery
Jim Bellavance

Members Present BOS:

Kenneth Beausoleil
Steve Herbert

II. Discussion

A. School Bus Operations

William Witkowski introduced Attorney David Ryan.

The Board members and citizens were given a revised school bus cost analysis for review and discussion, along with information on DATTCO, and an updated school bus mileage report.

Discussion was held regarding the aging fleet. Joseph Lindley created an analysis of the current fleet, replacing school buses over the next 10 to 12 years showing how hard it will be to get caught up with new

buses which causes safety issues. Attorney David Ryan stated that DATTCO's proposal will take care of problems right from the beginning.

Joseph Lindley also stated that information from the DMV states that there are 8,036 total buses in services in the State of Connecticut, 246 of those are remaining for public schools, which equates to 96.93% of the buses transporting students which are privately owned.

William Witkowski stated that this is a Town wide issue and the safety of the students is important.

Larry Groh, Jr. commented on seatbelts on the school buses and the costs associated with that, and also the age of the current bus fleet. He also stated that the recent bus inspection was mainly for incomplete maintenance records, not mainly mechanical issues.

Susanne Witkowski requested a copy of the inspection reports. Dr. Jolin will get that information and share with all Boards.

Discussion was held regarding another meeting with the Boards. A meeting with the negotiations committee will be held on Monday, March 13th, and a possible combined meeting will be scheduled for March 23, 2017.

III. Citizens' Comments

Gary Brissette stated that he was the board chairman in Plainfield when they were beginning the privatization of their school buses and is willing to answer questions anyone may have.

Steve Houghton stated that he would have liked to see if the Town is in support of the privatization first, then take the next steps towards privatization if necessary.

Christine Campbell stated that the taxpayers should be asked if the fleet should be sold, as it should not be a Board of Education decision.

Donald Dunning asked if there was any analysis in Plainfield regarding senior drivers being fired to avoid paying for expensive drivers, and the hiring of new lower-salaried drivers.

Michael Krogul stated that he disagrees with the statements about keeping up with the purchasing of school buses over ten years. He also made statements regarding the cost of field trips through DATTCO, drivers being drug tested 4 times a year, and the cost savings for the school budget if no privatization.

Angela Newell asked if buses will still be available for the recreation department for the summer program.

William Witkowski stated that the Board of Education is exploring the option of privatizing. No decisions have been made.

IV. Adjournment

Motion by Thomas Angelo, seconded by Donna Godzik to adjourn the meeting at 7:02pm.

Motion – Passes. Unanimous.

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

BOE approval of minutes: April 3, 2017

Joint Meeting Approved Minutes
March 9, 2017