

**Madison Public Schools
Board of Education Regular Meeting
October 04, 2016
7:30 PM
Town Campus Hammonasset Room**

MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to Order / Attendance

The public meeting of the Madison Board of Education was called to order by Chair Jean Fitzgerald at 7:30 p.m. Chairman Fitzgerald led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Jessica Bowler; Galen Cawley; John Dean; Jean Fitzgerald; Alison Keating; Seth Klaskin; Happy Marino; Katie Stein

Also present: Thomas Scarice, Superintendent of Schools; Gail Dahling-Hench, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; students; and community members.

2. School / Community Session - 7:30 p.m.

2.1. Public Participation

3. Board of Education Student Representatives' Report
Aidan Hughes and Emily Baker

4. Superintendent's Report
Thomas R. Scarice

4.1. General District Update

4.2. Other Matters

5. Board Members' Comments

Ms. Fitzgerald read the following letter into record from Frank Costanzo.

9/20/16

Good evening Board of Education,

My name is Frank Costanzo and I live at 251 River Rd. I apologize for not attending in person tonight but the Norwalk Public School District for whom I work also has their public meeting.

My wife and I are both educators and have a first grader that attends Island Avenue School. We chose to live in Madison and specifically within the Island Avenue attendance zone area because of our appreciation for having a neighborhood school.

We have grown to love our school, the staff and principal. It is integral to the neighborhood in the southern part of town as one can observe from our walking students and the families that use the

playground in the evening. I'm perplexed as to why a town like Madison which purports to valuing education would be willing to sacrifice one or two or all three local elementary schools in favor of a single, large, new k-2 facility in order to reduce costs.

As the COO for the Norwalk Public Schools, I have been leading the school district's facilities master plan where we are developing a plan to build a new school and expect to renovate, as new, two other current neighborhood schools. Much has gone into our planning. Families and staff here support local, neighborhood schools despite the slightly higher costs associated with operating them.

The research suggests that small, neighborhood schools offer communities much more than larger ones. They give people and children a sense of place. They are a civic asset and enhance school culture by promoting better parental involvement, and allowing siblings to stay together for longer. From an instructional perspective, schools with multiple grade levels enable staffs to vertically collaborate around the same learners in a single building for much longer, thereby informing the child's subsequent teacher with consistent and deliberate planning. They also reduce busing costs and promote healthy living. In fact, Norwalk is studying the feasibility of designing K-8 schools overtime.

Recent education reform indicates that local Boards have been working to support and preserve smaller, more intimate school settings that are integral to the neighborhoods they serve. And as education reform moves away from batch instruction in favor of mastery learning, I ask why Madison would be moving in the opposite direction by eliminating our present K-4 learning continuum and all of the pedagogical opportunities allowed by it, in favor of a K-2 model? Most parents of early grade children would prefer not to see their second grader have to unnecessarily transition to a new building and new staff when entering 3rd grade.

In the short-term, there are cost advantages to closing one or more elementary schools. But over the long-term, I question whether new families looking for a home on the shoreline will not opt for towns like Guilford or Branford that continue to operate neighborhood schools where staff and families build relationships over time and see the local school as an extension of their home.

The values and beliefs of this school board and the superintendent are at stake here. I would encourage you to support keeping Island Avenue School and our other elementary schools open and go back to the drawing board with respect to this Facilities Master Plan. It is in the long-term best interest of our children and the town of Madison to do so.

Best,

Frank Costanzo
251 River Road

6. Board Committees / Liaison Updates (Ref. Bylaw #9450)

6.1. Planning Committee

Members: Jessica Bowler, Chair; Galen Cawley, Alison Keating

School Utilization Facilities Study

District Strategic Objectives

6.2. Personnel Committee

Members: John Dean, Chair, Alison Keating, Happy Marino

6.3. Policy Committee

Members: Katie Stein Chair; Seth Klaskin, Matt Keller

6.3.1. Policy #1340 – Otherwise Lawful Possession of Firearms on School Property
(Second Reading)

6.3.2. Policy #6080.22 – Homebound/Hospital Instruction
(Second Reading)

6.3.3. Policy #6146 – Graduation Requirements
(Second Reading)

6.4. Finance Committee

Members: Alison Keating, Chair; Alison Keating, Jessica Bowler, Happy Marino

6.5. LEARN Liaison

Katie Stein

7. Audience Response to Information Presented (Ref. Bylaw #9540.10)

8. Consent Agenda (Ref. Bylaw #9540.2 and #9540.8)

8.1. Bills Payable: \$30,678.73 2015-2016 Budget; \$261,051.29 2016-2017 Budget

8.2. Line Transfers: \$15,377.14

8.3. Budget Expenditure as of: September 28, 2016

8.4. Donation: \$1,204.00 to Island Avenue Elementary School for student field trip from Island Avenue Elementary PTO.

MOTION: by Keating seconded by Klaskin
to approve the Consent Agenda.

AYES: Bowler; Cawley; Dean; Fitzgerald; Keating;
Klaskin; Marino; Stein

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED: 8-0

9. Action Item: Minutes of the September 20, 2016 Board of Education Meeting (Ref. Bylaw #9540.9)

MOTION: by Dean seconded by Stein to approve the
minutes of the September 20, 2016 Board of Education
Meeting.

AYES: Bowler; Cawley; Dean; Keating; Klaskin;
Marino; Stein

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Fitzgerald

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

10. Old Business

No old business was discussed.

11. Future Agenda Items

No future items were discussed.

12. Meetings / Dates of Importance

October 2016 Calendar

13. Adjournment

MOTION: by Dean seconded by Bowler to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

AYES: Bowler; Cawley; Dean; Fitzgerald; Keating; Klaskin; Marino; Stein

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN:

MOTION CARRIED: 8-0