

The combined regular meeting of the Board of Education of the City of Vineland was held in the Board Room, 625 Plum Street, Vineland, New Jersey, Wednesday, July 6, 2016 at 6:07 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. English presiding and the following members present: Ms. Acosta, Mr. Bordley, Ms. Codispoti, Mr. DeWinne, Mr. Jennings, Ms. Rios and Mr. Sbrana. Absent: Mr. Pagano.

Also present: Dr. Guccio, Superintendent, Mr. Frey and Mr. Frangipani, Assistant Superintendents, Mrs. Haley, Board Secretary, Dr. Rossi, Executive Director of Personnel, Mr. DeSanto, Solicitor, press and public. Absent: None.

Mr. English announced that in compliance with the New Jersey meeting law commonly referred to as "The Sunshine Law," the Vineland Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be sent to the following, announcing time and place thereof, agenda, etc.: The Daily Journal, the Atlantic City Press, the Grapevine, Clerk - City of Vineland, and Administrative Office Public Bulletin Board.

Flag Salute:

Mr. English asked for a moment of silence for Charlene Zoerb, who was the district's NJ School Board Association Representative, who recently passed away.

Resolution:

Mrs. Haley read a resolution to convene into executive session for the following reasons as outlined in N.J.S.A. 10-4-12. Any collective bargaining agreement, or the terms and conditions of which are proposed for inclusion in any collective bargaining agreement, including the negotiation of terms and conditions with employees or representatives of employees of the public body. Specify contract: Labor Negotiations with VASA, Non-Certificated Supervisors, School Psychologists and UAW. Any matters falling within the attorney-client privilege, to the extent that confidentiality is required in order for the attorney to exercise his ethical duties as a lawyer. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board of Education hereby declares that its discussion of the aforementioned subject(s) may be made public at a time when the Board Attorney advises the Board of Education that the disclosure of the discussion will not detrimentally affect any right, interest or duty of the School District or any other entity or person with respect to said discussion.

Motion:

Upon motion by Mr. Jennings, seconded by Ms. Codispoti, the resolution was passed. All Members voted "yes."

Special

Presentation (s):

Dr. Guccio introduced Ms. Jane Eisenhower and Ms. Christine Nolan from the South Jersey Land and Water Trust to discuss a land donation to the Vineland Public Schools

Ms. Eisenhower said the South Jersey Land and Water Trust is a private non-profit land conservation organization. She said their role is to protect and preserve the natural habitat of the Southern New Jersey region. Ms. Eisenhower said they were contacted last year by the owner of the 48 acres of land located across the street from Vineland High School who wanted to donate the land. She said they came up with a plan with the land owner and thought it would be a wonderful property to donate to the Board of Education for educational purposes as well as environmental protection. Ms. Eisenhower said this is a wonderful opportunity for both entities. She discussed the deed of conservation restrictions along with the permitted and prohibited activities on the land.

Mr. English said the committee has been looking at this since December 2015 and the timing was tight to make a decision. He said there have been further discussions on the land and the committee wants to make sure the entire Board is okay with this. Mr. English said as our budget gets tight year after year we have this piece of property that has many stipulations attached to it. He asked if we could give the property back if we no longer can afford to maintain it. Ms. Eisenhower said you would have the option to sell or donate the property to another entity. She said the involvement with the South Jersey Land and Water Trust would be that we own the conservation easement and would stipulate all of the restrictions that we agreed to if the property is transferred. Ms. Eisenhower said in terms of the land trust taking back the property that is something we cannot predict but it can be considered. Mrs. Haley said in May we spoke with Mr. Castellini, our Insurance Broker, who said there is no additional premium for liability protection of the vacant land. Mr. English said Mr. Robbins, our Athletic Director, has been involved in the process along with Mr. Frey who was involved with the agriculture piece. Mr. English said that he walked through the property and feels it is nice for what we are looking to do in the future along with being a good investment.

Mr. Jennings asked if Mr. Robbins can present ideas on what he has proposed for the land.

Mr. DeWinne asked if there has been any issues with homeless people living on the property. Ms. Eisenhauer said we have not had any problems brought to our attention.

Mr. Robbins discussed some of the athletic plans for the property.

Mr. Frey, Assistant Superintendent, explained some of the agriculture curriculum opportunities for the property, which we are very excited about.

Mr. DiDomenico, Associate Solicitor, said there is a onetime cost of about \$1,500 for Phase I.

Mr. Jennings thanked the Administrators and Mr. Robbins for being willing to move forward with this.

Dr. Gruccio introduced Ms. Lindsay Thies and Ms. Miriam Jamil, Vineland High School teachers to discuss the 2016-2017 Senior Class trip.

Ms. Thies said they are here tonight to seek permission for the Senior Class of 2017 trip to Orlando, Florida. She said we would like to go to Walt Disney World and Universal Studios. Ms. Thies said they believe this trip will be beneficial for the senior class educationally as well as helping to increase the classes sense of unity and morale.

Dr. Gruccio introduced Mr. Keith Salerno, Executive Director of Purchasing, to present the new purchasing manual.

Mr. Salerno said tonight he would like to discuss the hard work, changes, reorganization and training that has been done since February 1st in the Purchasing Department located at the warehouse. He said in early August meet and greets will be done with the local vendors. Mr. Salerno said he will be visiting the local vendors to explain the purchasing process and hopes to have an annual vendor fair every October. He asked for the Board's patience and guidance during this time of change.

Mr. English said to see all this happening in purchasing is a good thing and he is glad to see we are moving in the right direction.

Dr. Gruccio introduced Mr. Frangipani, Assistant Superintendent, to present the 2015-2016 Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Report.

Mr. Frangipani said tonight he will be reviewing the February 2015 through July 2016 HIB Report, which is required twice a year. He said a HIB is based on a characteristic of an individual. Mr. Frangipani said HIB incidents have to substantially disrupt the school or a student's learning, cause physical or emotional harm, be insulting or demeaning or create a hostile educational environment. He presented an example of a HIB incident and reviewed the result of the HIB Report with the Board. Mr. Frangipani said in September we are going to improve our documentation investigation and will be going to an online reporting system called HIBster. He said we will be providing our school safety teams with additional training. Mr. Frangipani said we are working closely with Rowan University on a School Safety Grant, which is a 4 year research based grant. He said if we are awarded the grant we will receive 4.9 million dollars over 4 years.

Approval of Minutes: Upon motion by Mr. Jennings, seconded Ms. Codispoti, the minutes were approved from June 1, 2016 and June 8, 2016. All Members voted "yes" except Ms. Codispoti who voted "yes" on the June 8, 2016 minutes but "abstained" on June 1, 2016 minutes.

Solicitor's Report: None.

Public Comment on
Agenda Items:

Brian Buglio
Mr. Buglio expressed his concern in regards to being transferred.

Jaime Burgos
Mr. Burgos expressed his concern in regards to being transferred.

Renee Carfagno
Ms. Carfagno expressed her concern in regards to being transferred.

Charles Gaudio

Mr. Gaudio spoke in support of not transferring Jaime Burgos and Kim Rivera from Vineland High School North.

Mya Lopez

Ms. Lopez spoke in support of not transferring Kim Rivera from Vineland High School North.

Daun Moir

Ms. Moir spoke in support of not transferring Kim Rivera from Vineland High School North.

Cindy Paterno

Ms. Paterno expressed her concern in regards to the transfers in the district, which are not in the best interest of our students.

Kim Scarpa

Ms. Scarpa expressed her concern in regards to being transferred.

Vicky Miller

Ms. Miller expressed her concern in regards to working for Insight and questioned if they were ever approved. She asked if she is no longer employed by the Vineland Board of Education can she run for School Board.

Mr. English told Ms. Miller that we will get back to her with an answer in regards to the School Board election.

Mrs. Haley said Insight was approved on June 8, 2016 and all Board members voted “yes.”

Dr. Rossi said employees were notified through Aesop email and through a statement of assurance that a contracted service may be employed. He said at today’s Insight seminar they did explain wages. Ms. Miller said Insight did not explain wages and said that they did not know what the wages would be because it would have to be voted upon at the next Board meeting. Dr. Rossi said that was at yesterday’s seminar. He said at today’s seminar Insight clarified that the wages for substitute personnel are the same as they are now. Mrs. Haley said substitute rates were approved a few months ago by the Board.

Mr. English asked Mr. DeSanto if he can entertain discussion with the Board about this current situation before moving forward. Mr. DeSanto said yes. Mr. English asked if any Board member has a question or comment about this.

Ms. Rios asked if we will continue to use our regular substitutes along with this outside company. Dr. Rossi said we will not be using our substitutes in teaching, classroom aides and guidance counselors. He said we shall retain secretarial, security and transportation substitutes. Ms. Rios asked if this was discussed with the unions. Dr. Rossi said the substitutes are not union members but he has had discussions with the UAW but he is not sure about the VEA.

Ms. Codisoti asked if the substitute nurses will be through Insight. Dr. Rossi said they are not on the Insight bid.

Mr. English asked what the advantage is for doing this. Dr. Rossi said we are baring costs through the Affordable Care Act, which requires benefits after 30 hours or more. He said this is not a budgeted item and there are payroll taxes, pension contributions and workers compensation premium costs.

Mr. DeSanto said he has been working with administration on the Insight contract and this was the most advantageous proposal to the district. He said Insight is the outside provider for certain substitutes and the other substitutes are covered elsewhere. Mr. DeSanto said Insight is the outside provider that has been awarded the contract for these services.

Mr. English asked if you are employed by Insight is there a chance that you may be working in another school district. Dr. Rossi said Insight would prefer that Vineland residents work in Vineland but they cannot limit them.

Recommendations:

B. Proposed for review or discussion or adoption by Board Members: None.

Approval of Bills: Upon motion by Ms. Codispoti, seconded by Mr. Jennings, the bills were approved and warrants issued for same. All Members voted “yes” (\$21,112,871.49).

Committee Reports: Ms. Codispoti said discussed at the June 29th Curriculum & Instruction Committee was the Vineland High School French textbooks, possibly purchasing a new vehicle for the communications department, and Camelot.

Mr. Sbrana recommended to continue conversation with the entire Board about our default sharing of content produced by our communication department.

Mr. English asked if we are paying Camelot for full capacity. Mr. Frangipani said it is our responsibility to add students. Mr. English asked if Camelot is interested in taking in middle school students. Mr. Frangipani said they are interested however it is a different curriculum to work with 7th and 8th graders. He said we are currently using the Educere Program with support from the high school teachers. Mr. Frangipani said if we add that next level then we will have to bring in middle school teachers to support the curriculum. Mr. English said that will be discussion that we will continue to entertain. He expressed his concern in regards to guidance at the middle schools and wants to make sure it is monitored.

Emergent Item(s)

(with prior approval)

The Board approve to accept the following funding:
2016-2017 Perkins Secondary Consolidated Formula Grant
In the amount of\$99,155.00

Motion:

A motion was made by Ms. Acosta, seconded by Mr. DeWinne, to approve the 2016-2017 Perkins Secondary Consolidate Formula Grant in the amount of \$99,155. All Members voted “yes.”

Public:

Justine Lopez
Ms. Lopez spoke in support of not transferring Kim Rivera from Vineland High School North.

Kim Piccari

Ms. Piccari expressed her concern in regards to being transferred.

Lou Russo

Mr. Russo said his hands are tied and feels badly for the people who are being transferred. He reminded the Board that they had the capacity to lessen these affects and five Board members voted in a way that made tonight worse. Mr. Russo said that Dr. Rossi has worked tirelessly to make the personnel plan work that the Board gave him. He said Dr. Rossi worked very hard to keep everyone employed and this is the product. Mr. Russo said you need to raise revenue because we are not getting any more money from the State. He said there are a lot of non-tenured people who were hired during the past year and a half who will not be coming back. Mr. Russo said as all of his colleagues have come up to speak many of the Board members are looking down at their computers. He asked for the dignity of the Board's attention while he and others are speaking. Mr. Russo said that the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) has helped to get the money moving for the HVAC work being done at Vineland High School. He reminded everyone that the deadline for running for School Board is July 25th. Mr. Russo said the Vineland Education Association (VEA) does not represent substitute teachers and are only representatives of full-time certificated employees. He said that we have faced catastrophic substitute shortages during the last year and hopes it will be fixed in September.

Kim Rivera

Ms. Rivera expressed her concern in regards to safety in the girl's locker room and urged the Board to reconsider the placements.

Kim Burgos

Ms. Burgos expressed her concern in regards to safety in the girls' locker room. She also spoke in support of her husband not being transferred from Vineland High School.

Tammy Smith-Halter

Ms. Smith-Halter expressed her concern in regards to being transferred 3 times in 4 years.

Jaime Burgos

Mr. Burgos spoke in support of staying at Vineland High School.

Kate Checkley

Ms. Checkley spoke in support of Brian Buglio not being transferred from Wallace Middle School.

Monya Fuller

Ms. Fuller expressed her concern in regards to being transferred. She also expressed her concern in regards to someone she knows who has filed a very detailed complaint, which has not reached the Board.

Ron Walker

Mr. Walker spoke on behalf of 4 teachers who taught his children. He urged the Board to make sure these moves are being made for the best of our ability and students. Mr. Walker challenged Vineland Administrators and Board members to go to Trenton and fight for more funding.

Board Member

Remarks:

Ms. Acosta thanked everyone for the roles that they play in our children's lives. She said that she decided to run for school board because she had to get involved. Ms. Acosta said the budget deficit that we are facing is enormous and will continue to grow. She said that central administration has had a difficult time trying to figure it all out and she does not envy their positions. Ms. Acosta said it is time for our community as a whole to take a more active role in our children's education. She said all of her decisions are based on what is in the best interest of our students.

Mr. Sbrana echoed the comments made by Ms. Acosta. He believes the Board often has difficult decisions to make and the more information they have the better decisions they can make. Mr. Sbrana wished everyone a safe and happy summer.

Ms. Rios thanked everyone who came out tonight. She also thanked Mr. Russo for the clarification on the substitutes. Ms. Rios said transfers are day to day operations but the Board makes the decisions to decide where they want to go with this. She apologized for looking at her computer a lot in order to follow what is going on. Ms. Rios said she has been on the Board for 8 years and chooses to be here because she cares.

Mr. Bordley apologized to the class of 2016 for not being able to attend the graduation due to work commitments. He said that he has great respect for everything the teachers do in this district. Mr. Bordley said in his career he has been moved around to just about every division and sometimes he grew to love it. He said hopefully we will do what is in the best interest of our students.

Ms. Codispoti echoed the comments made by her fellow Board members. She thanked everyone who spoke tonight supporting their colleagues. Ms. Codispoti said when she is looking at her computer she is listening but also looking at her notes. She said that she is here for our students and every Board member takes their job very seriously. Ms. Codispoti said she tries to attend every activity to see what our students are doing and how they are performing. She wished everyone a fun, safe summer.

Mr. DeWinne said we are spoiled in Vineland and changes are coming. He said tonight he was prepared to vote “yes” for all of the Superintendent’s changes but feels we need more time. Mr. DeWinne said the placements vote was just “tabled” and we will reconvene on it.

Dr. Gruccio said this is not an easy process. She thanked Dr. Rossi for all the endless hours that he put in trying to do what is right to ensure that no one loses a job. Dr. Gruccio said there are many things on this list that we are not happy about but our first priority is to make sure that everyone is employed. She said every day we will continue to make changes and put people where they prefer to be to make the situation better. Dr. Gruccio extended sympathies to Mrs. Braxton, Principal of D’Ippolito School, on the loss of her father and Mrs. Meyers, Vice Principal at Vineland High School, on the loss of her mother.

Report/Remarks by
Board President:

Mr. English addressed Mr. Russo and said the Board does what is best for the taxpayers. He said his fellow Board members listen and can hear and do not need to be scolded as far as what they do with their computers. Mr. English told Mr. Russo that he has disrespected the Board twice and he thinks that Mr. Russo is better than that. He said we have heard different things this evening. Mr. English said that he preaches communication, collaboration and transparency. He thinks there are still enough good people here who want to do what is right.

Mr. English said tonight we have heard things that he honestly hopes are not true. He said transfers and change are a tough thing for anyone to digest. Mr. English thanked everyone who came out tonight.

Adjournment:

Upon motion by Ms. Codispoti, seconded by Mr. Bordley, the Board adjourned the meeting to executive session by voice vote at 9:54 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Helen G. Haley
Board Secretary

HGH:dt

