

The 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, October 8, 2014 at 7:01 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. Medio presiding and the following members present: Mr. Baruffi, Mr. DeWinne, Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. English, Mr. Jennings, Ms. Morello, Ms. Rios and Mr. Ulrich. Absent: None.

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

Mr. Medio 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, Clerk - City of Vineland, and Administrative Office Public Bulletin Board.

Flag Salute: Students from Mennies Elementary School led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Resolution: None.

Special

Presentation (s): Mr. Medio introduced Mr. Don Robbins, Athletic Director, to honor the Vineland High School Crew Team Members.

Mr. Robbins introduced Joe LaRosa, Head Crew Coach. Mr. LaRosa thanked the Board for their support and introduced the crew team members.

Approval of Minutes: Upon motion by Ms. Morello, seconded by Mr. DiGiorgio, the minutes were approved from July 2, 2014, July 9, 2014, August 6, 2014, August 13, 2014, August 27, 2014, September 3, 2014 and September 10, 2014. All Members voted "yes" except Ms. Morello, Mr. Ulrich and Mr. English who voted "yes" on all minutes but "abstained" on July 2, 2014 and July 9, 2014 and Ms. Rios who voted "yes" on all minutes but "abstained" on September 3, 2014.

Report of the  
Secretary/Custodian  
Of School Monies:

Upon motion by Ms. Morello, seconded by Mr. DiGiorgio, the reports of the Secretary and Custodian of School Monies for the month July of 2014, which are in agreement were approved as submitted and on file in the Minute Book, and the Board approved its monthly certification of budgetary major account fund status and the Board Secretary's monthly certification as on file with the Secretary. All Members voted "yes."

Solicitor's Report: None.

Public Comment on  
Agenda Items:

Recommendations:

Mr. Medio made a recommendation to suspend policy and accept the recommendation of the VHS Historical Society to name the pool after John Casadia.

Motion:

A motion was made by Ms. Morello, seconded by Mr. Baruffi, to suspend policy and accept the recommendation of the VHS Historical Society to name the pool after John Casadia.

Mr. Ulrich said he thought this was discussed at the last meeting to move this to the Policy & Personnel Committee and to only suspend on emergent items. Ms. Morello said during and after the last meeting it became pretty clear that no one had a problem with this. She said that she spoke with Mr. DeSanto and the piece of this policy that needs to be changed can be done at the meeting, which was done at other meetings for other issues. Mr. Ulrich said it seems like a point of convenience that when policy affects the Board we can suspend it and move in a non-emergent situation. He said if the district or an administrator did something wrong we would criticize the policy issue. Mr. Ulrich said he does not see where this is an emergent item and at last week's meeting it was agreed upon that this would move to Policy & Personnel to be discussed. Ms. Morello said her recollection is that nobody had a problem with this and we would discuss and amend the policy at the Personnel & Policy meeting. Mr. Ulrich said that is not what we are doing. He said we are suspending our policy on an emergent item, which Mr. DeSanto said normally suspension of Board policy would be left to emergent items. Mr. Ulrich said he does not see how this is emergent and bypasses our Board policy system. He said nothing against Mr. Casadia but he does not think we should be doing this because it is not an emergent situation and the quote was to see what the flavor of the Board was in the meeting. Mr. Medio said the flavor of the Board was to name the pool and look at the policy afterwards then go on from there. Mr. Ulrich said it seems like it is a convenient Board of Committees.

Mr. English requested clarification from the Board Solicitor on this.

Mr. DeSanto said the suspension of policies should be the exception not the rule. He said generally it is applied to emergent situations but does not have to be if the pleasure of the Board is to suspend the policy.

Mr. English asked if we are considering this an emergent item. Ms. Morello said she does not know and Board members can vote yes to do this now or vote no and we will do it later through committee. She said the naming of the Veterans Memorial School stage for Mark Melamed flew through.

Dr. Guccio said with Mr. Melamed it was emergent based on his health condition and what the Board wished to do. Ms. Morello said we did not suspend the policy to do that. Dr. Guccio said that she thought we did.

Mr. Jennings agrees with Mr. Ulrich that we need to be fair with everything we do and he voted “yes.”

Ms. Rios also agrees with Mr. Ulrich but because the attorney indicated it can or cannot be an emergent item it is the Board’s decision and she is going to vote “yes.”

Mr. Ulrich voted “yes” because Mr. Casadia deserves it and said we deviate from protocol when it benefits the Board.

Mr. English voted “yes” and echoed the comments made by fellow Board members. He thinks we understand what needs to be done moving forward with situations like this.

All other Board Members voted “yes” to suspend policy and accept the recommendation of the VHS Historical Society to name the pool after John Casadia

The motion carried.

B. Proposed for review or discussion or adoption by Board Members:

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. DeWinne, seconded by Ms. Morello, to remove from the table the motion to approve the Superintendent’s recommendations for the appointment of three principals and one assistant principal. All Members voted “yes.”

The Board voted to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to appoint Renee Braxton as Principal of D'Ippolito Elementary School, Carmella Heer as Principal of Johnstone Elementary School, Dan Sakers as Principal of Max Leuchter Elementary School and Jeffrey DuBois as Assistant Principal of Petway Elementary School.

Mr. Baruffi voted "yes" for all candidates except Mr. Sakers and Mr. DuBois he voted "no."

Mr. DeWinne said at the last month's meeting there were some people who were upset. He said this is a process and the Board needed more time. Mr. DeWinne said this is within our rights to "table" and find the time to have questions answered. Mr. DeWinne voted "yes" for all candidates and wished them all well.

Mr. DiGiorgio said what should have been a seemingly non-controversial or easy decision became somewhat complicated when considering and reviewing credentials of candidates as well as the process, which needs work. Mr. DiGiorgio said he requested a list of candidates for each position and reviewed the successful candidates' package. He said the Board is schooled to believe that we should go along with what the Superintendent put forward. Mr. DiGiorgio said we were provided with materials that showed economic advantages, which raised questions because some of the material was inaccurate. He said what he has supported in the past is to put the best qualified people in positions to run our schools effectively. He is always supportive of in-district candidates especially those who have put many years in the district and deserve a chance. Mr. DiGiorgio said when you have to review the performance of these individuals he hopes that it is all based on factual data, non-relationships and so forth. Mr. DiGiorgio voted "yes" on all candidates except Mr. Sakers, he voted "no" and hopes with respect to Ms. Heer the Superintendent can have an objective and professional opportunity to evaluate because of the closeness of their friendship and he voted "yes" for Ms. Heer.

Dr. Gruccio said Mr. Frangipani will be doing the evaluations on Ms. Heer.

Mr. Jennings voted "yes" for all candidates.

Ms. Morello voted "no" for all candidates.

Ms. Rios voted “yes” for all candidates.

Mr. Ulrich said leaders in work places have to deal with perceived conflicts and issues all the time. He said they often have to evaluate or discipline people that they are friendly with. Mr. Ulrich said in studies that he has read strong leaders do have a true connection with their staff and subordinates. He said that is always a careful line that a leader has to choose and he has no doubt that the people who he will vote for tonight know that line exists. Mr. Ulrich said it is natural to have friends in the workplace and a true friend would never take advantage of you as a superior person. Mr. Ulrich voted “yes” for all candidates and wished them the best of luck.

Mr. English voted “yes” for all candidates.

Mr. Medio reminded everyone that his vote has nothing to do with any of the individuals but with the deficit coming in the next budget. He said this was a chance to save about \$400,000 and put towards the deficit. Mr. Medio said this was an easy place for the Superintendent to make cuts but it did not happen. He said you have a principal at Cunningham who only has about 70 students and could have taken over as principal of two schools. Mr. Medio said you could have eliminated the assistant principal position. He said we were told last year that all Max Leuchter School would need is an assistant principal now everything has changed. Mr. Medio said do not forget in January and February when you hear about all the cuts that are going to be made that you had the chance to do some of that and did not. Mr. Medio voted “no” for all candidates.

The motion passed for all candidates.

Mr. Medio asked for a motion to be entertained to permit Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. English, Ms. Rios and Mr. Ulrich the opportunity to change their votes on the approval of the Collective Bargaining Agreement with UAW Local 2327.

Motion:

A motion was made by Ms. Morello, seconded by Mr. Jennings, to permit Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. English, Ms. Rios and Mr. Ulrich the opportunity to change their votes on the approval of the Collective Bargaining Agreement with UAW Local 2327. Mr. Baruffi, Mr. DeWinne, Mr. Jennings, Ms. Morello and Mr. Medio voted “yes.”

Mr. DiGiorgio “abstained” and explained that the reason he is conflicted on voting on the UAW 2327 contract is because his wife is a teacher’s aide in the district, which has created many conflicts for him over the years.

Ms. Rios “abstained” and clarified that she is a union member of UAW 2327 at the Cumberland County Board of Social Services.

Mr. Ulrich “abstained” because his mother was a bus driver.

Mr. English “abstained” and explained that his wife is a teacher’s aide in the district.

Mr. DeSanto explained that their votes at the September meeting were totally inadvertent and this vote was merged with a number of other items.

Mr. Medio announced that the motion approving the Collective Bargaining Agreement with UAW Local 2327 remains carried with a vote of five yeas, 0 nays and 4 abstentions.

Approval of Bills:

Upon motion by Ms. Morello, seconded by Mr. DiGiorgio, the bills were approved and warrants issued for same. All Members voted “yes” (\$6,246,514.64).

Ms. Morello thanked Mr. DiGiorgio for reviewing the bill list so thoroughly. She also thanked Dr. Guccio for the answers she received. Ms. Morello asked if two buses cost \$206,000.00. Mrs. Haley said she believes so they were 34 passenger wheel chair buses. Ms. Morello asked if AmeriHealth Cobra is something we will be able to do in-house. Mrs. Haley responded yes Dr. Rossi is looking into implementing this in January. Ms. Morello noted that Mrs. Haley attended a meeting and brought back a calendar that is used by many Business Administrators and is being put into use now in her office.

Public:

Harry Meyers

Mr. Meyers asked various questions on the private company security guards.

Mr. Medio asked Dr. Rossi to give Mr. Meyers the answers to his questions later.

Mr. English asked for Board members to be copied on those answers.

Vicky Miller

Ms. Miller asked why the district does not hire retired policemen.

Mr. English asked if this is the forum for questions from the public.

Mr. DeSanto said we are required by law to have public comment. He said public comment is the opportunity for the public to address the Board. Mr. DeSanto said if the public has questions regarding the operation of the school district those questions generally go to the Chief School Administrator.

Mr. Medio said that Dr. Gruccio will answer Ms. Miller's question.

Susanne Vasta

Ms. Vasta asked about emergent hiring procedures.

Mr. Medio said that Dr. Gruccio will answer Ms. Vasta's questions.

Carol Belawsky

Ms. Belawsky said the company that was hired to do security work is US Security & Associates. She said they did not come in and privatize any slots but came in as long term substitutes until June 30, 2015. Ms. Belawsky said these long term substitutes will receive no medical, no pension and no vacation.

Emergent Item(s)

(with prior approval) None.

Board Member

Remarks:

Mr. Ulrich thanked everyone who came forward tonight to voice their concerns. He congratulated the new supervisors and hopes they live up to the high expectations. Mr. Ulrich said you need to have leaders regardless if the state flat funded us or if we cut eight million dollars. He announced that the South West Council is sponsoring a free seminar on Thursday, October 30, 2014 at Rowan University on the Truth about Marijuana. Mr. Ulrich said anyone who wishes to attend just send him an email at [tulrich@vinelandcity.org](mailto:tulrich@vinelandcity.org) or [tulrich@vineland.org](mailto:tulrich@vineland.org) and he will send them the link to register for free.

Mr. DeWinne congratulated the newly hired administrators. He thanked Dr. Karwowski, the retiring Principal of Johnstone Elementary School, for extending her retirement while this transition goes through and hopes she enjoys her retirement. Mr. DeWinne said he will not be here for the November work session and wished all the Board candidates well. He thanked Dr. McCann for rehanging a picture of Mr. Tanner who was a high school Vice Principal who drowned in 1982 on a class trip in Puerto Rico saving a student. Mr. DeWinne hopes that one day this district names something on his behalf.

Ms. Rios congratulated the principals and assistant principal who were hired tonight. She asked the VHS Crew Team to keep doing the excellent work and thanked the coach for everything he does. Ms. Rios thanked the Mennies Elementary School students for a job well done. She also thanked the *Daily Journal* for the publicity they gave the new online breakfast/lunch payment system along with the administration and Board for their support on this issue.

Mr. DiGiorgio thanked the students and everyone who spoke tonight. He shared the concerns of Mr. Meyers and thanked Ms. Belawsky for clearing up the situation with security. Mr. DiGiorgio said we are being asked to consider substitutes in various areas and have had a substitute for quite some time in an administrator's position at an elementary school. He thanked Dr. Karwowski for her service.

Mr. Jennings congratulated everyone who received promotions tonight. He reminded everyone that our community and tax payers are counting on you to perform because you are with our children more than their parents.

Ms. Morello thanked Mr. DeWinne for his exceptional Boardmanship. She said as Board members we may not always agree. Ms. Morello said that she is very concerned about the financial impact some of these decisions that are being made will have on students and people in those positions. She said that she is very happy that 97% of the students who are coming to school are ready to learn and doing a great job. Ms. Morello said there are wonderful things happening in our schools. She told the new administrators that they have big shoes to fill because we expect the 97% to increase.

Ms. Morello thanked Dr. Guccio for answering the questions that a parent had about the uniforms. She said for anyone who has questions to please share the information you have so you do not put people in a tight spot. Ms. Morello congratulated the new language arts supervisor.

Mr. Baruffi congratulated the flag salute students and athletes. He suggested for the Board, Administration and Superintendent to take a look at what our preschool program does and maybe put a director in charge when a principal retires.

Mr. English thanked Ms. Arena and the Mennies students for an outstanding flag salute. He wished the new administrators the best of luck. He said in regards to Mr. Baruffi's comments the private providers are the principals and it is a good collaboration between all. Mr. English said his complaint with the Alternative Program is that it is housed in a large building that costs the district approximately 1.8 million dollars a year to run and the average daily attendance is 35 students. He said someone needs to figure out what the proper thing is to do there. Mr. English said he believes every building should have a principal. He said we know the shortfall is going to be large but we do not know how large and how we are going to address it. Mr. English said there were some positions approved tonight that may not be here eight months from now because there is no guarantees in this district. He said we really need to figure out how you do more with less. Mr. English wished the best of luck to the incumbents and new candidates in the school board elections. He said it is such a huge thing to be a customer service based business or school district. Mr. English said there is an answer to every question but you have to be ready for that answer.

Dr. Guccio congratulated and welcomed everyone that was appointed this evening. She has the utmost confidence in all of them and knows they will do a fine job. Dr. Guccio said when you are in the district 40 years and live in the town about 60 years you cannot help but make relationships with people. She considers every person that was given a job this evening a friend and hopes this Board understands that she knows how to separate friendship and the job to evaluate people. Dr. Guccio said she does not directly evaluate principals or vice principals but if she had to she would do that job correctly.

Dr. Gruccio said that she does not consider it a fault to have friends because she has worked here a long time and is very fortunate and blessed to have the relationships that she has established with every one of our administrators.

Report/Remarks by  
Board President:

Mr. Medio congratulated the Mennies Elementary School Safety Patrol who led the flag salute. He congratulated the crew members for winning the Stotesbury Cup and John Casadia on having the pool named after him. Mr. Medio also congratulated everyone who was named to leadership positions in the district. He said we will be hearing about the shortfall, which will be addressed in the near future. Mr. Medio said we will be looking at a budget deficit and it will be something that is going to be very interesting in the next six months.

Adjournment:

The Board adjourned the meeting by voice vote at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Helen G. Haley  
Interim Board Secretary

HGH:df



