

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of the City of Vineland was held in the Vineland High School North Auditorium, 3010 E. Chestnut Avenue, Vineland, New Jersey, Wednesday, November 12, 2014 at 7:00 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. Medio presiding and the following members present: Mr. DeWinne, Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. English, Mr. Jennings, Ms. Morello, Ms. Rios and Mr. Ulrich. Absent: Mr. Baruffi, absent and Mr. Ulrich who was present for the vote but left at 7:50 p.m.

Also present: Dr. Gruccio, Superintendent, Mr. Frey and Mr. Frangipani, Asst. Supts, Mr. Vassallo, Acting Board Secretary, Dr. Rossi, Executive Director of Personnel, Mr. DeSanto, Solicitor, press and public. Absent: Mrs. Haley, Interim Board Secretary.

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.

- Resolution: None.
- Flag Salute: Students from Landis Middle School led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Morello, seconded by Mr. DiGiorgio, to approve a Resolution appointing Earl Vassallo as Acting Board Secretary for the period November 12, 2014 to November 14, 2014 pursuant to NJ Statutes Annotated 18A:17-5. All Members voted "yes."
- Special Presentation (s): Dr. Gruccio introduced Mr. Dan Greco, Principal of Durand Elementary School, to honor him for a heroic act toward a staff member. She along with Mr. Weaver, Executive Director of Physical Facilities, presented Mr. Greco a certificate for saving a maintenance man's life in his school that was choking and could not breathe by doing the Heimlich maneuver.

Dr. Gruccio said this evening we will be presenting our Strategic Plan. She welcomed and thanked Charlene Zoerb from the NJ School Boards Association for guiding the district through the entire process. Dr. Gruccio thanked members of the committee who volunteered to help us develop the plan. She said Strategic Planning is to create a vision for our future. Dr. Gruccio said it is an effective process for aligning short-term decisions with long-term goals.

Dr. Gruccio said at the end of our process we came up with the following five goals: #1 Student Achievement, #2 Technology, #3 Finance and Facilities, #4 School Culture, #5 Communication and Community Partnerships. She said we have asked various members who served on the committee to take a piece of the presentation to share. Mr. Jeff Dubois presented Student Achievement, Mrs. Lauren DeBello presented Technology, Mr. Ron Franceschini presented Finance/Facilities, Mr. Thomas Ulrich presented School Culture, Mr. Lee Burke and Mr. John Frangipani presented Communication and Community Partnerships and Mr. Ron Walker presented a summary.

Ms. Zoerb, NJ School Boards Association representative, commended everyone who was part of this process and said the Superintendent has put her heart and soul into this. She said this presentation was well done and can be shared with the entire community.

A five minute recess was taken at this time.

The meeting resumed.

Approval of Minutes: Upon motion by Mr. DiGiorgio, seconded by Ms. Morello, the minutes were approved from October 1, 2014 and October 8, 2014. All Members voted “yes.”

Report of the
Secretary/Custodian
Of School Monies: Secretary’s Report – August 2014
Treasurer’s Report – August 2014

Solicitor’s Report: None.

Public Comment on
Agenda Items: None.

Recommendations:

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

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” except Mr. DiGiorgio who voted “yes” on all bills except Inspira Medical Center, Healthcare Consultants Inc. and The Wright Choice he voted “no” because he needs more information. (\$6,287,352.52).

Emergent Item(s)
(with prior approval) None.

Public: Ronald Walker
Mr. Walker said it was very disrespectful and unprofessional to cancel the meeting that was scheduled for Dr. Guccio’s renewal at the last minute. He thinks it was a cop out because if the Board does not renew Dr. Guccio’s contract he hopes they have a valid reason. Mr. Walker said Dr. Guccio has over 30 years of educational experience and has served in every capacity of education, knows the students and community. He hopes that this was not a spiteful tactic or personal member vendetta and based on professionalism because even with one Board not being in attendance the process could have been moved.

Ron Franceschini
Mr. Franceschini said he feels there should be at least a four day notice to cancel a meeting. He said this process is a little troubling and the meeting on the Superintendent’s renewal should be a separate meeting from the work session or regular meeting. Mr. Franceschini said he has been an advocate for Dr. Guccio and she has done a great job. He hopes the Board will think the same.

Sue Cicchini
Ms. Cicchini said when she sees injustice she needs to speak. She said that in 28 years of employment in the district she has seen many school boards, superintendents, principals and co-workers. Ms. Cicchini said without any hesitation she can say there are very few, if any, that she feels compare to what Dr. Guccio has done for this district.

Joseph Pagano
Mr. Pagano thanked everyone for coming out. He echoed what has already been said that the timing along with the cancellation of this meeting was not proper and there was not enough notice given.

Mr. Pagano said during his campaigning he had the pleasure of going door to door and meeting hundreds of Vineland Residents. He said the first thing that everyone wanted to know is where he stood on the Superintendent. Mr. Pagano said the support was overwhelming for Dr. Gruccio. He asked when did this Board give Dr. Gruccio the opportunity to do her job without micromanaging. Mr. Pagano said when you look at the history, five Superintendents in fourteen years, maybe it is not the Superintendents but the Board. He thinks the citizens, taxpayers and voters of this community spoke very loud in this election. Mr. Pagano said if Dr. Gruccio's contract is not renewed he has a feeling that we will be revisiting this again in January. He congratulated Ms. Rios on her campaigning and looks forward to working with her as well as the rest of the Board. He promised the community that we will do what you put us here to do because the bottom line is it is about our children and future.

Board Member

Remarks:

Mr. DeWinne said he is extremely pleased with tonight's Strategic Plan presentation. He said that he agreed with pretty much all of it especially the financial literacy piece and students graduating knowing how to reconcile their own bank account. Mr. DeWinne thanked Ms. Debbie Marko in regards to an article she did in the *Daily Journal* on Dennis Tanner. He said since that article ran he has received a number of calls plus a sizable donation for a scholarship. Mr. DeWinne said hopefully Mr. Tanner will be recognized and his story taught to all of the students. He said that he already congratulated Ms. Rios and Ms. Codispoti on winning the school board election and congratulated Mr. Pagano tonight.

Ms. Rios complimented Dr. Gruccio for a job well done with the Strategic Planning as well as the Board, Administrators, Staff and Community members who were involved. She said it was a wonderful process and the brochure is beautiful. Ms. Rios suggested having this every year so we know how money is spent, how many students are in the district, and how everything is done on a yearly basis. She congratulated the newly elected School Board members and looks forward to working with them. Ms. Rios thanked everyone who came to tonight's meeting and apologized for the last minute cancelation of the special meeting.

Mr. DiGiorgio thanked the students for the flag salute. He also thanked the community for their input and collaboration with the district along with the Board and Superintendent for the Strategic Plan. Mr. DiGiorgio said hopefully we will have follow up reports that show how we are achieving goals. He looks forward to working with the newly elected Board members and believes we can all be objective and work together for the future of our district.

Mr. Jennings wanted to clarify something that took place concerning this special meeting. He said early on he made it clear that he did not think an hour would be along enough. Mr. Jennings said he did not realize if we did not finish what we needed to do the meeting could be adjourned and finished at a later time. He said that we were all prepared to be here and have this meeting take place. Mr. Jennings said on the agenda there are a lot of grants that have been written and he appreciates everyone's effort.

Ms. Morello said the Strategic Plan will give us a roadmap and a guideline because every year it can be revisited and updated. She said many of the things that were listed by the presenters have been done. Ms. Morello said we just have to as a Board keep focused and support the good work that goes on in the schools and community. She said there are so many wonderful achievements in the newspaper. Ms. Morello said we need to help make sure that this game plan is really implemented and helps to support the students, staff and administration. She said if you total all of tonight's grants that were approved it is an amazing amount of money. She said our staff members have put a lot of hard work into place to bring enrichment into the school community. Ms. Morello said great things happen all the time and we have to start believing in the great things that our students and staff do. She likes the leadership academy piece that Mr. Frangipani spoke about and thinks it is something that we should actively pursue. Ms. Morello wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving and a wonderful time with their family. She said that she reached out to the new Board members and welcomed them to lots of night stand reading as we move forward.

Dr. Gruccio thanked the Landis School students for the flag salute. She also thanked everyone involved with the Strategic Plan for all their time and effort.

Dr. Guccio thinks the Strategic Plan will be a very productive roadmap for the district in the next five years. She said every year we will analyze what we have accomplished with the plan and present an update. Dr. Guccio congratulated Mr. Greco and said he is a fine leader and we are very proud to have him as part of this district's family. She also congratulated the newly elected Board members along with Ms. Rios and looks forward to working with them. Dr. Guccio thanked everyone who came out this evening and apologized for the inconvenience of the meeting being cancelled. She truly appreciates everyone's kind words and support.

Mr. English recognized and thanked all the veterans for their service. He thanked the Landis School students for the flag salute. Mr. English said the three words he continues to pound into his brain and his fellow Board members' brains are communication, collaboration and transparency. He said we are echoing those three words as we listen to the Strategic Plan for the district this evening. Mr. English said the shortfall for the budget is here and we would love to support everything but unfortunately there is always something that has to be cut due to the lack of funding from our wonderful state. He said in order for this Strategic Plan to be successful it is going to take support from all of us to make sure this implementation is a successful process. Mr. English said contractually the Board has to let Dr. Guccio know by December 31st whether she will be getting a renewal of her contract. He does not think anyone up here questions the character, courage and outstanding leadership that Dr. Guccio has supported in her career with the district. Mr. English said it is important to him that she is a local person and through thick and thin has dug her feet in and continues to push our students to be the best they can be. He said Dr. Guccio continues to support our staff to the best of her ability. Mr. English said there are times he has not supported some of her decisions, which is nothing personal but just some things he thinks financially should be run differently. He does not want any employee of this district to ever fear coming to the microphone because anytime you speak he believes you are telling the truth and doing the best for our future. Mr. English said the message is pretty clear but the Board members have the other side of it that unfortunately the public sometimes does not see. He said it is a tough decision that we will all be forced with but he believes the right thing will be done in the future. Mr. English wished everyone a happy and safe Thanksgiving. He also wished the Academic and Football teams' good luck.

Report/Remarks by
Board President: None.

Adjournment: The Board adjourned the meeting by voice vote at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Earl Vassallo
Acting Board Secretary

EV:df

