

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of the City of Vineland was held in the Vineland High School North, 3010 E. Chestnut Avenue Vineland, New Jersey, Wednesday, December 10, 2014 at 7:00 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: The Vineland High School Academic Bowl Team led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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 matter involving the purposed, lease or acquisition of real property with public funds, the setting of bank rates or investment of public funds where it could adversely affect the public interest if discussion of such disclosed matter is Almond Road Lease. Any pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation in which the public body is or may be a party. If pending or anticipated litigation the matter is Schectman Litigation and John Sammons vs. Vineland Board of Education. If contract negotiation the nature of the contract and interested party is the Insurance Broker Contracts. 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. Any matter involving the employment, appointment, termination of employment, terms and conditions of employment, evaluation of the performance, promotion or disciplining of any specific prospective public officer or employee or current public officer or employee employed or appointed by the public body, unless all individual employees or appointees whose rights could be adversely affected request in writing that such matter or matters be discussed at a public meeting. The nature of discussion is Sick Leave Allocation for a teacher.

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 Ms. Morello, seconded by Mr. Ulrich, the resolution was passed. All Members voted “yes.”

Flag Salute:

Special

Presentation (s): Dr. Gruccio said at this time the Vineland High School Band will perform.

Mr. McDevitt thanked the Board for inviting them to perform tonight. He honored the Vineland High School Marching Band for their achievement in the 2014 competitions.

Mr. Ulrich asked Mr. McDevitt what the possibility is to showcase the VH Band on National Night Out, which is held on the first Tuesday in August, to showcase the VHS Band. Mr. McDevitt said last year they were asked had it on their schedule to perform and no one ever got back to him. Mr. Ulrich said next year you have an open invitation because it would be great.

Dr. Gruccio introduced Ms. Lisa Fagan to acknowledge students from her Physics Class.

Ms. Fagan thanked the Board for inviting them and explained the “Punkin Chunkin Project” that her class was involved in. She introduced each of the students who were involved in the project.

Dr. Gruccio introduced Mrs. Yeager the VHS Academic Team Coach.

Mrs. Yeager introduced and honored the Academic Team on their competition win.

Approval of Minutes: Upon motion by, Ms. Morello seconded by Ulrich, the minutes were approved from November 5, 2014 and November 12, 2014. All Members voted “yes.”

Report of the
Secretary/Custodian
Of School Monies: Upon motion by Ms. Morello, seconded by Mr. DeWinne, the reports of the Secretary and Custodian of School Monies for the month of September 2014, which are in agreement 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: None.

Recommendations:

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

Mr. Medio said at this time there will be discussion in regards to the Board vacancy.

Mr. DeSanto said as he indicated to the Board via email the current Board policy does not establish a procedure for the Board to consider applicants for the Board vacancy. He said it is his recommendation this evening that the Board develops a procedure for the pending vacancy. The policy would be referred to the Personnel & Policy Committee for a long term revision so the policy would have a set procedure in place. Mr. DeSanto said the Board should consider how long the applicant presentations will be, what types of standardized questions the Board will ask of each candidate to establish a level playing field, and whether Board participation would be limited to clarification as opposed to additional questions. He said the law is clear that the presentation by the applicants is to be made public because you are filling the vacancy of an elected official. Mr. DeSanto said the Board would retire to executive session to discuss/deliberate on the presentations then come out and vote. He said tonight the Board's role would be to establish the procedures for conducting the advertising for the position, standardized questions, time limits etc.

Ms. Morello asked if we can make certain that the people who apply understand the number of meetings and commitments they will have as a Board member. Mr. DeSanto said he believes that would be a good piece to include in the public notice. Ms. Morello asked if this Board seat will be held until the next election. Mr. DeSanto said the individual would hold the seat until the next reorganization meeting following the next election. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if we have gone forward with the advertisement. Mr. DeSanto said no the Board Secretary is awaiting direction from the Board. He said there is no policy that sets these procedures. Ms. Rios asked if there was a previous policy. Mr. DeSanto said in 1996 there was a policy and in 2010 a complete policy revision was done by Strauss Esmay. He said the 2010 policy did not include the detail that the 1996 policy had such as questions and time limitations. Mr. DeSanto said that is why he is recommending for a policy to be developed, which could be delegated to a committee. Ms. Morello asked if the old policy worked. Mr. DeSanto said in 2008 each candidate received the same questions and they included their answers in their seven minute presentation. He said the Board was not permitted to ask additional questions. Mr. DeSanto said yes he thinks the policy did work. Ms. Morello asked if we can make a motion to readopt the old policy. Mr. DeSanto said yes the only thing you may want to visit in the old policy is whether this Board wants to use new questions. Ms. Morello said we could make a motion to adopt a policy while developing a list of questions that are acceptable by majority vote of all the Board members. Mr. DeSanto said we can do that but not by email. He said the Board President can delegate a committee of four people to come up with the questions.

Mr. DeWinne said in 2008 the candidates were given seven questions up front to answer and the Board could not ask any questions. Mr. Ulrich asked if the advertisement could go out for people who want to apply and the set of questions will follow that the new Board adopts in January. Ms. Rios feels the requirements listed in the advertisement should be the same requirements that the current Board members have to follow. Mr. DeSanto said there was an advertisement developed by central office for this and it did list all those requirements. He said that could be a base to add suggestions to. Mr. DiGiorgio said he is totally against standardized questions and having them in advance. He would like to see how the candidates answer questions under the microscope. Mr. Ulrich said in his opinion the candidate should come up and say why they should be selected and what they bring to the table. Mr. DiGiorgio said it could be their opening comment and then a variety of questions could be asked. Mr. English suggested putting eight questions in a hat and having the candidate pick their question. Ms. Morello said Mr. DeWinne had an excellent suggestion to have people come in be given the questions and a half hour to write their answers. She said we could come up with eight to ten questions and pull out five questions to be answered. Ms. Rios said she likes that idea. Mr. DeWinne said we want who we feel is going to best help us work together and he thinks that makes it fair for everybody.

Mr. DeSanto wanted to clarify that the only reason the Board allowed the candidates to see the questions in advance is because the Board is not allowed to ask any other questions. He said they wanted to level the playing field by having each candidate in their seven minute presentation address those questions.

Mr. English asked if the Board, Board Solicitor and Board Secretary are part of this process. Mr. DeSanto responded yes but it is the Board's process. Ms. Morello said we must decide as a group if we want to adopt the structure of the old policy. She said the second thing would be do we want to develop a committee to come up with the questions. Ms. Morello said every Board member could submit one question and the committee can review the questions. Mr. DeSanto said that would be a practical way of doing it. Ms. Morello asked if we want to do this before the holiday or in January. Mr. DeSanto suggested placing the advertisement and all candidates will receive the questions after the deadline date. Mr. DeSanto asked what deadline the Board wanted for receipt of the resumes. Mr. Ulrich said he does not think there is any harm in placing the advertisement and allowing the new Board to set the new policy. Mr. DeWinne asked if whoever is selected can be sworn in that night to have access to information.

The following timeline was set by the Board:

- 1/7/15 – Deadline for resumes and letters of intent to Board Secretary
- 1/14/15 – Special Meeting (prior to work session) at 6:00 p.m.
Candidates arrive at 5:15 p.m. for questions and at
6:00 p.m. names will be pulled for order of seven minute
public presentations to be given by candidates.
- 1/14/15 Vote & swearing in of new Board member

The following members will be on the committee: Ms. Rios, Mr. Jennings, Mr. English and Mr. DiGiorgio.

Mr. DeSanto suggested the following motion:

The Board hereby adopts the procedures for the filling of the pending Board vacancy consistent with the discussion by and the consensus of the Board including the following:

1. Interested persons shall submit resumes and letters of intent to the Board Secretary by January 7, 2015.
2. Presentation by candidates shall take place in public session at a special meeting of the Vineland Board of Education at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 14, 2015.
3. Standard questions shall be formulated by a committee of the Board with input and suggestions from the remaining Board members.
4. Candidates shall report to the Board conference room at 5:15 p.m. on January 14, 2015, at which time the Board Secretary shall provide the candidates with the written standard questions.
5. Candidates shall remain sequestered until each is called at random to make his/her presentation in public session.
6. Each candidate shall be given seven minutes to make their presentation. Each candidate shall respond to each of the standard questions as part of his/her presentation.

Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Morello, seconded by Mr. English, to approve the procedure for filling the pending Board vacancy consistent with the discussion by and the consensus of the Board including the above six items. All Members voted “yes” except Mr. Medio who “abstained.”

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” (\$5,720,873.16).

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

Public: None.

Board Member

Remarks:

Mr. Ulrich thanked and recognized the students who came out tonight. He said tonight is bittersweet because it has been around eight years he has been on the Board. Mr. Ulrich said he has met many people that he has a lot of respect for and has acquired some new friendships. He is lucky that he will still have the opportunity to interact with the schools in his official function through community police and juvenile education unit. Mr. Ulrich thanked the voters who have supported him through three elections. He is looking forward to the opportunity to move on to different things and continued relationships with school district staff. Mr. Ulrich said he has not always agreed with everything that has gone on here but has always tried to speak with his heart and tried to do what he thought was right. He said being a Board member is not two meetings a month it is many hours at home and after meetings. Mr. Ulrich said he is happy and does not have anything negative to say about his time on the Board. He thanked all the past and present Superintendents for putting up with him for that period of time.

Mr. DeWinne said the Academic Bowl is a great student accomplishment. He said the band and science project students did a great job. Mr. DeWinne said he would like to postpone the Finance Committee meeting and reschedule at a later date. He thanked Mr. Ulrich and Mr. Medio for their service on the Board. Mr. DeWinne wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Ms. Rios thanked Mr. Ulrich and Mr. Medio for their years of service. She wished everyone a joyous safe holiday season.

Mr. DiGiorgio echoed some of the statements regarding the achievements this evening. He said we have some wonderful accomplishments taking place in our district.

Mr. DiGiorgio thanked Mr. Ulrich and Mr. Medio for their service on the Board. He wished the public a happy holiday.

Mr. Jennings thanked Mr. Ulrich and Mr. Medio for their service on the Board. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Ms. Morello said tonight's student presentations are the reason all of us are here. She said we need to focus more in the new year on the wonderful things happening in our district. Ms. Morello thanked the departing Board members for their time, service and dedication. She said this Board will be diminished with the loss of these two people but the rest of us will carry on. Ms. Morello wished everyone a happy holiday and said let's go into 2015 in a kinder, gentler more productive way.

Dr. Gruccio thanked Mr. McDevitt and the band for their wonderful performance and taking the time to be here this evening. She wished the band continued success. She thanked Ms. Yeager and the Academic Team for making us proud. Dr. Gruccio also thanked Ms. Fagan and Physics Class students for their project. She said it is obvious that she and Mr. Medio have different philosophies on education but she respects him as a person and wished him well on his future endeavors. She also thanked Mr. Ulrich for his support and honesty. Dr. Gruccio said she values Mr. Ulrich's friendship and looks forward to working with him in a different capacity. She wished everyone a most healthy, happy and blessed holiday season.

Report/Remarks by
Board President:

Mr. Medio wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy holiday season. He said when he was elected in 2011 the first thing he had to do was attend a curriculum meeting and listen to administration say that they wanted to cut back on art and music. Mr. Medio said those were the two things that he hated the most in school. He said now he argues that students should have the opportunity to be exposed to these things more rather than less. Mr. Medio said he would like to think that he was instrumental in getting the uniform policy passed. He thinks that Ms. Rios spent almost two years on the policy with the help of Mr. Mercado. He said that he thought it would be a fiasco and he was dead wrong. Mr. Medio said it was implemented and turned out to be a very positive thing for the district.

Mr. Medio said he is not happy that the advanced classes are only at Veterans Memorial School and feels they should be at all the schools. He said two good accomplishments were done by this Board which are the naming of the swimming pool after John Casadia and the state of the art weight room. Mr. Medio wished everyone well. He sent prayers to Todd Weaver a friend of his who had an aneurism and is not doing well.

Mr. English wished Mr. Medio and Mr. Ulrich the best of luck on their retirement from the Board. He recognized them for their years of service and commitment to the Vineland Public School District. Mr. English presented Mr. Medio and Mr. Ulrich with a plaque.

Adjournment: The Board adjourned the meeting by voice vote at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Helen G. Haley
Interim Board Secretary

HGH:df

