

Port Chester-Rye Union Free School District  
Board of Education – Special Meeting Minutes  
November 29, 2016 – Middle School

Present: James Dreves, President; Christopher Wolff, Vice President; and Trustees Anne Capeci, Carolee Brakewood, and Robert Johnson

Also Present: Dr. Edward A. Klizus, Superintendent of Schools; Joseph Durney, Assistant Superintendent for Grants and Personnel; Coleen Kotzur, District Treasurer; and Cathy A. Maggi, District Clerk

#### **Call to Order**

Mr. Dreves called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

#### **President's Opening Remarks**

Mr. Dreves welcomed everyone to the meeting. This meeting is about a potential acceptance and discussion of the Bond Advisory recommendations. We have formally received the recommendations and we will also have a report from the architects to review the drawings based on the recommendations. The next step will be a discussion by the board and we will ask for comments from the committee and from the public. Approval of these recommendations will let us go forward and determine the exact costs and specifics. He sincerely thanked the Committee for their efforts for the community and the children. We have been following the committee very closely. This vote is not to vote on a particular bond; this would come later. We have another recommendation that is to look at a public relations firm. We would like everyone to come out and vote. Mr. Dreves then turned the meeting over to Dr. Klizus. who read aloud the bond committee's recommendations.

#### **Bond Advisory Committee Report**

Dr. Klizus read aloud the bond committee's recommendations.

#### **Architect's Presentation - Bond Advisory Committee Recommendations**

A video was presented by Architect Joseph Fuller of Fuller and D'Angelo.

#### **Public Comment**

Ms. Messerly said it was a pleasure to be on the committee and an honor to serve. She felt the recommendations speak for themselves and was anxious to hear what everyone else had to say.

Keith Morlino, 59 Haines Boulevard, commended the board on persevering on the bond. The proposal was overwhelmingly majority supported. He went on with many glowing remarks about the findings of the committee and the positive effect it would have on the schools.

Heather Mateus, Rye Brook section, talked about the committee and all the hard work of the committee. She hoped that everyone would build for the future and do what was best for the children.

Thomas Ceruzzi, 84 Hobart Avenue, said it was a long process, but it is now up to the Board. There were a couple of other plans that we felt were viable and there was one we would have stood by. He said that this will need to be thought out. There were plans that either Mr. Fuller or Mr. Hyman could review with you.

George Ford, no address given, thanked everyone for the opportunity to speak tonight. He talked about the committee and that it was a public resident group that agreed and voted to put the proposal forward. The proposal will create a path of success for the school district and for the entire community as a whole. He spoke about the overcrowding and the antiquated classrooms. He would like to see us build for the future and feels the community would change forever. He hopes that the board continues to keep the Committee involved and wishes the board the best of luck.

Tom Corbia, 365 Putnam Avenue, thanked the Board for letting the committee to be formed and thanked the Board for letting him be part of it. It was a democratic process and he was one of the no votes. He felt that tonight was the night for celebration of all of the hard work. He had questions about the public relations firm, its authorization, and its cost.

Mr. Dreves said that when we get to the second resolution that some of the questions would be answered.

Steve Simmons, 255 North Regent Street, thanked the Board to be part of the process. He spoke about the committee and the diversity of the committee. They went from a split room to an almost 90% vote. The costs are higher than expected, but the committee feels it is all necessary. They are hoping that the board will move forward with the whole plan.

Mr. Hyman, Lafayette Drive, appreciated being put on the committee. He abstained and doesn't feel this should be considered as a non-vote. He did vote against the last bond and it was the first time he ever did vote against anything for the school. His concern is that this bond is twice the amount of the last one which was voted down. His name was mentioned earlier with regard to a plan, which he discussed in further detail.

Steven Wesley, 69 Glen Avenue, feels that the schools need to move forward. We need to stop talking about the bond failing. We need to reach out to students and the seniors to get out the votes.

Jody Helmly, 30 Austin Place, talked about working hard and getting things done. She spoke to students at the high school who were proud of the school but could be prouder with more space. The bond committee became concerned with each of the plans approved and the costs rising, but felt each item had to be done. She quoted Steve Greto who said "do it once and do it right".

Laura Luzzi, 18 Wesley Avenue, thanked the board and the committee on the many hours that were put in. There was a lot of discussion and thought that went into the process. They are here for the long run and want to continue to support the board in this endeavor going forward. She would like to see the village educated on the process.

Jennifer Sanders, no address given, said it was a pleasure to be part of the Committee. Everyone is proud of the schools and students. Say it loud, say it proud and say yes to the Bond.

Joseph Richard Esposito, 10 Browndale Place and 1 Lyon Farm, noted that he was representing many Espositos who came through the system. His company is Plant Integration Associates and the people in his company came up with a rendition of the high school. His rendition was previously shared with the bond advisory committee.

Ingrid Perez, 8 Cottage Street, asked questions about the effect that this bond would have on ELC. The board responded that it was too early in the process to answer all of her questions at this point. Right now, ELC is recommended to continue as a rental and not to be discontinued.

There being no one else wanting to address the board, Public Comment was closed. Mr. Dreves thanked everyone for their comments.

#### **Action Items:**

There was a motion and a second of the resolution. A discussion followed with some questions to the architects regarding any potential obstacles that we could face in light of the high school being a historical building and also what if any concerns were there with regard to the environmental process. There was further discussion on a refurbished gymnasium as opposed to a new gymnasium. There was discussion on the bond, the costs and passing the bond.

Mr. Johnson thanked the bond committee members for all of their time and heavy lifting. He thanked Ana Gonzalez and Keith Morlino for chairing the committee. He asked the committee to please stay engaged. He thanked them from the bottom of his heart. It is for the children and that is what we need to always keep in mind.

Mrs. Brakewood is happy to move forward with the recommendations. She thanked the bond committee and discussed all that they went through and did to come to this recommendation. She encouraged them to continue to stay involved and help the board.

Mr. Dreves commented on the committee on how the committee addressed the aesthetics of the high school. They also addressed the needs of the elementary schools and have looked at all the needs of the school district. He hears the concerns about the cost of the bond. He supports what is out there, but they can look at other suggestions. We need to go forward to send this on for further discussion. This is not the final vote. The final vote will come later.

Dr. Klizus commented on the opportunity for the young people with this bond. It is very exciting with all that the committee did and how everyone came together.

Upon the motion of Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mrs. Brakewood and carried, the resolution was unanimously approved (5-0):

- A. **RESOLVED**, that the Board of the Education of the Port Chester-Rye Union Free School District accept the recommendations of the Bond Advisory Committee defining the scope of a building project as charged by the Board of Education on August 31, 2016 via Action Item Resolution E.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Superintendent of Schools is hereby authorized to engage Fuller and D'Angelo, P.C. Architects and Planners for the completion of preliminary plans, New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) evaluation, State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) approvals, and other appropriate submissions.

There was discussion about the reasons why the public relations firm was being considered. Dr. Kliszus talked about how the millennials are not voting. The public relations firm will reach out to get the message out. There were two firms that the board met with and they had helped out other school districts to get the message out and bonds passed. Their expertise is in communicating with all age groups. They communicate with everyone and get the message out. The cost is about \$7,000 a month for a campaign. Accurate, consistent information needs to go out as soon as possible. We have a bid out with returns coming in.

Further discussions continued about the price of the public relations firm, having the expertise of a professional firm, the authorization of moving forward with the RFP and then further discussions at the next board meeting.

Upon the motion of Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Wolff and carried, the resolution was unanimously approved (5-0):

- B. **RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Port Chester-Rye Union Free School District authorize the Superintendent of Schools to select and engage a public relations firm in accordance with Board of Education Purchasing Regulation 6700.R.

Mr. Dreves received an email from Bill Lauer that the first Ram Watch of 2016-17 is now on our School Cable Stations and on demand on our website.

The next board meeting will be held at Park Avenue School at 7 p.m. on December 13<sup>th</sup>.

There being no further business at 9:30 p.m., upon motion by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Wolff and carried, the Board adjourned the meeting.