

**Rochelle Park Board of Education
Caucus Meeting Minutes– 7:00 P.M.
December 10, 2012**

- I. Call to Order and Flag Salute**
- II. Roll Call**

| Board Members | Present | Absent |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Mr. Robert Verhasselt, Vice President | x | |
| Mr. Sam Allos | | X(arrived 7:04) |
| Mrs. Teresa Cravello | x | |
| Mr. Jay Esposito | x | |
| Mrs. Maria Lauerman | | X (arrived 7:05) |
| Mr. Mark Scully | x | |
| Mrs. Patricia Bilka, President | x | |

Others present:

- Bert Ammerman, Interim Superintendent
- Vincent Occhino, Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary
- Cara Hurd, Principal
- Ellen Kobylarz, Board Recording Secretary

III. Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P. L. 1975 Announcement – by Board President

In accordance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act, I wish to announce that:

“The New Jersey Open Public Meeting Law was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meeting of bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. Notices announcing the date, time and place for this Regular Meeting were sent to all concerned individuals, associations and sent to the Star Ledger, The Record and Our Town, in accordance with Chapter 231, P.L. 1975.

IV. Superintendent’s Report – Student Performance

- Mr. Ammerman introduced Mrs. Genovese and Mrs. Aiello who in turn introduced a 4th grade student Jodi DiPiazza. Jodi performed Santa Baby, Cold, a song she wrote, and Blue Christmas.
Mr. Ammerman thanked the teachers who brought this outstanding student to his attention. He thanked Jodi and her parents, commenting on her terrific performance. She received a standing ovation from all who were present at the meeting.
- *President Bilka- added her thanks and also thanked Jodi’s teachers Mrs. Weiner, and Mrs. Genovese for the letters they sent to the newspapers, highlighting Jodi’s accomplishments.*
- *There will be a resolution on the agenda for C. Hurd to attend a workshop on “The Principal’s role in closing the Achievement Gap” on May 7, 2013 at no cost to the district for registration.*

- *There will be a resolution on the agenda for the TAG students to attend the Teen Arts Festival in Paramus on May 17, 2013 at a cost of \$20.00 per student for busing.*
- *Mr. Ammerman reported on the Honor Roll for Hackensack High School and Midland School students. Congratulations to all.*
- *A survey taken of 8th grade students showed that 13 plan to attend Hackensack High School, 6 Private school, 25 Academies and 9 are still undecided as to where they will go. The Academies usually only accept 4 or 5, and the rest will then attend Hackensack or Private school.*
- *There will be a resolution on the agenda to approve the Social Studies, Computer-Technology and Physical Education curriculums.*
- *Mr. Ammerman presented to the Board a list of proposed dates for the Board Meetings in 2013. The Board will finalize this at the re-organization meeting on January 7th.*
- *There will be a resolution to approve the Marshall Evaluation Instrument for teachers and principal.*
- *Mr. Ammerman will attend a meeting on Thursday at Hackensack High School with Mr. Montesano. The purpose will be to foster a stronger partnership with the High School.*

V. Principal's Report: Mrs. Hurd reported the following:

- *Interims for making period 2 will be going out Friday, December 14th.*
- *Yolman Castaneda, a new 8th grade student received a positive office referral, Yolman helped a new Kindergarten student who was having trouble adjusting to his new school.*

VI. Business Administrator's Report : Dr. Occhino reported the following:

- *On the agenda there are routine resolutions to approve bills.*
- *A resolution approving IDEA grants*
- *3 additional addendum items- at which time Dr. Occhino deferred to the committee for their reports.*

VII. Reports – Committee Action Items:

Building and Grounds- Mr. Verhasselt reported: *Based on the result of the committee meeting, bulldozing the playground is out of the question. The Board has the money, if we use funds from the Latchkey program, and certain dormant student activity accounts to bring the equipment up to code. Playground has been saved.*

Mr. Scully –inquired if it was just the jungle gym?

Mr. Verhasselt clarified – yes nothing extra. Does not include replacement of the swings etc. Some parts of the jungle gym may have to be removed also. It depends on the current codes.

Mr. Esposito-Co-chairman of the building and grounds committee commented: *that the area will see new mulch and the rail road ties will be removed.*

Mr. Verhasselt added- *on the Energy program the district is looking at an energy audit to see how the district can save money.*

Negotiations- President Bilka stated – *details regarding negotiations will be given to the board in executive session and will be reported to the public at the regular meeting.*

All other committee reports were deferred to the regular meeting.

VIII. Items for Board Action - Resolutions (none needed)

Note: Resolutions marked with an asterisk are as a result of Executive Session Discussion.

IX. Other Business:

X. Open to the Public (Any Item)

During this portion of the meeting, the residents are invited to address the Board with any questions, comments or concerns that may be in respect to the operation of their school.

Motion by Mrs. Cravello, seconded by Mr. Scully, to open public comment at 7:40 p.m.

Roll Call 7-0

Motion Carried

Mr. Borchard- 70 Forest Place- Expressed the need for more communication between school and parents- website – e-mail blasts just have the attachments, feels the district needs to get the message out, not enough information is getting home. Genesis Parent Portal is only for the upper grades; Mr. Borchard would like to see that portal open for all students.

President Bilka- thanked Mr. Borchard for his input.

Mr. Borchard continued - stating he came in for parent/teacher night. Bulletin boards were bare, no student work, and no evidence of learning. He asked Mrs. Hurd that night about the boards. He could have had an army of parents that would come in and do the boards. Mrs. Hurd's response was that she was a neutral party. He thought she was running the school. Teacher's actions are not in the best interest of the students. Mr. Borchard asked who's looking out for the students.

President Bilka responded by asking Mr. Borchard to clarify if he was asking about education or bulletin boards, President Bilka continued stating that communication has never been better. There is more communication now than ever in the past. A handful of parents come to meetings every month, if there is a problem more parents should be coming to the meetings.

Mr. Borchard 70 Forest Place- asked President Bilka if she was happy.

President Bilka stated the board has a limited role. We hired an excellent Superintendent. Mrs. Hurd is new. Maybe the communication was not exactly what you want as fast as you want it- with no money. Mr. Ammerman addressed Mr. Borchard- You sent an email stating you were disappointed in the teacher's actions. There's no contract, its part of the job action. Am I disappointed- yes- the time spent on turning this around- yes- but it is better today. We overhauled the K-5- Math, Language Arts, and Social Studies. Emphasis is on learning in the classroom. Would I prefer that things were different, yes- Board will vote on the contract tonight and there will be a change tomorrow.

Someone in the audience- stated that people don't come to meetings because they are afraid of retribution.

Mr. Ammerman answered by stating that the squeaky wheel gets everything- people who have spoken have been supportive. Things have changed. I have another year- I was here for Hurricane Sandy. The town of Rochelle Park is a very family driven community. 95% of the faculty is good to excellent. We are moving in a direction of change and in a good way. I moved teachers to the best positions. Parents complained. My reputation is that I don't come in and hang out- I come in and make changes. Board has been receptive, district is not standing still, and it is moving in the right direction. First 8-9 months were wild months with lots of changes. We are at a point where we are getting things done- if you hired a full time Superintendent they might not have moved as fast. I make my decisions in the

best interest of the children and not everyone is happy with that. Communications, we can enhance, programs are getting better. Come back in 6 months from now.

Mrs. Abraham 138 Forest Place- asked if the new board member will be the Vice President.
Mr. Ammerman- stated no.

Motion by Mr. Esposito, seconded by Mr. Verhasselt, to close public comment at 8:50 p.m.
Roll Call 7-0
Motion Carried

XI. Announcements:

The reorganization meeting will be held on Monday January 7, 2013 at 7:00 P.M. in the Media Center.

XII. Executive Session Announcement (if needed)

WHEREAS, the Rochelle Park Board of Education (hereinafter referred to as the “Board”) will convene in Executive Session to discuss confidential matters which include:

Personnel, Negotiations, HIB Case

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Board shall move into Executive Session to discuss the above referenced matter(s).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the minutes of the executive session will provide as much information as possible without violating any applicable privilege or confidentiality so that the public can understand what was discussed and when available what the Board decision was.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the minutes of the executive session will be released to the public in an appropriately redacted form within a reasonable period of time after the privilege or confidentiality is no longer applicable to such minutes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the redacted portion of the executive session minutes will not be released until such time as the privilege or confidentiality is no longer applicable.

Motion by Mrs. Cravello, seconded by Mrs. Lauerman, to open Executive Session at 7:53 p.m.
Roll Call 7-0
Motion Carried

Motion by Mr. Scully, seconded by Mr. Esposito, to close Executive Session at 7:53 p.m.
Roll Call 7-0
Motion Carried

Motion by Mrs. Lauerman, seconded by Mr. Allos, to resume Regular Meeting Agenda at 8:56 p.m.
Roll Call 7-0
Motion Carried