

**Rochelle Park Board of Education
Caucus Meeting– 7:00 P.M.
October 8, 2012**

- I. Call to Order and Flag Salute**
- II. Roll Call 7-0**

Board Members	Present	Absent
Mr. Robert Verhasselt, Vice President	x	
Mr. Sam Allos	x	
Mrs. Teresa Cravello	x	
Mr. Jay Esposito	x (arrived 7:10)	
Mrs. Maria Lauerman	x	
Mr. Mark Scully	x(arrived 7:03)	
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. Presentation by Heidi Wohlleb from Nisivoccia, the district auditor was introduced by Dr. Occhino.

Mrs.Wohlleb-Presented the audit to the board. At the end of the Presentation she explained to the board the districts debt allowance, stating that the board could issue debt to 29 million.

Dr. Occhino wanted to clarify and stated if we had a referendum we could ask up to 29 million.

Mrs.Wohlleb-stated the district is in good financial condition, went over formal recommendations.

President Bilka- asked about the 125 account.

Dr. Occhino- stated we need to figure out all the details- he will get the numbers and then check with Mrs. Wohlleb

President Bilka- stated the board was told by Theresa Guastello, an account was already setup.

Dr Occhino- stated there is an account but it’s not what is needed.

Mrs. Wohlleb- explained to the board an unemployment account- there are two ways to address how the district handles unemployment issues. She then continued with

administrative items- the district needs to define standard operating procedures with regard to the business office.

Dr. Occhino- stated he already has one available.

Mrs. Wohlleb -stated that the audit recommendation only talks about the bad not about the good and there are good things being done.

President Bilka- asked about the recommendations-

Mrs. Wohlleb –stated they were all mandated items that need to be done.

Mr. Verhasselt- asked Mrs.Wohlleb to grade the district

Mrs. Wohlleb – gave the district an A- on the way to an A.

Dr. Occhino- part of that was Mr. DiPaola’ work – he set the district on the right course.

Mrs. Wohlleb – stated that staff was very helpful during the audit process.

V. Superintendent’s Report: Mr. Ammerman reported the following:

- Evacuation drill- best kept secret-excellent job by the staff and students. Pete Donatello RPOEM is outstanding- efficient- knows what needs to be done. In the past having busing on scene prior negates the idea of what you are trying to do. Two issues surfaced 1) PE classes didn’t hear the announcements. 2) K-5 teachers started to take attendance instead of proceeding directly to the designated destination. Mrs. Hurd will be sending notes to the RP Police Department and Township Officials. In the future, the Police Department expressed interest in being part of a lockdown drill. These drills are mandated by the State of New Jersey. Mr. Donatello will be conducting a county drill on October 17th Mr. Ammerman was asked and will participate in this drill.
- There will be a resolution to accept the Nursing Services Plan; the plan will then be forwarded to the county office.
- Mr. Ammerman presented the Violence & Vandalism Report for the 2011-2012 school year: 11 Out of school suspensions, 7 in school suspensions, 34 reported acts of HIB of which 2 cases were deemed HIB and resulted in 2 suspensions.
Mr. Ammerman stated that there are now strict guidelines for the reporting process, once an incident is reported you need to notify the parents. Confirmed cases there are two options counseling, suspension. Forms need to be filled out for each occurrence. Overall it was a normal school year.
- Mr. Ammerman discussed the playground- swings and slides have to go- and that process will start tomorrow. The big playground the company will be called in to see what it would cost to address the areas of concern. If it is too expensive it will have to be taken down. If not and the district can afford to repair it, it will be repaired. Last option would be a new playground- Mr. Ammerman has looked into green acres grants- say a new playground costs: \$60,000.00- the county thru the grant program will contribute \$30,000.00 the school needs to put \$30,000.00 up front and then the company will contribute \$30,000.00 and in the end you have a \$90,000.00 playground. The next time to apply for grants would be next spring; however the district wouldn’t receive the funds from the county until 2014. With regard to the district coming up with the \$30,000.00 we don’t have it. Could come up with maybe half and then would talk to the PTA or another group to see if they could raise the rest of the money to cover the costs.
- There will be one special education placement on the agenda.
Mr. Verhasselt asked if this was a new placement or a transfer placement.
Mr. Ammerman stated it was a new placement.
- The district testing report will be given at the November meeting.
- There will be a resolution on the agenda for a second reading and passage of 3 policies and one regulation.

- Mr. Ammerman reported that the education committee met with the Math curriculum committee today and therefore there will be a resolution on the agenda to approve the Math curriculum grades 3-5
- Attached for the board's review is the yearend report for basic skills. Mrs. Oliver and Mrs. O'Rourke did a nice job, 75% of students scores went up. Mr. Ammerman explained because we are a focus school and how the students were chosen. Parents can opt out of the program. Emphasis has been on 3rd to 8th grade but they are now looking at 1st and 2nd graders.

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

- Mrs. Hurd recognized Jonathan Buyck who saw Mrs. Oles drop money, he followed her though the hallway to return the money back to her.
- Student Council Elections took place last week, and the results are as follows: President Michael Palamara, VP- Yusef Froogh, Treasure Olivia Vladyka, Secretary Olivia Valenzuela, Historian Samantha Ang.
- Mrs. Hurd gave the board an update on the Focus School status. The self assessment of Midland School was submitted and accepted by the state. Mrs. Hurd received the areas that we are considering "under developed" or "developing" in and need to complete the School Improvement Plan with consideration of these areas. The ISP will be submitted to the state by Friday October 12th.

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

- Boiler project 95% complete.
- The Administrative team at their weekly meeting was given a budget calendar as well as examples of budget request sheets.

Mr. Ammerman interjected to explain that in the past the staff didn't understand where the money was coming from. Staff not told how much money they actual ended up with after the cuts in their budgets. The team meets for one hour a week to go over issues. The 2% cap puts us under pressure. We need to increase the budget for textbooks so the staff has resources. We were able to get the Math; English books were from 1996- we originally did 3rd to 5th Grade. When we ordered the old 1st and 2nd Grade books we were told they were no longer available due to their age. That forced us to order new 1st and 2nd Grade books as well. Mr. Ammerman stated the district is in a better place today then last year only going to get better.

- With regard to the Auditor's recommendations, Dr. Occhino told the board that they will see a new resolution for the student activity account on the agenda. He credited Ellen Kobylarz with creating a data spreadsheet and addressing the recommendation with a swift response.

VIII. Reports – Committee Action Items: deferred to regular meeting:

IX. Items for Board Action - Resolutions (If needed)

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

X. Other Business:

XI. 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 Mr. Esposito, seconded by Mr. Allos, to open public comment at 7:47 p.m.

Mrs. McElroy 28 W. Oldis St. RP -8th grade class size is 33 in Spanish- trying to understand how moving 1 teacher caused the class sizes to increase. Teachers at back to school night were concerned about the size. With kids back packs no room in the classroom. What happens with Science and Music?

Mr. Ammerman- to address the problem with the NJ Ask scores, the district went to block scheduling last year- good idea but in turn you had a bastardized schedule. The Spanish teacher is outstanding. If we had kept the block schedule we would have decreased her to 3/5 or 4/5th. By keeping her full time last year the primary grades had high numbers. With a 2% cap there is no money to hire another teacher.

Mrs. McElroy- Why not bring someone in as a sub?

Mr. Ammerman- we took staff from the Middle School and away from block schedule. One section of Spanish matches up with two of the math classes. We can't move with the small numbers- school is too small. Last year, math teachers taught 39 students (13 in a class) that's fantastic. English teachers 43 students (less than 15 per class) Science & Social studies taught 126 kids while their colleagues taught an average of 43. It's a lousy situation- if we can change it next year we will. Do you stay with that and affect the 1st and 2nd graders. We are working on adding in NJ prep classes and basic skills classes. Spanish teacher stated she can handle it. Other teachers have not come to complain to me. Back packs are in the hallway and it's a credit to the town, no one takes anything. If the teacher needs more room we can look into moving her into the library. Mr. Ammerman stated he is comfortable that the Spanish teacher can teach the class. There's no money in the budget to hire another teacher.

Mr. Pareson-61 Grove St RP. Asked Mr. Ammerman to re-explain the way the cost is divided for the playground, stated he didn't understand the way the cost is divided.

Mr. Ammerman- each group pays a third- first the district contributes say \$30,000.00 the county then matches it for another \$30,000.00 and finally the company who you buy the equipment from matches with \$30,000.00 in the end you get at \$90,000.00 playground.

President Bilka- stated grant could be denied.

Mr. Pearson- had one more question- different days are being taken off- he is still trying to figure it out and would like to know how it is determined.

Mr. Ammerman- Superintendent puts together the calendar and consults with the teachers. In this district, traditionally we do not take the Jewish holidays off. The school also serves as the only polling place in town for voting. The week in November, the school would normally be off Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Mr. Ammerman thought it would be better from an educational standpoint to go a full week off in November rather than come in for two days. The winter break in February different districts do different things Rochelle Park takes two days in February, April depends on when you are testing. Some district combine it with Easter- that could be anywhere from the end of March to the end of April. You are also trying to get the students out by the time the heat hits in June. In October I will be meeting with Maywood and South Hackensack which are the three sending districts to Hackensack to talk about the three districts being more unified and moving in a positive direction.

Mr. Pearson- asked when are the dates setup.

Mr. Ammerman- last January and again this January the latest will be February.

Mrs. Pascarella 32 Thiem Ave RP. Back to school night- black bulletin boards, black shirts- sick of not having a contract- What prompted the ad in the Our Town newspaper? What is keeping this contract up? Can you tell us?

President Bilka- two sides- contract is a negotiation. There are issues- always a slow process, the landscape changes- the second part of the question President Bilka could not answer. The RPEA placed the ad not the Board. President Bilka asked fellow Board member Maria Lauerman head of Board/Staff relations if she had any contact with the staff.

Mrs. Lauerman- stated the staff has not initiated any contact with her.

President Bilka- stated that the contract was sent to the association on Sept 10th- after some further negotiations it was resent on October 3rd. As of tonight the board does not have a signed contract from the association.

Mrs. Pascarella- asked when the next contract negotiations will start.

President Bilka- stated usually in October with the first meeting in January 2013.

Mrs. Pascarella- is it one thing or two?

President Bilka- changes- both sides working to resolve.

Mrs. Abraham- Forest Place RP- questioned teachers don't have contract.

President Bilka- they do- the one that expired in 2010- President Bilka then explained the process.

Mrs. Abraham- asked if playground doesn't work out what do we do?

Mr. Verhasselt- bulldozer the playground

Mrs. Abraham- asked is there a plan in the mean time?

Mr. Ammerman- explained that the district did order extra items so kids can play- worst case- it needs to be torn down. It could cost \$22,000.00 to fix.

Mr. Pearson- If \$22,000 is too much what is the amount the district will go to fix it?

Mr. Ammerman- I just threw that # out. Mr. Ammerman stated he's looking for money for textbooks.

Mrs. Minichetti – 48 Harvey Ave RP- Science- no labs- High School students are lost.

Mr. Ammerman- we have a lab and are currently in the process of looking in to it. He will meet with Mrs. Rainone.

Roll Call 7-0

Motion by Mrs. Cravello, seconded by Mr. Esposito, to close public comment at 8:25 p.m.

Roll Call 7-0

XII. Announcements:

The Joint Boards Meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 9, 2012 at 7:30 P.M. in the Hackensack High School Media Center. The next RPBOE Caucus and Regular Meetings will be held on Monday, November 12, 2012 at 7:00 P.M. in the Media Center.

XIII. 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

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. Lauerman, seconded by Mr. Scully, to open Executive Session at 8:26 p.m.

Roll Call 7-0

Motion by Mr. Esposito, seconded by Mr. Allos, to close Executive Session at 8:35 p.m.

Roll Call 7-0

Motion by Mrs. Cravello, seconded by Mrs. Lauerman, to resume Regular Meeting Agenda at 8:36 p.m.

Roll Call 7-0