

TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Tolland High School  
One Eagle Hill  
Tolland, CT 06084

REGULAR MEETING

7:30 – 10:00 P.M.

AGENDA  
January 22, 2014

**VISION STATEMENT**

*To represent education at its best, preparing each student for an ever-changing society, and becoming a full community of learning where excellence is achieved through each individual's success.*

A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 8, 2014 – Regular Meeting  
January 15, 2014 – Special Meeting

C. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2 minute limit)

*The members of the Tolland Board of Education welcome members of the public to share their thoughts and ideas at this time. When appropriate to do so, members of the Board and the administration may respond to comments during "Points of Information." However, in consideration of those in attendance and in an effort to proceed in a timely manner, follow-up discussion may need to take place outside of the meeting setting.*

D. POINTS OF INFORMATION

E. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – Aiyla Zahid

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- F.1 Board Policy 9190 – Committees
- F.2 Blum Shapiro Audit – FY 2012/2013
- F.3 Status of the 2013/2014 Budget – January 16, 2014 (no enclosure)
- F.4 2014/2015 District Budget – Discussion (no enclosure)

G. COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

H. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

I. BOARD ACTION

I.1 Obsolete and Surplus Equipment

J. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2 minute limit)

*Comments must be limited to items on this agenda.*

K. POINTS OF INFORMATION

L. CORRESPONDENCE

M. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

N. ADJOURNMENT

TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Hicks Municipal Center  
Council Chambers  
Tolland, CT 06084

REGULAR MEETING – January 8, 2014

Members Present: Mr. Sam Adlerstein, Chair; Mr. Patrick Doyle, Vice Chair; Ms. Kathy Gorsky, Secretary; Ms. Karen Moran, Mr. Steve Clark, Mr. Al Fratoni, and Mr. Joe Sce

Administrators Present: Mr. William Guzman, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Kathryn Eidson, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Mrs. Jane Neel, Business Manager

A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 P.M.

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

December 11, 2013 – Regular Meeting

Under item L, Mr. Gorsky should be Ms. Gorsky. Mr. Doyle motioned to accept the minutes of the December 11, 2013 meeting as amended. Mr. Clark seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. None abstained. Motion carried.

December 11, 2013 – Special Meeting

Ms. Gorsky motioned to accept the minutes of the December 11, 2013 meeting as presented. Ms. Moran seconded the motion. Mr. Adlerstein, Mr. Doyle, Ms. Gorsky, Ms. Moran, and Mr. Fratoni were in favor. None opposed. Mr. Clark abstained. Motion carried.

December 18, 2013 – Special Meeting

Ms. Moran motioned to accept the minutes of the December 18, 2013 meeting as presented. Ms. Gorsky seconded the motion. Mr. Adlerstein, Mr. Doyle, Ms. Gorsky, Ms. Moran, Mr. Clark, and Mr. Fratoni were in favor. None opposed. None abstained. Motion carried.

C. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2 minute limit)

Rebecca Risley, 103 Mountain Spring Road, commented that at the last meeting she suggested setting up a community workshop to discuss full day kindergarten and would like to discuss this tonight and have a date scheduled this evening. She recommended an early start time and a child-friendly atmosphere so that more people could attend. She added that full day kindergarten is inevitable and will be coming to Tolland. The question is if Tolland will support the children and be ahead of the curve or allow them to lag behind. The district should not wait until it is forced to offer it as an unfunded state mandate but should offer it now to impact the 2014 group of students and teachers. She asked the Board to bring the Town Council on as well. She has faith in the Board and believes this can be achieved through its guidance, hard work, and dedication.

Matthew Mancuso, 4 Wildwood Road, noted that on December 19<sup>th</sup> he sent correspondence to Ms. Gorsky regarding what he spoke of at the Special Meeting. He would like to know the status of that letter and thoughts on his comments. He suggested having an anonymous survey of the Tolland teaching staff in regard to the SEED program. This continues to be a pressing matter on his mind and hangs like a black cloud over the teaching staff.

Diane Clokey, 29 Tolland Farms Road, thanked Mr. Guzman for his response to her concern about the budget information not being on the website. She would also like to see a comprehensive calendar posted that includes the entire district on the district level page. Further, she expressed concern about the HVAC system at Tolland High School, the youngest building. The temperatures in the building have been extreme and are disturbing. She would like to know what is being done to address this.

D. POINTS OF INFORMATION

Mr. Guzman commented that a comprehensive district calendar can be developed and posted. In terms of the heating system, this has been a concern at the high school and the middle school. The mechanical company has been at both locations working on these issues. An e-mail was sent to Honeywell to advise them of the situation. As a quick fix for the high school, they are doing manual overrides and can do this again, if needed. As for the cause, that is still unknown but the issue was addressed as quickly as possible. He added that the SEED (state evaluation system for teachers and administrators) will be addressed later on the agenda.

Ms. Moran proposed that that Board create an ad-hoc communication subcommittee with her as the chair. Mr. Fratoni and Ms. Gorsky will also sit on the committee. This will allow them to begin communications regarding the budget process, calendars, and other items quickly. Ms. Moran motioned to add the creation of an ad-hoc communication subcommittee to the agenda as item I.2. Mr. Doyle seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. None abstained. Motion carried.

Mr. Doyle noted that many of the members attended the FOI workshop on January 6<sup>th</sup> and understands the transparency necessary under this law. He looks forward to continuing the conversation of the budget process discussion. He added that it is important to note where there are places in the SEED program that changes can be made and customized and not on areas in which decisions have been made by the state or federal government.

Mr. Adlerstein noted that he understands the importance of a mechanism for getting staff feedback without fear of repercussion. He also read a thank you note he received from a member of the cross-country team.

E. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT - Aiyla Zahid

Ms. Zahid noted that the Madrigal dinner took place in December. Further, the National Honor Society did a dollar drive raising about \$500 and the school was very involved in the Toys for Tots drive. Rehearsal for Anything Goes has begun and the Eastern Regional Music Festival is coming up. Ms. Zahid will follow up with information on the Names Can Really Hurt Us program.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

F.1. Common Core State Standards (CCSS) – Status Report

The attachment F.1 provides the background on CCSS. Mr. Guzman noted that Tolland has been working to unpack the standards and incorporate changes that need to be made into the existing curriculum.

Dr. Eidson explained some of the professional development that has taken place over the past 18 months and noted that it has been a monumental task. Tolland began looking at the CCSS in 2011 and started unpacking them. In 2012/13, they started doing unit development for grades 1-5. Half of the staff focused on language arts and the other half focused on the math standards. Each curriculum in grades 6-12 has language arts standards. In turn, in 2012/13 they worked to start incorporating the language arts standards into programs such as physical education and music. During 2013/14, curriculum development is continuing and ideally will be completed by the end of the summer. The teachers have been involved in the development. This is important since there is a paradigm shift in the pedagogy. The teachers need to be involved so that they will know what they need to do in the classroom. Some good materials are beginning to appear in the market and she and her staff will be reviewing these but noted that these materials are quite expensive and they will need to look into how to go about getting the necessary materials.

Mr. Adlerstein inquired if they have prioritized the materials. Dr. Eidson responded that a new anthology that will cover grades 1-5 will most likely be the number one item.

Mr. Doyle asked if the standards in one grade build upon those in the previous grades and if grade 1 is based on all-day kindergarten. Dr. Eidson replied in the affirmative to both questions. Mr. Adlerstein inquired about how students are being made aware of these changes. Dr. Eidson did not know if the students have been told directly but they do know the SBAC is coming. Mr. Sce was interested in knowing how much of the new material is electronic. Dr. Eidson explained that there are online resource materials but she has not seen anything in terms of texts. Mr. Clark asked if the CCSS assumes that a child has already learned the alphabet, numbers, and spelling when they enter kindergarten. Dr. Eidson noted that there is the expectation that students will know more when they enter kindergarten than they have in the past.

F.2. Professional Learning and Evaluation Plan – Status Report

Dr. Eidson provided some background and noted that it is a state law.

Dr. Eidson explained the Teacher Evaluation Plan. It has four components: using a rubric to evaluate teacher practice (40%), working on a common school-wide teaching objective (10%), creating SMART goals for student learning (45%), and working on building a school-wide student goal (5%). The administrators have a conference before they observe a teacher, they watch them teach, a post-conference takes place, and then the administrator rates them on the rubric. This is done three times and requires approximately 11 hours for each teacher. 115 teachers were evaluated this year. The evaluation is a good thing to have but is very time consuming. The district has always evaluated teachers but this is three in one year instead of one evaluation every three years. She added that teachers have always had SMART goals although now the goals are directed by the state.

Mr. Guzman provided a history and information on the impact of the plan on the staff including the stress and anxiety it is producing. It is ominous and a tremendous amount of work. It came down when a number of other laws were passed that affect school districts at the same time. The burden is not only on the teachers but on the principals who need to perform the evaluations. That said, the district will be faithful to the process. There is a part of the law that ties teacher evaluations with students' testing performance. This has been waived for the first administration of the SBAC. The Superintendents from the area have asked the legislators to ease the burden but they have not received further information.

Dr. Eidson explained the Administrator Evaluation Plan. It has four components: using a rubric to evaluate the administrator's practice (40%), working on Stakeholder survey feedback (10%), measures of Academic Learning (45%), and student learning measures (5%).

The district is using the BloomBoard program to assist in managing the data about the evaluation and professional learning process. Dr. Eidson noted that the evaluation plan's rubric is slightly different for those teachers who do not have a classroom and will be presented to the Board at a later time.

F.3. Obsolete and Surplus Equipment

A list was provided of the items the district would like to have declared obsolete and turn over to the Town Council in accordance with Board policy 3040, Disposal of Obsolete, or Surplus Equipment/Materials. This will be an action item at the next meeting.

F.4. Student Surveys – Tolland High and Tolland Middle School

In response to a request made in December, the survey data was provided. The student responses were those of students in 2012 compared to the same cohort when they were in the preceding grade in 2011 and provided good baseline data. The same was done at the middle school. One particular question the district likes to focus on is the one that asks the students if there is at least one adult at the school that cares about them.

Mr. Adlerstein inquired what the outcome was of this data. Mr. Guzman explained that one item they are doing district-wide is the issue of school climate. They have been promoting it via PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) in all four schools. This promotes a positive school climate and positive interactions between students. This is one way of monitoring to see if some of the initiatives each school has developed have been effective. Further, the bullying law requires a survey. All the initiatives in place to better the school climate are ongoing. The district is very serious about this and works on it daily.

A brief review of some of the data in attachment F.4 followed.

F.5. Magnet School Enrollment

In response to a request for information, the magnet school enrollment information was presented. In 2008/2009, 55 students attended magnet schools. Twenty six of those students attended the Vocational & Technical schools; the others went to the non-Hartford host magnet schools and the Hartford host magnet schools. In 2013/2014, 122 students attended magnet schools. Twenty seven of those students attended the Vocational & Technical schools. Ninety five students attended non-Hartford host magnet schools and Hartford host magnet schools. Over time, there has been a growth in the number and variety of magnet schools.

Mr. Sce noted it costs approximately \$1,800 per student for those not in the Hartford program. The cost for a student to attend school in Tolland is approximately \$12,000. He inquired if the district is actually saving money by having students attend schools outside of the district. Mr. Guzman explained that if 20 students leave the 4<sup>th</sup> grade to go to a magnet school, that is a full class of students and it would appear that you would then have one less teacher but this is not the case. The other side is the tuition the district is paying for those students to attend those magnet schools. This increase in students attending magnet schools is a statewide trend. Mr. Doyle added that the district is not receiving some state funding if these students are in the enrollment numbers.

In terms of the budget, the level budget assumed the same number of students would be attending the magnet schools. Mr. Guzman provided a brief history of magnet schools and noted that at one time there were only 3 magnet school programs available. Over the years, the number of programs has increased tremendously.

Mr. Doyle inquired what could be done to keep students in the district. Mr. Sce commented that he does not see a tremendous downside of having students attend magnet schools which are focused on their specific interests. It costs very little and frees up resources for students in district. Mr. Guzman noted that it has a budgetary impact. He has to budget \$179K for tuition for the students attending magnet schools; if they were in district there could be three additional teachers. Mr. Sce responded that the tuition of \$129K is significantly less than the cost of having the students in district at a rate of \$12K/students or approximately \$1.5M. Mr. Guzman commented that if the 122 students returned to the district that he would not necessarily see a \$1M increase in the budget.

F.6. 2014/2015 District Budget (no enclosure)

Mr. Guzman distributed the historical rate increases for medial health insurance.

Ms. Neel provided an FYE 2015 BOE cost of level services comparison and reviewed the data listed under the "high cost increase" model. .

Systemwide services come in at 9.7%. The business services office charges a certain percentage of the accountant's salary (audits, bookkeeping, purchase orders etc.) to the family resource center and this has not been pulled out of this number. She needs to be sure this credit can be taken before pulling it out of the budget so there is not a shortfall. This same process takes place with the food service department. Mr. Alderstein would like it pulled out if one can assume that there is a 99% chance that it will be credited. Mr. Guzman noted that there are still 4-5 Board meetings and budget workshops where these numbers can be fine-tuned.

Under "All other systemwide services", including substitutes and curriculum writing, the increase of 39.2% is based on an average of the past two years for the cost of substitutes. "Staff Services" is listed as a 12.5% increase and includes course reimbursement, life and disability insurance, Medi/FICA, unemployment, and workers' compensation. "Teacher retirements" was based on the assumption that 5 individuals will retire and is -14.2%. The "special services" budget, which includes the cost of outplaced tuitions, comes in at 2%. Custodial maintenance and supplies comes in at 5% and is based on known contracts, materials and supplies. Interdistrict tuition comes in at 32.3% and Technology at 2.3%. Student athletics and activities is budgeted as a 4.6% cost increase and other items such as communications, property insurance, fuel for school buses etc. come in at 7.8%. Lastly, other items including the principals' office, program and professional development and the Superintendent, Board of Education and the business office come in at -4.7%. This reduction is because the DRA study from the current year is no longer a budget item.

It was noted that the \$4.9M budgeted for health insurance would have been \$200K higher but this amount was prepaid last year. Further, Mr. Guzman will bring the High School student class sizes to the next budget workshop. If the health insurance projection is decreased and the bus transportation bid comes in lower than budgeted, there could be an opportunity for projected costs to decrease. Based on conversations with Mr. Adlerstein, Mrs. Neel believed that this first review of the budget the Board would be working on the "low cost increase" budget column. Some items in the budget are based on contracted or fixed prices. There were items requested by the cost center managers in IT, science, and other areas but these were not taken into consideration in the creation of the level services budget. Mr. Adlerstein noted that if the low cost increase is 5.21%, then they cannot discuss adding all-day kindergarten or other programs.

Mr. Guzman explained that the initial request from the Board was to look at 80-85% of the budget to see where it would come in, and this was presented at the last meeting. The other 15% is what is being presented this evening and many of these items are contractual in nature. Nothing was added but he and his staff can look at the low cost increase model again and see if there is any way to impact some of the numbers. Mr. Adlerstein believes it is critical to review the low cost increase model numbers as a starting point.

Mr. Doyle noted that this is just a baseline of information with which to enter the budget process. There is a sense that this reflects reality. This is the best knowledge we have at this time and conversations will take place in the workshops. Mr. Adlerstein thanked Mrs. Neel for putting together this information. He would like to see just about a zero increase

for anything that is not contractual or certain to have an increase. Mrs. Neel will review the numbers and noted that the budget projection has not yet been calculated.

The proposed schedule was posted:

- January 15<sup>th</sup>, budget workshop
- January 22<sup>nd</sup>, regular meeting
- January 29<sup>th</sup>, budget workshop
- February 5<sup>th</sup>, budget workshop
- February 12<sup>th</sup>, regular meeting
- February 14<sup>th</sup>, submit approved budget to the town manager
- February 18<sup>th</sup>, special meeting – joint meeting with the Town Council

Mr. Doyle recommended January 29<sup>th</sup> as an option for discussing all-day kindergarten and invited Ms. Risley to speak during public participation.

Mr. Clark expressed some concern that the schedule indicates the Board's budget will be presented to the Town Manager the day after he holds the Community Conversation. Mr. Adlerstein noted that the intent is that the Town Council and the Town Manager will be kept updated on the numbers as the Board works through the budget.

Ms. Gorsky motioned to extend the meeting past 10:00 P.M. Mr. Clark seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. None abstained. Motion carried.

Mr. Adlerstein noted that one of the five goals of the Town Council is to work with the Board on shared services. There is one study of possible shared maintenance. In turn, he recommended that the Board be proactive and form a task force that will attend next week's Town Council meeting and report back with recommendations. He asked for volunteers for this task. Ms. Moran volunteered to act in this capacity as the Town Council liaison. Mr. Alderstein will serve on this committee as well.

Mr. Werbner has a plan to speak to members of the energy task force at a later time regarding this topic. Ms. Gorsky motioned to form an ad-hoc task force to work with the Town Council on shared services and add this to the agenda as action item I.3. Mr. Doyle seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. None abstained. Motion carried.

At the January 15<sup>th</sup> workshop, Mr. Alderstein would like to review the full year projection of the budget if possible. It is important to determine if the Board will be able to pay forward this year what was paid forward last year. Mr. Guzman clarified that the agenda would be to call the meeting to order, hold public participation, hold a budget workshop, have public participation, and finally adjournment. The meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M and be held at the high school. This will be posted on the website under Budget Development.

#### **G. COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS**

- Policy Committee

Ms. Gorsky noted that they met and discussed two items: graduation requirements and advertising signage.

In regard to the graduation requirements, the focus was on the requirement for community service (policy 6011). Ten hours of community service over a period of four years is required for graduation. This was done in order to receive NEASC accreditation, social and civic expectations need to be met by students and it needs to be measurable. The committee did not recommend any changes to the policy but noted that if someone refuses to do the community service, he could still graduate if he went above and beyond in other areas of the rubric.



In regard to the advertising signage, last year the Board allowed advertising signage on the turf field at the high school but they needed to be removed by November 30<sup>th</sup>. The signs were lightweight. The Town Council approved that metal signs could be created and posted. Given the installation, the signs' removal was difficult and Mr. Werbner asked if the signs may be left up beyond the November 30<sup>th</sup> date. The committee is willing to waive the requirement for this year but would like to direct the Superintendent to write a letter to Mr. Werbner to ensure the policy is followed in years to come. Ms. Gorsky motioned to add waiving of the policy 3080 for a period of one year and to allow the signs to remain up this year to the agenda as action item I.4. Ms. Moran seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. None abstained. Motion carried.

Additionally, the committee is working on language to amend communications and outreach. This will be on a future agenda.

- Finance and Facilities

Mr. Doyle noted that the committee will be meeting to discuss the budget. They have met with DRA to discuss the facilities study to ensure they connect back with the principals and schedule some time with the committee where they see the narrowing of their scope of possibilities they will bring to the next facilities workshop and what process they will use to ensure the public has an opportunity to provide feedback at the workshop. This date is TBD.

- Communications

Ms. Moran created a draft communication of the upcoming budget workshop.

H. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT - none

I. BOARD ACTION

I.1 Baseball and Softball Field Dugouts

Mr. Clark motioned to request that the Town Council allocate the remaining funds that exist in the unexpended accounts capital improvement funds totaling \$17,529, \$12,529 from the Tolland Middle School paving project, and \$5,000 from the Tolland Middle School track resurfacing project to an account to offset the cost of the repair of the baseball and softball field dugouts caused by Hurricane Sandy. Mr. Sce seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. None abstained. Motion carried.

I.2 Creation of an ad-hoc Communication Subcommittee

Mr. Doyle motioned for the creation of an ad-hoc communication subcommittee. Mr. Clark seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. None abstained. Motion carried.

I.3 Creation of a task force to work with the Town Council to explore shared services

Ms. Moran motioned to form an ad-hoc task force to work with the Town Council on shared services for the current time until February 13<sup>th</sup> to make recommendations back to the Board of Education and the Town Council by the end of January. Mr. Sce seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. None abstained. Motion carried.

I.4. Policy 3080

Mr. Doyle motioned, for this winter, to waive policy 3080 requiring the removal of the signage at the sports field between the period of November 30<sup>th</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup> with the intention that the policy is still valid and will be an expectation in the future. Ms. Gorsky seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. None abstained. Motion carried.

Mr. Adlerstein requested that Mr. Guzman send a letter to Mr. Werbner regarding this issue.

J. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Matthew Mancuso, 4 Wildwood Road, thanked Superintendent Guzman for recognizing that the Common Core is ominous. He wants to be sure the Board understands the background of the Common Core and provided a history. The state standards seem to come from the state but it was an insular group of testing executives and there were only two content specialists on this "consortium". Educators were involved but they did not play a role in adopting the standards. The Common Core model was designed for an industrial model of education. The mission states it is to create academic success in college and the workforce but what colleges and what jobs? It is an ominous thing hanging over us. The motivation was the Race to the Top initiative and a lot of money was given to the state to adopt this. "Rigorous" is just a buzzword for different. In regard to the SEED program, teachers' final performance will be based partly on standardized test exam scores but there is no control on these exams for two things: student engagement and student interest. He asked the Board to take this into consideration. This will cause teachers to teach to the test. He added that this is overreaching for administrators and provided data.

Diane Clokey, 29 Tolland Farms Road, would like to address the stress the test will cause in students. The test tests things that have not been taught to an entire group of students. It is only going to test how well her children type. The test will be administered to a junior who thought they were done with these tests. The test is going to be administered to an eighth grader who has never had keyboarding because it was not in the budget. The test will be administered to a fourth grader who has keyboarding once every 12 days. She is not sure her kids will participate in this test. It is an absurd and stressful thing to do and is a waste of their educational time and the teachers' educational and professional time. There is more they could do than sit in front of keyboards that do not work and computers that do not have enough memory and power to run the tests.

K. POINTS OF INFORMATION

Mr. Sce asked about keyboards that do not work. Mr. Guzman responded that they are aware of everything Ms. Clokey stated. The district has ordered 160 iPads with keyboards for testing purposes and is increasing the memory on the computers. The district is holding meetings to discuss how to deploy the machines to the schools and familiarize the teachers and students with the process and the mechanics of the test. The tests are not being used for any evaluation purposes this year. Ms. Gorsky commented that this is all state mandated and any changes would have to be made at the legislative level. He will send the members a link to information about the SBAC.

L. CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Gorsky noted that she received three letters in favor of all-day kindergarten and one letter specifically requesting that it not be instituted. Ms. Risley sent a letter regarding holding a workshop where all-day kindergarten people could express their views of all-day kindergarten and asked if childcare could be provided so people were more likely to come. Additionally, she received a letter from Mr. Mancuso regarding the teacher evaluations of which he spoke this evening. Ms. Gorsky believed that everyone is aware that this is an ominous standard for teachers and creates a burden but does not know that an open-mic night as he requested would make a difference. Mr. Guzman commented that the forum for this to be discussed is not here but at the state legislature.

Mr. Doyle noted that he would like to explore ways to look at employee engagement surveys. Now may not be the time to do so but should be an ongoing discussion separate from the common core curriculum.

M. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Action item – obsolete equipment
- Board policy amendment for a first reading
- Audit report from BlumShapiro

N. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Clark motioned to adjourn the meeting at 11:02 P.M. Mr. Doyle seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. None abstained. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lisa Pascuzzi".

Lisa Pascuzzi

Clerk

Tolland Board of Education  
Special Meeting  
Tolland High School – Library  
1 Eagle Hill

January 15, 2014

7:00PM

Members Present: Mr. Sam Adlerstein, Chair; Mr. Patrick Doyle, Vice Chair; Ms. Kathy Gorsky, Secretary; Ms. Karen Moran, Mr. Steve Clark, and Mr. Tom Frattaroli

Administrators Present: Mr. William Guzman, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Kathryn Eidson, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Mrs. Jane Neel, Business Manager; Ms. Dominique Fox, Principal, Tolland High School; Dr. Walter Willett, Principal, Tolland Middle School; Mr. Jim Dineen, Principal, Tolland Intermediate School; Mr. Tom Swanson, Principal, Birch Grove; Ms. Kathleen Raymond, Director, Pupil Services, Mr. Adam Sher, Director of Technology

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM

Mr. Adlerstein reviewed the plan for the evening:

1. Outline plan for the evening
2. Identify what you want
3. Hear public participation
4. Evaluate our budget process
5. Discriminate our top priorities
6. Critique schools' specific needs
7. Quantify as-is cost
8. Propose your ideas

2. Public Participation

Ken Kittridge, 37 Farm Brook Drive, noted that when a student is identified as a gifted child, the parent receives a call of congratulations but is also told that there is nothing that can be offered. He would like to see a gifted program in addition to all-day kindergarten. He added that having the lowest per pupil spending in the state is not a good thing and noted his desire for greater technology. Past budget talks have been about level spending, but there should be discussion regarding what is needed to provide academic excellence. In addition, the cost of pay-to-play is the highest in the state and lastly, there are few to no clubs left in junior or senior high school. Ms. Fox noted that there are clubs at the high school.

Mr. Frattaroli noted that a student's positive experience from early on determines his or her success. He is concerned with the common core and the experience it will provide the students.

A resident stated that she would like to see world language offered in the lower grades.

A resident noted that she would like to see smaller class sizes in grades K-4, an improved curriculum, and instructional materials and professional development for educators.

Bob Lincoln spoke in support of all-day kindergarten. In 1974, when he came to Tolland as a principal, one third of the students were in all-day kindergarten. Part of his dissertation at UConn

was on the achievement results of primary grade teaching. When you take a subgroup of ½ day kindergarteners and full day kindergarteners in Tolland over a 10 year period of time, there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups. Most towns in CT offer all-day kindergarten. Tolland should not wait until it is mandated. In regard to the common core, teachers need materials to teach the common core curriculum and need more time in kindergarten to do so. There is space to implement the program at Birch Grove and there was bipartisan support for all-day kindergarten. He urged it to be included in next year's budget.

Dale Kasai, 32 Marbella Lane, commented that all-day kindergarten would be \$140K. This is minimal dollars and there is a lot of statistical data to support the foundation it provides. Without it, kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers say that 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers will not be happy with the scores. In regard to financial statistics, Tolland will hit the wall in 2-3 years. There are a lot of really good teachers who will be retiring. These teachers care about their students, not so much their salaries. The Town will have difficulty attracting new, strong teachers and current teachers, who have to support their families, will see openings in other school systems that pay more and leave Tolland. If one does not focus and manage the money, it will be a disaster down the road. It is time people speak up. Tolland is way behind and is going to crash into the wall.

Diane Clokey, 29 Tolland Farms Road, inquired if the \$140K dollar amount that has been discussed to be the cost of all-day kindergarten includes anything besides teacher salaries and if this amount would allow all-day kindergarten to be instituted well.

Donna Hryn, 136 Rhodes Road, commented that she represents the group which is not in support of all-day kindergarten and added that there are many parents who do not believe it is a top priority. She has one child in pre-k and another in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Given that there are finite dollars in the budget, she believes the money should not be spent at the kindergarten level but in the higher grades where the students, by nature of their developmental progress, are with their parents less. The kindergarten years are a time for parents to have faith and take responsibility as their children's first teachers and be involved. It is a time for parents to be a bridge between the students' home life and school life. Research shows that children benefit from having an adult caregiver or parent at this young age. Teachers are not caregivers and should not be. Research shows that parental involvement is key to children being successful in school. Kindergarten allows parents to play this role.

Rebecca Risly, 103 Mountain Spring Rd, commented that the reason all-day kindergarten is such a heated debate is because parents want what is best for their children. It is a challenge to determine a universal method that fits all kids. Full day kindergarten should be implemented and soon. Children should be able to play, explore, and enjoy their early years but when faced with the demands of the common core standards which expects full day kindergarten to make it a success; she believes that children need to be supported and given every tool that will help them succeed. What can be done is providing kids with the best methods and framework to nurture them. By increasing their time in school, it will provide more time for creative play. Learning through creative play and engaging with other children will have less stress than trying to cram a 6 hour curriculum structure into 2 less hours a day. The best option is to have that time to learn and develop in a calmer, less stressful environment.

Michele Harrold, 256 Mountain Spring Road, does not want to see full day kindergarten. She is preparing her child for kindergarten and it would be a huge jump in how she would need to prepare. Some parents will hold their children back. Economically, how will that impact businesses who are early childhood educators?

David Garritt, 23 Rudansky Lane, spoke on behalf of all-day kindergarten. The cost of full day kindergarten is a relatively small amount of money that will affect every child going through the school unlike a band or sports program. It provides a foundation for the students. Last year, a CT town implemented full day kindergarten and gave parents the option of sending their children to either the full day or half day option. Within 3 weeks, every family who selected the half day option switched to the full day option.

Jackie Kolb, 34 Susan Drive, has a 6<sup>th</sup> grader. She is saddened that the 6<sup>th</sup> grade lost a team – there were 3 teams and now there are 2. Her student is not gifted or special needs and is a bit lost. She has been proactive and discussed this with his teachers. On two occasions, the discussion of an interventionist came up and after doing some research; she would like to have a 6<sup>th</sup> grade interventionist at the school.

In regard to the question about the cost of all-day kindergarten, Mr. Guzman explained that the projected cost of approximately \$170K is just for teacher salaries. This is net of the bussing savings that would be realized. It was calculated based on the salaries of current teachers in the position and the recommended salary for people coming into the district at the MA-7 step so there could be some fluctuation in the number. This does not include materials or supplies.

Mr. Adlerstein thanked everyone for attending the meeting and bringing their comments. People can also e-mail the Board, himself, or Ms. Gorsky. All staff and Board of Education members' e-mail addresses follow the format of: YSmith@tolland.k12.ct.us. (Y should be replaced with one's first initial and Smith should be replaced with one's last name).

### 3. 2015/16 Budget Discussion

Mr. Alderstein explained that this year, the Board is going through the budget one step at a time. It wants to know what the cost is to do things before making decision. The goal this evening is to evaluate the needs. They do not want to evaluate the needs in terms of dollars but to allow for creativity in the process. He commented that there is some tension between the Board and the Town Council. The Town Council and the Board are trying to work together and think about what services may be able to be shared. He thanked Town Council members Paul Krasusky and Jan Rubino for attending the meeting.

Mr. Adlerstein explained that the Board will pursue funding the top priorities without increasing overall costs. It might not get there but it will not be due to a lack of effort. The cost of level services, assuming nothing is improved or added will be presented. The top priorities for the next 3 years will be discussed along with the reasoning behind them. The Board is mindful of the taxes and will research cost-saving initiatives.

In regard to item 5 in the outline, Mr. Doyle explained that it is really the brainstorming phase. The school principals and other administrators have identified the needs that rise above the rest. Mr. Guzman identified some of these needs as all-day kindergarten, more technology and its use in the

classroom, better curriculum material and support for teachers, and a desire for a school resource officer as a shared service. The Board has heard a lot about the technology needs, the importance of supporting teachers, particularly in terms of the common core, and items in the strategic plan including the importance of developing 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, establishing a positive school climate, providing technology to promote learning, facilitating communication among stakeholders, and improving school facilities.

The participants broke into small groups, one for each school, to discuss the school's needs. The summaries are listed below.

#### Tolland Intermediate School

- K-8 Special Education Supervisor: help run PPTs, oversee the program, relieves duties on others, may oversee the alternative in-district special education program
- World Language – in lower grades (highlighted as low cost)
- Increase CCSS support and materials and resources
- Clubs – lower fees and more offerings (highlighted as low cost)
- Reading paraprofessional
- Gifted & talented options

Mr. Dineen identified that there is a huge need for a special education supervisor. A specialized program needs to be planned for each special education student. He would like someone who could be devoted to this and spend time with staff and parents. This would allow more time for other things such as work on writing new units for the common core curriculum. Additionally, teachers need assistance with writing units and repurposing materials.

#### Birch Grove

- More professional development
- Full day kindergarten
- Improved math and literacy curriculum to support the common core
- Implementation of science and social studies
- Music, language, and health offerings
- Development of technology – updated equipment is needed
- Materials – particularly non-fiction
- Literacy coach to support the teachers
- A 60 minute increase of special time
- Birth-to-3 coordinator
- Social worker
- Security
- Reduction of class sizes
- Enrichment opportunities for students

Mr. Swanson identified all-day kindergarten and more resources in the curriculum as his greatest needs.

#### Tolland Middle School

- Math interventionist / literacy interventionist
- Math and literacy coaches – teachers deserve professional development

- Facilities – structural – it is an old facility with challenges, it could use updating
- Curriculum and instruction/support and materials
- Professional Development for teachers
- Technology

Dr. Willett noted that the top priorities are staff and professional development which dovetails with literacy and math coaches.

#### Tolland High School

- Technology
- Resource Officer

Ms. Fox explained that the teachers have given up trying to access technology with the students and are doing their best with the Bring Your Own Device technology. The school needs hardware that works but really needs every student to have a device which would allow them to take the technology with them. This initiative would cost \$130K and would begin by providing an iPad to every freshman.

A resident commented that they would like to have numbers/costs assigned to each of items listed. The top 2 priorities for each of the schools could then be brought to the Town Council to show the top 8 priorities and asked to go to bat and ask the town for the money. Mr. Doyle responded that the Board is not willing to put all of this on top of a level-funded budget but dollar figures and an analysis should be done.

A resident commented that as parents, they need to go to the Town Council meetings and let the members know that they support what the Board proposes. Mr. Krasusky noted that the Council wants to hear from the public and encouraged people to speak with their friends and neighbors as well.

A discussion of the cost of a level budget took place.

Mr. Guzman explained this year's process and distributed the FYE 2015 BOE cost of level services comparison, 1.15.2014. Two numbers are provided for each line item. The blue column represents the high-cost model and the green column represents the lower-cost model with some assumptions. The Board, as a group, will have to make some of the decisions in regard to these assumptions.

The district and town health insurance consultant has advised that the potential increase on July 1, 2014 will be +12.1% (item 1, blue column). This corresponds to the number in the town's budget since the town and board are linked together in a collaborative health insurance program, ECHIP (Eastern CT Health Insurance Program). An increase of 8.3% (item 1, green column) is an assumption that has not been approved by the consultant. Mr. Guzman explained the dynamics of the health insurance program and how calculations are performed. As the year progresses, actuals are used in the formula in turn providing a more accurate projection. In regard to the impact on the budget, the high-cost increase projection would be 1.7% and the low-cost increase would be 1.2%.

Item 2 represents the \$200,000 health insurance prepayment that was directed by the Board last year. As an example, if this year's bill was \$1M and \$200K was put toward that in June it would



reduce the budget request by that amount. The assumption on the spreadsheet is the same. This has a .6% impact on the budget.

Item 3 is a newly budgeted item. The \$164K figure was provided by the insurance consultant and is related to potential cost to the Affordable Care Act.

Item 4, Teachers – Certified Salaries is a negotiated item that was approved by the Board. It has a .8% impact on the budget and uses the assumption of level services – that is the same number of teachers. If there is a reduction in the enrollment numbers and the teaching levels stay the same, class sizes may go down.

Item 5, Transportation is an item which needs to go out to bid. The final number will be dependent on the competitive market.

Item 12, Other Post-Employment Benefits, has a .4% budget impact and is an annual obligation. The debt going forward is \$155K. \$140K of this debt was prepaid last year. The budget assumes the same.

Item 16, Substitutes, was based on a 5 year average with an assumption of a 3% increase. This includes professional development, curriculum writing, and tutoring.

This exercise to create this type of budget spreadsheet was directed by the Board so that it could get a sense of where the budget may fall. The high-cost increase comes in at 5.93% and the low-cost increase is 3.86%. Mr. Guzman cautioned that the latter number is based on many assumptions. It is here that the Board will need to make some decisions. The staff is still continuing the budget process and there is a good deal of refinement still to come.

Dr. Willett thanked the Board for inviting the administration to the workshop to be part of the process.

#### 4. Public Participation

A resident thanked the Board for creating a new way to approach the budget process and having an appropriate environment and guidelines for how people may treat each other.

A resident commented that she would like to see the information provided this evening with numbers attached.

A resident recommended that at another meeting, there should be time to brainstorm on how to touch other people in town and understand that this budget increase is for X, Y, and Z and not an increase to increase one's taxes.

A resident commented that the percentage impact should be identified and explained in terms of how it will affect one's household.

A resident would like to define the word "priority" and if the priority is to look at one for each school or priorities systemwide.

A resident commented that it would be helpful when looking at the priority lists to know what other districts have in place so it does not appear that they are asking for something high-end.

A resident commented that it would be useful when selling this to the townspeople to provide a savings plan as well. The perception is that costs are just going up.

A resident commented that he is trying to be respectful of everyone but the technology and the common core material are important. If one tried to cut and paste, the district will lose credibility with the state and lose funds. This has to be addressed or the district will fail. For the last 10 years, the budget in Tolland has been level and the Board has done as much as it can. The district is hitting the wall. The town manager is afraid to put a budget out there that has a small increase. The townspeople are afraid if they don't vote for the budget that is put out there that it will be cut more. The town and children will lose. How much will the principals take if they do not get the funding and the support? Out of 169 towns, Tolland ranks 167 in money spent for education in CT. He thanked the Board and noted that the administration is stretched to the limit. He encouraged the Board to start chipping away.

Mr. Doyle encouraged the participants not to lose their passion and excitement.

Mr. Frattaroli commented that the Board gets less than 7% of its revenue from personal property tax. Townspeople have to acknowledge that how the town brings in revenue has to change. One way would be to bring commercial development into town. Mr. Krasusky responded that the Town Council is working diligently to grow revenue resources and encouraged everyone to e-mail their ideas to the Council.

5. Adjournment  
9.45PM

Respectfully submitted,

*Lisa Pascussi*

Lisa Pascussi  
Clerk

**TO: Members of the Board of Education**  
**FROM: William D. Guzman**  
**DATE: January 22, 2014**  
**SUBJECT: Board Policy 9190 - Committees**

Attached for your review is a copy of Board Policy 9190 – Committees with recommended revisions. The Policy Committee reviewed these changes at its meeting of January 8, 2014. The change to the policy creates a new Communications and Outreach Standing Committee of the Board of Education.

The Policy Committee recommends approval.

WDG:jp

**TOLLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Tolland, Connecticut**

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**BOARD POLICY****REGARDING: Committees**

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Number: 9190  
Bylaws

Approved: 10/9/02  
Revised: 11/14/12

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1. The Board shall act as a committee of the whole on all matters coming before it except that special committees for the consideration or investigation of certain problems may be created by vote of the Board.
  - A. Such special committees shall submit their reports at such regular meetings of the Board as may be determined, and when such reports have been submitted and accepted by the Board, shall be discharged.
  - B. All special committee reports affecting Board policy shall be submitted in writing.
2. Meetings of committees shall be posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. A record shall be maintained by the chairperson of each committee of each meeting, which shall include the names of committee members in attendance, listing of topics discussed and committee recommendations.
3. The Superintendent shall notify all Board members of committee meetings.
4. Standing Committees

As deemed necessary, the Board of Education may establish standing committees from among its membership to make recommendations for board action. The following rules will govern the appointment and function of such committees which shall:

- A. Be established through action of the Board of Education;
- B. have their members appointed by the Board Chairperson;
- C. be informed in writing at the time of committee formation of committee purpose, functions, and duties;
- D. make recommendations for board action, but it may not act for the board except in those instances where authority to act has been specifically delegated to the committee by the board;
- E. The standing committees of the Board of Education are:
  1. Contract Negotiations

- 2. Policy
- 3. Finance And Facilities
- 4. **COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH**

- 5. Contract Negotiations Committee - charged with contract negotiations with the various district bargaining units and recommending contractual amendments to the Board of Education.

1.0 Service on the negotiations committee

1.1 Board members shall not serve on the negotiations committee if a member of their immediate family (spouse, parents, children) is a member of a Connecticut organization with whom the board negotiates or if there is an appearance of a conflict of interest.

1.2 All negotiations committee members are required to disclose to the chair if their status changes in regards to section 1.1.

2.0 Disclosure

2.1 All board members shall disclose immediate (spouse, parents, children) family memberships in any organization with whom the board negotiates. These disclosures shall be recorded in the meeting minutes of the second meeting of the board and updated as necessary when the status changes. Board members are encouraged to withdraw themselves from contract ratification votes if a conflict of interest exists.

- 6. Policy Committee - charged with reviewing, developing and recommending amendments to existing policies and adopting new policies.
- 7. Finance and Facilities Committee - charged with reviewing fiscal, operational and facility related matters as may come to the committee from time to time.

The Board Chairperson and the Superintendent of Schools shall be ex-officio members of all standing committees.

**8. COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE – CHARGED WITH INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES FOR TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND OTHER MUNICIPAL BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES AS WELL AS THE GENERAL PUBLIC AT LARGE.**

Legal reference: Connecticut General Statutes  
1-7 through 1-21k Freedom of Information Act.

**TO: Members of the Board of Education**  
**FROM: William D. Guzman**  
**DATE: January 22, 2014**  
**SUBJECT: Blum Shapiro Audit – FY 2012/2013**

Attached is a January 10, 2014 memorandum from Vanessa E. Rossitto, Partner, Blum Shapiro relative to the audit of the following School district financial reviews:

1. Financial statements
2. Internal controls on compliance with federal grants
3. Internal controls on compliance with state grants

Also attached is a December 26, 2013 letter from Blum Shapiro regarding their review of the end of year School Report Form ED001. All suggested adjustments contained in that letter have been recorded accordingly.

The entire Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the year ended June 30, 2013 is on the District website at [www.tolland.k12.ct.us](http://www.tolland.k12.ct.us).

WDG:jp

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**MEMORANDUM**

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**TO:** TOWN OF TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION AND WILLIAM D. GUZMAN,  
SUPERINTENDENT  
**FROM:** VANESSA E. ROSSITTO, CPA PARTNER, BLUM SHAPIRO AND COMPANY, P.C.  
**SUBJECT:** 2013 AUDIT  
**DATE:** JANUARY 10, 2014  
**CC:** JANE NEEL

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Blum Shapiro issued the audit of the Town of Tolland, Connecticut on December 6, 2013. The audit contained:

- A clean, unmodified opinion on the financial statements.
- A clean, unmodified opinion over compliance and over internal control on compliance of Federal Awards.
  - Programs Tested that are related to the Board of Education: Special Education Cluster-Grants to States and Preschool Grants
- A clean, unmodified opinion over compliance and over internal control on compliance of State Awards.
  - Programs Tested that are related to the Board of Education: Family Resource Centers
- There was no management letter issued.

No issues came to our attention that would warrant communication to the Town of Tolland Board of Education.

29 South Main Street  
P.O. Box 272000  
West Hartford, CT 06127-2000

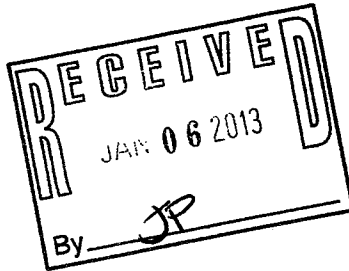
Tel 860.561.4000  
Fax 860.521.9241  
blumshapiro.com

2 Enterprise Drive  
P.O. Box 2488  
Shelton, CT 06484-1488

Tel 203.944.2100  
Fax 203.944.2111  
blumshapiro.com

# BlumShapiro

Accounting | Tax | Business Consulting



December 26, 2013

William D. Guzman  
Superintendent of Schools  
Board of Education  
Town of Tolland, Connecticut  
21 Tolland Green  
Tolland, CT 06084

Dear Mr. Guzman:

Enclosed is your copy of the Town of Tolland, Connecticut's report on the End of Year School Report Form ED001 for the year ended June 30, 2013. Please forward a copy to your Business Manager.

We have filed the required reports with the State Department of Education.

Sincerely,

*Blum, Shapiro & Company, P.C.*

Blum, Shapiro & Company, P.C.

Enc.



# BlumShapiro

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## Independent Accountant's Report on Applying Agreed-Upon Procedures

William D. Guzman  
Superintendent of Schools  
and Board of Education  
Town of Tolland, Connecticut 06084

We have performed the procedures included in the Connecticut State Department of Education's Review Package, which were agreed to by the State Department of Education (SDE) and the Town of Tolland Board of Education ("LEA"), solely to assist the SDE in evaluating certain school year grant data as printed on SDE's Internet application in connection with education reimbursement claims submitted by the LEA for the year ended June 30, 2013. The school year grant data is reported on the following SDE forms and data systems:

- **Form ED001** dated October 7, 2013 at 11:15:05 AM
- **Form ED001 SEDAC-G Data Adjustment Form** dated October 7, 2013 at 10:21:59 AM
- **Form ED006S** dated October 7, 2013 at 11:11:10 AM
- **PSIS Racial Survey and Detail of Enrollment for Entire District report** dated October 7, 2013 at 9:57:46 AM

Management is responsible for the LEA's compliance with the SDE requirements. This agreed-upon procedures engagement was conducted in accordance with attestation standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. The sufficiency of the procedures is solely the responsibility of the SDE. Consequently, we make no representation regarding the sufficiency of the procedures described in the SDE's Review Package either for the purpose for which this report has been requested or for any other purpose.

As a result of performing the procedures included in the SDE's Review Package, certain matters came to our attention that caused us to believe that adjustments should be recorded to the school year grant data reported on Form ED001, and the ED001 SEDAC-G Data Adjustment Form. The adjustments are incorporated in the following internet application printouts: Form ED001 dated December 24, 2013 at 09:22:07 AM and ED001 SEDAC-G Adjustment Form dated December 23, 2013 at 12:39:34 PM.

Town of Tolland  
Page Two

We were not engaged to and did not conduct an examination, the objective of which would be the expression of an opinion on compliance. Accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. Had we been able to perform all procedures other matters might have come to our attention that would have been reported to you.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the SDE and the LEA and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

*Blum, Shapiro & Company, P.C.*

December 24, 2013

**TO: Members of the Board of Education**  
**FROM: William D. Guzman**  
**DATE: January 8, 2014**  
**SUBJECT: Obsolete and Surplus Equipment**

The attached list shows those items which are in disrepair or obsolete.

The Administration requests that the Board of Education declare these items as obsolete and turn to the Town Council in accordance with Board of Education Policy 3040, Disposal of Obsolete, or Surplus Equipment/Materials.

WDG:jp

## **Technology – Adam Sher**

<b><u>ITEM</u></b>	<b><u>Model Number</u></b>
1. 26 MGC Technologies	MGC-770H
2. 6 Philips	107B20/74H
3. 4 ViewSonic	PS790
4. 7 ViewSonic	PF775
5. 6 Komodo	K73P
6. 8 Dell	E773s
7. 4 AOC	Spectrum 110L
8. 2 HP	7650
9. 1 Max Tech	XT7871
10.2 Futura	L7035GD

## **Board of Education**

<b><u>ITEM</u></b>	<b><u>Model Number</u></b>
1. Fax Machine	Fax-2920
2. Mail Machine	Hasler System - 304062 F
3. Check Signing Machine	810
4. Typewriters (2)	IBM Wheelwriter 5

## MEETING MINUTES

### TOLLAND TOWN COUNCIL HICKS MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER 6<sup>th</sup> FLOOR COUNCIL ROOM JANUARY 14, 2014 – 7:30 P.M.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jack Scavone, Chairman; George Baker, Vice-Chair; Richard Field; William Eccles; Paul Krasusky; Jan Rubino and Ben Stanford

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Steven Werbner, Town Manager; Beverly Bellody, Human Services; Michael Wilkinson, Director of Administrative Services; Lisa Hancock, Director of Finance and Records; Steve May from Milliman

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Jack Scavone called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Recited.
3. **MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Observed.
4. **PROCLAMATIONS:** None.
5. **PUBLIC PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** (*on any subject within the jurisdiction of the Town Council*) (2 minute limit)

**Brendan & Sarah Smith of 72 Eaton Road** – The Smiths come to the Council presenting a hardship they are facing with the tax assessment on a piece of property that they recently purchased at 78 Eaton Road. They purchased the property from a bank that had foreclosed on the property. Part of the foreclosure process was to assess the structure on the property, which was actually damaged beyond repair. So, the house was demolished. The Smiths were unaware that the appraised tax value of the property continued to include the structure for the remainder of the 2012 grand list. Their real estate attorney advised them to approach the Council to see if a reassessment of the property could be made to accurately represent the property at the time of sale, with the structure not being on the property. Mr. Smith ran through the tax numbers for the Council. They believed when they were bidding, it was for the land only. The house was removed four months before bidding on the property was due. There was a tax bill due to the town just a few weeks after they had closed. If they had known about the tax bill, they probably would have bid differently. They were made aware of the tax due just days before the closing. They have been in Tolland since 2001. Ultimately, they would like to build a home on the property.

*Mr. Werbner will speak with the assessor on this issue to find out more information.*

**Jan Rubino motioned to allow Dorothy Mickiewicz, Chair of the Conservation Commission, to make comments during the discussion of 8.3; Seconded Rick Field. All in favor. None opposed.**

**George Baker motioned to add an Executive Session (15.0 to the agenda) to discuss personnel issues; Seconded by Ben Stanford. All in favor. None opposed.**

**Karen Moran of 50 Merlot Way (speaking as a BOE Liaison)** – She is aware that the tour of the schools was rescheduled, and that due to conflicts with scheduling Mr. Krasusky was the only member able to

attend on the new date. She invited the members to reschedule a tour with Bill Guzman by contacting the Board office.

**6. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS: None.**

**7a. REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES RESPONSIBLE TO THE COUNCIL: None.**

**7b. REPORTS OF TOWN COUNCIL LIAISONS:** Paul Krasusky participated in the school tour, but was unable to get to Birch Grove due to timing. He observed the state of disrepair that TMS is in. THS is having issues with hot spots and cold spots. Mr. Krasusky also attended the BOE meeting. Mr. Adlerstein tasked Jane Neel with coming up with a level service budget estimate. She provided a starting number at a 5.1% increase. They realize they need to do a lot of work on that. The Principals agreed that their biggest priorities are security, school culture and climate, and technology. Jan Rubino commented that the first BOE workshop will be tomorrow night; an ad hoc committee will be formed to look at shared services containing members from the BOE and Council; and an ad hoc communications & outreach committee has been formed by the BOE. Mr. Baker commented on the PZC: the assisted living facility has looked at a different location; discussion is occurring about a day care on Anthony Road, which will include a petting zoo; Gottier should be submitting their application later this month; and they are moving along with their regulations. Mr. Stanford said the WPCA meeting was canceled. Mr. Eccles commented on the EDC: Ms. Farmer reviewed some of the happenings; a new vet is thinking about moving into the area; there are two new businesses that are thinking of moving into the NERAC building. The EDC is working hard to bring a developer, landowners and the town to the table on the TVA zone by the end of February. Regarding the Tech Task Force: it has new co-chairs, James Gifford and Andy Powell. Their big project for the year is working on a network for town buildings and schools. They are going to incorporate voice and fire tower-com so that we don't have telephone bills to pay. There is a strong recommendation by the task force to consolidate IT services between BOE and the town. The Committee has set its direction to be advisors to the BOE about the technology available, as the BOE goes forward.

**8. NEW BUSINESS (ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS):**

**8.1 Health Insurance Update Presentation by Steve May of Milliman.**

Steve May of Milliman gave the Council members a health insurance update. Tolland is still with EChip and Cigna. It was a successful year. Tolland is in this group as a self-insured. The town saved a good sum of money doing EChip. He explained how they did their calculations and projected claims going forward. He mentioned a fee that they didn't have to pay last year, which is new this year and part of the increase. The fee is for Federal Health Care Affordable Care Act Reinsurance Fees ("ACA"). The fees associated with ACA work out to be approximately \$13.58 per employee / per month. This fee will be charged during the years of 2014 – 2016 for self-insured groups. The good news is being self-insured it is only here for 3 years. If we were fully insured, it would continue for good. The projected rate increase is near 11.6%. They will continue to update to accommodate the budget process. He added that EChip, as a group, is fiscally reserved, which matches Tolland. It has turned out to be the right thing to do.

**8.2 Discussion of Consolidation of Non-Educational Services – as required by State Statute.**

Mr. Werbner said this is a new Public Act (13-60) that became effective June 2013. This is a test year to see how communities and BOE's are going to handle these. The act requires that the Board of Education prepare and submit to the Town Council an itemized estimated cost of the maintenance of public schools for the ensuing year. This estimate must be provided not later than two months preceding the annual meeting at which appropriations are to be made. Since Tolland does not have an annual meeting for this purpose I am using the April 1st date which is when the Council is scheduled to adopt a budget which is sent to referendum. Therefore, the estimates mentioned above would have to be provided by the BOE no later than February 1st. Following receipt of the estimates the Council has ten days to make

recommendations and suggestions to the BOE as to how the BOE may consolidate non-educational services and realize financial efficiencies. The BOE may accept or reject the suggestions but must provide the Council with a written explanation of the reason for any rejection. The act further more states that the "money appropriated by any Town for the maintenance of public schools shall be expended by and in the discretion of the BOE." This is another piece of legislation that is very unclear in its intent and purpose. There is some inconsistency in terms of the language that is being used. We have been talking about consolidating services, and we already have services consolidated. There have been preliminary discussions about the Town absorbing responsibility for monitoring HVAC systems of the BOE as well as the Town and for overseeing a facility maintenance unit that would be responsible with contractual support for the actual maintenance of HVAC systems as well as handling plumbing, electrical, painting and minor construction needs required of Town and BOE facilities. The Council and the BOE are putting together a committee to talk about possible consolidation of services, and all that needs to be discussed within the 10 day timeframe. If you want to be in compliance, something should be submitted between February 1 – 10<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Werbner suggested that a workshop be scheduled for discussion.

Mr. Scavone asked Mr. Werbner what he believes the priorities should be. Mr. Werbner said he believes number one on his list would be to learn how to manage the facilities. Other things to look at would be a combined financial system and combined IT services.

**Rick Field motioned to appoint Paul Krasusky, Jan Rubino and Ben Stanford as the Council's representatives on the Shared Services Ad Hoc Committee; Seconded by George Baker. All in favor. None opposed.**

### 8.3 Discussion of the Preparation of Generic Rules of Procedures for Commission Use.

Mr. Werbner said this came up when the Conversation Commission was looking at Rules of Procedures. He was informed that the Town Charter does specify that all Boards and Commissions should have Rules of Procedure. The thought was that rather than have one Commission develop their own Rules of Procedure, it might be better if the Council approved a Generic Rules of Procedures that all Commissions and Boards could use as a format to frame their own Rules. It doesn't mean what is being presented tonight, and if approved by the Council, has to be adopted in whole by a Board or Commission. It would be the framework. The Rules can be adapted for each Board / Commission's needs. They could be modeled after the Council's Rules, which have been modified slightly over the years, and they seem to work.

Dorothy Mickiewicz, Chair of the Conservation Commission spoke, although advised that the points of view that she will discuss are her own. She passed out a memo addressed to the Council regarding Rules and Procedures for Boards and Commissions, with suggested guidelines. She finished by saying that she didn't want the Council to approve this document without major revision, and suggested an organizational meeting occur in either September or January, immediately after the biennial appointments have been made.

Ms. Rubino brought up the biennial appointments. It's difficult to make these occur in July. Mr. Werbner said the date can be changed to January. The Commissions will need to make the change. Ms. Rubino liked the idea that this be a generic template, so that the various Commissions can adapt them to meet their needs.

Mr. Werbner suggested having a cover memo submitted with the generic template stating that the Commissions / Boards could adapt the Rules to meet their needs.

It was determined that Ms. Rubino will take a look at the suggested rules and revise them. Discussion and review will be on the next agenda.

8.4 Discussion of 2013-2015 Town Council Goals.

Mr. Werbner said these five items were what came out of the last meeting in terms of the major categories. He hasn't heard anything additional from the Council members regarding this item since the last meeting.

Mr. Stanford believes #'s 3 & 4 are the same, although one is a bit more specific. Mr. Werbner agreed that combining them would be appropriate.

1. Work with the EDC and the Town Manager's Office to ensure that the Economic Development Action Plan is sufficiently specific to allow for the proper marketing and development of the Tolland Village Area and other developable properties.
2. Work with the Board of Education to investigate and implement shared services, wherever possible, specifically accounting practices and management of facilities and oversight.
3. Review current policies, where appropriate, for increased revenue potential or cost savings.
4. Review the possibility of renting out certain ball fields in the Town (ex. Heron Cove, Parker School) and enhancing rental and advertising potential at the high school field.
5. Actively pursue the implementation of a solar farm on Town owned property.

Mr. Scavone said he believes this sums up what they were all thinking, which was to keep it simple.

Mr. Field suggested revising #1 as follows:

1. ~~Work with~~ Direct the EDC and the Town Manager's Office to ensure that the Economic Development Action Plan is sufficiently specific to allow for the proper marketing and development of the Tolland Village Area and other developable properties.

Ms. Rubino would like to see #5 changed to:

5. ~~Actively pursue the~~ Implementation of a solar farm on Town owned property.

She also suggested taking out the 'review and possibility', and actually make them actionable. She believes that would make more sense. Mr. Scavone will look at these and revise them for the next meeting.

8.5 Appointments to vacancies on various municipal boards/commissions.

Ben Stanford motioned to **re-appoint** the following:

**Board of Assessment Appeals**

Debra Keeler, new term 11/6/13 – 11/4/15

**Tree Warden**

William K. Pakulis, new term 11/6/13 – 11/4/15

and to **appoint** the following to the Library Board:

Kathy Fratoni, 38 Sherry Circle, 11-06-2013 – 11-02-2016

Lynn Caley, 593 Old Post Road, 11-06-2013 – 11-02-2016

Dale Vannie, 18 Crystal Springs Drive, 11-06-2013 – 11-02-2016

Seconded by Jan Rubino. All in favor. None opposed.

9. **OLD BUSINESS (ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS):** None.



10. **REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER:** Mr. Werbner's written report was included in the Council member's packets.

11. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

- 11.1 December 10, 2013 Special Meeting Minutes  
11.2 December 10, 2013 Regular Meeting Minutes  
George Baker moved to adopt the minutes of both December 10<sup>th</sup> meetings; Seconded by Bill Eccles. All in favor. None opposed. Ben Stanford abstained.  
11.3 December 12, 2013 Special Joint Meeting Minutes: George Baker moved to adopt the minutes; Seconded by Bill Eccles. All in favor. None opposed. Ben Stanford abstained.

12. **CORRESPONDENCE TO COUNCIL:**

- 12.1 E-mail from Michelle Harrold of 256 Mountain Spring Rd. re: opposing all-day kindergarten.  
12.2 E-mail from Elizabeth Chozicki of 10 Old Farms Rd. re: opposing all-day kindergarten.  
12.3 E-mail from Mark Tompko re: garbage container size issues.

13. **COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS FROM COUNCILPERSONS:** Mr. Stanford commented on the Tech Task Force: The Charter states that the Council and BOE will be members that will co-chair. That should be revised, because that is no longer the case. The exclusivity of who can be chairs should be removed. Mr. Werbner will add this to the next agenda.

Mr. Baker commented that Judge Twerdy will be retiring effective July 1, 2014 from the Probate Court. He outlined the various ways to fill the vacancy with a special election. If there is a period of time when the position is vacant, the Probate Administration will have some of the local judges handle the cases, until the position is filled. Mr. Werbner has asked Judge Twerdy to set up a meeting with the Probate Court Administration and the four towns involved to discuss this.

14. **PUBLIC LISTED PARTICIPATION** (*on any subject within the jurisdiction of the Town Council*)  
(3 minute limit):

**Sam Adlerstein of 164 Pine Hill Road** – The BOE is actively working on the budget now. He welcomes the Council to attend any of the meetings/workshops. Right now, they are focusing on a level budget, with the same level of services, etc. It is very much a work in process.

15. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Ben Stanford motioned to go into Executive Session at 8:57 p.m., thus ending the Regular Meeting of the Town Council; Seconded by George Baker. All in favor. None opposed.**

- 15.1 Executive Session to discuss personnel issues.

16. **ADJOURNMENT:** Rick Field moved to adjourn the meeting; Seconded by George Baker at 9:22 p.m. All were in favor.

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Jack Scavone, Council Chair

Michelle A. Finnegan  
Town Council Clerk