

**TOWN OF EAST HAVEN, CT  
EAST HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
35 WHEELBARROW LANE, EAST HAVEN, CT 06513  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2009  
7:00 P.M.**

**PRESENT:           MRS. VITALE, MR. DENUZZO, MR.  
                      HAMMELL,     MR. HENNESSEY, MR.  
                      INGLESE, MRS. PADUA,   MRS. VINEYARD and  
                      MRS. GERACI-ANASTASIO**

**ABSENT:           MR. FINKLE**

**ALSO PRESENT:   MR. ANTHONY SERIO, SUPERINTENDENT**

**MR. FRANK MEOLI, ASSISTANT SUPT.  
MRS. MARY ACQUARULO, DIRECTOR OF  
PUPIL  
SERVICES  
MR. JASON LATHROP, BUSINESS  
ADMINISTRATOR**

**1.    CALL TO ORDER**

Mrs. Vitale, Chairperson of the Board, called the Special Board of Education meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Boardroom of the high school. Mrs. Vitale asked Janice Ball to do a roll call.

Mrs. Vitale – present  
Mr. DeNuzzo – present  
Mr. Finkle – absent  
Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio – present  
Mr. Hammell – present  
Mr. Hennessey – present  
Mr. Inglese – present  
Mrs. Padua – present

Mrs. Vineyard - present

**2. MINUTES**

Mrs. Vitale asked for a motion for the approval of the revised minutes for the Regular Board meeting of October 27, 2009.

Motion was made by Mr. Hammell and seconded by Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio.

Any discussion on the motion?

Mrs. Padua stated she did not remember receiving the revised minutes. It was stated they were sent by email. Mrs. Ball explained that the only item that had been changed was the information regarding the Cafeteria Satellite Hostesses and the Cafeteria General Worker. They had been voted on together but had appeared in the original minutes as separate items.

There were no objections or abstentions made to the motion. Motion carries. The minutes were approved.

**3. Request for Approval of the Payment of Invoices:**

- **Dated November 11, 2009 for Fiscal Year 2009-10 in the Amount of \$1,263,288.31**

Mrs. Vitale stated they had a request for the approval of the invoices dated November 11, 2009 for fiscal year 2009-10 in the amount of \$1,263,288.31.

Motion was made by Mr. Hammell and seconded by Mr. Inglese.

Any discussion on the motion? There was none.

There were no objections or abstentions made to the motion. Motion carries. The bills were approved.

**4. Approval of Strategic School Profiles for 2008-09**

Mrs. Vitale asked for approval of the Strategic School Profiles for 2008-09.

Motion was made by Mr. Hammell and seconded by Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio.

Any discussion on the motion?

Mr. Hennessey asked was this profile made up with their data or did the State supply it. Mr. Meoli explained it was a combination of the principals' reporting the data and also information they had through a variety of files that they extract what they need. The narratives were written by principals or by Central Office staff. This was done in every school district in Connecticut.

Mr. Hennessey said that one thing he noticed in this profile was the percentage of kids that could not speak English. It was now up to 5.5% or approximately 200 kids. Mr. DeNuzzo stated he thought it was closer to 250. Mr. Hennessey felt that they needed an attack plan for this someday. Mr. Meoli explained they had two full-time ELL certified people, but they could use another two right now. They had a complement of aides who did a nice job. Mr. DeNuzzo asked where they were utilizing them. Mr. Meoli stated in every school as well as the high school.

Mr. Serio stated they had increased services tremendously in the last three years. They were doing this with instructional aides and now with the new State mandates, they had certified teachers in the Middle School, Carbone and the high school. The high school person coordinates all of the other schools to make sure the students were getting services.

Mrs. Vitale stated that in New Haven they were looking for interpreters. Mr. Meoli stated they use their foreign language teachers when they can to communicate with parents. They also use interpreters and have been able to provide for that so far. Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio said there was a State service called Interpreters and Translators.

Any other questions? There were none.

There were no objections or abstentions made to the motion. Motion carries.

Mrs. Vitale called for a 10-minute recess. They were waiting for counsel to arrive. At 7:05 p.m., the Board took a recess. The meeting reconvened at 7:25 p.m. Counsel had not arrived.

Mrs. Vitale stated the next item was discussion and possible action of Central Office Reorganization Plan.

**5. Discussion and Possible Action of Central Office Reorganization Plan**

Mr. Hammell asked for a motion for approval of the Central Office reorganization plan with the elimination of Curriculum Coordinator and Replacing with Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction. Motion was seconded by Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio.

Any discussion on the motion?

Mrs. Vineyard did not think this was a good idea. She felt they had better places to put their money. She stated that Mr. Serio or Mr. Meoli just finished saying they could use two more ELL teachers. If they took a look at the Strategic School Profile that they just approved, they spend \$500 more per student on administration than they did on student support. She thought that spending more money now was not a good idea.

Any further discussion?

Mrs. Padua stated she agreed wholeheartedly with Mrs. Vineyard. They didn't receive any paperwork backing up this request and they did not see a job description or job posting or contract. To try and vote on something that they had no information on -- it was against their bylaws and it was not common sense. Mrs. Vitale asked Mr. Serio if he had a job description.

Mrs. Padua stated they had asked for it two weeks ago at the meeting and they still did not have anything. Mrs. Vineyard stated that two weeks ago the majority of them did not think it was a good idea and

here they were not even two weeks, it was only 13 days. Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio stated when they went over the realm of what she would be doing, did she ask for a job description? Mrs. Padua stated she said they did not have anything on how much -- you're telling us we are going to save money, but where? They did not have anything of what a salary would be on this. Show us in the budget how this was going to save them money. Two weeks ago you said it was going to save us \$35,000. How was that going to save them money?

Mrs. Padua stated they had voted on football coaches where they received more information than this. Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio stated the organization chart told them what she was going to do. She was only answering the question as to what she was going to do. Mrs. Padua stated it was not a job description, it was an organizational chart.

Mrs. Padua stated two weeks ago they needed salary information to make this kind of decision. The majority agreed that now was not the time to be spending more money. They had people standing up saying their kids did not have band teachers; teachers were still out on layoffs; stipend positions had to be cut and kids did not have activities. They were putting more bulk up at the top and it did not make sense. She did not understand what the rush was to push this through without the information they needed.

Mrs. Vitale asked Mr. Serio to address the monetary amount. Mr. Serio stated the Assistant Superintendent contract was modeled from Mr. Meoli's contract as Assistant Superintendent. The salary would be \$130,000. (There was a commotion from the audience.) Mrs. Vitale stated they would clear the room. Mr. Serio stated that would be approximately \$15,000 more than what she was currently making.

Mrs. Vineyard stated at the last meeting the majority of us, including Mr. Serio, thought that this should wait for the new Board and the budget process to see if there was reason and enough money to put this in. Mr. Hammell stated he did not believe it was said that way. Mrs. Vineyard stated it was.

Mr. Hammell stated that he was going to caution everyone in here. There was no public comment nor was there public out displays (sic)

here. If it continued, they would clear the room. He asked them to please refrain themselves. Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio stated there were rules and regulations.

Mrs. Vineyard made the motion to postpone the motion on the floor. Mrs. Padua seconded the motion.

Mrs. Vitale stated all right. Let's take a vote postponing the motion on the floor. A roll call vote was taken.

Mr. DeNuzzo – no  
Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio – no  
Mr. Hammell – no  
Mr. Hennessey – no  
Mr. Inglese – no  
Mrs. Padua – yes  
Mrs. Vineyard – yes

Vote was five (5) to two (2) against postponing the motion. Motion denied.

Any further discussion?

Mr. DeNuzzo asked Mr. Serio to give them a little more on the job description other than what he had heard so far. Mr. Serio read the job description information that had been handed out to the Board.

Mr. DeNuzzo asked whether any of these items were things that were done by either he or Mr. Meoli at this time. Mr. Serio stated he thought they shared the duty of many of these things, but he thought one of the major things was to put the hierarchy from the coordinator to a Central Office administrator. The main thing in driving teaching and instruction and providing curriculum for their schools was to have that person in the status where they were above the administration and able to give direction to the principals and did not have to signoff through himself or Mr. Meoli. She would still answer to him as Superintendent. Right now the initiatives needed to be rubberstamped by Mr. Meoli or himself.

Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio asked if they were adding to what she currently does, was he also adding this job description which they don't have.

Mr. Serio stated she would be a 12-month employee instead of an 11-month employee. So they would be paying her an additional \$15,000 than what she was working? Mr. Serio stated that was because they were three months into the year and their fiscal year ended on June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. DeNuzzo asked Mr. Serio what was the extension of this contract. Mr. Serio responded it was a 3-year contract. Mrs. Vineyard asked why they did not have a copy of the contract. Mr. Serio asked if they had a copy of the contract. Mrs. Padua asked why they did not get it. They talked about it at the last meeting. How could they make a decision on something that they didn't have any information on and put it on the agenda again and still give them no information and expect them to vote on it?

Mrs. Vineyard spoke about how many times they spoke about only receiving one piece of paper and now they expect them to vote on it tonight. Tonight they did not have any pieces of paper, but you want us to vote on it. Our bylaws state if they do not have the paperwork in front of them, then it was not valid. Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio asked if they had asked for a copy of it -- she did not remember.

Mrs. Vineyard stated they wanted her to vote on something and she did not even know what she was voting on. Our bylaws say you want me to vote on something, then I need to see the piece of paper and have time to digest it before I vote on it. Mrs. Padua stated they had nothing but this lovely piece of paper that gives a listing of duties that Mr. Serio just read. Mr. Hammell stated they also had an organization chart at the last meeting which was what this motion was all about to begin with. It was pretty self-explanatory; the importance of the reorganization. It puts into place the future for the district.

Mrs. Vineyard felt it was fiscally irresponsible to be doing this right now and Mrs. Padua agreed.

Mr. DeNuzzo asked how many years did this person they were recommending for the position have with the district. Mr. Serio responded four years. Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio asked if that was valid to this. Mr. Serio explained without the reorganizational decision, he did not think anything would move forward as far as additional appointment to anyone.

Mrs. Vitale stated that right now the item on the table was to vote to approve the plan. So that's what they were going to vote on.

Mr. Serio asked them to repeat the motion. Mr. Hammell stated he would repeat the motion. The motion on the table was this:

Motion is to approve the Central Office reorganization plan with the elimination of Curriculum Coordinator and Replacing with Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction.

Mr. Hammell stated this was the motion that was on the floor, so that's what they were voting on. Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio had seconded that motion.

Mrs. Vitale asked for a roll call vote.

Mr. DeNuzzo – yes  
Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio – yes  
Mr. Hammell – yes  
Mr. Hennessey – yes  
Mr. Inglese – yes  
Mrs. Padua – no, absolutely not.  
Mrs. Vineyard – no

Vote was five (5) in favor with two (2) opposed. Motion carries.

**6. Discussion and Possible Action to Appoint Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction (Executive Session Discussion Anticipated)**

Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio made a motion to approve the contract and appoint Erica Forti as the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction, and authorize the Board Chair to execute a contract of employment with Ms. Forti. Mr. Hammell seconded the motion.

Any discussion on the motion?

Mrs. Vineyard asked if she could see a copy of the contract now. Mrs. Padua wanted to state again how unbelievably irresponsible this was

to ask them to vote on something that they were just now getting five minutes before they were supposed to be voting on it.

There were discussions and remarks going on throughout the room.

Mr. Serio asked if they were looking over the contract and going to vote on it. Mrs. Padua asked if could they have at least five minutes to look at it. Mr. Serio stated that was fine.

Mr. Hammell stated he was going to say this one more time, if this didn't stop, he was going to call a recess and clear this room. This was the last warning.

There was a major commotion going on. Nothing was decipherable.

There was a call made to the Police Department. Mr. Hammell said, Madam Chair, I call for a recess. I want the room cleared. They were having a policeman come here to keep order in this meeting. They were now in recess.

Mrs. Vitale reconvened the meeting at 7:57 p.m.

Mr. DeNuzzo asked that the motion be read again.

Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio read the motion again.

The motion was to approve the contract and appoint Erica Forti as the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction, and authorize the Board Chair to execute a contract of employment with Ms. Forti. Mr. Hammell had seconded the motion.

Mrs. Vineyard stated that Section 9320 of their bylaws stated that all pertinent information should be furnished to the Board prior to discussion and vote. She said that five minutes before discussion and vote did not cut it with her.

Any other comments?

Mrs. Padua stated they were going against their bylaws. She had a right to talk. They did not have time to review this; we did not have

proper information and we did not have proper notification. They were in violation of their bylaws. They did not have appropriate information to act on this tonight and they should not be acting on this.

Mrs. Vineyard stated they don't have the money. They cut teachers, they cut stipends, and they had places where there was need. They had people come in here and tell them their kids were missing out on things because of the cuts they made. Now they were going to put in a new position that costs them more money. She just didn't get it.

Any other discussion?

Mr. Hammell stated he moved the motion for a vote.

A roll call vote was then taken.

Mr. DeNuzzo – I would just like to say I know this is heated here tonight. Erica Forti, since she has been here has been a pillar of this district. To lose this person to another district is quite inevitable at this point in time. I think she is a young lady that has a star on top of her head. I think to lose this young lady in this district would be a disservice to this district. As to what she has contributed to this district in the four years she has been here, I think she is the biggest reason that our CMT and CAPT scores are where they are today, and where they are in this State. With that said, I will approve this. I will vote yes.

Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio – yes

Mr. Hammell – yes

Mr. Hennessey – yes

Mr. Inglese – yes

Mrs. Padua – absolutely no. This is the first we heard about the contract and this is the first we have heard who the person is. There is nothing on the agenda of who the person was. No way. No.

Mrs. Vineyard – absolutely not. I think we need to be fiscally responsible to our kids.

Vote was five (5) in favor of the motion with two (2) opposed.  
Motion carries.

**7. Discussion and Possible Action on Assistant Superintendent's Contract (Executive Session Discussion Anticipated)**

Mr. Hammell made a motion to approve the one-year extension of Assistant Superintendent Frank Meoli's contract until 2011- 2012, and authorize the Board Chair to execute an agreement with Mr. Meoli that contains this term of employment. Motion was seconded by Mr. Inglese.

Any discussion on the motion?

Mrs. Padua stated they did not have a copy of the contract. Mrs. Vitale stated they all have a copy of everybody's contract in our contract book.

There was discussion on not having a copy for information when they were supposed to be voting on something. Mrs. Vitale stated they were just extending it for a year. It was the same contract that they have in their contract book, if they read it and look at it. They had a copy of every contract in this district. Mrs. Padua asked weren't they supposed to get a copy of the contract. Mrs. Vitale stated if they knew it was coming up they should take it out of their book at home. Mrs. Padua asked weren't they supposed to get a copy with the information when they were supposed to vote on something. Yes or no?

Mr. Serio responded that both he and Mr. Meoli had a freeze on their salary this year and no increase request. Mrs. Vitale stated so there was no money involved at all. No.

Any discussion on the motion? There was none.

Mrs. Vitale asked for a roll call vote.

Mr. DeNuzzo – yes, I do have a comment. It's been a tough two years for this Board, Superintendent, staff, including Mr. Meoli. He wanted to compliment him for getting us to where we are today. So he votes yes.

Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio – yes

Mr. Hammell – yes  
Mr. Hennessey – yes  
Mr. Inglese – yes

Mrs. Padua – no, nothing against Mr. Meoli. They were not doing it the right way.

Mrs. Vineyard – no, and it was nothing personal against Mr. Meoli.

Vote was five (5) in favor of the motion with two (2) opposed.  
Motion carries.

**8. Discussion and Possible Action on Superintendent’s Contract  
(Executive Session Discussion Anticipated)**

Mr. Inglese made a motion to approve the one-year extension of Superintendent Anthony Serio’s contract until 2011-2012, and authorize the Board Chair to execute an agreement with Mr. Serio that contains this term of employment. Motion was seconded by Mr. Hammell.

Any discussion on the motion?

Mr. DeNuzzo stated he had the same remarks he had for Mr. Meoli that he had for Mr. Serio. The same issues.

Mrs. Padua stated they had an executive session where they did the Superintendent’s evaluation -- Mrs. Vitale stated that was in Executive Session, you’re not supposed to –

Mrs. Padua stated she was not saying anything about what was said. This was not going along with what they discussed. Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio stated this was personnel.

Any other discussion?

Mrs. Padua stated you know you guys are doing this wrong.

Mr. DeNuzzo – yes, same remarks go for Mr. Serio as they do for Mr. Meoli.

Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio – yes. Mr. Serio has worked on through some of the comments she has made. I am grateful for that, so thank you.

Mr. Hammell – yes

Mr. Hennessey – yes

Mr. Inglese – yes

Mrs. Padua – no. Nothing personal Mr. Serio.

Mrs. Vineyard – no. Nothing personal. It was just the way this whole thing was brought about.

Vote was five (5) in favor with two (2) opposed. Motion carries.

Mrs. Vineyard stated she wanted to make a point of order. She was a little disappointed with the fact that they cancelled tomorrow night's meeting and made this a Special Meeting so there would be no public comment. The way she found out about tonight's meeting was when she got her packet on Friday. She was curious to know if there was anybody else who didn't know about this meeting until they got their packet. Mrs. Padua stated she did not know about this meeting until she got her packet. Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio stated she didn't think any of them knew about this meeting until they got their packets. There was some discussion on this.

**9. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None.**

**10. ESTABLISHMENT OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING**

**THE NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION – NOVEMBER 24, 2009 – EAST HAVEN HIGH SCHOOL, 35 WHEELBARROW LANE, EAST HAVEN, at 7:00 p.m.**

**11. ADJOURNMENT OF REGULAR MEETING**

Mr. Hammell made a motion to adjourn the special meeting. Mr. Inglese seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion, no objections, and no abstentions. Motion carries. Meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,**

**MRS. MARILYN VITALE, CHAIRPERSON  
EAST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION**