

**ELMIRA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
ELMIRA, NEW YORK**

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**EFA – Community Room
933 Hoffman Street
Elmira, NY 14905**

**May 7, 2008
6:00 pm Executive Session
7:00 pm Meeting**

**MEETING CALLED TO
ORDER**

President Dan Hurley called the Special Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 6:07 and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Anthony Fisher, Jr., Lynn Grottenthaler, Dan Hurley, Robin Long, Rodney Strange, Robert Woods

Student Representatives: Elmira Free Academy Student Representative Kathleen Denicola

Absent: Michael Crimmins, Ethel Stroman, Mary Beth Turner, Alternative High School Student Representative Shayna Perry, Southside High School Student Representative Katelynn Cooper

Others: Dr. Raymond Bryant, David Gleason, Joseph Hochreiter, Christine Mecke, Robert VanKeuren

**APPROVAL OF
AGENDA**

Mrs. Long moved, seconded by Mr. Woods that the Board approve the agenda with the following changes:

- Remove item H-3-Approval of Update of SEQR Determination for District Capital Project
- Remove item “J”-Personnel
- Add Old Business as item “I”
- Change item “I” Visitors Wishing to Address the Board to item “J”

Motion Carried:

Yes: Fisher, Grottenthaler, Hurley, Long, Strange, Woods

No: None

Absent: Crimmins, Stroman, Turner

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mrs. Grottenthaler moved, seconded by Mr. Woods that the Board move into Executive Session for the discussions about proposed, pending or current litigation and the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation; also included for motion Mrs. Grottenthaler moved, seconded by Mr. Woods that the Board appoint Mrs. Long as Clerk Pro Tem in the absence of the Clerk. Attorney Gloria Varghese was also invited into Executive Session. (6:10 p.m.)

Motion Carried:

Yes: Fisher, Grottenthaler, Hurley, Long, Strange, Woods

No: None

Absent: Crimmins, Stroman, Turner

Valerie Castiglia
Substitute Board Clerk

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Mr. Woods moved, seconded by Mr. Fisher that the Board returns to Open Session. (6:52 p.m.)

Motion Carried:

Yes: Fisher, Grottenthaler, Hurley, Long, Strange, Woods

No: None

Absent: Crimmins, Stroman, Turner

Robin Long
Clerk Pro Tem

RECONVENED

The meeting reconvened at 7:05 p.m.

EDUCATOR OF THE MONTH

Dan Hurley congratulated Derek Almy, Principal of Ernie Davis Middle School for receiving the award as Educator of the Month. Mr. Almy received \$500 from this award and is going to donate the funds for a garden at EDMS in memory of Ernie Davis' mom who passed away this week.

President Hurley also congratulated EFA Student Board Representative, Katie Deniocla, on a nice article in the newspaper.

VISITORS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Barton Graham, former Board member, referred to the Curriculum Center Renewal's recommendations from a year ago stating that the district was to have current updated job descriptions. He stated that a couple of principals were to have specific job descriptions. He presented a FOIL (Freedom of Information Law) request and received an old job description from 1988. Dr. Bryant responded to Mr. Graham by stating that new job descriptions were done and he was not sure why he received an outdated copy. Dr. Bryant went to the administration building at that time and delivered to Mr. Graham, the current descriptions for the Principals, Vice Principals, Principals on Assignment and Director for Education.

Ted Lax, parent and President of the EFA SPTO, announced that he was no longer the President of the SPTO and is now a school board candidate. He also stated that he was at a recent meeting with more discussion regarding the gift cards that were issued at SHS. He voiced his concerns and frustration with not receiving any answers or communication regarding the Contract for Excellence and other policies.

CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Keystone Associates, Architects, Engineers & Surveyors, LLC

Welliver McGuire Report

Mr. Paul Bedford from Keystone Associates reported that they have not received any approvals yet for the Southside High school environmental review. Once the environmental issue is resolved they will wait for approval from SED. He stated that there is a conference call in place to SED to make sure that everyone is on the same page. Soil management, sub-slab system and piping are being finalized and they hope to have all these in place for final SED approval. He stated that once has SED approval Mr. Hopkins will put together a proposal and will bring this back to the Board.

He went on to say that EFA is scheduled to be finished in June and the project is moving along. He also informed the Board that there will be an Owner Construction Manager (OCM) meeting regarding the track and turf; and they hope to submit a report the first week in June. He went on to report that Diven and Hendy projects are out to bid and once they receive prices for these projects they will report back to the board for review. He stated that Booth Elementary School, the Bus Garage and Ernie Davis Middle School projects are all completed. They are waiting for pricing and construction documents and once they are received they will go to SED for approval.

Mr. Fisher told Mr. Bedford that he has noticed a dramatic improvement at the schools and the Board appreciated their hard work.

Mr. Craig Hopkins from Welliver McGuire reported that the project at Riverside, Beecher and Parley Coburn Elementary Schools were on schedule. He stated that the Fassett job is due to begin in the near future. The budget sheets have been updated and everyone has a number and design estimates. He also stated that there was a decent amount of surplus built up from the \$99 million dollar project.

He discussed the Riverside projects and informed the Board that there are three projects that need decisions soon. He also stated that the asphalt in the parking area has deteriorated and needs work.

Mr. Hopkins explained there is \$500,000 in surplus left over from the \$88 million dollar referendum of 2002 which they would like to close out. Mr. Hopkins asked the Board for a vote on the blacktop project which will cost \$82,000 and will be subcontracted. Mr. Woods was concerned if this project would cause a delay in the opening of the school; Mr. Hopkins replied it would not.

Mrs. Grottenthaler moved, seconded by Mr. Fisher that the Board support the recommendations for the reconstruction of the back parking lot at Riverside Elementary School and support the plan through the Vision 2000 contingency fund.

Motion Carried:

Yes: Fisher, Grottenthaler, Hurley, Long, Strange, Woods

No: None

Absent: Crimmins, Stroman, Turner

Mr. Jeff Robbins of Hunt Engineers & Architects asked for direction from the Board on a project in the main office which will be \$12,437.00. He needs direction before he brings a change order to the Board for approval.

Mr. Russ Robinson from Welliver McGuire explained that there was a need to replace the basketball back stops and framing in the gym at Riverside Elementary School. He explained that there are a couple existing walls that cannot handle the load of the new backstops and this will cause a safety issue. He went on to say that now there is only a 4" masonry wall and another 4" wall

behind that. He stated that 4” is not enough to work with, but it could work with outside walls which would mean they would have to remove brick to put it together. The structural department came up with a design which uses steel beams and six connection points. They estimated that the steel work would be approximately \$35,000 to \$40,000 but have not received the estimate yet. Mr. Robinson recommends that they proceed with the constructional requirements. Mr. Strange asked if this was a problem at all the schools and Mr. Robinson stated that each school has different problems. Mr. Woods asked what the time frame was for using block versus steel. Mr. Robbins replied that block would work structurally and not as costly as steel. The design should be finalized tomorrow, May 8th and he is not sure on the cost difference as of yet. He stated that the contingency is \$719,000 and it is the most efficient and safe. He is looking for direction from the Board to proceed with this project. The Board was in favor for Mr. Robbins to proceed with this project, but the cost should not exceed \$40,000.

Mr. Hopkins stated that he will come back to the board in two weeks with an update on Beecher Elementary School.

Mrs. Grottenthaler thanked Mr. Hopkins for taking the time to mentor a young boy from the Step Down Program who is interested in construction. He got him a hard hat and took him along to some work sites. Mrs. Grottenthaler stated that he is truly an inspiration and wanted to thank him for taking an interest in our students.

2008-2009 BUDGET HEARING

Mr. Gleason presented the 2008-2009 Education Plan & Budget. (Copy available in Clerk’s Supplemental File)

Mr. Gleason began his report by saying that all schools have made annual yearly progress this year. Dr. Bryant thanked Derek Almy, Principal of Ernie Davis Middle School & Brian LeBaron, Principal of Broadway Middle School for their hard work in achieving that goal. He stated that this is the first time in six or seven years that the middle schools in the district have established that progress and it looks like it is going to happen again this year.

There was discussion relative to the Targeted Pre-K and Universal Pre-K after Mrs. Grottenthaler asked about long range plans. Dr. Bryant explained that targeted Pre-K and Universal Pre-K are all rolled together to be called Universal Pre-K. Mrs. Grottenthaler brought up the general fund reserve and the Board

agreed that it is certainly still a big concern and that it will need to be reviewed closely each year.

Dr. Bryant stated that the review of the Contract for Excellence continues and that there is another conference call meeting scheduled next week. He addressed Mr. Lax that answered to his questions are forthcoming as these meetings take place. Dr. Bryant explained the tentative schedule to him.

**BUDGET HEARING
CLOSED**

The budget hearing closed at 8:20 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of Field Trip-
Allentown, PA (SHS
Band/Orchestra)

Mr. Woods moved, seconded by Mr. Fisher that the Board approve the Southside High School Orchestra Field Trip to Allentown, Pennsylvania on May 17, 2008.

Motion Carried:

Yes: Fisher, Grottenthaler, Hurley, Long, Strange, Woods

No: None

Absent: Crimmins, Stroman, Turner

Approval of Field Trip-
Rochester, NY (BMS 8th
Grade Class)

Mr. Woods moved, seconded by Mr. Fisher that the Board approve the Broadway Middle School 8th Grade Class Field Trip to Rochester, New York on June 18, 2008.

Motion Carried:

Yes: Fisher, Grottenthaler, Hurley, Long, Strange, Woods

No: None

Absent: Crimmins, Stroman, Turner

Addition to Agenda-
Approval to Authorize
District Counsel to Enter
into Negotiations for
Possible Litigation

Mrs. Long moved, seconded by Mr. Strange that the Board approves District Counsel to Enter into Negotiation for Possible Litigation.

Mrs. Long asked the President Hurley if this could be added to the agenda and he approved this item as an addition to the agenda under New Business.

Motion Carried:

Yes: Fisher, Grottenthaler, Hurley, Long, Strange, Woods

No: None

Absent: Crimmins, Stroman, Turner

CONSENT ITEMS

Mrs. Long moved, seconded by Mr. Woods that the Board approve the following consent items:

Minutes

Minutes of the April 23, 2008, Regular Meeting.

Grants

Accept the Grant from the New York State Education Department for Title I School Improvement Grants Extension Funds in the amount of \$225,000.

Establishment of 2008-09 Premium Equivalency Rates

Approve the 2008-09 Health Insurance Premium Equivalency Rates and use the reimbursement from the Retiree Drug Subsidy to provide for A Wellness Program as recommended by the Elmira City School District Self-Insured Health Plan Committee as follows:

	<u>Individual</u>	<u>Family</u>
Active Employee	\$4,452.00	\$ 13,356.00
<u>Retirees/Survivors</u>		
Under Age 65	\$4,896.00	\$14,664.00
1 over, 1 under age 65		\$ 9,120.00
Age 65 and over	\$4,116.00	\$ 9,732.00
COBRA	\$4,630.08	\$13,623.12
Medicare Reimbursement	AS ESTABLISHED BY MEDICARE	
Dental	\$ 165.00	\$ 444.00

Mr. Strange reported that pursuant to Item H-4, the Health Committee voted for a wellness program and will bring that program forward in the near future. He pointed out that this program was discussed 10 years ago when he was on the Board and he is glad to finally see it going into action.

2008-09 BOCES Service Contract

Approve the Contract for Services provided by BOCES in 2008-2009 in the amount of \$16,539,207 and authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to sign the agreement.

Committee on Special
Education (CSE)
Recommendations

Approve the placement of students classified by the District Committee on Special Education (CSE) Teams.

Motion Carried:

Yes: Fisher, Grottenthaler, Hurley, Long, Strange, Woods

No: None

Absent: Crimmins, Stroman, Turner

OLD BUSINESS
Substitute Teachers

Mrs. Grottenthaler addressed the Board with some serious substitute issues in the district. It is her understanding that schools are pulling teachers out of their classrooms to substitute on a daily basis. She stressed that pulling a teacher from their own day's initiatives because there are no substitutes is not appropriate. She stated that if we are as concerned about instruction as we say we are as a Board, this should not be happening. Dr. Bryant stated that we are paying less than other areas for substitutes. He presented to the Board a substitute salary comparison sheet for their review to show what other districts are paying their substitutes. (Copy available in Clerk's Supplemental File).

Dr. Bryant also stated that sick leave incentives are being reviewed and asked the Board if they would like him to come back with recommendations. Mr. Van Keuren stated that students leaving college need 60 credit hours completed to be a substitute teacher. He also stated that we require fingerprinting, etc. Mrs. Grottenthaler mentioned that perhaps teachers who are retired receive an additional amount, such as they do in Corning and Horseheads. She feels by using retired teachers we are getting quality teachers. She also stated that this is a critical problem and has been a problem in our district for a long time. Mr. Fisher added that if our district has such a critical need for substitutes maybe we should look at the structure of how we retain these individuals. Mrs. Long stated that we should look into how our substitutes are treated; the manner in which they are called, etc. Dr. Bryant explained that subs are processed and put on a BOCES list and are contacted by BOCES. Mr. Hurley would like input on substitute exit interviews and what is our process?

Dr. Bryant will bring back an item on permanent substitutes and other proposals.

Dr. Bryant informed the Board that he has a mediation meeting with the ETA next week and feels that they may be coming back with a proposed contract.

VISITORS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Barton Graham asked the Board if they are still receiving designs, errors and omission reports. This is something he reviewed while he was on the Board and was checking to see if someone was following up on what we are collecting and asking for. Mr. Gleason answered in the affirmative.

Ted Lax asked that the budget presentation presented this evening be put on the District website.

Michael Robinson, teacher at Elmira Free Academy addressed the Board with the substitute problem in the district and stated that it is a big concern at EFA. He stated that it was very important to have a pool of subs that are reliable. He also wanted to acknowledge to the Board what a wonderful asset Katie Denicola is to the Board.

Dr. Bryant congratulated Carrie Rollins, Principal at Riverside Elementary School on her tenure effective July 1, 2008.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Woods moved, seconded by Mrs. Long that the meeting be adjourned. (8:44 p.m.)

Motion Carried:

Yes: Fisher, Grottenthaler, Hurley, Long, Strange, Woods

No: None

Absent: Crimmins, Stroman, Turner