

North Branford Board of Education

Board of Education Meeting

March 16, 2006

Totoket Valley Elementary School
1388 Middletown Avenue – Northford, CT

The North Branford Board of Education meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Conference Room of Totoket Valley Elementary School on Thursday, March 16, 2006.

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Liz Caplan to adjourn to executive session as per Section 1-225 of the Connecticut General Statutes as permitted by Section 1-200 (6)(a,b & c) of the Connecticut General Statutes.

ALL VOTED AYE

MOTION: Moved by Liz Caplan and seconded by John Bozzuto to reconvene to the Library Media Center for Public Session at 7:05 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

I. Visitors

Principals: David Perry, NBHS
Alan Davis, NBIS
Nancy Brittingham, TVES
Robin Brown-Criscuolo, JHS

Assistant Principals: Todd Stoeffler
Christine Imperato

Dolly Potter	Cliff Potter	M.Lisa Gagliardi
Rose Angeloni	Lisa Albert	Paul M. Proto
David McMahan	Marcia Staffa	Ron Siena
Elizabeth Siena	Jim Dwyer	Tamre Mockus
Craig Creller	Phil Palma	Mike Pollio
Vincent Candelora, Board Liaison		

Lisa Gagliardi inquired about the increases in the certified salaries, and for medical and life insurance in the budget spreadsheet. She would like an explanation on these two increases. She also requested a copy of the breakdown of the legal fees in the 330 account for the second quarter. Lisa also asked that Board Members request copies of the original policies so they can compare them with the new policies that are up for revision. It is important to compare the old policies to see what changes are being proposed. She added that only then can the Board get an understanding of the direction a policy is taking and perhaps the reasons for the changes. Some of these policies tonight are extremely restrictive to the public. Since December the manner of this Board has been to stifle the public and squelch freedom of speech by proposing agenda changes and policies that have become more punitive. This is the perception among the public, and it is a reality. She stated this is why there is no longer an audience at these meetings. She asked the Board to consider sending some of these policies back for one last revision and make them more welcoming and user friendly to the public.

Cheryl Smith asked Lisa Gagliardi to put her requests in writing to the Superintendent's Office.

Liz Caplan stated that they do work off of old policies when in a policy meeting.

Lisa Gagliardi suggested that the rest of the Board receive the old policies.

Cliff Potter asked the Board to take another look at policies #9110 and 9115, because the Town Council does not have a format like this. He feels that 2 minutes is an unreasonable amount of time. He would like that reworded to a reasonable amount of time, and that Madam Chair has the gavel, and control. He feels that if it is getting out of hand, everyone should respect the gavel. This Board is a new Board, because people were upset with the way things were going and wanted a change. Now the Board has a responsibility to represent the taxpayers, and to keep it to 2 minutes is stifling.

II. Student Representative

Student Representative, Mike Scalia reported on the following:

The Student Council sponsored a blood drive in the small gym. 54 pints of blood were collected from North Branford High School participants.

The Honor Society will host the annual Senior Lunch on March 22nd in the small gym. 66 seniors are signed up to attend, with 10 more on a waiting list. There will be special performances of some scenes from this year's play, "Fiddler on the Roof."

The Drama Club will perform "Fiddler on the Roof" on March 30th – April 1st with a special performance at 1:00. Tickets are on sale every night from six until eight o'clock.

FBLA will be working alongside Americares on April 29th and May 6th. They will assist a family in New Haven with renovations, cleaning and remodeling. FBLA also has just completed it's candy sale toward a scholarship for one of its' members and is preparing to have a breakfast for all of the senior members of the club.

PANGEA held a concert by high school students and a few alumni recently in the small gym. All proceeds went toward an American based organization called China Care. Over eleven hundred dollars was raised toward the cause.

The High School has wrapped up its' winter programs. One of the programs was a CIAC regulated group called Unified Sports. North Branford was represented by athletes Bobby Monaco, Erin Falvy, Nicole Iaquesa, Dan Rivellini, Alyssa Wollman, Amanda Baum, Katrina Cardona, Jessica Simmons, and Megan Smith. The group competed in a tournament in Stratford led by coach Carter Welch and received medals for their efforts.

The Hockey team also had a great year with a record of 16 – 3 – 1. The success was made possible by great hockey players such as all conference athletes Kevin Sullivan, Chris Baiocchi, and Matt Iannucci.

III. Consent Agenda

a. Minutes

Minutes of the February 16, 2006 Board of Education meeting.

EXHIBIT A

b. Resignations – None at this time.

c. Appointments

The Superintendent has received a recommendation for the following stipend positions for the 2005/2006 school year:

EXHIBIT B

Peter Babnis	Golf Coach
Cheryl Torino	Assistant Lacrosse Coach
Jennifer Hourascak	Assistant Softball Coach

d. Leaves – None at this time.

e. Field Trips

The Superintendent has received a request from North Branford High School for a field trip to New York City for one day on May 31, 2006. Details of the trip are attached.

EXHIBIT C

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Marcey Onofrio to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

IV. Superintendent's Report

a. Recognition

The representative from CABE was unavailable.

b. Communications

Dr. Wolfe stated that a revised budget was distributed to the Board Members. This was the budget that was submitted to the Town Council. There was also a revised staff directory, a copy of the educational specifications for the renovate as new project for NBIS, and also a copy of the program of studies for NBHS. Dr. Wolfe also distributed a copy of an article that was in the New Haven Register about the circus which came to TVES, and a number of thank you notes to the Board of Education for various functions.

c. School Events

The Drama Club will present *Fiddler on the Roof* on March 30th, 31st and April 1st at the North Branford Auditorium. Show times are:

Thursday – March 30 th	7 p.m.
Friday - March 31 st	7 p.m.
Saturday – April 1 st	1 p.m. and 7 p.m.

d. Board of Education 2006/2007 Budget Request

Dr. Wolfe stated that the budget has been amended, and called the Board's attention to the following dates which the Town Council has set:

On April 4th the Town Council will meet and have a public hearing on both the town and Board of Education budget. The location and time in the past has been 8:00 p.m., at TVES. Dr. Wolfe stated that he will confirm this once he has received official word. The Town Council has also set the dates of April 10, 11th and 12th to meet in a budget workshop to go over various departments budget requests. He added typically that is done in the Town Council chambers, and the Board of Education has usually been on the second day. He asked the Board to reserve those days for the workshops.

e. NBHS Principal Search

Dr. Wolfe reported that there are six semi-finalists which have been selected from the pool of candidates for the position of North Branford High School Principal. The committee has established interview questions and a writing sample question. Interviews are scheduled for April 4th and 5th. The committee will meet on the evening of the 5th to determine the finalists. The finalists will go

through a number of focus groups, and will also have a second interview with the Superintendent, and then the two finalists will be presented to the Board of Education for interviews. He added that the Board will then make a selection. Dr. Wolfe stated that there were 4 faculty members, parents, a student, Administration, and the Chair of the Board of Education on the search committee.

f. CMT/CAPT Testing

Dr. Wolfe reported that students in grades 3-8 and grade 10 began State required testing on March 6th. This marks the first year that all students in grades 3-8 must take the Connecticut Mastery Test and also marks the first year that the administration of these tests has been moved to the spring. Students in grade 10 are required to take the CAPT (Connecticut Academic Proficiency Test) in March. Joan Follo, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, oversees the testing program and is available to answer any questions.

Joan Follo stated that the requirements of giving certain subject tests on certain dates has been accomplished, and that the CMT testing should be completed on Friday, and CAPT testing on Monday. She added that she has called the State Department today to inquire about receiving the results, and they expect to have an electronic copy available in June and a hard copy in August, but this is the first time using this publisher, and there may be glitches.

g. Summer of 2006

Dr. Wolfe stated that this year's program is a joint project with North Haven. The Summer of 2006 – "*What do you collect?*" brochure was released for distribution in both North Branford and North Haven on March 1st. As of March 16th there have been approximately 400 slots filled. Approximately 65% of the registrations are from North Branford and 35% from North Haven. Dr. Wolfe added that he is inquiring about using the pool in North Haven for the summer program, and some of the programs that are leading are new, like Laser Tag, which will be sold out soon.

h. Arts Academy – Summer of 2007

Dr. Wolfe stated that conversations have been ongoing between the Superintendents of North Branford and North Haven about the development of a joint Arts Academy for high school students in the summer of 2007. Currently, the enrichment program provides opportunities for students entering preschool to grade 8. The Arts Academy would provide enrichment activities in both the visual and performing arts for students entering grades 9-12.

i. Special Education Update

The Superintendent distributed a copy of the memorandum that was prepared to the Board. There were no sanctions in the State report, but there were a number of recommendations made by the State Department of Education as a result of their focus groups in North Branford. This is a thorough review which highlights particularly Professional Development, which was a key component, with one of the recommendations involved planning and placement teams and the possibility of utilizing SERC. SERC has very specialized training to help our faculty and Administration in the running of planning and placement teams. The Director of Special Education has provided information regarding this additional training. Dr. Wolfe added that STW is scheduled to undergo that training on April 5th. Another area was communications, and listed is a great number of bulleted items that reflect communication with Administration, faculty, and staff. There has also been outside resources which have also been employed to help in that area.

Dr. Wolfe stated that the next area had to do with paraprofessionals. Those items are also bulleted. There have also been discussions at both building level and Administrative level regarding lowering the retention rate in Special Education. He added that we have also employed the services of the head of the Special Education Department from Southern Connecticut State University who has met as recently as Wednesday with the administrative team K-5, and has been working with a number of our elementary schools. Individual principals have submitted plans which they are going to embark on which they hope will improve some of the recommendations that were made. Dr. Wolfe will continue to check in with the Board, and will provide another update at the end of the school year.

j. SCASA Luncheon

The Superintendent reported on the SCASA Luncheon scheduled for tomorrow. SCASA stands for South Central Area Superintendent's Association. There are 21 school districts in the greater New Haven area. Six North Branford students will be honored. Dr. Wolfe added that he would like the six students to attend a Board meeting soon. Over 200 individuals are expected representing 13 towns. Guest speakers for the event are the Director of CAPSS Dr. David Larson, a former principal of NBHS and Kristen Cusato, Channel 8 News Anchor.

Cheryl Smith added that there is a student that attends CAMS attending that is a North Branford resident.

Dr. Wolfe stated that ACES is one of the 21 schools districts attending.

V. Committee Reports

The Board of Education will review and take possible action on committee reports.

a. Negotiations

The Board of Education will review the tentative agreement between the North Branford Board of Education and Local 1303-054 of Connecticut Council #4, AFSCME, AFL-CIO (Custodians).

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Elisabeth Caplan to approve the agreement between the North Branford Board of Education and Local 1303-054 of Connecticut Council #4, AFSCME, AFL-CIO (Custodians) for the period July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2008.

Dr. Wolfe distributed a brief executive summary for the Board of the contract. Three Board members were involved in the negotiations. He also distributed the contracts for signature.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

b. Budget

A copy of the March 1 financial statement is attached for review. **EXHIBIT D**

Elisabeth Caplan reported on the budget meeting. She stated that the 330 account is in the red because of speech services. Also, account 490 which is security service is in the red which is a residual from the fire alarm problem.

Dr. Wolfe added that the problem was from December when the panel board at the police station burned out.

Elisabeth Caplan stated that the transportation account #510 may be in the red by the end of the year because of the cost of fuel. The energy account #620 is in the red, but because of the mild winter it is not as bad as it could have been.

Cheryl Smith stated that because of the trouble hiring a Speech Therapist, the school system has been contracting services, it has cost \$60,000 more in professional services as opposed to certified staff.

Dr. Wolfe stated that we have hired a half time person.

c. Buildings & Grounds

John Bozzuto distributed a spreadsheet of current building repairs to date, which starts with emergency repairs. The second page shows the repairs for 2005-2006, there have been major improvement, and some have not been done at this time. John added that the spreadsheet includes a proposed schedule of repairs for 2006-2007. The last page shows building and site improvement detail, one of the major replacements coming up is the fascia project at STW this summer. There is regular preventative maintenance done throughout the year, and the committee has decided to meet quarterly. If there is an emergency, the committee will call an emergency meeting.

Ron Haskins stated that the bleachers at the high school are almost complete. They should be ready for the track season.

John Bozzuto has added that you can see the new bleachers from Route 22, and it makes a big difference.

Cheryl Smith asked if the budget and actual projects listed on the second page are being scheduled to be done.

Ron Haskins stated that they may now be listed on the 2006-2007 page.

John Bozzuto added that some projects have been pushed back, and others brought in.

d. Curriculum

Bonnie Symansky reported on the new technology and literacy curriculum. The State mandate is coming out with new frameworks, and we addressing these frameworks with the new technology plan. They have identified skills for k-5, and another set of skills for 6-8. There are two teams working simultaneously. They have come up with a draft that they are working on which addresses basic concepts, objectives, and ways to measure student's progress.

e. Pension

Elisabeth Caplan stated that the pension committee did not meet this month.

f. Policy

The Board is provided a copy of the following policies for second reading and approval.

Policy #P9110 - Meeting Conduct	EXHIBIT E
Policy #P9115 - Board Meetings - Public Participation	EXHIBIT F
Policy #P9120 - Actions by the Board	EXHIBIT G
Policy #P9130 - Order of Business	EXHIBIT H
Policy #P9140 - Consent Agenda	EXHIBIT I
Policy #P9150 - Parliamentary Procedures	EXHIBIT J
Policy #P9170 - Meeting Procedures - Broadcasting & Taping of Meeting	EXHIBIT K
Policy #P9200 - Development of Board Policy	EXHIBIT L

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Elisabeth Caplan to approve Policy #P9110 - Meeting Conduct as submitted.

Elisabeth Caplan stated that she feels that two minutes is not enough time for speakers, and the Board should look at this policy again. She added that there should be a listing of related policies.

Marcey Onofrio added that she agrees. She has checked on Madison's policies, and they do not have a time limit, but it states that they may set a time limit on the length. Marcey stated that she feels the Board should not stifle the public.

Bonnie Symansky asked if the Board is operating by Roberts Rules of Orders, what does Roberts Rules state.

Cheryl Smith stated that she feels the Board should be fair to everyone. If there is no limitation at all, everyone might not be able to speak. She feels that there should be some limit.

John Bozzuto suggested that the Board table this policy, and discuss it further. With the past issues, it may be the wrong way to go with the public concerns. We can stop someone at some point, and does not know if three minutes is sufficient.

Bonnie Symansky stated that if there are twenty people who want to speak, it becomes an issue, if there are only one or two it is not.

Marcey Onofrio added that the Board should not put a harsh policy in effect for those few times.

Bonnie Symansky stated that the policy also says that there is a maximum of 15 minutes for each issue.

Marcey Onofrio stated that she does not care for that language either. We owe it to the public to listen.

Cheryl Smith stated that there is a motion on the table, and if the Board votes it down, it will go back.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	NAY
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	NAY
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	NAY
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	NAY
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	NAY
RON HASKINS:	AYE

MOTION FAILED 1-5

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Elisabeth Caplan to approve Policy #P9115 - Board Meetings - Public Participation as submitted.

Marcey Onofrio stated that she had an issue with this policy.

John Bozzuto added that part of this policy states the same thing as the previously discussed policy.

Marcey Onofrio added where is it by limiting the public to just what is on the agenda, where do they get to ask the Board anything outside of that.

Cheryl Smith replied that they can do that at the end of the Board meeting.

John Bozzuto added that the two minute limit is in this policy also.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	NAY
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	NAY
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	NAY
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	NAY
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	NAY
RON HASKINS:	NAY

MOTION FAILED 6-0

Elisabeth Caplan stated that she is not comfortable with the language of the second paragraph.

Cheryl Smith stated that this issue has to be clarified.

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by John Bozzuto to table Policy #P9120

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by John Bozzuto to table Policy #P9170 – Meeting Procedures as submitted.

Cheryl Smith asked what Marcey's concerns were.

Marcey Onofrio stated that she does not know why the media needs to give 24 hour notice if they are going to be at a meeting, and doesn't know if this is legal. It is a business meeting held in public.

Cheryl Smith stated that there are times when the Board would not want the meeting to be publicized in the media.

Marcey Onofrio referred to Madison's policy.

John Bozzuto stated that if the Board has something it does not the public to hear, it is held in executive session, and not a public forum.

Marcey Onofrio added that the only thing the public cannot hear is legal, personnel, and negotiations. Anything else is public record, and if it is public record it is public to the media.

Ron Haskins stated that there are some other items that fall into the executive session.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	NAY

MOTION PASSED 5-1

MOTION: Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by Elizabeth Caplan to approve Policy #P9130 - Order of Business as submitted.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	NAY
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 5-1

MOTION: Moved by Elisabeth Caplan and seconded by Bonnie Symansky to approve Policy #P9140 - Consent Agenda as submitted.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

MOTION: Moved by Elisabeth Caplan and seconded by Bonnie Symansky to approve Policy #P9150 - Parliamentary Procedures as submitted.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

MOTION: Moved by Elisabeth Caplan and seconded by Ron Haskins to approve Policy #P9200 - Development of Board Policy as submitted.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

Cheryl Smith stated that a discussion has been ongoing regarding communications from the public to individual Board members. We began to discuss a policy that relates to that. Included in that are e-mails from the public. The committee is looking into having a school e-mail address, and the e-mail will then be dropped into the Board member's personal e-mail address.

John Bozzuto added that he thought it was a good idea, any form of communication, to get ideas, concerns, and thoughts from the public.

f. ACES

Cheryl Smith reported that ACES had a meeting last week. There are three finalists for the position of Executive Director who are very positive people. The property that ACES was going to purchase last year is off the table, but they are making an offer on a piece of property on United Drive which is currently being leased. She stated that there was a discussion on administrative salaries in the negotiations portion of the meeting. Cheryl added that ACES is hosting a charity event to support the Little Theater from 5 to 7 pm. There is a new fee schedule for the daycare, and people are obligated to pay for a full year.

g. Strategic Planning

No meeting to report at this time.

h. Building Committee

No meeting to report at this time.

i. Calendar Committee

Marcey Onofrio reported that she has received paperwork on the 2007-2008 calendar today, and will contact people that were on the committee last time to

see if they are still interested in being on the committee and will schedule a meeting.

MOTION: Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by Marcey Onofrio to change the next Board meeting from April 13th to April 6th because of the Jewish holiday.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	NAY

MOTION PASSED 5-1

j. Transportation/Bus Safety Committee

No meeting to report at this time.

k. Communication

Bonnie Symansky reported that the committee placed an article in the newspaper which is the committee's first column which is called BOE News. It has an e-mail address so anyone can contact the Board.

VI. New Business

None at this time.

VII. Visitors and Press

Cliff Potter stated that he wanted to press strongly that the Board has power and control over Board meetings, and would like to see it written in such a way that is more reasonable, and take off the time limits, and take the pressure off of the public. If the Board places time limits, it will come back to bite you. This is a newly elected Board, and a lot of healing needs to be done, and you should be open to the Board.

Lisa Albert stated that if Policy #9110 is tabled, will the 15 minute time limit per subject matter, does that mean that if seven people use 2 minutes, will that be it. No one has mentioned that and it needs to be considered.

Vincent Candelora stated that the way that he read the policy paragraph is that if a radio or television station wants to come in here and report proceedings from the floor of the meeting they need to have permission to do so, which is different than coming in to gather information, and reporting from the hallway or outside. He added that the policy

should be read carefully for what it says and for what it is. It is not just about prohibiting the media altogether. It is important that you don't have anchormen or reporters in here reporting and interviewing from the floor. He feels he would support a policy like this, adding a statement in the first paragraph having more inviting language making it clear that radio and television would be permitted in the room, but any reporting they would do, they would have to give 24 hours, or not allow it on the floor of the meeting at all.

Lisa Gagliardi thanked the Board for taking some of those policies back for consideration. She added that she had a question about the Special Education report, but believes she received an answer regarding improvement in the area of teacher training in the PPT process. She would like to know if any of the special education updates require additional funding.

Dr. Wolfe replied that some of the training is being done by our own staff, including Suzanne Wright, and Dr. Kris Lindsey, and some is being done through grant money, and some through the current budget. There will not be any need for additional costs. There is professional development in the special education budget. The SERC program is relatively cost effective.

Lisa Gagliardi asked if the update is available to the public.

Dr. Wolfe replied that yes it was, and to make a request for it.

VIII. Grievance Hearing

A Level Three Grievance Hearing filed by the North Branford Federation of Teachers will be heard by the Board of Education. This grievance involves personal day language in the Teachers' Contract. The Board will return to Executive Session after hearing the evidence of the grievance and has up to three (school) days to render its decision.

Phil Palma stated that he is attending the Board meeting tonight regarding personal days, and it involved his personal day. He had submitted for a personal day, by following the process per the contract more than a week in advance, which was denied by the building principal, and the Superintendent. He stated that he has not yet received a reason why it was denied other than a quote back from the contract, which did not satisfy him, and this is why he is here. He does not know why it was denied, since the teachers have three personal days.

Dr. Wolfe distributed a copy of the paper trail of the grievance to the Board, and to the Union. The first page is the grievance form D, which was completed. The second page is the level 1 grievance form A which was completed. The next is grievance form B – the decision of the principal. The next is the original personal leave request form. The last is the grievance form C. The reason it is incomplete is because a request was made of the Union to extend the timelines regarding this particular grievance. He also

submitted a copy of the packet which was submitted to Board members on February 16th referencing items which are in this packet, and also provided the Board with a copy of the minutes of the February meeting because there is also information regarding this grievance.

Dr. Wolfe asked the Board members to refer to the exhibits which were handed out on February 16th. He stated that exhibit E1, article 17 from the Director of Personnel and Business. This particular language is the language which occurs in the contract prior to the collective bargaining agreement which was agreed upon following the expiration of the 2002-2005 collective bargaining agreement. Under B1 there was a day under section I which did not require approval or any questions asked. This was in the collective bargaining agreement from 2002-2005. Then in exhibit B2, we now have the new language which was negotiated between the North Branford Federation of Teachers and the Board of Education. This language is significantly different. The personal days were separated from bereavement. The number of personal days was reduced to three. It expressly states that a personal day is for personal reasons which cannot be handled out of school hours. The only reason for an Administrator to handle that is for the right to ask what that day is going to be used for. This is not an attempt to infringe on the personal rights of a person, but it could be a day which is in fact granted. It could be a day before a vacation as long as the reason meets the criteria which is set in the language in section A1. It is interesting is that if you were to go to the Union proposal in the last sentence of paragraph A, which was on the table it reads that use of personal leave does not require express reason, nor can it be denied by Administration. That particular language fell off the table, and while the contract went to arbitration, the personal leave clause was mutually agreed to by the Union and the Board of Education. This particular grievance is not about what the Union wants or would like, but is about contract language. The Unions states that it wants the Superintendent to follow the contract. That is precisely what the Superintendent is doing. The last grievance highlighted whether or not personal days are vacation days, this is a slightly different spin, and it centers around whether or not an individual has to tell Administration whether or not the day qualifies. In this particular case, the high school principal approached, and according to the high school principal, did not receive word on why this day was being used. That is the reason this was denied. Without any information to determine whether it met the criteria of the new language it was denied. If the individual provided the information and that information was in conformity with the language, then the principal would have approved. The absence of the reason on the form is by design, not by omission. The administration has discussed whether the form should list the reason that someone should request a personal day. We have chosen not to list it on the form because we do not want to memorialize the reason which could be highly personal. The relationship is key between the principal and the individual. The Superintendent does not second guess his administrative team, and if a reasonable answer meets the criteria provided, the day will be in fact approved.

Dr. Wolfe added that under B4 is the language of the collective bargaining agreement between 2005 and 2008. It should be noted that grievance arbitration is significantly different from interest arbitration. The Board has been put on notice by the Union that it will use the grievance process to attempt to get what it didn't get in interest arbitration. Grievance arbitration is solely for the purpose of interpreting existing contract language. We believe that personal days have a standard to meet, and the standard is clear, personal reasons that cannot be conducted after school hours. This

isn't about what someone wants or someone desires. It is not about what fell off the table or what someone didn't get. It is simply about strict contract interpretation. The Superintendent does have the right to grant personal for extenuating circumstances, and that is continuing for people who have personal days needs related to advanced medical illness, or family illness, or funerals beyond the scope of what the contract calls for. But this particular case is clearly about whether or not the Administration has the right to ask someone what the reason for a personal day is. If that is given and it is reasonable, the building Administration will make the recommendation to approve the day. In the absence of that information, it will be denied.

Phil Palma stated that he could also bring up things that preceded the contract language. There were a lot of things as you heard at the last meeting that were discussed and agreed upon verbally, and you cannot possibly put everything in writing. There are implied things. Phil added that he stood there today to say to the Board that what is implied as a personal day is just that. A personal day is whatever that individual sees that they cannot do during the school hours. Also the Superintendent and Personnel Director have used the word business, which is not in the contract language. He referred to the February 16th page, from Donald Winnicki, it says that personal days are for business that cannot be handled outside of school hours. The contract language does not use the word business. We are happy to live by the contract language, but I think any personal day is just what it says, it is a personal day and you do not have to give a reason why you want that personal day. We did go from five personal days down to three. We can bring all kinds of things that happened during negotiations that have nothing to do with the final product. What led up to the negotiations, and went back and forth is irrelevant. The final thing is the contract language and we are more than happy to live by the contract language. We thought we had an understanding with the Superintendent and the attorney for the town, because this was clearly discussed, each and every item of this. But if we want to come back to just with the contract language we are happy to live by it in arbitration if you don't see it that way.

Dr. Wolfe stated that this is contradictory testimony because it stated that we had an agreement that was not put in writing, and there is no such thing as an agreement which is not put into writing unless there is letter of understanding which might be attached to a contract. To say that we had some kind of agreement outside of this contract language is simply not true. There is no question that there was considerable discussion, and things fell off the table. The agreement is what is written here. For the Boards reference personal business in his opinion is synonymous with personal reasons.

Cheryl Smith asked is the Board had any questions.

Ron Haskins asked Mr. Palma about the discussions in negotiations about this particular item. He stated that he was there, and there were discussions about changing what is in here, but when that falls off the table, those discussions fall off the table as well, and reverts back to the original contract language. He does not understand when you say that the Superintendent made assurances to you; those discussions were made in the context of bargaining this issue with you.

Phil Palma replies that they specifically asked because they wanted a clarification on this language of what he meant, and the attorney for the town answered specifically

that they could be taken, and no reason would be asked and they could be taken any time. The state labor department says that in bargaining that is part of the agreement. The contract language is certainly the language, but there are things that are discussed and if there are specific questions asked of the parties to clarify an understanding, that can be used as a part of understanding what the language means. Barring that, we can live with the fact that the Board does not want to accept the responsibility for that. If that is your position that we are going to rule out anything that was discussed clarifying this, that is why labor law states that nothing can be completely covered and the two parties have to come to an agreement and we did come to an agreement on this particular and clarified, and again that will all come out in the future. We did have other people there with you Mr. Haskins that heard that.

Ron Haskins replied that he remembered the conversation, and that was in context of changing the wording in this contract.

Phil Palma replied that was clarifying because they figured they would be in this position. They wanted to make sure that that was the correct understanding. It was point blank asked to Mr. Connon. Those very questions were asked of Mr. Connon. Dr. Wolfe leaned over to Mr. Connon, and asked him some questions, and they still proceeded to agree that yes, you will be able to take it without any reasons; we are not going to ask you the reasons.

Ron Haskins stated that was with the changes that were being proposed, but those changes fell off the table.

Mr. Palma stated no.

Cheryl Smith stated that the contract clearly states that for personal reasons that cannot be handled outside of school hours, so how would that be determined without asking that question.

Phil Palma replied that you don't need to ask that question, it is a personal day.

Cheryl Smith asked then why would we have which cannot be handled outside of school hours.

Phil Palma replied it is clear that those would be things if a person asks for a personal day, it is for things that cannot be handled outside of school hours.

Cheryl Smith asked Phil Palma, within the grievance procedure in accordance with the contract the first step is an informal procedure in which the aggrieved person goes to the principal for a sit down with him for a discussion, and tries to work it out. Did that happen?

Phil Palma replied that it did not happen.

Cheryl Smith asked why this did not happen.

Phil Palma stated that he went and followed procedure and filled out the form. It was not up to him.

Cheryl Smith replied that that is the formal procedure. Prior to that, within the contract in article 27, under grievance procedure number one, there is an informal procedure which reads that if a teacher feels he may have a grievance, he must first discuss the matter with his principal, or in his absence the assistant principal in an effort to resolve the problem informally.

Phil Palma had a discussion with Dr. Perry, that he wanted to have the day off, and Dr. Perry made it clear to him that the Superintendent was making those decisions.

Cheryl Smith asked Phil Palma if he didn't go to Dr. Perry and say that he had a problem with this, let's sit down and talk about this.

Phil Palma replied that he did not do this, because he is not the one who makes decisions about this.

Cheryl Smith stated that he is the first person to make a decision about this.

John Bozzuto asked if that is procedure.

Cheryl Smith stated that that is how it reads in the contract, that the first step is an informal procedure. Then it moves to a formal procedure.

Phil Palma stated that you would have to feel that there is a chance that it would be resolved at that level to bother going through that.

Cheryl Smith replied that she was asking if he did it or not, not making a judgment call.

Elisabeth Caplan stated that on the form, one personal day was previously used, and asked if Phil Palma gave a reason for that day, and if he got if off with pay.

Phil Palma replied that he did not give a reason, and he got if off with pay.

Elisabeth Caplan asked when this was.

Phil Palma replied that this was the day before Thanksgiving.

Elisabeth Caplan asked if he had gone to the building principal and asked for that day off?

Phil Palma replied that he filled out the paper, and then it was approved by Dr. Perry.

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by seconded by Marcey Onofrio to go into Executive Session at 8:35 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

MOTION: Moved by Elisabeth Caplan and seconded by Marcey Onofrio to reconvene to Public Session at 9:20 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Elisabeth Caplan to uphold the decision of administration in the grievance filed by the North Branford Federation of Teachers. Personal days are defined by the contract “for personal reasons that cannot be handled outside of school hours.”

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	NAY
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 5-1

Cheryl Smith offered to have three Board Members meet with the Teacher’s Union to work together on these issues.

Phil Palma accepted this offer.

IX. The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for April 06, 2006 at Totoket Valley Elementary School.

X. Adjournment

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Bonnie Symansky to adjourn the Board of Education meeting at 9:35 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

Respectfully submitted,

**Terri Rienzo
Secretary**