

**NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
January 17, 2008**

The Thursday, January 17, 2008 Board of Education meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Conference Room of Totoket Valley Elementary School. The following members attended:

Board Chairwoman:	Deborah Prunier
Board Vice-Chair:	Marcey Onofrio
Board Secretary:	Nancy Lappie
Board Members:	Christopher Manna Bonnie Symansky

Superintendent of Schools: Dr. Robert K. Wolfe

Absent: John Bozzuto, Jr.

MOTION: Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by Christopher Manna 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 to discuss legal matters, personnel and negotiations at 6:21 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Bonnie Symansky to reconvene to Public Session at 6:53 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

I. Visitors

Director of Business/Personnel:	Donald Winnicki
Director of Instruction/Curriculum:	Joan Follo
Director of Special Services:	Suzanne Wright
Supervisor of Operations:	: William Choti
Principals:	Michele Saulis, NBHS Alan Davis, NBIS Nancy Brittingham, TVES Shawn Parkhurst, JHS

Samantha Flanagan	Chris Fraenza	Rose Angeloni
Todd Stoeffler	Cheryl Smith	Cliff Potter
Dolina Potter	Penny Seaman	John Lappie
John Lappie III	David McMahon	Maria Staffa
Len LaLuna, AFSCME C-4	Tom Singer	

There were no visitor comments at this time.

II. Student Representatives

Samantha Flanagan and Chris Fraenza reported on the following items:

Academics

Mid-term exams began today, Thursday, January 17, 2008 after being rescheduled because of a snow day and will end next Wednesday, January 23, 2008.

The Junior Seminar will be held on January 30th at 9:30 a.m. and all juniors and their parents are invited to attend. This day is the beginning for juniors to plan their college application process.

College applications are due by the end of January 2008 for most colleges by present seniors and seniors who applied early decision are already receiving replies.

Mr. Berry's Theater Arts class put on four one-act plays on January 4, 2008. Many alumni students attended the plays.

Juniors and seniors heavily attended the alumni breakfast and they had the ability to present questions about college life from our former students who are presently attending college.

Social

Semi-Formal Dance will be held on February 22, 2008.

Student Council members will host a Staff Appreciation Day with special events for NBHS teachers.

A Model U. N. field trip to University of Hartford will be at the end of January 2008.

Sports

Boys' Basketball won against Valley at Wednesday's home game.

Girls' Basketball team is 6-6.

Hockey 5-5-1

III. Consent Agenda

a. Minutes

Minutes of the December 20, 2007 North Branford Board of Education meeting.

- b. Resignations - None at this time.
- c. Appointments - None at this time.
- d. Leaves - None at this time.
- e. Donations - None at this time.
- f. Field Trips - None at this time.

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

CHAIRWOMAN PRUNIER:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR ONOFRIO:	AYE
SECRETARY LAPPIE:	AYE
CHRISTOPHER MANNA:	AYE
BONNIE SYMANSKY:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 5-0

IV. Superintendent's Report

a. Donation Acceptance

At the last Board meeting, the Board of Education accepted a generous donation from the Booster Club to help seed Phase 2 of the Scoreboard Project. The Booster Club committed \$5,000 to the project. President of the Booster Club, Rose Angeloni, will present the first installment (\$2,500) to the Board of Education for this project.

Rose Angeloni presented the \$2,500 check to the Board of Education stating that in 1978 a group of parents organized the NBHS Booster Club to help all athletics at NBHS. The group donates towards many causes such as the outdoor nest, letter jackets for our athletes, in-door concession stand, \$5,000 towards the construction of the new concession stand, \$4,000 towards the football scoreboard, etc.

Dr. Wolfe and Board members extended thanks to Rose Angeloni and all members of the NBHS Booster Club for their generosity.

b. Recognition - None at this time.

c. Communications

Memorandum from: Barbara Q. Beaudin, Acting Associate Commissioner –
Division of Assessment and Accountability

Re: No Child Left Behind District and School Reports

d. Open Choice

The Superintendent provided the Board with an update on its commitment to Open Choice. Open Choice is a major component of our ability to provide diversity within our schools. This is required by State law. The Superintendent provided a chart that detailed the 26 seats by grade level. Twenty-one of the 26 seats will be filled by returning students as part of our commitment that once a student begins in Open Choice, they are allowed to continue. This will leave five vacancies for the 2008/2009 school year. The Superintendent recommended continuation of the commitment as in the past – 26 seats.

MOTION: Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by Christopher Manna that the Board of Education endorses Open Choice for the 2008/2009 school year with its continuation of 26 seats.

CHAIRWOMAN PRUNIER:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR ONOFRIO:	AYE
SECRETARY LAPPIE:	AYE
CHRISTOPHER MANNA:	AYE
BONNIE SYMANSKY:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 5-0

Marcey Onofrio questioned if there was a limit of students for each school.

Dr. Wolfe stated no, but traditionally there are 2 students at STW, 3 at TVES, 3-4 at NBIS and the balance at NBHS. We accept students at STW or the ninth and tenth grades at NBHS.

e. Principal Search

The Superintendent provided the Board with an update on the Principal search at Totoket Valley Elementary School and Stanley T. Williams School.

Dr. Wolfe stated that there are 13 members on the Principal Search Committee and the semi-finalists have been identified. Interviews will take place on February 13th and 14th for the semi-finalists.

The committee has developed a framework of questions and our Board Chair, Deborah Prunier, will represent the Board of Education on this committee. Central Office administrators, building administrators, three teachers from TVES and two teachers from STW and several parents are on the search committee.

The pool of candidates includes principals, assistant principals, teachers and district office personnel. All semi-finalists reside in Connecticut.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that the finalists would have a writing sample, on-site visitations, background checks and reference checks. Hopefully there will be recommendations at the March 2008 Board meeting.

Deborah Prunier stated that the parents on the search committee are very vocal and an asset to the committee.

f. High School Reform Meeting

The Commissioner of Education will be holding a series of regional meetings to discuss the recently adopted draft proposal for High School Reform. The Greater New Haven meeting will be held at North Branford High School on Thursday, February 7th, beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the North Branford Auditorium. This meeting is open to Board Members, administration, faculty, staff, parents, students and the general public. An informational flyer will be sent home to all parents. The High School Reform that is proposed will have an impact on our students.

In as much as this is a very important meeting, the Superintendent suggested a change in the meeting time and place for the February 7, 2008 Budget Workshop. In order for Board Members and personnel to attend, this Budget Workshop could be moved to 8:30 p.m. in the cafeteria of the high school.

Bonnie Symansky questioned if the Board Budget Workshop meeting could be changed to a different evening.

Dr. Wolfe stated that it could.

Nancy Lappie questioned if the public could attend this meeting as 8:30 p.m. is quite a late start.

Dr. Wolfe stated the public could attend both meetings.

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Deborah Prunier to amend the Budget Calendar meeting to Wednesday, February 6, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. at TVES.

CHAIRWOMAN PRUNIER:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR ONOFRIO:	AYE
SECRETARY LAPPIE:	AYE
CHRISTOPHER MANNA:	AYE
BONNIE SYMANSKY:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 5-0

g. NBIS Project Update

The Superintendent provided an update on the NBIS Renovate as New Project. Issues with the State Traffic Commission have been resolved and the STC has notified the State Department of Education that the project can move forward. The State Department has also confirmed that they have received all required documentation by both Herbert Newman Associates (architect) and Turner Construction (construction manager). On January 9th, the Facilities Unit confirmed receipt of all needed materials and approved the project for bidding.

Dr. Wolfe stated that this is a result of five and one-half years to get to this point. He remarked that the project would be divided into 19 different sub-sections. He stated that the climate in the construction market is very favorable at this time so we shouldn't delay and get our bids out before other school districts start their projects.

The portables have been approved and in order to stay within projected costs of the portables we have gone from ten portables to nine portables with other slight variations.

Dr. Wolfe extended his sincere thanks to William Choti, Donald Winnicki, Lisa Coughlin, Alan Davis and Christine Imperato for all their help with this project stating we have a great amount of work ahead of us in the next thirty months.

Bonnie Symansky questioned if the portables are stationary and where they would be placed.

Dr. Wolfe stated that they would be anchored in the NBIS parking lot to the left as you enter from route 80.

Marcey Onofrio questioned what class would be in the portables first.

Dr. Wolfe stated sixth graders as that wing is slated for demolition first.

Christopher Manna questioned if the building would be finished by September 2010.

Dr. Wolfe stated that once they break ground it should be completed in thirty months. He remarked that the town builds the schools with the input of the building committee and the Town Council before it is turned over to the Board of Education.

Deborah Prunier asked if all this latest information could be sent to former Board of Education members as that they were instrumental in getting this project underway.

h. Proposed 2009 Board of Education Meeting Dates

The Superintendent provided Proposed 2009 Board of Education Meeting dates for Board action.

MOTION: Moved Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Nancy Lappie to approve the 2009 Board of Education Meeting dates as submitted.

CHAIRWOMAN PRUNIER:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR ONOFRIO:	AYE
SECRETARY LAPPIE:	AYE
CHRISTOPHER MANNA:	AYE
BONNIE SYMANSKY:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 5-0

Marcey Onofrio questioned if the April 2009 vacation was changed and the April 23 meeting was not during the vacation week.

Bonnie Symansky questioned if the Jewish Holidays were checked.

Dr. Wolfe stated that these items were checked.

i. Superintendent's Budget Request

The Superintendent presented his budget request for the 2008/2009 school year to the Board of Education. Tonight's presentation was an overview of the assumptions on which the budget was constructed. The Board will have an opportunity over the next few weeks to review the information. The following dates have been developed for additional presentations and information.

January 24, 2008	Special Meeting/Budget Workshop	7 p.m. – TVES
February 6, 2008	Special Meeting/Budget Workshop	6:30 p.m. – TVES
February 21, 2008	Board Meeting	7 p.m. – TVES

Superintendent Wolfe stated he was asking for a 6.88 % increase in the 2008-2009 school budget. He remarked that budget increase would represent the following:

5.03%	Fixed Costs.
0.14%	Supplies / Equipment
<u>1.71%</u>	Program Improvements- mandated addition to budget
6.88%	2008-2009 Budget

Dr. Wolfe remarked that fixed costs reflect the largest portion of the new funding required in this proposed budget. Anticipated employee contracts, insurance costs and energy cost will drive this budget. Energy costs impact electricity, heating oil, natural gas and fuel for our transportation system and 2.0 special educators are required for mandated services.

Superintendent Wolfe mentioned that the teachers' contract is in arbitration and it will be the largest single increase in fixed costs. He spoke on the state mandate of a certified teacher for our in-school suspension program, SAGE grant being funded only by 80% of cost.

Dr. Wolfe spoke on the Capital Budget with security improvements, heating unit replacement at the high school, conversion of the small studio at NBHS, introduction of a 5 year carpet replacement plan, replacement of the school system truck and the need to resurface the outdoor track.

Superintendent Wolfe stated that Board members have done a great job so far with the budget and they could call him or Donald Winnicki at any time if there are questions on any of the budget items. He mentioned that we should know about teachers, health care and energy between now and February 20, 2008.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that the \$500,000 returned to the town by Anthem for Board employees should be turned over to the Board of Education for Board project improvements.

Dr. Wolfe thanked Donald Winnicki, the administrative team, department chairs, lead teachers, faculty, staff, Central Office personnel and all who played a part in developing this budget.

V. Committee Reports

a. Negotiations

Dr. Wolfe stated that the teachers' contract is in arbitration.

b. Budget

Nancy Lappie questioned if we changed companies for the septic system.

Donald Winnicki stated that we have. We went out to bid and awarded the contract to the low bidder.

Dr. Wolfe distributed copies of a list of definitions for the line item objects, instead of just numbers, that was requested by Board member Lappie.

A copy of the January 1 financial statement was enclosed for Board review.

c. Buildings & Grounds

No report at this time.

d. Curriculum

Bonnie Symansky remarked that she and Nancy Lappie met with Joan Follo and reviewed information on the curriculum cycles.

e. Pension

No representative at this time. Donald Winnicki will represent the Board at future Pension committee meetings.

f. Policy

Christopher Manna stated that there would be a policy meeting on Wednesday, January 23, 2008 at 7:30 a.m.

g. ACES

No representative at this time. Deborah Prunier will be the Board representative at future ACES Executive Board meetings.

h. Strategic Planning

No report at this time.

i. Building Committee

Deborah Prunier stated that at the last building committee meeting the bulk of the meeting town library projects were discussed. She also remarked that committee members questioned plans for the NBIS project that were changed.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that any building committee member could review the NBIS bid package at the Town Hall.

j. Calendar Committee

No report at this time.

k. Transportation/Bus Safety Committee

Bonnie Symansky questioned the results of the bus matter that was presented at an earlier Board meeting.

Marcey Onofrio stated that the committee is working on getting a date for the meeting.

l. Communication

Bonnie Symansky remarked that Dr. Wolfe would be writing the Board article each month for the Totoket Times as he is in a better position to know all the wonderful happenings going on in the school system.

VI. New Business

No new business at this time.

VII. Visitors and Press

Penny Seaman requested that the Board of Education support additional funding for North Branford High School as some students have too many study halls or get to leave school early if they have no classes. (seniors) She stated that one study hall is 25% of their day and two study halls is fifty per-cent of their day. This is way too much time to miss out of a school day. We have to look for better ways to motivate our students. We must look at our curriculum as Mrs. Seaman feels that many students don't need keyboarding. We must take advantage of our resources (long distance learning) and challenge our students (websites, running the school nest store, etc.) They will learn advertising, management, ordering, etc. skills. We should not let our students choose sleeping late or being sent home early over education.

Christopher Manna questioned if Mrs. Seaman felt no students needed keyboarding.

Mrs. Seaman felt many students would test-out of keyboarding as so many students have computers of their own in earlier grades and know keyboarding before they get to high school. Our students must be challenged.

XIII. Grievance Hearing

A Level Four-Grievance Hearing filed by Local 1303-54 of Connecticut Council #4 AFSCME, AFL-CIO (Custodians) was heard by the Board of Education. This grievance involves unsafe working conditions. The Board returned to Executive Session after hearing the evidence of the grievance and has up to fourteen (14) days to render its decision.

Leonard LaLuna, union representative, stated that this grievance should not be held in public, as he believes it is a personnel matter. He stated the Board should review this matter in Executive session.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that legal council deemed this matter not to be a personnel matter and he distributed all information and letters leading up to this grievance.

Mr. LaLuna stated that if this grievance were in arbitration it would not be heard in public. He stated that a NBHS custodian tripped on a water bottle coming down a staircase and it could have resulted in a serious accident. He feels there is trash, food and water bottles in the hallways that pose a safety issue. He remarked that the custodians are not looking for a ban on water bottles but control of water bottles. Mr. LaLuna mentioned that on page 60 of the student handbook water bottles are banned at NBHS.

He remarked that he had hoped to resolve this at a lower level and didn't want this issue to go this far. Custodians are looking for safety not less work.

Bonnie Symansky questioned if recyclable containers were in the hallway.

Michele Saulis stated there are containers in the hallways but not for recyclables. She mentioned she would like to have recyclable bins mounted to the hall walls.

Nancy Lappie questioned if this was a problem during the day or after school.

Michele Saulis stated after school.

Tom Singer stated after school until lock down.

Marcey Onofrio questioned if they were not looking for a ban how would they control the problem.

Mr. LaLuna stated no eating and drinking in the hallways, control the hallways. Bring personal water bottles from home that returns home with the students. He suggested that Board members meet with the custodians.

Bonnie Symansky stated we should get the students involved.

Christopher Manna questioned that prior to this incident if there were any other incidents at NBHS.

Michele Saulis stated not that she knew of.

Deborah Prunier questioned if Todd Stoeffler noticed any incidents.

Todd Stoeffler stated maybe one last year but during the school day the staff tries to keep food and beverages contained in the cafeteria.

Deborah Prunier questioned if staff members would report misconduct with water bottles to administrators.

Todd Stoeffler stated that they would.

Deborah Prunier remarked that she didn't think the union was being unreasonable and she hoped the Board could help with the control issue.

Bonnie Symansky questioned if the lighting was adequate.

Michele Saulis stated that it was.

Donald Winnicki stated he didn't want to debate housekeeping and cleanliness and that Bill Choti did investigate and he and Mr. Winnicki met with the custodians. They investigated and took corrective action. Based on their investigation water bottles are

not a real threat. He remarked that they are all for keeping the building clean and controlling food and beverages. Mr. Winnicki felt that according to legal issues this incident did not meet the criteria for a grievance.

Dr. Wolfe stated that the student handbook is a snapshot in time and the administrators will change the handbook next year to allow water bottles.

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Bonnie Symansky to adjourn Executive Session at 8:47 p.m. to discuss the grievance submitted by Local 1303-54 Custodians' Union

CHAIRWOMAN PRUNIER:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR ONOFRIIO:	AYE
SECRETARY LAPPIE:	AYE
CHRISTOPHER MANNA:	AYE
BONNIE SYMANSKY:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 5-0

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Nancy Lappie to reconvene to Public session at 9:07 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0

MOTION: Moved by Deborah Prunier and seconded by Nancy Lappie that the grievance be denied for the reasons outlined in the Superintendent's response of December 20, 2007, however the Board directs the administration to:

establish a meeting with students and the Union to discuss ways that recycling can be improved as well as proper disposal of waste within the high school.

determine if additional recycling containers or waste containers are necessary at the high school and install same.

report back to the Board on progress within sixty days.

ALL VOTED AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0

January 17, 2008

The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for February 21, 2008 at Totoket Valley Elementary School at 7:00 p.m.

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Nancy Lappie to adjourn this North Branford Board of Education meeting at 9:10 p.m.

**ALL VOTED AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0**

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Ardine
Account Clerk