

**NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
February 21, 2008**

The Thursday, February 21, 2008 Board of Education meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm 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:	John Bozzuto, Jr. Christopher Manna Bonnie Symansky

Superintendent of Schools: Dr. Robert K. Wolfe

MOTION: Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by Marcey Onofrio 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 6:01 pm.

ALL VOTED AYE

MOTION: Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by Marcey Onofrio to reconvene to Public Session at 6:58 pm.

ALL VOTED AYE

I. Visitors

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

Samantha Flanagan	Kris Lindsay
Chris Fraenza	Elizabeth Caplan
Todd Stoeffler	Mike Doody
Christine Imperato	

There were no visitor comments at this time.

II. Student Representatives

Samantha Flanagan and Chris Fraenza reported on the following items:

Academics

Students have been registering for their classes for next year and the sophomores are preparing for the CAPT which starts in two weeks.

Social

The Student Council Blood Drive will be held on March 7.

FBLA brought chocolates to Hospice for Valentine's Day. They also cooked a meal that was brought to the Ronald McDonald House.

The Semi-Formal Dance originally scheduled for February 22 has been postponed due to the impending snow storm.

The World Language classes will be taking their trip to Quebec City next Friday thru Sunday.

Sports

The winter sports teams have been holding their senior nights over the past week.

Hockey is 11-7-1

Boy's Basketball is 11-9 and is on a seven game winning streak.

Girl's Basketball is 11-9

Swimming is 5-6

Indoor Track has been doing well. Billy Cottage has made the State Open for shot put.

III. Consent Agenda

a. Minutes

Minutes of the January 17, 2008 North Branford Board of Education meeting.

Minutes of the January 24, 2008 Board of Education Budget Workshop.

Minutes of the February 6, 2008 Board of Education Budget Workshop.

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 Nancy Lappie to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted.

CHAIRWOMAN PRUNIER:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR ONOFRIO:	AYE
SECRETARY LAPPIE:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	AYE
CHRISTOPHER MANNA:	AYE
BONNIE SYMANSKY:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

IV. Superintendent's Report

- a. Donations – None at this time
- b. Recognition – None at this time
- c. Communications

The Superintendent shared with the Board a copy of a letter from ACES Village School sent to Mr. John DeNunzio, technology education teacher at NBHS. The letter thanks Mr. DeNunzio for his assistance in creating sensory boards to be used by their visually impaired students.

d. Principal Search

The North Branford Principal Search Committee met on February 13 and 14 and interviewed 11 semifinalists for the positions of Stanley T. Williams Principal and TVES Principal. These positions become available July 1, 2008. The Superintendent reported four finalists have been selected and second interviews will be conducted on February 26 and 27. Dr. Wolfe thanked all members of the committee for their time and commitment during the interview process.

e. High School Reform Meeting

Dr. George Coleman, Deputy Commissioner of Education, conducted a High School Reform Meeting in the North Branford Auditorium on Thursday, February 7, 2008 as part of an eight-town tour. Approximately 70 individuals from a wide range of school districts attended the meeting and asked questions. A copy of the High School Reform Matrix was given to Board Members for review. Board Chair, Debbie Prunier, and Board members, Nancy Lappie and Chris Manna, attended this session.

Dr. Wolfe stated there were a number of positive ideas that were discussed, such as a senior project and a mentor – mentee program. He also stated that there were many good questions asked from the audience including one raised by Michele Saulis, principal of NBHS, regarding how school districts are going to meet employment needs especially in areas of shortages like world languages.

Dr. Wolfe stated that a major question that has repeatedly come up during this eight-town tour is “How are we going to fund these initiatives?” Another discussion point has been end of subject tests in certain areas, are these the right areas, and are we talking about 21st century skills but still testing like we are back in the 20th century.

The committee conducting these reform meeting will report back to the State Department of Education and make their recommendation in October 2008. The earliest the reforms might begin will be 2011. Some reforms will have little or no impact on North Branford. One in particular is needing 24 credits to graduate. North Branford already exceeds that level.

Dr. Wolfe reported that Dr. Coleman also stated the State Department of Education is asking the Legislature for money to conduct a cost benefit analysis. This is a very crucial point as we don't need more unfunded mandates.

f. NBIS Project Update

Bids were opened on a revised date of February 20, 2008. The Superintendent provided the Board with an update based on bid submission.

Dr. Wolfe reported that the construction manager, Turner Construction, felt this was a good time to go out for bids because more projects in other districts will be coming on line in the spring and summer of this year making the market tighter. The 20 bids were opened and the net result was the total packages were \$2.64 million dollars under the estimated budget.

There will be a Permanent Project Building Committee (PPBC) meeting on Monday, February 25 and a joint meeting with the Town Council for further discussion. Turner Construction must now certify each of the bids to make sure the bonds are in order and an analysis should be ready in approximately one week. This information will be forwarded to the PPBC, then to the Town Council who will ultimately award the various bid contracts.

Dr. Wolfe thanked Alan Davis, Christine Imperato, and the staff of NBIS for all the behind the scenes work they have done in working out the schedules that will be necessary during the construction phase. Dr. Wolfe attended a recent staff meeting at NBIS to personally thank them for all their hard work and to let them know that as difficult as it has been it will be more difficult during the construction phase but he has confidence in the staff to meet the needs of our students during this project.

Alan Davis thanked Dr. Wolfe for his encouraging words to the staff. He stated the staff are anxiously waiting for the project to start and ready to meet the challenges that will be present during the construction. The end result will definitely be worth it and something the entire community will be proud of.

g. Voting in Our Schools

Several parents have inquired as to whether there is increased risk when voting takes place in our schools when school is in session. The district calendar in November accommodates the general election by using Election Day as a professional development day only (no students). The problem occurs when there are primaries.

During the recent primary election, several parents called the superintendent's office and stated that students should not be in school during voting due to increased number of people coming into the schools. Dr. Wolfe did have a discussion with the police department and they felt the ultimate risk was relatively low but there may be some increased risk.

There are three potential solutions:

- 1) move the voting place to a non-school location,
- 2) close school during voting, or
- 3) increase security by asking the Town to provide police coverage during school hours on voting days.

Dr Wolfe stated that option 1 and 3 are the most viable. He is willing to write a letter to the Town on behalf of the Board depending on which option they prefer. Dr. Wolfe's recommendation is that the Board ask the Town for police coverage in the two schools where voting is held at least during school hours.

Chairwoman Prunier stated she would like to ask the Town to move the voting to a non-school location as a first option and if that is not feasible, to request police coverage during school hours.

Chris Manna asked if the police would charge the Board for that service.

Dr. Wolfe stated he would request the Town to pay for the service. The Board

currently requires any organization holding a non-school event, in any of the facilities, requiring police presence to be the responsible party for the police bill.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that with the new, streamlined voting machines vs. the older, bulky machines, option 1 may be a more viable solution for the Town.

h. Kindergarten Enrollment

Kindergarten registration for the 2008/2009 school year was held on February 6th at both Jerome Harrison and Stanley T. Williams elementary schools. As of the Board meeting, each school had enrolled 73 students for a total of 146. The 2008/2009 budget was based on a project enrollment of 80 students per school. Traditionally this number increases a little over the summer and it will continue to be monitored.

i. Superintendent's Budget Request

The Superintendent provided the Board with up-to-date information regarding the 2008/2009 Budget Request. The original budget request of 6.88% has been reduced to 6.57% as a result of a stipulated arbitration agreement of the North Branford Federation of Teacher and reduced healthcare costs.

Chris Manna asked about the opening of the fuel bids.

Dr. Wolfe stated it was extended from the original date of February 20 to February 27. The transmittal letter to the Town regarding the Board's final budget number is due on February 29, 2008. The Town is aware that the number may need to be revised based on the opening of the fuel bids by the consortium on February 27. The current budget used \$3.00/gal for heating oil and \$3.50/gal for diesel fuel. The hope is the bids will come in lower.

The Budget Subcommittee recommends the Board requests an Operating Budget of \$28,871,577 and a Capital Budget of \$340,587 for the 2008/2009 school year.

MOTION: Moved by Deborah Prunier and seconded by John Bozzuto, Jr. to request an Operating Budget for the 2008/2009 school year in the amount of \$28,871,577 and to authorize the Superintendent to adjust the bottom line to reflect the opening of bids relating to energy costs.

CHAIRWOMAN PRUNIER:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR ONOFRIO:	AYE
SECRETARY LAPPIE:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	AYE
CHRISTOPHER MANNA:	AYE
BONNIE SYMANSKY:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

Dr. Wolfe distributed a revised 2008/2009 capital request. All items remained the same with the exception of the track resurfacing. Track experts came out to inspect the track and they felt the top layer does not have to come off and the necessary work would be minor repairs to the rubber, repainting, and restriping. This would reduce the cost to approximately \$45,000 and would last about 5 years. The \$20,000 is for a reserve to be established specifically for track repairs and it is the recommendation of the budget subcommittee to fund this reserve every year so the Board does not have to request the entire amount in a particular year when the track needs major repairs. This amount is negotiable and can be adjusted either way by the Board or the Town Council.

Nancy Lappie questioned whether the total dollar amount of the capital budget needed to be split between the reserve and the remaining costs.

Dr. Wolfe said the Board could word the motion in whatever manner they desired. A discussion amongst board members was held and the result is reflected in their motion.

Deborah Prunier asked about possible reimbursement for the studio conversion which was discussed at a previous budget workshop.

Dr. Wolfe stated the renovation reimbursement rate is nowhere near the renovate as new rate of approximately 57%. He will explore the possibility of some reimbursement and report back to the board.

Nancy Lappie asked about the Anthem monies received by the Town several years ago.

Dr. Wolfe explained to the Board how that money came about and will try to get a more accurate accounting of the money from the Town. It is possible that the Town may decide to use some of that money to fund some of the capital budget request.

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Nancy Lappie to request a Capital Budget for the 2008/2009 school year in the amount of \$340,587, which includes \$20,000 in a reserve account for track resurfacing in the future to be a yearly contribution.

CHAIRWOMAN PRUNIER:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR ONOFRIO:	AYE
SECRETARY LAPPIE:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	AYE
CHRISTOPHER MANNA:	AYE
BONNIE SYMANSKY:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

V. Committee Reports

a. Negotiations

The Board of Education has received the arbitrators stipulated award for the teachers' contract 2008-2011.

Dr. Wolfe reported the arbitration award has been submitted to the Town Clerk and the Town Manager. The Town Council has 25 days from the date of submission to approve, reject, or do nothing. If they reject it, the contract would go to another arbitrator and a decision is made which becomes non-negotiable. Dr. Wolfe highlighted some of the changes in the contract.

b. Budget

Marcey Onofrio reported that the 420 account – Lawn and Septic continues to be over budget due to the septic problem at Stanley T. Williams School. Also, the 323 account – Pupil Service is over budget due to contracted help in two areas – Speech Pathologist and School Psychologist.

Dr. Wolfe stated this will be offset by certified salaries.

c. Buildings & Grounds

No report at this time. Dr. Wolfe stated this committee needs to meet and asked members to check their calendars after the meeting to set a date.

d. Curriculum

No report at this time.

e. Pension

Dr. Wolfe read the report submitted by Don Winnicki who could not attend tonight's meeting. The pension committee is considering changing the meeting time to 5 pm due to the difficulty of obtaining a quorum. Don attended the meeting held on February 13 with members Anthony Esposito and Andrew Bozzuto, the account manager, and a representative from Morgan Stanley. The committee reviewed the recent investment results and the Board may obtain a copy from Don Winnicki. No business was conducted due to a lack of a quorum. The next meeting will be in May.

f. Policy

Policy #P5050	Superintendent of Schools
Policy #P5090	Educational Research in District Schools
Policy #P5130	Administrative Reports
Policy #P5140	Freedom of Information

The policy subcommittee decided to submit the policies listed above as a first read again due to the election of new board members.

Dr. Wolfe encouraged board members to contact any member of the policy committee with any questions or thoughts regarding these policies.

Bonnie Symansky distributed copies of the state statute regarding the Superintendent of Schools. She stated the committee discussed that the policy references the state statute which is not indicated on the proposed policy.

Chris Manna discussed his concern with #P5050 and the section regarding the Superintendent's attendance at all meetings. The concern expressed by him and John Bozzuto, Jr. is they do not want to set a precedent for future Boards that mandates the Superintendent would be present at all meetings.

Bonnie Symansky stated that if there are any concerns regarding any of the policies they should be given to a member of the policy committee for discussion at the next committee meeting.

Marcey Onofrio asked if this was an entirely new policy or a revision to an existing policy.

Dr. Wolfe stated there is an existing policy in the old policy book that is outdated and this one would replace it and align it with the state statute.

Deborah Prunier asked if any policy could be brought before the Board at any time.

Dr. Wolfe explained that the Board has been on a logical revision of the Policy manual but at anytime any policy can be brought forward for revision.

Deborah Prunier stated that this would seem like a logical solution to the concerns raised by Chris Manna regarding #P5050.

Dr. Wolfe stated that any Board has the right to revise a policy as often as they like. There is no time limit as to how long a policy must be in place before it is changed.

Deborah Prunier inquired about the type of research that would be done referenced in #P5090.

Dr. Wolfe discussed different types of research and gave an example referencing Yale Child Study. He stated that the District typically receives one to two requests per year. Procedures are followed to insure the safety of our students and to obtain permission from the parents.

Chris Manna asked if the District receives any monies from the research.

Dr. Wolfe responded the school system very rarely receives compensation. Occasionally there may be stipends to the parents for transportation cost or other related costs.

Bonnie Symansky stated that there should be a fifth point on #P5090 regarding the District receiving a copy of the research in which they participated.

g. ACES

No report at this time

h. Strategic Planning

No report at this time

i. Building Committee

John Bozzuto, Jr. recapped the NBIS project and the bidding process. Meetings will be held every two weeks. The joint meeting between the Town Council and the Building Committee will be held immediately following the PPBC meeting on Monday, February 25.

j. Calendar Committee

No report at this time

k. Transportation/Bus Safety Committee

No report at this time. Dr. Wolfe stated this committee needs to meet and asked members to check their calendars after the meeting to set a date.

l. Communication

No report at this time.

VI. New Business

No new business at this time.

VII. Visitors and Press

Elizabeth Caplan thanked the Board for a job well done on the budget. She understands how difficult this is especially for new members. She stated the next part is equally as important and that is to keep the lines of communication open with the Town Council. This is very crucial to the success of the 2008/2009 school year.

The next regular Board of Education meeting will be held on March 13, 2008 at Totoket Valley Elementary School at 7 pm.

Marcey Onofrio asked if the date for the next Board meeting was correct because it was only three weeks away.

Dr. Wolfe stated this was due to the Easter holiday the following week and the decision was made by the previous board not to meet so close to Easter.

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Nancy Lappie to adjourn this North Branford Board of Education meeting at 7:45 pm.

**ALL VOTED AYE
MOTION PASSED 6-0**

Respectfully submitted,

Rose Angeloni
Substitute Board Secretary