

Preliminary Public Hearing

A Preliminary Public Hearing of the Board of Education of the Northport-East Northport Union Free School District was held on Wednesday evening, April 6, 2011, beginning at 6:00 p.m., in the Faculty Dining Room at Northport High School, 154 Laurel Hill Road, Northport, New York, with Mr. Stephen V. Waldenburg, Jr., Chairperson, opening the meeting and presiding.

Members present: Ms. Julia Binger, Mr. Joe Gannon, Mrs. Lori McCue, Mrs. Donna McNaughton, Mr. Andrew Rapiejko, Mrs. Jennifer Thompson, Mr. Stephen V. Waldenburg, Jr., Mrs. Karen Wills

Members absent: None  
One board seat vacant

Also present: Dr. Marylou McDermott, Superintendent of Schools  
Dr. Terry Bouton, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources  
Ms. Kathleen Molander, Assistant Superintendent for Business  
Mr. Matthew Nelson, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and Administration

1. President Waldenburg called the meeting to order.

Motion was made by Trustee Gannon, seconded by Trustee McCue, to convene in Executive Session to discuss matters pertaining to potential litigation and the employment history of individual employees.

Unanimously carried.

At 7:45 p.m., the Board reconvened in public session in the large cafeteria at the Northport High School.

Public attendance: There were approximately 125 persons present.

2. Mr. Waldenburg led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance; and
3. Pointed out the emergency exits.
4. SPECIAL REPORTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

4.01 Accomplishments of Staff and Students

4.01.1 Mr. Peter Falotico, District Chairperson for Art, introduced Nicolas Bruno, Art Department Student of the Month. Mr. Falotico stated that Nick is an exceptionally talented, young artist whose commitment, passion and dedication inspires and intrigues both his classmates and teachers. Nick may attend SUNY Purchase in the fall of 2011 for a BFA in Photography. Mr. Falotico stated that Nick is a member of the National Art Honor Society, and has won a number of awards for his photography from the Huntington Camera Club. Nick is an active student and has taken Studio in Media, Digital Photography, Computer Art 1 & 2, Art Honors, and AP 2D-Design where as a junior he received a 5, the highest mark a student can achieve. As a sophomore, Nick competed in the Huntington Camera Club Competition, where out of 700 student submissions, his photograph of wrestlers won both 1<sup>st</sup> place and Best-In-Show. Mr. Falotico stated that Nick is truly a special student and artist who will no doubt succeed in life and his professional artistic career.

President Waldenburg and Superintendent McDermott congratulated Nick on his fine accomplishments and presented him with a commendation from the Board.

4.01.2 Mr. Timothy Hoss, Northport Middle School Principal, introduced Sara Connor, recipient of the Prudential Spirit of Community Award. Mr. Hoss stated that the Prudential Spirit of Community Award is given to the top youth volunteer and Sara received a \$1,000 award, silver medallion and a trip to Washington, DC. Sara started LemonAid after Hurricane Katrina and has made donations through that to neonatal intensive care unit, American Cancer Society and has raised funds to replant fifteen trees in Northport. Mr. Hoss introduced Mr. Matt Donnino from Prudential who presented Sara with the silver medallion.

President Waldenburg and Superintendent McDermott congratulated Sara and presented her with a commendation from the Board.

## 5. BOARD AND COMMUNITY DISCUSSION OF SUPERINTENDENT'S PROPOSED 2011-2012 BUDGET

Dr. McDermott stated that there may have been some misunderstanding regarding the presentation given by Board Counsel John Gross at the last meeting. Dr. McDermott noted that the intention is to keep music programs offered to students before school intact. Dr. McDermott stated that the intention is to cap core class size at the high school at 25 students where currently the cap size is 29 weighted students. Regents class size cap will be lowered to 23. Dr. McDermott noted that even if several children in the classes were special education weighted at 1.5, that number would still be lower than a cap of 29 which is presently in place.

### 5.01 Communications to the Board relating to the budget:

#### 5.01.1 Email from Mr. Armand D'Accordo, received March 4, 2011

Mr. D'Accordo addressed the Board and stated that he understands that the reserves are a complex issue but he does not believe it is fair to taxpayers to have \$22 million in reserves.

#### 5.01.2 Email from Mr. Albert Prisco, received March 21, 2011

Mr. Prisco addressed the Board and stated that the Board should ask for a 50% contribution to health care, not 25% and should eliminate sick days taken in a lump sum at retirement. Mr. Prisco also stated that there is no reason for the district to borrow money in anticipation of taxes.

President Waldenburg stated that the budget runs from July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> and that the budget closes at the end of June. The money the District gets from the Town in June is for that year's budget.

### 5.02 Public input regarding the school budget for 2011-2012

<u>Name</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Joe Sabia Resident	Asked the Board to take into consideration the senior citizens expenses, economy and come up with a zero percent budget increase and give the public a break.
Steven Brown Resident	Stated that the school district is down almost 300 students in enrollment but have more teachers and staff, the district should consider returning to an eight period day, the budget should be at a zero percent tax increase this year and subjects of no importance should be eliminated.
Frances LaDuca Resident	Ms. LaDuca stated that there are several ways to give salary and increment raises. Ms. LaDuca stated that it is not fair to ask teachers to

bear the entire financial burden and that teachers have had a freeze for this past year and gets no discounts when it comes to paying bills. Teachers live in the community and spend money in the community.

John Ohlmann  
Resident

Stated that someone has to stand up for the community and argue that the taxpayers just can't keep paying.

Sheila Whitlow  
Resident

Stated that the Board should consider scaling back new spending in the budget such as the technology along with the new administrative positions, new technology support positions, new bus and security equipment.

Joseph Stewart  
Resident

Asked how much the netbooks and SmartBoards initiative costs and over how many years. Mr. Stewart asked if the teachers were surveyed to see if they agree with the initiative.

Mr. Matthew Nelson, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and Administration, stated that the first year of the contract would cost \$175,000 and \$115,000 for the next four years. Mr. Nelson stated that this is something the District is trying to do for the students.

Armand D'Accordo  
UTN-EN

Stated that the expenditures for the communication systems were to make the Board of Education meetings paperless and asked why the District has a new five year lease for duplicating machines.

Dr. McDermott stated that it is not a new five year lease, the District is in year three of the five year lease.

Kristen Gavin  
Resident

Stated that neighboring districts who have spent reserves or do not have reserves are looking at 13% tax rate increases. Ms. Gavin asked if the Board could lay out the difference between the proposed budget and a contingency budget.

Ms. Kathleen Molander, Assistant Superintendent for Business, stated that the current contingent budget for the 2011-2012 school year would be a 1.92% tax rate increase. Ms. Molander noted that new equipment, non-essential maintenance and capital expenditures must be removed from the budget.

Gene Leavy  
Resident

Asked what innovative changes has the Board made to reduce the cost of running the school system. Mr. Leavy stated that everyone needs to give including the teachers. Mr. Leavy stated that zero based budgeting is the only way to look at the whole situation.

Richard Anastasio  
Resident

Asked why the budget seems to have a percentage of administrative costs out of proportion with the other educational costs and requested the Board look at the administrative costs.

Joseph Stewart  
Resident

Asked if the budget were voted down would the Board go to a zero increase in property tax. Mr. Stewart stated that the Board should find ways to cut, not using reserves, because the District will lose money for LIPA, State Aid is getting cut and the proposed 2% property tax cap.

President Waldenburg stated that this would be a topic for the Board to debate in its roundtable session next week.

- Albert Prisco  
Resident
- Stated that the 403b should be on the table in negotiations and that the 403b is a benefit.
- Armand D'Accordo  
UTN-EN
- Stated that the UTN-EN did not advocate for a pay freeze for school employees, they advocated for a zero percent tax rate increase, and advocated teachers offering a pay freeze as an alternative to teacher layoffs.
- Nina Dorata  
Resident
- Asked if the assertions are correct regarding the calculation of the TAN interest rate of 2.75%. Dr. Dorata also stated that certain towns and counties in New York State bill for school taxes in the summer.
- Trustee Gannon stated that Suffolk County accounts for 60% of the TAN borrowing in New York State due to the Suffolk County Law.
- Tom Papell  
Resident
- Stated that the Board needs to show the community that it is changing the spending culture that exists in schools. Mr. Papell stated that SmartBoards will not make a bad teacher better and suggested saving the money on technology for a mentoring program to help improve quality of teaching in Northport.
- Dr. Terry Bouton, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, stated that the District does have a new teacher mentoring program.
- Nina Dorata  
Resident
- Asked about providing reconciliation of actual spending of the \$137 million and proposed budget of \$147 million, asked about the availability of the budget in Excel, and assessment outcome of the technology plan.
- Mr. Matthew Nelson, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and Administration, stated that there are models in place and instruction is not about technology, it is about practices and how did the technology improve test scores or improve a specific metric.
- Donald Longo  
Resident
- Stated that the foreseeable future is not good and asked what happens if the District invests in technology but cannot afford it in the future. Mr. Longo stated that before the Board invests in SmartBoards the teachers can use telephones.
- Tammie Topel  
Resident
- Asked for an explanation of the Governor's proposed tax cap on this years' tax levy and next y ears budget.
- Ms. Molander stated that with a 2% tax levy the District would have to look very closely at cutting expenditures.
- Karl Litt  
Resident
- Asked the Board to consider the cost implications on any motion that comes throughout the year such as lowering the student cap from 29 to 23 and what the cost implications are of that. Mr. Litt stated that the District needs to do more with less and that the new budget format is very hard to decipher. Mr. Litt stated that he did not see anything in the budget as far as capital projects and the District is falling behind with maintaining the facilities. Mr. Litt also stated that people are looking for a zero increase in expenditures for this year.

Dr. McDermott stated that the Board looked at the five year plan and is considering many things that need to be addressed.

Denise Summers Mumm  
UTN-EN

Stated that the Board needs to form committees such as a legislative committee. Ms. Mumm also asked how many new positions have been put into the budget and how many retired. Ms. Mumm also complimented the Board for having John Gross give his presentation at the last meeting.

Dr. Terry Bouton, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, stated that six people are retiring.

Dr. McDermott stated that they are still in the process of staffing and that 1.0 fte may be needed at the high school. The chairperson positions in Art and Guidance are being filled.

Clifford Spence  
Resident

Stated that the economy will get a lot worse with no turn around until the third quarter of 2012. Mr. Spence stated that thing like white boards and field renovations should be held until things get better.

David Chinitz  
Resident

Stated that people are losing jobs and that the unemployment numbers are not accurate, people can't afford tax increases on an annual basis and the District needs to have a lower increase.

Armand D'Accordo  
UTN-EN

Requested the budget be provided in Excel format and suggested that a student in the AOF program write a macro for it.

Frances LaDuca  
Resident

Stated that Northport teachers salaries in the bottom half of Suffolk County and that there is a problem with poaching by other districts of specialty teachers. Ms. LaDuca stated that moral is important.

Nina Dorata  
Resident

Asked what the property tax rate increase would be in the event of a contingency budget assuming that the \$3 million in reserves would be used.

Ms. Molander stated that the 1.92% included the use of reserves.

At 10:30 p.m., motion was made by Trustee Gannon, seconded by Trustee McNaughton, to extend the meeting.

Unanimously carried.

George McGuigan  
Resident

Stated that the District needs to look beyond the May 17<sup>th</sup> vote and be innovative and consider combining school districts and take into consideration LIPA.

Rob Ingraham  
Resident

Stated that the Board needs to put the needs of the students first and foremost and urged the Board not to dig any deeper into the reserve funds than already proposed.

Lisa Dimond  
Resident

Stated that if the District uses reserves and then has an extreme emergency in the future there wouldn't be anything left. Ms. Dimond stated that the Board really needs to think about using reserves.

Joe Schuvert  
Resident Stated that last year a student presented about a company that would do an energy plan that would be at zero cost to the district and asked what happened to that presentation.

Ms. Molander stated that they are currently in the process of finalizing an RFP for an energy audit.

Carl Litt  
Resident Asked what happens to lease purchase agreements on a contingency budget. Mr. Litt congratulated the Board on changing the 1.5 weighting and delivering education to students properly and efficiently.

Ms. Molander stated that any long term lease agreement that is specified in the budget brochure makes the liable for those obligations in future years.

Nina Dorata  
Resident Stated that she is in the midst of a research project going back six years and that the District is in the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile as far as reserves island-wide and 80<sup>th</sup> percentile for Suffolk County. Dr. Dorata stated that except for the capital reserve fund, the District uses every bit of money interest free. Dr. Dorata stated that the Board has to cut the budget and may have to go slower on other initiatives.

Motion was made by Trustee Wills, seconded by Trustee Thompson, to approve all items under 6.01 and 6.02, including Supplemental 6.01.1 (Schedule A #27-28), and Supplemental 6.01.3 (Schedule B #2)

6. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT, GENERAL - FOR BOARD ACTION

6.01 Personnel Schedules, each dated April 6, 2011, and each attached and made part of the official minutes:

- 6.01.1 Schedule A – Certified Staff
- 6.01.2 Schedule C – Salary Transfers
- 6.01.3 Schedule B – Non-Instructional Staff
- 6.01.4 Schedule D – Extra Pay

6.02 Receiving for a second reading and adopting the following policy:

6.02.1 Policy #3301 – Substantive Changes in District Administrative Regulations or Procedures

Vote on Trustee Wills' motion to approve all items under 6.01 and 6.02, including Supplemental 6.01.1 (Schedule A #27-28), and Supplemental 6.01.3 (Schedule B #2) was unanimously carried.

6.03 Motion was made by Trustee Wills, seconded by Trustee McNaughton, to approve a Stipulation of Settlement between Employee A, employed by the Northport-East Northport Union Free School District, and Dr. Marylou McDermott, Superintendent of Schools of the Northport-East Northport Union Free School District

Unanimously carried.

6.04 Motion was made by Trustee Wills, seconded by Trustee McNaughton, to approve a Stipulation of Settlement between Employee B, employed by the Northport-East Northport Union Free School District, and Dr. Marylou McDermott, Superintendent of Schools of the Northport-East Northport Union Free School District

Unanimously carried.

Motion was made by Trustee Gannon, seconded by Trustee McCue, to approve all items under 7.

7. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT, FINANCIAL - FOR BOARD ACTION

7.01 Receiving the following donation to the District:

7.01.1 A Barnes and Noble Nook and case to Fifth Avenue Elementary School in memory of Joan Baltman from her family, value estimated by the donor to be approximately \$300.00

7.02 Authorizing the administration to accept a New York State Bar Foundation and New York State Bar Association Grant in the amount of \$1,500.00 to be used to support the expenses related to the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Civil Law Moot Court Competition to be held at Northport High School on Friday, April 29, 2011

7.03 Approving transfer of general fund appropriations in the 2010-2011 budget

Vote on Trustee Gannon's motion to approve all items under 7. was unanimously carried.

8. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – FOR INFORMATION ONLY

8.01 Schedule H – Use of Facilities

9. ADJOURNMENT

President Waldenburg reviewed the upcoming Board of Education Meetings of April 13<sup>th</sup>, April 28<sup>th</sup> and May 9<sup>th</sup>.

Vice President Wills requested that Trustee Gannon research formulating a Board policy on weighting of students for review at the next policy committee meeting.

There being no further business to discuss, motion was made by Trustee Wills, seconded by Trustee Gannon, to adjourn the meeting.

Unanimously carried.

At 11:15 p.m. the Chair declared the meeting adjourned.

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Beth M. Nystrom  
District Clerk

bmn