



**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL
SPECIAL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
MEETING MINUTES/MOTIONS**

In order to comply with Connecticut General Statutes regarding minutes of meetings, the following will be used to record information during all public meetings that take place. An original must be submitted to the Town Clerk of Rocky Hill within 48 hours of the meeting being adjourned. Motions should be complete, showing the maker and second of the motion as well as how each member voted. Unanimous votes may be listed as unanimous.

NAME OF PUBLIC BOARD OR COMMISSION	Board of Education
DATE MEETING AGENDA POSTED	March 2, 2010
LOCATION	Training/Conference Room
DATE OF MEETING	March 4, 2010
TIME MEETING STARTED	5:00 p.m.
PERSON PREPARING MEETING MINUTES	Jo-Anne Booth, Recording Secretary
VERBATIM NOTES TAKEN	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
AUDIO, VIDEO OR LIVE TRANSMISSION OF MEETING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

MEMBERS PRESENT AT MEETING

1. Frank Morse	2. Also present: Superintendent Dr. Jeffrey Villar
3. Assistant Superintendent Marian Hourigan	4. Darlene Brown (Language Arts Coordinator)
5. Principal Mario Almeida	6. Principal John Colonghi
7. Principal Cori-Ann DiMaggio	8. Various Teachers
9. Various Parents	10.

NUMBER REQUIRED FOR QUORUM 5 QUORUM PRESENT Yes No

TEXT MOTIONS AND RESULTS VOTES

1st MOTION Passed Failed Tabled

No motions were made during this special meeting to review the school calendar. (William MacDonald (Chairman), Rene (Skip) Rivard (Vice Chairman), Marc Beliveau, Raffaella Calciano-Coler, Dilip Desai, Brian Dillon, Maria Mennella and Edward (Alex) Silva were absent.)

LINK TO WORKING NOTES (will be attached if available)
CORRECTION(S) (will be attached if available)
TIME MEETING ADJOURNED: 5:44 p.m. .
TIME DELIVERED TO TOWN CLERK: .

ACTION

**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL
BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING OF MARCH 4, 2010**

Members Present: Frank Morse

Members Absent: William MacDonald (Chairman)
Rene (Skip) Rivard (Vice Chairman)
Marc Beliveau
Raffaella Calciano-Coler
Dilip Desai
Brian Dillon
Maria Mennella
Edward (Alex) Silva

Also Present: Dr. Jeffrey Villar (Superintendent)
Marian Hourigan (Assistant Superintendent)
Darlene Brown (Language Arts Coordinator)
Principal Mario Almeida
Principal John Colonghi
Principal Cori-Ann DiMaggio
Various Teachers
Various Parents

A special meeting of the Board of Education was held on Thursday, March 4, 2010 in the training/conference room. Mr. Morse called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

1. Discussion of the Upcoming School Year Calendar (s)

Superintendent Dr. Villar passed out a new calendar for the 2010-2011 school year. They had talked about leaving this alone at last week's meeting and there are just some minor changes to it. The snow day makeups for the parent/teacher conferences in December were highlighted (December 15, 2010, December 16, 2010 and December 17, 2010) and they changed the language around for the early dismissal dates indicating that those are parent/teacher conferences.

Superintendent Dr. Villar passed out a draft of the 2011-2012 school year calendar. He tried to inject half days into this schedule for the purpose of providing teachers with professional development time that would be used for data analysis. This might still need some "massaging". He suggested that the people who are very intimate with exam schedules look this over in order to make sure that he didn't make mistakes. The six professional development days they currently have that are in the teachers' contract are distributed throughout the school year in the same fashion as they have been but these are now augmented by four additional early dismissal days throughout the calendar. He explained how he tried to put these days in strategic locations. One of these was put in

roughly every five to six weeks and this varies based on vacations, etc. By doing this, this reduces the total hours of education for each grade level in this district by eleven hours. He researched this to make sure they would be okay by doing this.

Principal DiMaggio said she saw one issue with the 2011-2012 school calendar. She referred to the half days for December 6, 2011, December 7, 2011, December 8, 2011 and December 9, 2011. Typically for that Tuesday in December, kindergarten usually gets a full day so that the teachers can be out of the classroom to do their conferences and they also have the half days because these teachers have double sessions of children. She guessed they could move this to Monday, December 5, 2011 instead. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he initially had looked at half days for the following week. He said they could move that day to December 13, 2011 but the only negative thing would be that there would be the piling up of half days in that one area. Mr. Morse asked if this could be moved up into October. Superintendent Dr. Villar explained his thought process for all of this.

A teacher suggested that if they give their Blue Ribbon testing in October then instead of having the professional development day on December 6, 2011, they could move this to the end of October. Superintendent Dr. Villar mentioned using December 7, 2011, which is a full day, for typical workshops that Assistant Superintendent Hourigan and Mrs. Brown plan and then they could have a half day at the end of October. This would correspond with the initial benchmark. Mr. Pentland (parent) suggested moving this to October 26, 2011 and Superintendent Dr. Villar said that would be a good day. Principal DiMaggio said they could take off December 6, 2011. That day would still be for the kindergarten conferences but it won't be a half day. Superintendent Dr. Villar said that was right and December 7, 2011, December 8, 2011 and December 9, 2011 would be the conference days. Someone questioned if October 7, 2011 would be a day off. Superintendent Dr. Villar said children won't have school that day but the teachers have to report.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to one of the conversations they were having with regards to cutting down part of the school year and he said the arrangement as he has it written right now does nothing to shorten the school year. This does shorten the amount of contact time that the students and teachers have by eleven hours. Even with this reduction, they are well within the state requirement of nine hundred hours at all of the schools so they don't have to worry about being cited. He said the way they could get to cutting down part of the school year would be to have teachers stay for a longer period beyond the normal dismissal on those days so it would be an extended day for them. This can be done but it would get a lot more complicated on the legal side of things. He doesn't know if it is necessary though because according to the 2011-2012 school year calendar, they would be getting out of school on June 12, 2012 anyway. He appreciates the fact though that the Rocky Hill Teachers Association (RHTA) is willing to talk about this. He honestly didn't know if they needed to do this though. This is fertile ground for discussion in the future because he can see the advantages to it.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to the next big issue which is February vacation. There had been a lot of dialogue on this previously but he said the outcome would be that they would take three days from February and they would get to cut these off of June. He didn't know that there would be a lot to be gained with this. He buys the argument that teachers and students could use the time off in February. There is some benefit to February.

A parent said that half days have been added but she thought there wasn't going to be a professional day then. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he and the RHTA would have to come up with a memorandum of understanding around this. This parent asked if new professional development days are just being added to the calendar. Superintendent Dr. Villar said time will be provided to teachers during their normal work time and they won't have students in front of them. This parent mentioned how school will be getting out on June 12, 2012 and for the next couple of years they will have an early date for this. Part of this is driven by the Christmas vacation which has less days and she explained more. She also noticed that Good Friday lands in April vacation one year. The issue comes up more when school ends on June 19th for example, like it did last year so they knew that school wouldn't get out until June twenty-something if there was one snow day. She suggested that they pick the day that they would want the latest day of school to be on and they could back into this so that they can make sure they start at an acceptable time. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he understood what was being said. The bottom line is that there are one hundred and eighty days of school so school will start either before or after Labor Day and it will end either early in June or late in June. This parent said a lot of children do things in June (i.e. go to camp). She likes the way the calendar is presently where the students will be getting out of school on June 12, 2012 because they are still getting out at a good time. They run into a problem when school ends on June 18th or June 19th and if there are snow days. She said they should start before Labor Day if they have to because then they won't be going so late in June. Working parents have their summer set up for their children. Most camps end by the third week of August because most school systems start in August. Superintendent Dr. Villar told this parent that he thought she was right and they have had this Committee for the last two years for this to be looked at. He is pushing now that they look at multiple years so they get ahead of this a little bit. They will hopefully be looking at the 2012-2013 school year calendar and the 2013-2014 school year calendar next year so that they will be a couple of years ahead. Mr. Pentland referred to what was just being talked about and he said this really doesn't affect the 2011-2012 school year calendar but maybe when the meeting is held for the 2012-2013 school year calendar then this will be the thing they really need to look at.

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan referred to the making up of snow days and she said some school systems limit it to five days after school ends. This would go into the April vacation from the end if they go over the five days. This is a provision that could be put in so it would limit the number of snow days at the end. Principal Colonghi said this provision is in the green box on the calendar already. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said according to what it states that it means they could have school all the way until June

29th. She explained what she had been saying. Superintendent Dr. Villar said most likely this would have to be a separate distinct policy that the Board of Education would have to debate. This could have significant implications in a bad winter. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said people would have to know well in advance that this could happen. Mr. Pentland said he worked in New Britain seven or eight years ago. That school district had to go into its April vacation and he said it was such a disaster.

Mr. Morse asked how many professional development days they are supposed to have in a year. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they are supposed to have six full professional development days. Mr. Morse said there are eight and half days of these in the 2011-2012 school year calendar. Superintendent Dr. Villar told him that he was counting the half days. They are obligated to provide six full days under their contract. The additional four days are half days in the sense that teachers have a normal workday but the students leave early. The teachers would have a few hours without students on these days. Principal Almeida said they get two hours. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this isn't a huge block of time but it is significant when the teachers need to meet as a team and do things. Principal DiMaggio said most teachers are so dedicated that they stay longer. Superintendent Dr. Villar explained the whole concept for this. He originally had thought this might be a way to shorten the calendar year but that is a little more complicated.

Principal Almeida asked Superintendent Dr. Villar if there are any thoughts about proposing something similar to this for next year. Superintendent Dr. Villar thinks it is too early to do this for next year.

Principal Colonghi referred to an error on the 2011-2012 school year calendar with regards to the snow days. In the green box, it states April 22, 2012 as being the last day of the vacation period and he said this should be April 20, 2012.

Superintendent Dr. Villar asked everyone if they had any other changes, thoughts or suggestions. A teacher asked if they are definitely going to stay with three days in a row for the conference days. Superintendent Dr. Villar said if people want to change this that this is up for discussion. He likes the fact that a link is being made from a Wednesday to a Wednesday so if there is a snow day on that Wednesday then it will be known that the conference will be held the next Wednesday. Principal DiMaggio thinks it is less confusing for parents if this is kept consistent.

Principal Almeida liked the fact that they still had the February break on the table. He explained more and he said he also liked the fact that they will be getting out early in June. They are keeping the February break because it makes sense for the children and they are not doing this because they are following the lead of someone else.

A teacher said she liked the February break too as well as the promise that half days will be coming for them to do their meetings that they have to do anyway. Some of their meetings don't start until 3:45 p.m. at Stevens School and it is hard to think at that time

after being with children all day. She wishes they could do half days next year but she understood what Superintendent Dr. Villar said. She thinks teachers will appreciate the fact that half days will be coming for them to do this kind of work. Principal Almeida agreed especially because they have so many initiatives coming. These common planning times seem to be what more and more school districts are doing.

Superintendent Dr. Villar asked the parents who were present what type of reaction they thought their friends and neighbors would have if half days were to be put in for the next school year. A parent said she thinks this probably would be a little harder for parents who have elementary school children and she doesn't think that they planned for this yet for next year. Mr. Pentland thinks a couple of half days could be put in. Principal Almeida thinks two or three half days could be put in. Mr. Pentland said there would be a daycare issue. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he has experienced in Mansfield that the Parks and Recreation Department runs programs on the half days and even on professional development days. The children can go to an all day program for a certain amount of money. He said he can talk to Lisa Zerio (Parks and Recreation Director) to see if there is some way they can start to coordinate some activities that the Parks and Recreation Department would run for four or five days a year. Principal DiMaggio asked if students could be transported over there and Superintendent Dr. Villar said maybe something could be set up on site. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he was just brainstorming. The Parks and Recreation Department could tell him that they have no money for this. This idea may help to take daycare off of the table for some parents. Mr. Pentland said the Parks and Recreation Department runs a camp now for the February and April school vacations. Superintendent Dr. Villar said maybe they will want to put two half days in and grow into this slowly. Mrs. Brown suggested an October date and a February date for the half days if they are going to try to do this for next year. She asked if this would make the most sense in terms of when the data comes back to the teachers. Principal Almeida suggested that a half day should be done in March but that is when there are the CMTs. Mr. Pentland suggested October 27, 2010 which is the last Wednesday of that month. It was asked if Wednesdays are picked for a certain reason for half days. Mr. Morse said he likes Fridays. Mr. Morse said he would prefer to have a half day on October 29, 2010. Mr. Pentland has seen a school district where they have half days on Fridays. He suggested having another half day on February 4, 2011. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said her concern with this is that they wouldn't have a week before the CMTs. She said they would go right into the CMTs after coming back from vacation and she would hate having any instructional time taken away. Mrs. Brown said they could maybe talk about their CMT schedule for that year. Principal DiMaggio suggested January 28, 2011 and she asked if that would be too soon or if they would have all of the testing done by that time. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said this will depend upon when the Blue Ribbon testing and all of the testing will be done. A discussion took place about this. It was decided to have a half day on February 4, 2011. For the 2011-2012 school year, the half days were moved to Fridays from Wednesdays except for the one near Easter which was moved to Thursday. Mrs. Brown referred to half days for the 2010-2011 school year calendar. She suggested October 29, 2010 and May 27, 2011. Superintendent Dr. Villar said Mr. Morse had

questioned if they want to do this again for the 2011-2012 school year calendar if this logic is being followed with regards to the half day in May. It was decided to do this. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they eventually want to get into a cycle of four to six weeks. The 2011-2012 school year calendar tries to go in this direction. He said that he, Assistant Superintendent Hourigan and Mrs. Brown, in working with the teachers, should start to bring some things to the Board of Education to show them so this can get out on T.V. and people can see the purpose of some of the things they are doing. Principal Almeida referred to the half days they have had for NEASC and he said they couldn't have done what they did so far without these. Superintendent Dr. Villar told Principal Almeida that they did a great job going to the Board of Education to report what was happening with NEASC.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said he will have Mrs. Christine Flynn edit the school calendars. These will be on the agenda for the Board of Education's next meeting. He invited everyone to go to the next Board of Education meeting because it is always great to have people who are on a Committee present there in the event that the Board of Education members have questions. He said these calendars will hopefully get approved and maybe earlier in the fall they can try to start looking at the calendars for the next two school years after the 2011-2012 school year.

This meeting adjourned at 5:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo-Anne Booth

Accepted by: _____ Date: _____