

3/9/2010 Special Meeting of the Board of Education of the Berlin Central School District, held at the Berlin Middle School/High School

President Zwack called meeting to order at 7:15 PM with 6 Board members present. Board member Gina Goodermote arrived at 7:25 PM.

Administrators: Charlotte Gregory, Cathie Allain, Cyril Grant, Eileen Leffler, Jennifer Morris, Sandra Owens

Guests: Heinz Noeding, Patty Nash, Diane Paine, Robert C. Miller, Andy Zlotnick and others.

Cyril Grant spoke with a sales representative from Williams Scotsman, Inc. regarding insulation factors of the modular classroom units. There was also discussion in regard to how the modular classrooms might impact other educational programs. More lengthy talks about the modular units included money savings for the district in leasing modular classrooms, closure of Grafton school, selling Stephentown and Grafton schools and applying that money toward renovations at Berlin Elementary, the possibility of not needing the classrooms at the end of the 5-year lease due to declining enrollments, and reducing the district's footprint. Some Board members were concerned with the cost of leasing modular units with no budget in place, looking at long term solutions instead of leasing modular units, and concerns about staff lay-offs and cuts that may occur with the closing of Grafton Elementary, as well as the possible reconfiguration of the school district from Pre-K through grade 12 to a Pre-K through grade 8 school. Also discussed were safety concerns for the modular units. Cyril Grant stated the same security procedures would be used for the modular units that are in place for other school buildings, such as locked exterior doors, and the linking of the units to the security system at Berlin Elementary.

Procedural Motion for Robert's Rules of Order was discussed. Part of the procedures include: following the 3-minute rule for speaking and staying on topic. One Board member suggested moving ahead without following the 3-minute rule. It was suggested that budget discussions remain focused and civil by President Zwack. A procedural motion to use Robert's Rules of Order was made by Jeffrey Paine, second by Liz Miller.

**Ayes: Frank Zwack
Jeffrey Paine
Gina Goodermote
Elizabeth Miller
Thomas Morelli
John Greene
Beverly Stewart**

Nays: No one

Discussions occurred regarding the upcoming school budget, how to close the budget gap, buy-outs to retiring teachers, contractual agreements with the BTA and CSEA, and the closing of Grafton school. Board members

3/9/2010 Special Meeting of the Board of Education of the Berlin Central School District, held at the Berlin Middle School/High School

were again reminded to adhere to the budget workshop agenda by President Zwack.

Eileen Leffler talked about Kindergarten enrollment for the next school year. It is estimated that the class size will total 47 for the district, with about 14 coming from Grafton and the remainder from Berlin and Stephentown. Thirty-eight are expected from the current Pre-Kindergarten classes. Eileen also stated that there are presently about 83 students at Grafton School, and for the 2010-2011 school years she expects enrollment to be approximately 66. It was noted that enrollment numbers for Grafton are declining more rapidly than was anticipated.

A motion to lease two 2-unit modular classrooms for not more than 5 years, to be located at the Berlin Elementary School was made by Gina Goodermote, second by Jeffrey Paine.

Ayes: Frank Zwack	Nays: Thomas Morelli
Gina Goodermote	Beverly Stewart
Jeffrey Paine	John Greene
Elizabeth Miller	

Superintendent Gregory gave a brief report regarding a follow-up from the commercial real estate broker Win Morrison. After he did a walk through pre-bid tour, Mr. Morrison was invited to meet with the Board at its March 16th meeting. The Superintendent recommended to the Board his appointment.

The New Lebanon Central School District has offered an arrangement for Berlin elementary students in the Stephentown area to attend school in the New Lebanon district if they so chose. Students attending school in the New Lebanon district would pay a reduced tuition rate, and there is a possibility of that district transporting the students as well. This arrangement would be done for convenience. Superintendent Gregory requested direction from the Board regarding this matter so the school attorney may draw up a document about the proposed arrangement. It was determined that only a few students from the Stephentown area might attend the New Lebanon Central School District. A motion to create an agreement regarding the arrangement between New Lebanon and Berlin schools to be presented to the Board was made by Elizabeth Miller, second by John Greene.

Ayes: Frank Zwack	Nays:	Thomas Morelli
Elizabeth Miller		Beverly Stewart
John Greene		
Jeffrey Paine		
Gina Goodermote		

3/9/2010 Special Meeting of the Board of Education of the Berlin Central School District, held at the Berlin Middle School/High School

A lease agreement between the Berlin Central School District and the Town of Stephentown was presented by the Superintendent. The town plans to use the building for summer youth activities, and does understand that the building will be listed on the real estate market. The town will also maintain the facilities.

Sandra Owens said that budget work and a projected financial plan for the next five years will be given to Board members at the March 16, 2010 meeting. The Superintendent did state that a review will be distributed to Board members regarding what happens if the district remains status quo, or if the district closes Grafton school. She also discussed ways the budget gap could be closed for the 2010-2011 upcoming school year. Approximately \$250,000 was left from the previous budget and that might be used to close the budget gap. One Board members suggestion for closing the budget gap was to withhold BTA and CSEA raises for a year. President Zwack warned this would be a violation of the Taylor Law and the school attorney had previously advised the Board about discussions of personnel items in public session.

The Preparation Report for State's approval of 55/25 for teachers was discussed. It is not an option, but a reality for schools. Incentives would be given by the school district. More discussion would occur in an upcoming Executive Session. There will be nine teachers in the Berlin district who would be eligible for this incentive. Sandra Owens handed out to the Board a 5-year projection retirement savings document for further review.

Sandra Owens gave a follow up report for a point of sale computer system for the Cafeteria. Three different companies were compared and investigated. It was suggested that NERIC-Nutri Kids system be purchased from cafeteria profits. It was also suggested that the system be implemented before the end of the 2009-2010 school year for easier transitioning. This system would help reduce the stigma sometimes associated with reduced or free meals. One Board member commented that they would prefer profits from the cafeteria be put into offering a menu that would include variety and more nutritious foods. A motion to purchase the computer system was made by Jeffrey Paine, second by Elizabeth Miller.

**Ayes: Frank Zwack
Jeffrey Paine
Elizabeth Miller
Gina Goodermote
Thomas Morelli
John Greene**

Nays: Beverly Stewart

3/9/2010 Special Meeting of the Board of Education of the Berlin Central School District, held at the Berlin Middle School/High School

A motion for items 1) Board elections, 2) Budget, 4) \$100,000 for maintenance and repair was made by Jeffrey Paine, second by Gina Goodermote.

**Ayes: Frank Zwack
Jeffrey Paine
Gina Goodermote
Elizabeth Miller
Beverly Stewart
John Greene**

Nays: Thomas Morelli

A brief discussion occurred regarding the voting location at the Berlin Fire Department Hall. Cyril Grant stated that this location is the official polling site for the Town of Berlin. Also it was noted this site has handicapped accessibility, and ample parking accommodations. Having this location as the polling site would not interfere with the school students and their schedules. The Budget Vote and Board election date is May 18, 2010, Noon – 9 PM at the Berlin Fire Department Hall.

A motion for item 5) Elections to be held in the Berlin Fire Department Hall was made by Jeffrey Paine, second by Gina Goodermote.

**Ayes: Frank Zwack
Jeffrey Paine
Gina Goodermote
Elizabeth Miller
John Greene**

**Nays: Thomas Morelli
Beverly Stewart**

A motion for item 3) Bus purchase program for one handicapped bus was made by Jeffrey Paine, second by Gina Goodermote.

**Ayes: Frank Zwack
Jeffrey Paine
Gina Goodermote
Elizabeth Miller**

**Nays: John Greene
Beverly Stewart
Thomas Morelli**

At 9:20 PM a motion to adjourn was made by Jeffrey Paine, second by Elizabeth Miller with all Board members voting yes.

Rebecca A. Giumarra, District Clerk