

ELWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Elwood, New York

MINUTES

REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING -- BOARD OF EDUCATION

January 13, 2005
Elwood Middle School

A. CALL TO ORDER – District Clerk 8:07 p.m.

Present	Michael Kaszubski	President
	Joseph Fusaro	Vice President
	Dina Annunziata	Member
	Julie Badlato	Member
	Dan Ciccone	Member
Staff	Dr. William J. Swart	Superintendent
	Carl Fraser	Assistant Superintendent/Business
	Robert Annucci	Assistant Superintendent/Human Resources
	John Hogan	Assistant Superintendent/Curriculum
	David Cenerelli	Director/Special Education
	Carlene Granieri	District Clerk

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Board President

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

(TAB L)

Mr. Fusaro moved and Mr. Ciccone seconded that the Board approve the minutes of the Regular Business Meeting of December 16, 2004.
The motion carried unanimously.

D. REPORT FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS – Dr. William J. Swart

The school budget for 2005-06 will be increased by 7.4%. While he is pleased that it is 5.5% below the 12.94% figure of last year, he is concerned with the projected average tax increase and the projected loss of \$800,000 in building aid. He believes the Board will find ways to reduce the average tax rate increase.

On Tuesday, 2/15 he will discuss the budget for next year.

On February 10 he will present the findings and recommendations of the K-12 Curriculum Articulation Committee. He thanked the committee for their effort. He believes the community and the Board will be pleased with the committee's recommendations.

Please mark your calendar with these additional dates. The Board will have Work Sessions on 3/3 and 4/7 at 7:30 p.m. in the HS Library. On 4/21 the Board will hold a Roundtable Discussion at 7:30 p.m. in the HS Library.

On 1/30 he will provide the Board with a report entitled "District Strengths, Critical Issues, A Vision Statement for 2005-07" and also a District organizational chart. That report will contain major recommendations in forming the District's Strategic Planning Council and how to develop a comprehensive 3-year plan for the District. He will discuss the recommendations in detail at the Board Work Session on 2/3.

E. COMMENDATIONS –

Mr. Keith McDermott, President of the Elwood Education Endowment, (EEE) announced the first annual Teacher Grant Awards totaling \$20,000. The mission of the EEE is to fund programs that are not eligible for School District funds. The mini grants were awarded to 40 teachers. Each recipient will receive up to \$500. Mr. McDermott and his committee thanked Mr. Kaszubski, Mr. Hogan, Mr. Fraser, Mr. Annucci, Mr. Tuorto, and Dr. Swart for their assistance. The EEE hopes to have a spring fundraiser and a 5K run. They will hold an Open House on 1/20.

The outstanding work of PTA Reflections Chairs and building principals was acknowledged. The winners of the PTA Reflections contest were presented with certificates. Their work will be displayed at the County Showcase at Walt Whitman HS on 1/22. County winners will go on to State Finals. In addition, the Reflections Committee presented a plaque entitled “A Different Kind of Hero” to teacher Nancy Gaiman for her assistance with the Reflections contest.

In addition, the hard work of the Elwood Music Sponsors was acknowledged.

Student Liaison Brooke Kluepfel reported:

There are no overwhelming concerns at the High School.

Sloan Kettering and the Krista House in West Babylon will benefit from the proceeds raised from the upcoming (3/18) Volleyball-a-thon.

The Musical is “Bye, Bye, Birdie” and it will take place on 2/4, 2/5 and 2/6.

F. RESIDENTS’ REMARKS – 9:08 – 9:16

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS -- (No Recommended Items)

H. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(TAB M)

1. The Board acknowledged receipt for audit of the Treasurer’s Report for the month ended November 30, 2004.
2. The Board acknowledged receipt for audit of the Revenue Report for the month ended December 31, 2004.
3. The Board acknowledged receipt for audit of the Budget Status Report for the period ended December 31, 2004.
4. The Board acknowledged receipt for audit of the Capital Projects Report for the quarter ended September 30, 2004.

I. NEW BUSINESS

1. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Heather Adams from the NYSSBA presented the results from the poll the District conducted through the Community Connect Survey. A total of 845 Elwood residents responded to the Survey. It reached every demographic. If you wish to see the full report, contact Dr. Swart’s office and you may sign it out.
- b. District Audit Committee
Mrs. Badlato gave an up-date on research she did over the weekend:
She did a web search of school districts, made direct inquires, and contacted a district that went through a state internal audit. She was both frustrated and disappointed to find no specific policy directive in place re forming Audit Committees. She made inquires to Senator Marcellino’s office for proposed legislation and was told that at present nothing has been physically drafted. A policy director advised her to wait pending a directive or guidance from Legislators. She is hesitant to create a formal committee until we receive concrete ideas, a more reasonable draft, or guidance from the State Education Department, Legislators, or Mr. Hevesi’s office.

Mr. Ciccone said he understands we are looking for structure and guidance from our Legislators. However, the Board has mentioned creating an Audit Committee at both the July and August meetings. He feels the Board should not take a “sit back and wait” attitude until the legislators guide us or wait for mandates from Albany. He is perplexed that we seem to be resistant or uncomfortable with mandates handed down from the State. However, he sees a reluctance to take action on items that are not mandated. He wants the Elwood Board to blaze the trail and if and when the State does create detailed legislation, we can revise our own policy accordingly.

Mrs. Annunziata asked if the district received the description of a Northport committee model promised by John Gross. Dr. Swart advised it would be in Friday’s board package. He added that the Northport committee created a number of recommendations on fiscal controls.

Mr. Kaszubski stated that the audit committee needs to be advisory and will have Board control. He wants to be proactive not reactive to create change. From past experience, he knows a committee takes time to form but we can have it essentially in place.

Mrs. Badlato responded that she agrees the Board must be proactive. However, her hesitation is the structure and she would like the legislators to give a general sketch and responsibilities.

Mr. Fusaro responded that the Board does not need to wait for ideas. The information gathered from the Community Connect Survey (CCS) indicates the community has the perception that the fiscal management by the Board and the use of community members and businesses is ineffective. In order to correct that perception, he is recommending the Board consider establishing a “District Financial Oversight Committee”.

(See Action Item 2. n)

c. Request for Proposal for External Audit Services (EAS) for the Elwood Union Free **(TAB N)** School District

Mr. Kaszubski said the Board wanted to keep the public aware of what the District is doing in light of the various news articles published in Newsday re EAS. The District wants to make inquiries in the form of a Request for Proposal (RFP) to audit firms.

Dr. Swart said if the Board is satisfied with the quality of the RFP, he would like direction from them and wants to distribute the RFP. He asked the Board to participate in interviews once he has a number of respondents.

Mr. Ciccone asked how many firms are we considering.

Dr. Swart responded the District will distribute the RFP and do a state-wide search. He indicated Elwood will look at all firms, with the exception of the firms from his previous two Districts. He asked the Board to not limit themselves to a handful of firms that service Long Island.

Mr. Fraser met with colleagues from Western Suffolk BOCES. They indicated there are quality firms out there; however, they have little or no school experience. He urged caution since many firms are now coming out of the woodwork.

Mrs. Badlato added some firms want to get into the market as the demand for services increases, but be aware that firms should not be both internal and external auditors.

Mrs. Badlato said the saddest part of the Rosyln scandal is now schools will have to spend more of the taxpayers money and the students will get less services. The Rosyln auditors reported to their Business Office. She wants to reverse the order (page 4) to read the auditors report their findings directly to the Board.

Dr. Swart will reverse the reporting order.

Dr. Swart reiterated that we might find firms who have significant experience in corporate audits (Fortune 500) and now want to get into the school auditing market. His first criteria will be to look at firms who have done school district audits, but again he does not want to

limit our search. He will forward his findings to the Board and any other people in an advisory capacity.

Mrs. Badlato said that larger national and regional firms have stated expertise but asked the primary question who specifically will be serving our account and do they have the appropriate qualifications.

Mr. Fusaro thanked Dr. Swart and Mr. Fraser for their speed in putting the RFP forward.

2. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Mr. Ciccone moved and Mr. Fusaro seconded that the Board approve personnel items. **(TAB O)**

<u>Resignation:</u>	Angela Motyka	Paraprofessional
<u>Leave:</u>	Amy Schombs	Elementary teacher
<u>Appointments:</u>	John Lonigro	Teaching Assistant (Computer)
	Tara Viola	Elementary Teacher
	Margaret Kissane	Paraprofessional
	Melanie Spooner	Food Service Worker
	Joseph Stavish	Microcomputer Repair Technician
	Patricia Umland	Principal Clerk

Other:

- *Emergency appointments and reappointments*
- *Extra classes for teachers*
- *Additional .2 FTE for Social Studies teacher*
- *Changes in co-curricular appointments for High School musical*
- *Addendum to Schedule of Substitute Teachers/Nurse*

The motion carried unanimously with the exception of the acceptance of Angela Motyka's resignation which carried 4 ayes 0 nays and 1 abstention (Mr. Kaszubski)

- b. Mr. Fusaro moved and Mrs. Annunziata seconded that the Board approve the Committee on Special Education's recommendations for students' classifications/placements and/or discontinuance of services for meetings held on December 1, 6, 15. The motion carried unanimously.

- c. Mr. Fusaro moved and Mrs. Annunziata seconded that the Board approve the Committee on Preschool Special Education's recommendations for students' classifications/placements and/or discontinuance of services for meetings held on December 8 and 13. The motion carried unanimously.

- d. Mr. Fusaro moved and Mrs. Annunziata seconded that the Board accept a donation in the amount of \$20,210.85 from the Elwood PTA Council for the Cultural Arts program. **(TAB P)**
The motion carried unanimously.

- f. Mr. Fusaro moved and Mrs. Annunziata seconded that the Board approve a health service contract for students attending private/parochial school:
- | | | |
|-------------|------------|------------|
| Syosset CSD | 3 students | \$1,965.54 |
|-------------|------------|------------|
- The motion carried unanimously.

- g. Mr. Fusaro moved and Mr. Kaszubski seconded that the Board approve the following change orders for Pella General Construction: **(TAB Q)**
GC-001 for work at Boyd Intermediate School in the **debit** amount of \$16,520.74
GC-002 for work at Boyd Intermediate School in the **debit** amount of \$5,951.62
The motion carried 3 ayes and 2 nays (Mr. Kaszubski and Mr. Ciccone).

- h. Mr. Fusaro moved and Mr. Kaszubski seconded that the Board approve the following change orders for M.H. Kane that were tabled in December 2004: *GC-8 for work at Boyd Intermediate School in the **debit** amount of \$5,766.61* *GC-9 for work at Boyd Intermediate School in the **debit** amount of \$9,317.18* The motion carried 3 ayes and 2 nays (Mr. Kaszubski and Mr. Ciccone). **(TAB R)**
- i. Mrs. Annunziata moved and Mrs. Badlato seconded that the Board approve the following change orders for Ultimate Power that were tabled in December 2004: *MECH-3 for work at the High School in the **debit** amounts of \$5,925.93 and \$5,382.00, totaling \$11,307.93* The motion carried 3 ayes and 2 nays (Mr. Kaszubski and Mr. Ciccone) **(TAB S)**
- j. Mr. Fusaro moved and Mrs. Badlato seconded that the Board approve the following change orders for Palace Electric: *EL-001 for work at Harley Primary School in the **debit** amounts of \$2,051.00 and \$4,731.00, totaling 6,782.00* *EL-002 for work at Boyd Intermediate School in the **debit** amounts of \$2,658.00 And \$1,772.00, totaling \$4,430.00* *EL-003 for work at Elwood Middle School in the **debit** amounts of \$834.00 and \$9,399.00, totaling \$10,233.00* The motion carried 3 ayes and 2 nays (Mr. Kaszubski and Mr. Ciccone). (Rich Scalia, Mike Walsh and Joe Ciarelli were present to explain all of the change orders) **(TAB T)**
- k. Mr. Fusaro moved and Mrs. Annunziata seconded that the Board waive the custodial/building use fees for the Harley Avenue and James H. Boyd PTAs for use of the Elwood Middle School on Saturday, January 29, 2005, for their annual Fun Fair. The motion carried unanimously.
- l. Mr. Fusaro moved and Mr. Ciccone seconded that the Board extend the 55-64 low pass option for all high school students until such time as the Regents of the State of New York adjust or remove the option for all students.
- m. **and** that the Elwood Union Free School District continue to grant local school diplomas in the 2004-2005 school year and beyond. The motion carried unanimously.
- n. Mr. Ciccone moved and Mr. Fusaro seconded that the Board approve the following resolution:
“RESOLVED that the appointment of Miller Lilly & Pearce, LLP as retained independent auditor for the 2004/2005 fiscal year be rescinded and terminated effective immediately; and be it further
RESOLVED that the services of Miller Lilly & Pearce, LLP as provided in a letter agreement dated October 28, 2004, be terminated effective immediately.”
 The motion carried unanimously.
- o. Mr. Fusaro moved and Mr. Ciccone seconded that the District establish a “District Financial Oversight Committee.”
 The Committee leadership should be co-chaired by two members of the Board of Education, and regularly attended by various members of this body. The composition of the committee should include, but not be limited to, the Superintendent of Schools, the Assistant

Superintendent for Business, and other staff members pertinent to the financial oversight of the district. Additionally, the committee should be comprised of a maximum of three residents of the district that are considered qualified by the Board of Education in the area of financial control and procedure.

Furthermore, it is preferred that at least one of the resident members of the District Financial Oversight Committee is a member of a current Citizens Finance/Budget Advisory Committee, if volunteers are willing and available.

The Committee will work in an advisory capacity to the entire Board of Education and remain focused on procedural issues concerning prudent and thorough financial controls. It is further expected that the committee will be part of the interviewing process leading to hiring staff in our business office, auditors, and the appointment of an external auditor for the district. Additionally, the committee can recommend changes in financial policy to the board, as well as recommend a revised charge of the District Financial Oversight Committee to be created and established through Board Policy.

The motion carried 3 ayes 2 nays (Mrs. Annunziata and Mrs. Badlato).

J. ITEMS NOT LISTED ON AGENDA

Mr. Fusaro asked the Board to consider holding back payments for one month, to Sullivan & Nickel, Baldassano, and anyone else involved in the project, until we are able to flush out who is responsible for design problems or omissions. If we owe them some money, withholding payment may be our only leverage.

Mrs. Badlato requested Work Sessions to review potential accounting procedures.

Mr. Kaszubski suggested the Board leave it up to Dr. Swart's discretion.

Dr. Swart will look over his calendar and call the Board members tomorrow.

K. COMMUNICATIONS

(TAB U)

a. Letter from Gala Handler

Mrs. Annunziata commented on Mrs. Handler's letter re the Foreign Language Program. She said the Board will look at her ideas and ways to enhance and strengthen the language curriculum. She hopes to receive input from our Administrators. She appreciated her time and professional expertise.

b. Letter from Noreen Miller

L. RESIDENTS' REMARKS – 11:11 p.m.

M. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Fusaro moved and Mr. Ciccone seconded that the Board go into Executive Session at 11:12 p.m. to discuss personnel matters.

The motion carried unanimously.

N. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kaszubski moved and Mrs. Annunziata seconded that the Board end Executive Session and to adjourn the meeting at 11:50 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Carlene Granieri
District Clerk