

The Board of Finance held a regular meeting on **January 16, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.** in the **Meeting Room of Windham Town Hall, 979 Main Street, Willimantic, CT 06226**

Members Attending: Lynne Ide, Anita Sebestyen, Anna Crawford, Charles Pennewill, Thomas White, Nectalis Martinez and Paula Haney.

1. Call to Order

Chairman Lynne Ide called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Upon a motion by Thomas White, seconded by Nectalis Martinez to add an agenda item 1a to welcome new board member Paula Haney.

The motion passed unanimously.

1a. Welcome new board member

Lynne Ide welcomed Paula Haney to the Board.

2. Public Comment

Mary Galuci commented on budgeted funds being removed from the Board of Education by the special master. She referenced court cases regarding the Board of Education

William Perry commented on the Natchaug roof and would like to see it fixed.

Gerry Philps commented the board of finance should be representing tax payers. He is in favor of fixing the Natchaug School Roof. The board should vote on the Natchaug School roof.

James Flores commented the issue is not just the Natchaug roof. Tax payers should vote to determine the fate of Natchaug roof. Exercise the right to vote. Amend the agenda to bring the issue to a vote.

Cindy Lewellin commented she moved from another town for a child to attend Natchaug school. The child was doing well until this year. Children are bringing security items to school with them because they are afraid. There is no recess for the children. The children don't leave the classroom.

Jeffrey Viens commented we are working on a 2005 valuation and we can't afford it. The magnet school will open up 150 spots for children. If it is going to a vote, put it on the ballot for the budget referendum.

Mark Doyle commented on the Natchaug Roof. 5 or 6 years ago the roof need to be replaced. It has been on the capital improvement plan. It is a town building that needs to be repaired. Bring this to a town vote. Concerning the non-lapsing account for the Board of Education, any surplus should just be returned to the town, he is not in favor of establishing a non-lapsing account.

William Ramos commented on the Natchaug roof. Take care of what we have first. The same thing was said about the middle school.

John Bason commented that the Hispanic population is not any different from anyone else. Do not play politics with the children.

Kevin Hoxie commented 80% of our taxes go to education. If the roof is opened up is there going to be additional costs? Move the 8th graders to the high school and move the smaller kids to the middle school.

Pamela Viens commented that people who have tried to put money into the town have been slammed by the 2005 property values.

Eliza commented that Latinos are in the same community and learning about diversity. We have beautiful buildings in town. Natchaug School has a lot of history. Our children need to be successful. Get together – it's just a roof.

Moses Flores commented we put money into Kramer so why can't we put money into Natchaug.

Thomas DeVivo commented it is time. How much will it cost over 20 years. He supports the replacement of the Natchaug School roof. We are going to improve our schools. As a community we will pull this off.

Regina Hackett commented the Board of Education put it out there to replace the roof. Please add this to the agenda. The kids need to go back to their school.

Alma Negron commented children who use to go to Natchaug and are now attending Windham Center. The kids don't have supplies.

Andrew Rosario commented his son attends Natchaug. He use to have lunch at the school but no longer can because students have to stay in the classroom. He supports replacing the roof.

Ernie Eldridge commented on replacing the roof. Come to the meeting with an open mind. Listen to what is being said.

Bill Powers commented that we have known that the roof needed to be replaced for the past 5 or 6 years. It's time to take care of the kids.

Roberto Martinez commented on having 2 schools in one. Children are not eating in the cafeteria or playing outside.

Nancy Tinker commented a goal should be to get the roof done so the kids can get back to the school in September.

Ana Silva has 2 grandchildren at the middle school. She is not happy because the children cannot eat in the cafeteria or play outside. We are one community and voting is very important.

Jolana Rivera commented the children are eating in their classrooms and are stuck in there all day.

Thomas White commented on Natchaug students being at the middle school. Fix the school properly and don't put a bandaid on it. Put a package together for all the repairs.

Mary Lou DeVivo commented the Natchaug School roof should go to a town vote and get the children out of the middle school.

Dennis O'Brien commented to change the agenda to add the Natchaug roof. The Board of Finance is to determine if the town can afford to replace the roof. He is in favor of replacing the roof.

Jose Lopez commented he wants his school back.

Tony Fantoli commented it is the board's responsibility to determine if the town can afford to replace the roof. The addition at Sweeney School on the facility plan needs to be questioned.

Julie Michaud commented that her children don't like school anymore.

Robert Michaud commented on being in a classroom and not able to go outside. Classmates are in their own classroom and there is no room. He wants to get out of the school and get Natchaug School back.

Alexis Michaud commented it is too hot in the classroom

Mathew Greg wants his school back.

Denise Flores commented to consider replacing the roof so the kids can go back to the school.

John French thanked the board for the job they do. The Board of Education was not ready when the last vote was taken. This should go to a referendum.

Tracy Lambert commented the kids from Natchaug School drew pictures.

3. Board of Finance Comment

Charles Pennewill commented on the call center. The audit of the Switchboard showed \$8000 in the red. The Reading program package was to allow children at home to be able to access the program. A school administrator and a teacher did not know about this. He would like a report on the reading program.

Anita Sebestyen commented on Drusilla Carter, the new director of the library and the work being done on a redesign of the library. She hopes we will find funding for it.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Charels Pennewill seconded by Anita Sebestyen to approve the meeting minutes from November 28, 2012.

The motion passed with Tom White, Anna Crawford, and Paula Haney abstaining.

5. Chair's Report

Update on audit for Fiscal Year 2011-2012

There have been conference calls on the status of the audit. The audit draft could be done by the beginning of February.

The Chair thanked everyone for coming tonight. We have on the agenda to hear from the Board of Education on a 10 year facility plan. At the last meeting there were 4 no votes and 1 yes vote on the Natchaug School roof. For the motion to be reconsidered someone that voted no will have to bring the item back up.

6. Presentations and Special Reports

Presentation from John French regarding a request to purchase a play structure at Sweeney School

Kim Switchenciko, PE Teacher, presented the board with information on a playscape at Sweeney School.

The current playscape has been demolished.

Anna Crawford questioned if the addition to the school would be a problem. John French replied no.

Presentation from the Board of Education regarding a 10 year Facility Plan

Tracy Lambert from the Board of Education presented the board with a 3 phase, 10 year facility plan. Bob Roach from Friar Associates presented the board with the needs of each school building. 80% of the cost for the Natchaug School roof will be paid by the State.

Anna Crawford commented if the report also includes the ceiling repairs and window. The project presented is for the roof not the ceiling.

Paula questioned the bidding process and can it be waived? Yes it could be waived.

Charles questioned the time line if this was on the ballot for the May referendum. The design would not start until June and then the repairs would not start until August.

Phase I – replace roof at Natchaug

renovations at the High School – Relocate the Board of Education, roof replacement, science classroom renovations

Sweeney School addition and renovate as new

Phase II – Windham Center Elementary school alterations

Windham Middle School –

North Windham Elementary – alterations

Phase III – Windham High School renovations

Dr. Stephen Adamowski commented the cost is greater to renovate than to build a new school. The school is in good condition. Natchaug could serve 5 years.

Thomas White questioned if any business has come forward to purchase or use the building. Ana Ortiz replied no.

Dr. Adamowski thanked the board for supporting Windham school children with the reading program and supporting the furniture fixtures and equipment increase with the Magnet School. In 2009-10 Natchaug was the lowest performing school. Performance increased 17% in 10-11, and 12% in 11-12 increase. He is unsure if this progress will continue this year with the disruption. Fifth graders were put back with elementary school. Kindergarten and 1st graders are at Kramer.

The Magnet school enrollment process is starting. It will take three years to reach full enrollment. 42 students from each elementary school will go to the magnet school. The middle school is under redesign. Natchaug will be used for 10 years. There are no environment problems.

Non-lapsing account request. The Board of Education is now using an all funds budget which has forced the district to go through funds. Some salaries paid through one fund and benefits were paid through

another fund. This has created a surplus in expenditures. The surplus would be used to purchase a finance software package for both the Town and Board of Education over the next seven years.

Charles questioned additional repairs such as elevator repairs or furnace replacement

Presentation from the Board of Education regarding a request to establish a non-lapsing account

Previously discussed.

Any other presentations or special reports, as appropriate

Upon a motion by Thomas White, seconded by Paula Haney to take a 10 minute break. The motion passed unanimously.

Upon a motion by Charles Pennewill, seconded by Anita Sevestyen to add item 6a for discussion and possible action on Natchaug School roof.

The motion passed unanimously.

6a - Discussion and possible action on Natchaug School Roof

Upon a motion by Thomas White, seconded by Paula Haney, to send a request for the revised amount of \$1,361,802.00 back to Town Council for consideration.

The motion passed unanimously

Upon a motion by Thomas White, seconded by Anna Crawford, to send to Town Council the cost of \$1,361,802 for repairing the Natchaug School roof. The recommendation to the Town Council is to send the motion from town meeting to adjourn to a referendum.

Paula Haney stated that the Town meeting is adequate and there is no need for referendum.

Charles Pennewill stated we need to have town referendum

Anita Sebestyen stated this needs to go to a referendum.

Paula Haney expressed the need to have the opportunity for people to truly understand what we are trying to accomplish.

The motion passed with Paula Haney opposing.

7. Controller's Report

The controller's report was presented by Tom Pesce

Blum Shapiro conducted interviews with the town hall staff and also the Board of Education.

Town manager has been meeting with town staff to review proposed budgets for fiscal year 2013-2014.

There was a senior center meeting and the final work is being done for the town transition. The senior center will be paying back the town for the payoff the loan that was for approximately 15,000.

Current year revenue and expenditures were reviewed.

Fire and police negotiations are still on-going.

The Request For Proposal for financial software is being reviewed.

The Pension Committee meeting needs to be rescheduled.

8. Discussion and possible action on any General Government 2012-2013 budget transfer requests

There were no transfer requests.

9. Discussion and possible action on any Willimantic Service District 2012-2013 budget transfer requests

There were no transfer requests.

10. Discussion and possible action to establish an unexpended education funds account

Upon a motion by Paula to establish an unexpended education funds account. There was no second.

11. Discussion and possible action to approve an appropriation for a play structure at Sweeney School

Upon a motion by Anna Crawford, seconded by Charles Pennewill to appropriate up to \$10,000 from the reserve for capital improvement fund for the Sweeney School playscape.

Thomas White questioned if the location will interfere where the proposed new building will be. John French said it will be put where there will be no problem with renovations or an addition.

Charles commented a local business donated \$9000

Anita commented the PTA has also raised funds

The motion passed unanimously.

12. Old business

Charles Pennewill questioned if a tri-board meeting would be held on Saturday? There will be no meeting.

13. New Business

Thomas White requested an update on the revaluation process.

14. Future Agenda Items

Update on reading program
Update on reevaluation

15. Public Comment

Pamela Viens commented that the Board of Education needs to do something for the kids.

Ana Ortiz commented that all proper procedures will take place. She did not ask the parents to bring kids. Every kid is getting what they need. We have done everything to make it work. Come visit and see how challenging it is .

Jeffrey Viens commented administration has not done everything it could. The Natchaug roof should go to a referendum.

James Flores apologized to the board for an earlier comment. If you own rental property and the taxes go up the rent will also go up.

Kevin Hoxie commented on spending 1.3 million when the school cannot be renovated. He suggested moving the 8th graders to the high school. Someone will buy the building.

16. Adjournment

Upon a motion by Thomas White seconded by Charles Pennewill the meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Attest: _____
Thomas Pesce