

March 16, 2016

A regular meeting of the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District was held on Wednesday, March 16, 2016, in Conference Room B at the Administration Building, 60 Weston Street, Huntington Station, NY 11746.

Present:

Board Members:

President

Vice President

Mr. Kaden
Mr. Ciappetta
Mrs. Brieff
Mrs. Carey
Mrs. DeGaetano
Mrs. LaCara
Mr. Nitkewicz

Staff:

Superintendent of Schools

Deputy Superintendent

Asst. Supt. for Personnel & District Services

Assistant Superintendent for Instruction & Curriculum

Business Administrator

District Clerk

Dr. Bennardo
Ms. Harris
Dr. Centamore
Dr. Bloom
Mr. Light
Mrs. McLean

Call to Order:

Mr. Kaden opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m. and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Budget Work Session:

Dr. Bennardo began the budget work session by taking a quick look at the budgets from the past three years. He reported on the tax cap and the accompanying state aid during these three years, which ranged from a 3.02% CAP (+\$3,144,277) with state aid of \$641,978 in 2012/2013 to last year's 1.71% CAP (+\$1,856,781) with state aid of \$1,700,000. A brief review was provided as to the administrative staff reductions that took place in 2013/2014 with the negative gap, to the growth of classroom-instructional staff and programs that occurred during the past two years. Dr. Bennardo remarked that the 2015/2016 was a quality-building year with the addition of 20+ instructional positions, theater opportunities for Grades 3-12, a full intramural program for Grades 3-12, as well as the Challenge Basketball and NYSPHSAA unified sports program.

Dr. Bennardo continued and shared that the District's commitment of \$1,500,000 for facility maintenance was a five-year plan that assisted in avoiding future, long-term debt. This commitment will enable the WWHS canopy renovations, a new playground structure for our early intervention program at the District Office, updates to 2 Melville Road (the old library), a face-lift for the Student Services suite and main office at WWHS, and a refurbishment of the outdoor running track. Dr. Bennardo reported that while in Albany last week with Senator Flanagan, Senator Marcellino, and Assemblyman Lupinacci, they stated their belief that GEA would be restored. If so, the District would receive \$500,000 to \$800,000 additional.

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The District's goal, Dr. Bennardo continued, was to "Maintain, Preserve and Sustain" our current services budget. Dr. Bennardo provided an explanation of what a current services budget entailed—namely, a continuation of classroom staffing/programs, staffing of maintenance, custodial and grounds at their current levels with all accompanying salaries/benefits calculated at next year's rates; a roll-forward of financial obligations with increased and decreased cost-of-living adjustments factored, and taking the final number related to these obligations and juxtaposing this figure against available revenue. However, Dr. Bennardo was quick to explain a current services budget does not stop the District from moving forward, and he asked Dr. Bloom to elaborate. Dr. Bloom provided 17 examples of enrichment, from establishing a K-2 theatre program to a Coding Camp, many enhancements coming from grants (such as the \$900,000 eRate grant) and donations the District has worked to obtain. Dr. Bennardo reiterated the importance of the District's mission in its quest for grants and donations; even a small grant can fund part of a teacher's salary, and the teacher was the most important component in education.

Dr. Bennardo reviewed several slides reflecting district-wide staffing by building, a five-year enrollment trend including neighboring districts, as well as other Long Island districts with similar student populations, and our current elementary/secondary class-size projections for 2016/2017.

Dr. Bennardo provided a review of the reserve expectation as follows:

Confirmed New State Aid:	\$988,602
Anticipated New State Aid:	\$500,000 to \$800,000
Confirmed New Tax Levy:	\$110,640
Roll-Forward in Year to Come:	\$4.5 million dollars

Dr. Bennardo stated that this year's current budget was funded by \$5,318,303 of carry-over money from the 2014/15 budget. We underspent last year's budget by \$7,166,496, so we were still in a positive balance flow, and furthermore, it placed us in a sustainable position, even if we were to appropriate the same fund balance carry-over for next year. Dr. Bennardo addressed the District's reserves, stating that in 2012/2013, the District spent more than it took in. That trend, however, was reversed from 2013 to present, and the District has saved money. The OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) account was established upon the recommendation from GASB several years ago. It was explained that the District was required to provide health insurance to our retirees, and GASB's position was that a fund was required for this obligation. Since that time their stance has changed, and the last time money was deposited into our OPEB account was in 2011. Interestingly enough, the State has not required districts to fund this account. Mr. Kaden interjected and shared that the State turned their heads on this matter for five years. Fast forward to the present time, and the Governor wants districts to squeeze as much money as possible from reserve

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accounts. Dr. Bennardo indicated that the District was currently being audited by the State, and it was their recommendation that monies from our reserve accounts be utilized to offset the budget. While the District has slowly and gradually done this, it was with extreme caution, as to not deplete our savings, as many other school districts have done. Dr. Bennardo reported that Mr. Light has crafted a legal way to unlock the OPEB account so that portions of this reserve can be used to mitigate the impact of this year's anemic tax cap. This could provide assistance for the next five years, perhaps even ten years with an extremely prudent approach. Discussion ensued regarding the OPEB account with Mr. Nitkewicz asking exactly how the account will be accessible. Mr. Light responded that on the agenda this evening was a resolution to assign the money for subsequent years' budgets. Mr. Nitkewicz asked if this was accomplished by changing the account's name. Dr. Bennardo stated that this was done by another district last year, and there were no ramifications. Mr. Nitkewicz expressed surprise at this; Mr. Kaden interjected and shared that the OPEB account was not a regular account. By accessing the account, it will be clear to everyone as to how the District was using the money. Mr. Light added that now is the time to start looking at using this fund in a measured, patterned manner. Mr. Kaden also stated that the State wants districts to reduce fund balances, the timing for doing so was perfect. Mr. Kaden prefers a gradual approach or using it for a one-shot project. Dr. Bennardo reported that the zero tax cap was horrific. If the inflation remains low for the next several years, it will produce zero tax money. The OPEB was a safety net, and if used wisely, Dr. Bennardo stated, it will help the District tremendously. Mr. Kaden added cautiously that the money (from OPEB) was not a recurring source of money. If used to fund a reoccurring expense, it will "cliff." A one-shot project was a better choice, such as a DNA lab. Mr. Nitkewicz shared that the reason that the District was in this position was because the Board has been very conscientious and conservative in spending the reserves.

Dr. Bennardo asked Mr. Light to review the next four slides depicting the history of reserves from 2007/2008 to 2014/2015, the unreserved/undesignated reserve and the total reserve graphs, and the reserves as a percentage of subsequent years' budgets. Mr. Light shared that with the latter, the District stabilized at a 21 to 22 percent steady balance of reserves, preventing cuts and maintaining a safety net. Mr. Light added that the District has acted in a proactive manner rather than a reactive one. Mrs. Brieff concurred, and stated that the District maintained its fine bond rating while doing so. Dr. Bennardo concluded that he would like to see a ten-year plan to maintain the safety net. Mr. Kaden agreed, but also stated that it will get sketchier and sketchier with each passing year.

**Adoption of
Agenda:**

Motion by Mrs. Carey, seconded by Mr. Nitkewicz, be it Resolved that the revised tentative agenda be adopted.
Motion carried unanimously.

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Motion on Minutes through Schedule of Bills (Warrants): Motion by Mrs. Carey, seconded by Mrs. Brieff, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District approve the following items:

Minutes: Minutes of Board meeting held on February 10, 2016.

Schedule of Bills (Warrants):	General (A)	Warrant 89	\$207,905.34
	“ ”	90	\$518,206.95
	School Lunch	Warrant 31	\$28,954.50
	Special Aid (F)	Warrant 36	\$35,880.18

Approved Board Packet of March 4, 2016

General (A)	Warrant 86	\$189,775.00
“ “	87	\$2,678,064.87
“ ”	88	\$637.89
School Lunch	Warrant 30	\$22,861.47
Special Aid (F)	Warrant 35	\$58,232.40

Approved Board Packet of February 26, 2016

General (A)	Warrant 84	\$251,022.98
“ “	85	\$8,000.00
School Lunch	Warrant 29	\$346.50
Special Aid (F)	Warrant 34	\$855.34

Vote on Minutes through Schedule of Bills (Warrants): Mr. Kaden asked for any additional comments or questions on the above items, and then called for a vote on the motion.
Motion carried unanimously.

Communications:

1. Letter from Andrew Martin to Board of Education in appreciation of support for Eagle Scout Project (Birchwood Reading Garden)
2. Letter from Michael Flynn of WS BOCES re official “Notice of Annual Meeting” held on Tuesday, April 12, 2016 (Budget Vote/Elections, April 19, 2016)

Proposed Board of Education Meeting Dates: Motion by Mrs. Brieff, seconded by Mr. Nitkewicz, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District hereby approves the Proposed Board of Education Meeting dates for the 2016/2017 school year, a copy made part of these legal minutes, pp. 1079-1081.
Motion carried unanimously.

Donation and Establishment of the WWHS Football alumni Scholarship: Motion by Mrs. Carey, seconded by Mrs. DeGaetano, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District hereby approves the \$750 donation for deposit into the South Huntington Football Extra Classroom Account to be utilized for a Walt Whitman Football Alumni Scholarship in the amount of \$750 to be awarded in June of 2017.
Motion carried unanimously.

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**School Lunch Price
Increase for
2016/2017:**

Motion by Mrs. Brieff, seconded by Mr. Nitkewicz, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District hereby approves a 25-cent increase in lunch prices in each building effective in the 2016/2017 school year.

Motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Bennardo reported that investigators from the State Child Nutrition Program Administration, as well as our independent auditor, R.S. Abrams & Company, recommended the increase in school lunch prices in compliance with the Federal Paid Lunch Equity Program. An annual calculation under this program was required, however, in that our lunch program operated “in the black,” the District did not conduct this calculation. However, the District is required to do so, and raise prices accordingly, or subsidize the lunch program with budget funds to equate to the established equity amount. For non-compliance, loss of aid was the ultimate penalty. The last time prices were raised was in 2011.

**Request to Remain
in South
Huntington:**

Dr. Bennardo reported that there were four requests to remain in South Huntington Schools, and the past practice has been to approve such requests when they occur after the second semester break. However, he explained, the sense of the Board was to have the exact “move-out” date when considering such requests. Dr. Bennardo shared that Mrs. Harris will secure this information and provide same to the Board with each future request. Discussion ensued with board members expressing frustration with not having an exact date; if in fact a family does not come forward and two months pass before this information was brought forward, then a loophole existed that must be repaired. Mr. Nitkewicz articulated his concern for not having the child “punished” because of the parents’ lack of awareness of the district’s practice or the deliberate withholding of information. Mr. Kaden spoke of families knowing full well of the notification practice and yet not communicating the move to the District; he has little compassion for that situation. Mr. Kaden felt it was abusive to the District. Mrs. Brieff stated her understanding of both positions—the importance of having full disclosure as to when the family moved, and the desire not to have the child penalized. Mr. Ciappetta stated that a clean policy was required and needs to be abided by. If a family plans on moving, the district must be notified prior to that move. Mrs. Brieff concurred, and with moving forward, the paperwork needs to be provided prior to the move. The District should not be paying for students who do not reside within our boundaries. Mr. Ciappetta stated that definitive timeframes were required. Some discussion ensued regarding the April 1st deadline for private transportation, and the manner in which that date was communicated to residents. Mrs. Brieff asked Mrs. Harris if the families that were requesting consideration knew of the general practice of the Board. Mrs. Harris reported that 99% did not know; additionally, these families were not “expecting” a positive decision, they were simply asking for consideration of their request. Mr. Kaden asked if the families had moved before the beginning of the

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semester. Mrs. Harris responded that the families moved in February. Discussion again ensued regarding the April 1st transportation date with Mr. Kaden stating the district does not consider requests after the April 1st deadline. Discussion ensued regarding possible methods of communication to the public regarding requests to remain in South Huntington. Mr. Ciappetta suggested that a further Board discussion take place regarding the general policy at a later time.

Mr. Kaden suggested taking the four individual requests and having a motion made for all four to be considered as one request.

Mr. Nitkewicz motioned to amend the current motion, seconded by Mrs. Carey; furthermore, Mr. Nitkewicz motioned to consider all four requests as one single request, again seconded by Mrs. Carey, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District hereby approves the individual four requests to remain in South Huntington Schools.

Motion carried unanimously.

Final Approval of Smart Schools Investment Plan:

Motion by Mrs. LaCara, seconded by Mrs. DeGaetano, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District hereby approves the final submission of the Smart Schools Investment Plan.

Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution for Use of OPEB Funds:

A brief discussion took place regarding this matter; Mr. Kaden asked Mr. Light if it was critical that this resolution be approved at this evening's meeting; Mr. Light responded it could wait until the next meeting. Mr. Kaden suggested securing a legal opinion in the interim.

Motion by Mr. Ciappetta to table this matter, seconded by Mrs. Brieff.
Motion carried unanimously.

Workers' Compensation Reserve:

Motion by Mrs. Carey, seconded by Mr. Nitkewicz, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District hereby approves an increase in the 2015/2016 school budget in the amount of \$500,000 to budget code 9040-13-BOF-800. Said increase is to be taken from the Workers' Compensation Reserve Account.
Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Light reported that the increase to the budget was required due to four Workers' Compensation cases settled at an amount of \$900,000.

Field Trip Request:

Motion by Mrs. Brieff, seconded by Mr. Ciappetta, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District hereby approves the overseas field trip to Spain, France and Italy on February 16, 2017 through February 25, 2017, for high school students who were enrolled in advanced language courses.

Motion carried unanimously.

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Dr. Bennardo shared that Mr. Dennis Callahan coordinated this field trip request, and it will take place during the 2016/2017 school year. Dr. Bennardo also referenced the amendment to the Field Trip policy whereby the recommendation for travel insurance was added. Should there be a world event that would require the trip's cancellation, parents would have the ability to recoup the cost of the trip through such insurance. The cost of the trip was \$3,900 per student for the ten days.

Obsolete School Books:

Motion by Mr. Ciappetta, seconded by Mrs. Carey, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District hereby approves the request to have the listing of books submitted by Ms. Jill Adler of St. Anthony's High School, and Mr. Jon Varlamos, Assistant Principal of Walt Whitman High School, deemed as obsolete.

Motion carried unanimously.

Recommendations for Placement by CSE/CPSE:

Motion by Mr. Nitkewicz, seconded by Mrs. LaCara, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington School District, having reviewed minutes of the Committee on Special Education dated January 28, February 3, 10, 11, 12, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 29, March 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 2016, and the Committee on Preschool Special Education dated February 22, 23, March 1, 3, 7, 2016, is satisfied that the procedures of Chapter 853 of the Education Law were followed and accepts the recommendations for placement set forth, copies made part of these legal minutes, pp. 1082-1102.

Motion carried unanimously.

Personnel:

Motion by Mrs. LaCara, seconded by Mr. Ciappetta, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington School District, having reviewed the recommendations of the Chief School Administrator, is satisfied that the provisions of Section 3012 of Education Law were followed, and thereby accepts those recommendations as set forth in schedules made part of these legal minutes, pp. 1103-1113, and authorizes implementation thereof:

Schedule 2: Probationary Appointments (Instructional)

Schedule 5: Part-time Appointments (Instructional)

Schedule 6: Summer School Appointments (Instructional)

Schedule 7: Temporary Replacement Appointments (Instructional)

Schedule 9: Coaching/Extracurricular Appointments (Instructional)

Schedule 11: Terminations (Instructional)

Schedule 12: Leaves of Absence; Ext. of Sick Leave

Schedule 15: Appointments (Non-Instructional)

Schedule 16: Terminations (Non-Instructional)

Schedule 17: Leaves of Absence (Non-Instructional)

Schedule 22: Substitute Employee appointments (Inst./Non-Inst.)

Motion carried unanimously.

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Information and Reports:

1. Hospital for a Day, Friday, March 18, 2016
2. SHPL Budget Vote & Trustee Election, Tuesday, April 5, 2016, 3-9 p.m.
3. School-Grade Enrollment Report for February, 2016
4. The Long-Islander (2)
5. Weekly Newsletter, March 8, 2016
6. Board & Administrator, March, 2016

In Envelopes:

1. Letter from Michael Flynn of WS BOCES re official "Notice of Annual Meeting" held on Tuesday, April 12, 2016 (also noted under Communications)

Information Sent to Board Week Ending March 4, 2016

1. The Long-Islander; Chris Herren's presentation at Walt Whitman High School
2. Raymour & Flanigan/SHSD Art Gallery, Friday, March 11, 2016
3. Facilities Committee meeting minutes from February 29, 2016
4. Proposed Board of Education Meeting Dates for Review for 2016/2017
5. Weekly Newsletter, March 1, 2016
6. Letter from Dr. Bennardo to recipients of WWHS winter sports awards post-season honors students
7. The Silas Scoop, March, 2016
8. The Countrywood Chronicle, March, 2016

Information Sent to Board Week Ending February 26, 2016

1. Weekly Newsletter, February 23, 2016
2. SHTA Minutes of the Executive Board meeting of February 22, 2016
3. NYSIR NEWS, February, 2016 (Board Only)
4. Invitation from PTA Council, Reflections Awards Ceremony, March 29, 6:30 p.m., South Huntington Public Library
5. The Long-Islander (1)
6. Facilities Committee Agenda for meeting of February 29, 2016

Comments from Board Members and Staff:

None provided.

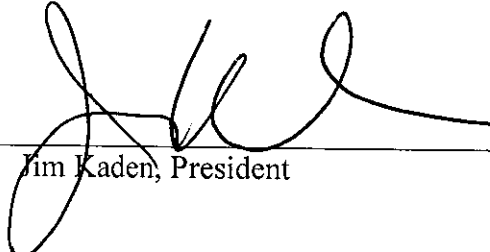
Voice of the Residents:

Mrs. Pat Dell commented on the Challenge Basketball game that took place the previous evening. She stated that the team did an awesome job in winning the game, and it was a wonderful evening for the students involved. Mr. Nitkewicz shared that he was very happy the program was successful.


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Adjournment: Motion by Mr. Nitkewicz, seconded by Mrs. Brieff, be it Resolved that the meeting be adjourned.
Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was declared adjourned at 9:20 p.m.



Jim Kaden, President



Laura McLean, District Clerk

Attachments made part of these legal minutes, pages 1079 through 1113.