

March 1, 2017

A regular meeting of the Board of Education of South Huntington Union Free School District was held on Wednesday, March 1, 2017, in the Administration Building, Conference Room B, Huntington Station, New York.

Present: **Board Members:**

President

Vice President

Mr. Kaden

Mr. Ciappetta

Mrs. Brieff

Mrs. Carey*

Mrs. DeGaetano

Mr. Nitkewicz

Staff:

Superintendent of Schools

Asst. Supt. for Business & District Operations

Deputy Superintendent

Asst. Supt. for Instruction & Curriculum

Interim Personnel Administrator

District Clerk

Dr. Bennardo

Dr. Centamore

Ms. Harris

Dr. Bloom

Mr. Fallon

Mrs. McLean

Absent: Mrs. LaCara

Mrs. Carey delayed; arrived 7:55 p.m.

Call to Order: Mr. Kaden opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Executive Session: Motion by Mr. Nitkewicz, seconded by Mrs. Brieff, be it Resolved that the Board go into Executive Session to discuss the employment history of a particular person.

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Mrs. DeGaetano, seconded by Mrs. Brieff, be it Resolved that the Executive Session be adjourned.

Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Kaden opened the Business Meeting at 7:40 p.m. and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Smart Schools
Investment Plan
Presentation:**

Dr. Bennardo provided a brief background regarding the Smart Schools Investment Plan. Dr. Bloom was pleased to share that the District was in receipt of the \$295,000 check from the first Investment Plan submission and expressed his confidence of the State's timeliness with future payments. Dr. Bloom reported that this next submission was for interactive boards, ChromeBooks and two digital planetariums. Dr. Bloom further stated that the planetarium utilized in the District now was not digital, and was, in fact, donated by the South Huntington Educational Foundation with two current trustees—Mr. Ciappetta and Mrs. Brieff—as the original advocates for the planetarium so many years ago. Additionally, as was required by the plan, money was set aside for the private schools within the District, and they will also receive the \$400,000 that we were asking for out of the 2.9 million dollars

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set aside by New York State. Dr. Bloom explained the approval process whereby after tonight's presentation, the submission will be placed on the District's website for a 30-day period, on April 5 there will be a public hearing, and at the Board meeting of April 19, approval will be sought by the Board of Education. Directly after the Board's approval, the submission will be submitted to the State.

With no questions posed, the presentation concluded.

**2017/2018 Budget
Overview:**

Dr. Bennardo stated that tonight was when we start the conversation about the 2017/2018 budget. Dr. Bennardo further stated that he, the Board, and his team wished to be as transparent as possible and have an open dialogue during this and our forthcoming budget work sessions.

Starting the presentation, Dr. Bennardo reported that the district must maintain whatever was in place and avoid a "boom and bust" cycle. He shared that districts have limited ways of raising funds—taxation, state aid and other revenues, such as grants and rents. In 2016/17, our taxation was 70% of the budget, state aid covered 21%, and other revenues covered 9%. Dr. Bennardo added that the greater the economic need in the district, the greater the state aid. For instance, Cold Spring Harbor's state aid was at 10%, whereas our District was at 21% for the current year. Discussion ensued regarding residential vs. commercial taxation, and the abatement provided to the Walt Whitman Shoppes. Dr. Bennardo said that there was a company planning to move into the area that would provide the potential of \$200,000 more in tax revenue.

Dr. Centamore reviewed the District's expenses—salaries, pension costs, healthcare, utilities, insurances, transportation, curriculum needs, technology and supplies. Dr. Bennardo added that education was a business of human beings. The goal was to have the highest quality teacher in front of the classroom. Dr. Centamore spoke of the tax cap impact; districts have experienced deficit situations between available tax and state-aid revenues and roll-forward expenditures. Because of this, a cycle of program and personnel cuts and reserve draining was common across New York State. A review of the 2010 to 2014 budgets was completed that included difficult decisions that led to belt tightening with programs, cooperation with bargaining units, and revenue enhancement through grants, sponsorships and tenant acquisitions. By 2014/2015, the hard choices and shared sacrifices yielded fruit, and the cutting cycle was halted. Through that time and the present, the District was able to build up programs and services, while also prudently preparing for future "rainy days," when tax levy and state-aid revenues were more limited.

Dr. Bloom provided a review of what additions were added in 2014/2015, such as 13.9 full-time equivalency positions, expansion of the school-to-career technology exploration program, technology and video production experiences, the reinstatement of the middle school theater, expansion of the advanced placement college opportunities, and the commitment of funds to our life skills room and academic intervention services. In 2015/2016, the District

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added 20+ new instructional positions, expanded theater opportunities to Grades 3-12, offered full intramural programs for Grades 3-12, joined both the Challenge Basketball and the NYSPHSAA Unified Sports Programs, and hosted, for the first time, the Special Olympics. In 2016/2017, Dr. Bloom shared that we were able to add new Science and Math instructional support positions, enhanced the high school Science Research Program, added a fourth lunch period, as well as Saturday courses to expand course offering opportunities at Walt Whitman High School. Also added were Coding at the primary levels, expanded theater opportunities to a K-12 program (the only K-12 theater program that Dr. Bloom was aware of), a middle school Dance Competition Program, and increased services by the tenants in the “old library” adding a Saturday Creative Arts Therapy Program and an Introduction to Dance. Dr. Bennardo expressed that the Board and Administration have worked hard to add initiatives that were sustainable for our students; it was not without debate and discussion.

A review of the Facilities planning was provided. In 2015/2016, \$1,500,000 was committed for planned building and grounds maintenance. In 2016/2017, the District allocated an additional \$900,000 for the continued maintenance of buildings and grounds, as well as a \$1,000,000 in “Transfer to Capital” for specific, targeted capital projects. These renovations and upgrades have been performed and will continue throughout the District. Several projects were cited, such as the District Office playground, the Stimson Middle School locker room renovation, and new awning and lights at Walt Whitman High School. Dr. Centamore complimented our grounds and custodial staff, adding that they have taken much pride in their work.

Addressing state aid, Dr. Centamore reported that in the state of Massachusetts, state aid was very significant. The robust state aid that Massachusetts provided to public school districts offsets taxation and other revenue streams. Dr. Centamore addressed the comment by New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, published in Newsday on January 19, 2017, in which the Comptroller credited districts to rely on their “rainy day” funds—a vast contrast to what the Comptroller had provided in his audit report just six months ago where the District was criticized for its ability to put funds away specifically for a “rainy day.”

Dr. Bennardo addressed the need for lobbying; he added that districts were lobbying for their individual districts, whereas in the past there was a united front lobbying effort, such as what was provided for Gap Elimination. Dr. Bennardo shared that he had orchestrated a legislative dinner just two weeks ago where he and the Board advocated for additional state aid. Whereas the original Governor’s proposal provided for a state-aid increase of \$1,195,161, that was simply a “launching point” and it was hoped that additional aid will be provided when the Governor’s proposal was released, typically before April 1. Dr. Centamore at this point explained that the 2% tax cap was either 2% or CPI, whichever is lower, and this year will be 1.26%. With allowable exclusions, our 2017/18 tax levy cap was 1.41%.

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A review of the past four years of tax levy cap history was provided, as was tax revenue increases. Dr. Bennardo provided the samples of the tax levy cap formula breakdown, as well as the tax levy cap worksheet for the 2017/2018 budget where the tax levy cap, with allowable exclusions, was 1.41%.

Dr. Bennardo reported that the Governor's initial proposal included a state aid increase of \$1,195,161, but it could be possibly \$500,000 more. He did not believe it would be more than that amount. Expected costs for the 2017/2018 were reviewed; while pension rates were holding steady for the ERS and decreasing slightly by about 2% for the TRS, it will result in some type of savings. However, healthcare costs were increasing by 8.4%, and fuel/energy costs were increasing by 7 to 10%.

Dr. Bennardo communicated that there are a number of expenses that based upon current revenue estimates, may require a one-time use of approximately \$895,000 in additional revenues. This will be applied to one-time, non-reoccurring expenses. Dr. Bennardo concluded the presentation by providing assurance that the District will get through this low tax-aid year.

A resident in the audience questioned the current student enrollment; Dr. Bennardo responded that our enrollment was holding steady. Furthermore, the Huntington School District was steady as well, however, Harborfields, Commack and Elwood's enrollment was down. The enrollment in Wyandanch was increasing. In the Half Hollow Hills School District, the district was closing their gap by closing school buildings.

A second resident asked what the term "other" referred to with respect to revenues; Dr. Bennardo explained that was incoming revenue generated from rents and grants.

With no further questions, the presentation concluded.

**Adoption of
Agenda:**

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

**Motion on Minutes
through Schedule
of Bills (Warrants):**

Motion by Mrs. Carey, seconded by Mr. Nitkewicz, 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 January 25, 2017.

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Schedule of Bills (Warrants):	<u>Schedule of Bills (Warrants)</u>		
	General (A)	Warrant 73	\$1,936,410.67
		74	\$982.52
		V073	(\$983.52)
	School Lunch (C)	Warrant 35	\$23,053.90
	Special Aid (F)	Warrant 30	\$14,788.40

Approved Packet of February 17, 2017

General (A)	Warrant 71	\$110,395.57
	72	\$871,400.07
School Lunch (C)	Warrant 34	\$25,085.97
Special Aid (F)	Warrant 29	\$9,719.54

Approved Packet of February 10, 2017

General (A)	Warrant 69	\$1,914,552.91
	70	\$11,666.67
	V066	(\$554.75)
	V069	(\$535.85)
School Lunch (C)	Warrant 33	\$24,095.94
Special Aid (F)	Warrant 28	\$9,761.90

**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 Joanne Klein, Clerk of the Board of Western Suffolk BOCES, to Mr. Kaden re Budget Vote and Elections on Tuesday, April 25, 2017.

**Approval of Single
Audit Report for
Fiscal Year Ended
June 30, 2016:**

Motion by Mr. Nitkewicz, seconded by Mr. Ciappetta, Be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District hereby accepts, as submitted, the Single Audit Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2016, prepared for the District by R. S. Abrams & Co., L.L.P., a copy made part of these legal minutes, pp. 1255-1266.
Motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of
External Audit
Corrective Action
Plan:**

Motion by Mrs. Brieff, seconded by Mrs. Carey, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District hereby approves, as submitted, the Corrective Action Plan in Response to the Single Audit Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2016, prepared for the District by R. S. Abrams & Co., L.L.P., a copy made part of these legal minutes, p. 1267.
Motion carried unanimously.

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**Approval of the
Tri-Community &
Youth Agency
Lease Renewal:**

Motion by Mrs. Carey, seconded by Mrs. Brieff, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District hereby approves the renewal of the lease at the Teen Center building, a copy made part of these legal minutes, pp. 1268-1270.
Motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Bennardo asked Dr. Centamore to comment; Dr. Centamore shared that the terms continue with this five-year extension at a cost of living increase or 3.5%, whichever is greater, capped at 5%.

**Donation from
American
Wholesale Nursery:**

Motion by Mrs. Carey, seconded by Mrs. Brieff, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District hereby approves the donation of shrubs and plants and labor worth \$1,000 to beautify the area by the Community Walkway at Walt Whitman High School by Mr. Michael Bermudez, district parent and proprietor of American Wholesale Nursery.
Motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Bennardo shared how fortunate the District was to receive such benevolence, and added that a thank you letter will be sent to Mr. Bermudez for his kindness.

**Recommendations
for Placement by
CSE/CPSE:**

Motion by Mr. Nitkewicz, seconded by Mrs. DeGaetano, 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 18, 19, 20, 23, 25, 26, 30, February 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 2017, and the Committee on Preschool Special Education dated February 7, 14, 2017, 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. 1271-1280.
Motion carried unanimously.

Personnel:

Motion by Mrs. Carey, seconded by Mrs. Brieff, 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. 1281-1289, and authorizes implementation thereof:
Schedule 2: Probationary 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 20: Re-Appointments (Non-Instructional)
Schedule 22: Substitute Employee appointments (Inst./Non-Inst.)
Motion carried unanimously.

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Information and Reports:

Information and Reports

1. Memorandum from Ingerman Smith, LLP, re New “Data Collection” Bill Regarding Religious Waiver Immunization Applications
2. Parent Mailing from Principal Smith re HIV/AIDS Education Included in Health Curriculum (for 7th Grade Parents)
3. Parent Mailing from Principal Smith re Sixth-Grade Parent Orientation
4. Personnel Postings
5. The Long-Islander
6. Spotlight, Winter 2017
7. NYSIR News Extra, February 2017

Information Sent to Board Week Ending February 17, 2017

1. Smart Schools Investment Plan
2. Invitation to Board Members from Principal Murphy to First Annual ACT/SAT Scholar Ceremony Breakfast, March 16, 2017, 9 a.m., WWHS
3. Letter to PTA Reflections Program Participants from Dr. Bennardo
4. SHTA Minutes of Executive Board meeting from February 13, 2017
5. The Long-Islander
6. Thank You Letter from Dr. Bennardo to Legislators re Legislative Dinner

Information Sent to Board Week Ending February 10, 2017

1. Enrollment Report for Month of January, 2017
2. Memorandum to Board/Cabinet from Principal Smith re Upcoming Events
3. Personnel Postings
4. Letter to Mr. Lee Nober from Dr. Bennardo re National Dance Alliance Journal
5. Letter to Participants from Dr. Bennardo re Magic Masters Basketball Game
6. Letter to Stimson Dance Team Members from Dr. Bennardo re Success of Program/Season
7. Letter to Brookhaven Science Bowl Participants from Dr. Bennardo
8. Letter to Student Shelbi Wuss from Dr. Bennardo re News 12 Scholar Athlete Designation
9. Letter to Students from Dr. Bennardo re Emerging Business Leaders Competition
10. Letter to Teacher Brian Thomas from Dr. Bennardo re Bright Light Award
11. Letter to Varsity Dance Team from Dr. Bennardo re Regional Competition
12. Letter to Walt Whitman High School Varsity Cheerleaders re Outstanding Season
13. Board & Administrator, February 2017

Committee Updates:

Mr. Nitkewicz communicated that he had attended the Audit Committee meeting on February 13, 2017, where he and other members of the Committee, including Mr. Ernest Smith and Mr. Dimitris Bantileskas of Nawrocki Smith, L.L.P., reviewed the audit and claims reports. Mr. Nitkewicz indicated that the function of the Audit Committee was basically to look for holes in the system. Other members of the Committee included Mr. Kaden, and residents Mr. Andrew Bronson, Mrs. Pat Dillon, Ms. Gayle Brady. Responsibilities also include plans for the next audit, what areas will be addressed. Mr. Nitkewicz

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shared that the Audit Committee came about after the Roslyn School District scandal many years ago.

Mr. Ciappetta reported on the recent Facilities Committee meeting held on February 6, 2017. The WWHS Main Office and Student Services renovations received SED approval. The bidding process will commence with the bid opening in mid-March. Mr. Ciappetta also shared that the Stimson main lobby work was ongoing. Additionally, outside lighting at Countrywood and Silas Wood needs to be addressed. At Walt Whitman, the bleachers need a coat of paint. Attention is being paid to boilers and water heaters in the district, the “nuts and bolts” of a building.

Comments from Board Members and Staff:

Mr. Ciappetta mentioned that the South Huntington Educational Foundation’s fundraiser, “Motown, Shadows of the 60s” was scheduled for Saturday night, March 4th, at 7:30 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center at Walt Whitman High School; tickets were \$39.50 each, and tickets were still available for purchase.

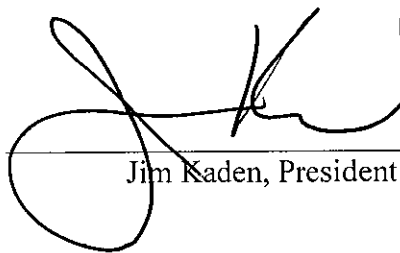
Voice of the Residents:

Visitors were invited to participate.

Adjournment:

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

The meeting was declared adjourned at 8:35 p.m.
Motion carried unanimously.



Jim Kaden, President



Laura McLean, District Clerk

Attachments made part of these legal minutes, pages 1255 through 1289.