

**New Milford Board of Education
Operations Sub-Committee Special Meeting Minutes
February 7, 2017
Sarah Noble Intermediate School – Library Media Center**

Present: Mrs. Wendy Faulenbach, Chairperson
Mrs. Angela C. Chastain
Mr. Robert Coppola
Mr. Brian McCauley

Also Present: Mr. Joshua Smith, Superintendent
Ms. Alisha DiCorpo, Assistant Superintendent
Ms. Ellamae Baldelli, Director of Human Resources
Mr. Anthony Giovannone, Director of Fiscal Services and Operations
Mrs. Laura Olson, Director of Pupil Personnel and Special Services
Mr. Kevin Munrett, Facilities Manager
Mr. Nestor Aparicio, Assistant Facilities Manager

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NEW MILFORD, CT

1.	Call to Order The special meeting of the New Milford Board of Education Operations Sub-Committee was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Mrs. Faulenbach.	Call to Order
2.	Public Comment • Mrs. Faulenbach said she wanted to review a few procedural rules. She said the goal was to keep speakers in public comment to three minutes so that all who wished to would have a chance to speak. The procedure is that the Board listens to public comment without responding. She said there would be an opportunity for public comment at the end of the meeting as well. • Peter Mullen said he would like to speak to item 3F. He said the only building in Town not ADA compliant is East Street. An evaluation was done years ago regarding making it accessible and the cost was very high. He said it is past time for the Board to move out and meet federal regulations in this area. He encouraged them to do so with expediency. • Greg Mullen said he has been to several past meetings, has read minutes and watched video and he said the common thread he has seen from the Board is that they like the idea of the	Public Comment

	community center but are concerned with the cost to the taxpayer and focusing on their primary responsibility to students. He said the Mayor said more than once that he would not ask the Board to spend Board funds to move and that the Town side would pay. Mr. Mullen said he has concerns with costs and lack of input and asked for cost comparisons to establish the proper cost of both buildings. • Frank Short said there is an old saying “fool me once” and that is what the Mayor is doing to taxpayers and the BOE by constantly changing cost figures, asking the BOE to pay for their move and providing everchanging information. He asked that a hold be put on the process until an independent architect can do a full cost analysis. • Michael Barnes questioned the hidden costs and said previous studies have shown a high cost for renovation. He said the BOE has shown careful consideration with any use of capital reserve over the last 20 years through studies and cost analysis of any project. He is concerned with possible state budget cuts. He said this project needs so many things to fall in place for it to go forward that he sees enormous risk with little reward. He quoted the mission of the New Milford Public Schools and asked how spending capital reserve to move administrative offices supports it. • Joseph DiGregorio said he was concerned with the proposed funding of the project as referenced by the MOU. He said the sale of East Street must be approved by Town vote. If the sale is approved any funds to be used must be budgeted or approved as a supplemental appropriation. He doesn’t understand the plan to use funds in light of these facts.	
3.	Discussion and Possible Action	Discussion and Possible Action
A.	Exhibit A: Personnel — Certified, Non-Certified Appointments, Resignations and Leaves of Absence	A. Exhibit A: Personnel — Certified, Non-Certified Appointments, Resignations and

	• Mr. Coppola said he was sad to see the retirement of two long time staff members on the Exhibit, Mrs. Guertin at the elementary level and Mr. Keck at the high school. He said they were valued educators and wished them well. He encouraged everyone to go see the all school musical this year that will be Mr. Keck's last one. • Ms. Baldelli said she would have a revised Exhibit A for Friday. Mr. Coppola moved to bring Exhibit A: Personnel - Certified, Non-Certified Appointments, Resignations and Leaves of Absence to the full Board for approval. Motion seconded by Mr. McCauley. Motion passed unanimously. B. Monthly Reports 1. Budget Position dated 1/31/17 2. Purchase Resolution D-695 3. Request for Budget Transfers • Mr. Giovannone said the electricity line 56220 available balance reflected a rebate check added for energy efficiency of the high school chiller. • Mrs. Faulenbach asked about revenue and Mr. Giovannone said excess cost was late this year and is expected at the end of the month. Gate revenue and parking fees had been added. • Mr. Coppola asked why line 56460 workbooks still had a balance as the year was more than half way done and Ms. DiCorpo said there was some savings in the Math program so that line might not be fully expended. • Mr. McCauley asked about the charge for Wellspring on the purchase resolution. Mrs. Olson said that was for an out of district placement. • Mr. McCauley asked if IEP Direct costs had increased since Frontline took over and Mrs.	Leaves of Absence Motion made and passed unanimously to bring Exhibit A: Personnel - Certified, Non-Certified Appointments, Resignations and Leaves of Absence to the full Board for approval. B. Monthly Reports 1. Budget Position dated 1/31/17 2. Purchase Resolution D-695 3. Request for Budget Transfers
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	Olson said no, it was budgeted based on the contract. • Mr. Coppola asked if the University of Bridgeport was for an intern used as a permanent substitute and Mr. Smith said yes at SNIS. Mr. Coppola said this year's New Milford Teacher of the Year started in this program. • Mr. Coppola said he was pleased to see that the budget transfers were within department lines. Mr. McCauley moved to bring the monthly reports: Budget Position dated 1/31/17, Purchase Resolution D-695 and Request for Budget Transfers to the full Board for approval. Motion seconded by Mr. Coppola. Motion passed unanimously. C. Gifts & Donations 1. PTO — Exhibit B • Mr. Coppola thanked the PTO on behalf of the Board for their support of special programs, field trips etc. that totals almost \$18,000 this month alone. • Mrs. Faulenbach said it was astounding community support. • Mr. Smith said there would be a revision to this Exhibit on Friday. The Bronx Zoo trip will be subsidized with district funds. Mrs. Chastain moved to bring Gifts & Donations: PTO – Exhibit B to the full Board for approval. Motion seconded by Mr. Coppola. Motion passed unanimously. D. Paraeducator Substitute Rate • Mr. Smith said this had been discussed at the December Operations meeting where it was	Motion made and passed unanimously to bring the monthly reports: Budget Position dated 1/31/17, Purchase Resolution D-695, and Request for Budget Transfers to the full Board for approval. C. Gifts & Donations 1. PTO — Exhibit B Motion made and passed unanimously to bring Gifts & Donations: PTO – Exhibit B to the full Board for approval. D. Paraeducator Substitute Rate
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	agreed to revisit the topic in February. In December the rate was changed to \$10.10 to reflect new minimum wage. They discussed ramifications to increasing that amount to \$11.00 or \$12.00. These increases were not included in next year's budget. The Board is also considering outsourcing para and teacher substitutes. It is his recommendation to hold steady at the \$10.10 for now until a decision is made on outsourcing to see what impact that might have on fill rates. • Mr. McCauley said he thought that the Board should consider raising this rate beyond minimum wage, as it is a thankless job and deserves more. • Mrs. Chastain agreed but is comfortable with waiting for more information.	
E.	Certified Substitute Coverage • Mr. Smith said they have provided updated fill rates here. Regarding possible services, they have reviewed proposals and checked references and plan to make a recommendation next month on a specific vendor for service.	E. Certified Substitute Coverage
F.	Mayor's Request: JPS and East Street • Mrs. Faulenbach invited Mayor Gronbach, as an ex officio member, to join the sub-committee at the table for discussion. • Mayor Gronbach referenced his request and said he was here to answer questions. • Mr. Coppola said he thought the Mayor's request came late in the game for discussion as the budget process was already completed by the Board to comply with the charter request to have the budget to the Town by February. • Mayor Gronbach said the \$250,000 he is talking about is outside of budget, in capital reserve. • Mr. Coppola said when the Mayor and Board started discussion back in September about	F. Mayor's Request: JPS and East Street

	moving offices to JPS the Mayor was very clear that funding was not the Board's responsibility and they continued to believe that based on conversations in the months going forward. The proposed MOU that they came up with together stated no funding from BOE accounts. Then the Mayor came to the last night of budget hearings before adoption to request funds. Mr. Coppola said he is not comfortable with the change. • Mayor Gronbach said it was Mr. Coppola's idea to move Board offices to JPS, not his. He said the window of opportunity for funding had closed while he waited for the Board to agree to the sale of East Street. He said capital reserve is not an education fund but for capital projects of which JPS is one. It is an appropriate use and would allow the BOE to vacate East Street so it can be sold. Funds would be replenished from the sale and all proceeds put in BOE accounts for future use to avoid burden to the taxpayer. The Mayor said the money has to come from somewhere. He said he initially looked at the Waste Management fund as a fall back when other accounts are not available but now there is a source: capital reserve. • Mrs. Faulenbach said she appreciated the Mayor's presence as this is the first opportunity for a sit down. She said she had to be honest and say she was not a fan of the process so far. She has several questions and wanted to start with the financial component. The Board authorized the Chair to sign a MOU with the Town on December 13, 2016. Mrs. Faulenbach asked what the status of that agreement was. • Mayor Gronbach said he has a revision to set forth a new proposal that he will share tonight. It clarifies that initial funding will come for BOE accounts. • Mrs. Faulenbach said any revision will require a formal motion from the Board as the previous one did. • Mrs. Faulenbach said the Mayor has stated that	
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	the East Street sale proceeds will replenish the capital reserve for years to come. She said the sale price has been estimated at \$1.4 million and asked if there had been any offers. • Mayor Gronbach said there was interest from assisted living developers but they can't commit until the building is empty. • Mrs. Faulenbach said between the funds requested and an allusion the Mayor made to settling a grievance the proceeds are pretty much allocated so she doesn't understand how the replenishment will work for years to come as the Mayor says. • The Mayor said this will be a credit towards the annual surplus which gets added in each year. • Mrs. Faulenbach asked respectfully by what authority the Mayor can ensure that the money will go to capital reserve. • The Mayor said he would get a resolution through Town Council. • Mrs. Faulenbach asked if he meant Town Council and Board of Finance. • The Mayor said he will if he needs to. • Mrs. Faulenbach said she likes to follow the money trail and there appears to be lots of what ifs here. She said it is her understanding that drawing on capital reserve requires Board of Finance to approve as they have in the past. • The Mayor said he has an opinion that states he does not have to follow past practice. He has a new way of doing things and only needs Town Council approval. • Mrs. Faulenbach said the Board of Finance has participated in the process for 15 years. In 1995 the capital reserve resolution attached both the Town Council and Board of Finance in drawing from the fund. As recently as June 2016 the Board requested Board of Finance approval for additions and withdrawals from capital reserve. Mrs. Faulenbach said in her opinion there was a risk in using capital reserve here as it is not designed for this type of project and she is concerned other boards will not	
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	agree with the process. It is a risk she is not prepared to take. • Mayor Gronbach said this year's capital reserve request did not go through Town Council and Board of Finance. • Mr. Smith said the request was baked into the budget that goes before all those agencies for review and is voted on by the Town for approval through the budget referendum. • Mrs. Faulenbach agreed that had occurred this year regarding capital in the budget, saying an October 2016 memo clarified this process. The process was capital reserve in the BOE budget offset by revenue went before Town Council, Board of Finance, and the Town voters. • Mayor Gronbach said we should attempt to do what needs to be done to get the funds to move the project. There are OSHA and ADA risks at East Street. Risks in moving forward are warranted. If it fails, the BOE is off the hook. • Mrs. Chastain said accommodations can be made for ADA by moving meetings to other buildings when necessary. • The Mayor said offering accommodations when you have an alternative is not ideal. • Mrs. Chastain asked what Plan B is if the Board gives the Mayor East Street and it doesn't sell. • The Mayor said they will adjust. He said it is a chicken and egg argument and wants to know if the BOE is willing to move or not. He said in the end we are all the same group, the Town, and if the BOE budget goes up it is all the same pot. • Mr. Coppola said if the Mayor is presenting a new MOU the Board will need to vote to make the old one, which they worked on together with the Mayor and which the BOE approved, null and void. He said there had been no dialogue about any changes so the process would have to start all over again. • Mayor Gronbach said they had agreed to broad strokes only and the nitty gritty was not	
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	acceptable. The new MOU clarifies the mechanism for the money piece. • Mrs. Faulenbach agreed that the original MOU was null and void because it remains unsigned. With a new one presented tonight, the original is no longer a living, breathing document. She was surprised to see the revision tonight without prior notice especially after the Board spent money to have legal counsel review the original. • Mayor Gronbach said there was no sense in him signing the original without clarification of funding. • Mrs. Faulenbach said this is a large project which warranted much more input and there are still lots of missing pieces. She is troubled by the assumption that the Board now has a financial component when in September 2016 the Mayor said they would not. • The Mayor said he could have done the project for \$75,000 back then but that ship sailed when the Board put in a request for \$250,000 for their space. • Mr. Coppola said he wanted to make a motion to recommend that the original MOU be stricken as a valid document in light of the new proposal by the Mayor and that the BOE pursue a new MOU. • Mrs. Faulenbach said she was not sure a motion was needed since the original agreement was never signed or acted upon and is therefore non-binding. • Mr. Coppola said he wanted the motion for clarity. Mr. Coppola moved to send a request to the full Board to formally null and void the MOU approved at the December 13, 2016 meeting due to lack of signature and action. Motion seconded by Mr. McCauley. • Mr. Coppola said the Board negotiated the	Motion made and failed to send a request to the full Board to formally null and void the MOU approved at the December 13, 2016 meeting due to lack of signature and action.
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	original MOU in good faith and he was totally surprised to see a new version. • Mrs. Chastain said she would not support the motion because she feels it is not needed. • Mrs. Faulenbach agreed that it was redundant as the intent will be captured in the minutes. She said if this was brought to the full Board it would open up the conversation to the funding as part of the discussion and she was not in favor of moving that conversation forward at this point along with the new MOU. She said she was not in favor of the first one. The motion failed 2-2. Aye: Mr. Coppola, Mr. McCauley No: Mrs. Faulenbach, Mrs. Chastain • Mayor Gronbach requested, as an ex officio member, that the Chair put the topic on the next BOE agenda. He feels the changes to the MOU make funding and future use clear. • Mr. McCauley said he was in favor of future discussion. He has said from the beginning that the Board should not be in a non-ADA compliant building. • Mr. Coppola said by charter the ex officio member does not have a vote but the Chair is free to add the item if he so wishes. • Mrs. Faulenbach said this is an important issue and she appreciates the Mayor's discussion with the committee. She said she would have liked to see a different process but appreciates the willingness to dialogue. • Mr. Coppola said this dialogue was going on as far back as 2001 when he was in favor of moving out of East Street then.	
4.	Items of Information	Items of Information
A.	Substitute Listing	A. Substitute Listing
	• Mr. Coppola asked when updates are given and	

	Ms. Baldelli said in October and February. She said she could give one in June if the Board wished but Mr. Coppola said it was not necessary then. • Mr. Coppola asked if there was much change from October and Ms. Baldelli said there was not. B. Important Dates New Milford Public Schools 2017-2018 • Mr. Smith said this draft is provided for planning purposes and that the full calendar would be out closer to April. • Mr. Coppola said this was an item of information because the Board does not vote on the calendar. C. Town of New Milford Audit Report dated June 30, 2016 • Mr. Smith said the Town had asked for an extension of 30 days and it was granted by the auditors so the audit would not be out until the end of February.	B. Important Dates New Milford Public Schools 2017-2018 C. Town of New Milford Audit Report dated June 30, 2016
5.	Public Comment • Greg Mullen said he would like to see the document where the BOE asked for \$250,000. He said he didn't understand why the Board did not take a vote on the request to use the capital reserve account just to make it clear. He thanked the Board members for their service. • Steve Looney said he had attended many BOE meetings and applauded the way the meetings are held. He appreciates the BOE sticking to its responsibilities. He expressed sympathy for Mr. Coppola and said he thought there was a lot of misinformation out there about past actions. He said at the Facilities meeting the committee spent 20 minutes talking about funding football field replacement ten years in the future and here there is an ever-changing	Public Comment

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	goal post. He said the BOE should spend BOE money on its responsibilities and let the Town spend on its responsibilities. He thanked the Board for their efforts. • Mary Jane Lundgren spoke about ADA non-compliance and referenced a New Haven lawsuit on the issue. She said the BOE is a lawsuit away from shutting East Street's doors and asked where they would go then if JPS fills up. • Joseph DiGregorio said the Mayor was clear in his statements that he is looking for off budget expenditures to pay for JPS renovations. He said any Town asset sold should go to taxpayer relief. He said the Mayor's statement about using Waste Management funds when others are not available is an incorrect use of the fund. • Doug Skelly said he is not against the sale of East Street or the move to JPS but as a businessman he is very concerned with the Mayor's statement about taking a chance with \$250,000. He feels it is a last gasp straw to go around the process of checks and balances to get what he wants. He said the town councils and boards should be given a chance to do their jobs.	
6.	Adjourn Mrs. Chastain moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m. seconded by Mr. Coppola and passed unanimously.	Adjourn Motion made and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Wendy Faulenbach

Wendy Faulenbach, Chairperson
Operations Sub-Committee