

BOARD of Education
APPROVED

JUN 20 2018

BOARD Office

BOARD MINUTES

April 25, 2018

The special meeting of the Board of Education held on April 25, 2018, in 801 City Hall commenced at 5:12 p.m. with the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

All Board Members were present except Dr. Flanagan-Priore.

The Superintendent was present.

President Nevergold presided and stated that the purpose for the meeting was to consider the District's proposed 4-Year Financial Plan, to review and consider an agreement for the lease of real property located at 75 West Huron and to review and consider the selection of the vendage to oversee the District's plans for the build of the new school.

* * * *

The 4-Year Plan was moved up to the beginning of the agenda.

Some discussion followed.

APPROVED, a motion made by Ms. Pierce, seconded by Ms. Jay, to approve the 4-Year Plan. The vote was unanimous.

* * * *

APPROVED, a motion made by Mrs. Belton-Cottman, seconded by Dr. Harris-Tigg to excuse Dr. Flanagan-Priore from tonight's meeting. The vote was unanimous.

* * * *

Mr. Darren Brown, Chief of Staff, presented on Item IV - Independent Monitor BUILD Community School.

The following discussion took place for the record.

MRS. BELTON-COTTMAN: I guess my question is do we have a choice? We don't have a choice because if we don't approve who the Commissioner recommends...

SUPERINTENDENT CASH: No, we recommended it. I asked for names.

April 25, 2018

MR. QUINN: I always have a problem with consultants because they are not there every day and this is a school that needs a major turnaround. It is a school that needs daily work. Is she committed to being in school every day?

MR. BROWN: If you look at her scope of work, her scope of work is not consultant in the general sense. It is consultant as an overseer in implementing the plan that we are doing. It doesn't require that she be there every day.

MR. QUINN: Looking at things that you are asking her to do scope, you want her to do team building and leadership. I don't know how she will do it without being there.

MR. BROWN: She will be in the school sometimes, just not an everyday thing.

MS. PIERCE: I kind of have a problem that Commissioner Elia is slamming this down our throats. Why? I think we are capable of handling this in the District ourselves. Why are we paying \$90,000?

MR. BROWN: To Commissioner Elia's credit, when we were given a Distinguished Educator we had no choice – that person was appointed we had to take them period. With the Independent Monitor we were able to select individuals that we supplied to the Commissioner. The Independent Monitor piece is in the regulation to do their closure and reopening of the school.

DR. NEVERGOLD: The Commissioner is requiring us to pay this money which you did with the Distinguished Educator. The Distinguished Educator, however, had a responsibility to the Board. The relationship really did not get defined enough. I don't see anything in this resolution that requires that this monitor have any communication or have any responsibility to the Board. I want to raise that as part of our discussion.

DR. HARRIS-TIGG: I concur with that. I spoke with Darren Brown this afternoon about the same thing. The only communication the Distinguished Educator had is we sort of pushed in the EPO and the EPO liaison and sort of forced her to come in and give us something sometime and that we would get to see it – that it wouldn't just go to just the Superintendent and just the State as if we just here playing. I suggested to Darren Brown just today that I think we need that same structure, the EPO liaison or what have you - that we can monitor as well the monitor – what is going out, how we are doing some work and I am willing to do that. I am still the EPO with School #80 which they are in their last year of that. We did it at School 6 but that is me this structure would ensure that the Board gets information, understands what is going on as part of the conversation, and that we are not just an afterthought. I would recommended adding that.

MRS. BELTON-COTTMAN: After looking at this – I really am looking for the word. I have been looking at words all afternoon because I wanted to say basically that it doesn't matter as a board member in this situation – it's a catch 22. If I don't vote her in, the Commissioner can do what she wants to do and if we vote her in it's not a reflection on the person, it's a reflection on the process. We are elected to represent people, okay and we are systematically seeing our abilities being taken away from us under the new request from the Governor in regards to the individual budgets for each school we are seeing that. In this particular case, my concern is after we saw the

April 25, 2018

fiasco that the Distinguished Educator did in this District, the sabotage that happen under her was unconscionable and we paid her more than the Superintendent during that period of time and to be looking at this from the perspective the Board has no say, no input at all – to totally disenfranchising a governing body. Why? This is total disenfranchisement under this receivership guideline. I don't understand how the legislators put this together and did not put in an additional piece that when step 1 doesn't work, we go on to step 2 and step 2 should at least include the Board again.

DR. HARRIS-TIGG: Step 1 should include the Board.

MRS. BELTON-COTTMAN: I agree with you. So when you sit here and we have to vote it's almost like my arm is being tied behind my back because I don't want Build to close so I have to do what the Commissioner wants but at the end of the day this isn't a reflection on the person, it's a reflection on the process and this needs to be changed. We should be able to know what is going on, and the decision being made at that school building. I can remember a number of times Dr. Harris-Tigg had concerns but because the report did not have to come back to the Board, it wasn't addressed in the way I felt it should have been addressed because there was no accountability to the Board – per say – but yet in order for her to get paid, we'd have to vote on it – that is catch 22 – my arms are tied behind my back.

MR. BROWN: I would just say this, I don't know that we have ever not been transparent with the Board about any of the schools in receivership or not. The beauty of having the independent monitor is that the school is still under the regulation and the control of the District as opposed to not being an independent receiver.

MRS. BELTON-COTTMAN: We appreciate that but we still have a right as elected officials to having opinions about it.

SUPERINTENDENT CASH: Let me say this, I don't see this person as being as influential as we are going to be. We are the ones that are still in charge of this process – I will be informing the Board Members every step of the way from the hiring of the principal, the rehiring of staff, and curricular decisions that will be made. Any Board Members that want to be involved, can be involved.

MRS. BELTON-COTTMAN: What is her purpose then? If all the work is being done by the staff, why are we spending another \$90,000? We have to cut staff and students are not getting the resources they need. I don't understand this mentality.

DR. CASH: That is the question and we are not getting the resources to pay for it. A don't think it's a warranted expenditure.

MS. JAY: So we don't have a choice? We have been ordered by the Commissioner to do this. We are just making our objections.

DR. CASH: The point is we have to make a major change at the schools. We are fully engaged in the work. We are following the process that has been laid out by the State in this process.

April 25, 2018

DR. NEVERGOLD: The concerns is that the Board wants to see itself reflected in this resolution.

DR. HARRIS-TIGG: We have to think about how then do we hold Commissioner Elia responsible for this suggestion? That it is something that is going to work because are funding it which hurts us – we have a deficit. How do we have the connection or conversation with her that this is a strategy that is effective or not because we I think we need to be part of that conversation.

MRS. BELTON-COTTMAN: We want her to report to us too. Commissioner Elia is sitting in Albany – she has certainly enough School Districts to worry about. I feel that at this point and this juncture that we need to know what is going on at Build and that this Board has a responsibility to those students to monitor every step of the way. To sit here and just oversee something is not getting it from me at up to \$90,000 a year. I am sorry, I don't care what anyone's resume has to say at this point per say. If you are not in that building for \$90,000 a year – everyday. I don't want to see you coming and that's how I feel.

DR. HARRIS-TIGG: I think the liaison at some point should have a conversation with Dr. Elia as well.

MRS. BELTON-COTTMAN: I think the entire Board should have a conversation with Dr. Elia.

MR. QUINN: I want to set the record straight. Mary Ellen Elia isn't doing something to us, she is actually accepting our recommendation. I think within the law she needs this to happen.

APPROVED, a motion made Ms. Woods, seconded by Ms. Mecozzi, to amend the resolution to include that the East District Board Member be the Independent Monitor Liaison. The vote was unanimous.

APPROVED, a motion made by Dr. Harris-Tigg, seconded by Ms. Woods, to approve the Independent Monitor for New BUILD Community School. The vote resulted as follows: 8 – Ayes (Harris-Tigg, Jay, Mecozzi, Pierce, Quinn, Woods and Nevergold), 1 – No (Belton-Cottman – stated for the record – it is based on principle). Motion carried.

* * * *

Mr. Quinn and Ms. Woods left the meeting at 6:16 p.m.

* * * *

Superintendent Cash had Mr. Nate Kuzma, General Counsel, give a presentation on Item V. Resolution for Lease of Real Property Located at 75 West Huron Street. Mr. Robert Knoer, who was part of the negotiating team, was at the meeting for any questions Board Members had.

Mrs. Belton-Cottman stated: I want to go on record in regards to my concern about spending \$46 million and not advance this school district. I feel that we missed the mark in not only pursuing the opportunity to build or to purchase our own building and hire people to do the work or

April 25, 2018

whatever. It appears that in this district we only own one building. We are one of the poorest cities in American, we have a \$1 billion budget and somehow or another, we are not able to figure out how to make that money work for us over a long-time period. I am disappointed in that. I have high expectations for things and for that not to be an option, not to have even been a discussion, is a major concern with me – for the foresight for this community and for this district. If we have \$46 million to give someone, we certainly need to be thinking about using it for ourselves and moving forward in this District. I am just disappointed – its short-sightedness that that was not an option. The other part that I was really upset about was that when the original plan was put together, we did not include the lower level, the basement level in the plans so for me this is bittersweet that we are not moving forward in this district to stop being renters and start being landlords. These are my concerns in regards to this.

Some discussion ensued.

APPROVED, a motion made by Ms. Pierce, second by Ms. Jay, to approve Item V. – Resolution for Lease of Real Property Located at 75 West Huron Street. The vote as follows: 6 – Ayes (Belton-Cottman – with the exception that Mr. Croche consider our parking concerns at evening events, Harris-Tigg – with the exception that Mr. Croche considers our parking concerns at evening events, Jay, Mecozzi, Pierce and Nevergold). Motion carried.

APPROVED, a motion made by Mrs. Belton-Cottman, seconded by Dr. Harris-Tigg, to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa M. Keane
Administrative Secretary



**Wednesday, April 25, 2018
SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETING**

**Room 801 City Hall
5:00 P.M.**

1. OPENING OF MEETING

A. Pledge of Allegiance

2. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

3. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Accept Consent Agenda

4. Personnel Affairs - Personnel Changes

A. Independent Monitor for BUILD Community School

5. BUSINESS AFFAIRS - LEASE AGREEMENT

A. Resolution for Lease of Real Property Located at 75 West Huron Street

6. FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

A. Four Year Financial Plan Update

7. APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approve Consent Agenda Items

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

9. ADJOURNMENT

A. Meeting Adjourned