

IT IS THE MISSION OF THE SCHODACK CENTRAL SCHOOLS  
to develop our students to become "...active, reflective, creative learners. In our schools, they will engage in rewarding work and practice behaviors that are intelligent in both an academic and a practical sense. Students will develop the attitudes, skills and understandings that will allow them to fulfill their potential and to function successfully in their individual and social roles."

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SCHODACK CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
1216 Maple Hill Road, Castleton, New York 12033-1699

**March 17, 2011**

**Maple Hill High School Library**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES – REGULAR**

Present: Andrew Fleck, President; Kenneth Flood, Susan Megna, Vice President; Paul Puccio, Michael Hiser, Christine DiGuilio, Lisa Lafferty, George Warner, Bruce Romanchak.

Also Present: Jason Chevrier, CES; Michael Bennett, MHMS; Ron Agostinoni, MHHS; Donna Watson, Director of Curriculum, Staff Development and Pupil Personnel Services; Sherri Fisher, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Robert Horan, Superintendent; Liz Chipman, District Clerk.

1. Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. Proposed Executive Session 6:05 p.m. (High School Conference Room). 7:10 pm President Fleck called meeting to order.
3. Approval of present agenda. Michael Hiser moved to approve present agenda. Lisa Lafferty seconded. All present in favor.
4. Approval of minutes of regular meeting February 17, 2011 and March 2, 2011 Workshop. Susa Megna moved to approve minutes., Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
5. Meeting open for public discussion. Matt LaClair: thanked custodial staff for all the work they did this year over the winter. Thanks to Sherri, Bob and Board to take unpaid leave to walk the Appalachian Trail. Have been meeting with students to talk about it. CES will be recognized as Energy Star School, and the Middle School is right behind that. High school will be next. Aubrey Racz: read letter to board regarding senior level classes that are in jeopardy of being cut. Impact on graduating students applying to college without these classes. Heather Carrington: parent of CES child. Read statement regarding cutting of budget for art and music programs. Sixth grade student read letter about looking forward to being in art class. Lisa Samarija: parent of two students with different interests. Difficult decisions that have to be made. Why are we toying with 2% tax increase? Why has board decided on 2% tax increase? No decisions have been made in terms of tax increase or reductions to budgets. Teacher contract negotiations: would hope that teacher contributions to health insurance and benefits or wage freeze would be on the table during negotiations. Schodack has the schools, not a lot of other services or benefits from the school, if we as a community don't support the schools, our property values will plummet. There is no other value in the town. Attendance will go down and crime will go up if sports are eliminated. The board is looking to see what the community will support. We either have to pay more as a community, or we have to cut program. There is no other way to do it. Michelle Champoni: What are the options for generating funds? Camps over break or in the summer? Sherri

Fisher explained that the camps over the summer aren't real revenue generators. Board is looking at other ways to generate revenue: leasing empty wing of middle school. If art and music are eliminated, please consider offering it in a way that parents can pay for it for their children. Tom Clinton: has worked at bus garage for many years. Mechanic hours to be cut at bus garage. Suggested different staffing at bus garage, rather than eliminating full mechanic position. Are there other options for modified sports program rather than eliminating it? We could accept donations in support of the program. Mrs. Bonin: is it possible to get a more detailed budget so that people who might want to make donations so that certain items can be reinstated. Grants from philanthropic groups are another possibility for funding opportunities. Are buses a requirement?

6. Consent Agenda:

- a. Bruce Romanchak moved acceptance of Treasurer's Reports for the month of January 2011. Lisa Lafferty seconded. All present in favor.
- b. Bruce Romanchak moved acceptance of Revenue and Budget Status Reports for the month of January 2011. Lisa Lafferty seconded. All present in favor.
- c. Bruce Romanchak moved acceptance of Extra-Classroom Activity Report for the month of January 2011. Lisa Lafferty seconded. All present in favor.
- d. Bruce Romanchak moved acceptance of Claims Auditor Report for the month of January 2011. Lisa Lafferty seconded. All present in favor.
- e. Bruce Romanchak moved approval of recommendations of the district Committee on Preschool Special Education regarding 2010-2011 special education services for students: #000113825, #000113829 and #000113830. Lisa Lafferty seconded. All present in favor.
- f. Bruce Romanchak moved approval of recommendations of the district Committee on Special Education regarding 2010-2011 students: #000113357. Lisa Lafferty seconded. All present in favor.
- g. Bruce Romanchak moved approval of recommendations of the district Committee on Special Education regarding 2011-2012 students: #000113696, #000113697. Lisa Lafferty seconded. All present in favor.
- h. Bruce Romanchak moved approval of agreement for special education services under IDEA with Wildwood School for the 2010-11 school year, as required to sub-allocate 2010-11 IDEA grant funds. Lisa Lafferty seconded. All present in favor.
- i. Bruce Romanchak moved approval of agreement for special education services under IDEA with Early Childhood Education Center for the 2010-11 school year, as required to sub-allocate 2010-11 IDEA grant funds. Lisa Lafferty seconded. All present in favor.
- j. Bruce Romanchak moved acceptance of a donation from Kurt and Regina Maier of 11 books: The Dreamer, in support of Castleton Elementary School, reading class, book club and/or library. Lisa Lafferty seconded. All present in favor.

- k. George moved to remove from agenda. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor. Approval of a Memorandum of Agreement with the Schodack Central School Faculty Association relative to a 2010-11 Retirement Incentive, **effective March 22, 2011** through April 15, 2011, and subject to ratification by SCSFA.
- l. Bruce Romanchak moved authorization of the Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds as LEA (Local Educational Agency) Asbestos Designee – interim designation is Mark Meehan, Needham Risk Management Resource Group, effective March 28, 2011 through September 27, 2011. Lisa Lafferty seconded. All present in favor.**
- m. Bruce Romanchak moved authorization of Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds as Toxic Substance Coordinator, interim designation is Edward J. Costigan, effective March 28, 2011 through September 27, 2011. Lisa Lafferty seconded. All present in favor.**
- n. Bruce Romanchak moved authorization of Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Coordinator – interim designation is Edward J. Costigan, effective March 28, 2011 through September 27, 2011. Lisa Lafferty seconded. All present in favor.**

7. Appointments / Resignations:

- a. Kenneth Flood moved acceptance of the resignation with regret and thanks for many years of service, of Gertrude M. Valli for the purpose of retirement into the NYS Teachers' Retirement System, effective June 30, 2011. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
- b. Kenneth Flood moved acceptance of the resignation of Christine M. Sussman, 7-12 Science Teacher, effective June 30, 2011. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
- c. Kenneth Flood moved acceptance of the resignation of Meghan Hitlin, K-12 Reading Teacher, effective June 30, 2011. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
- d. Kenneth Flood moved appointment of Sandra Hall, Claims Auditor, Pro-tem, effective March 10, 2011. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
- e. Kenneth Flood moved approval of tenure appointment of Jacqueline Hill (certification: Childhood Education [Grades 1-6], Students with Disabilities [Grades 1-6], Students with Disabilities [Grades 5-9], Generalist in Middle Childhood Education [Grades 5-9] & Literacy [Birth-6]), as Special Education Teacher, effective September 1, 2011. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
- f. Kenneth Flood moved approval of tenure appointment of Lisa Kelly (certification: Childhood Education [Grades 1-6], Students with Disabilities [Grades 1-6], Students with Disabilities [Grades 5-9], Generalist in Middle Childhood Education [Grades 5-9] & Literacy [Birth-6]), as Special Education Teacher, effective September 1, 2011. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
- g. Kenneth Flood moved approval of tenure appointment of Jillian Post (certification: Health Education and Physical Education) as Health and Physical Education Teacher, effective September 1, 2011. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.

- h. Kenneth Flood moved approval of Extracurricular Coach(s) / Advisor(s):
  - i. Doug Van Alstyne – 7<sup>th</sup> / 8<sup>th</sup> grade Track and Field. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
- i. Kenneth Flood moved approval of Volunteer Assistant Coach(s):
  - i. Ruth Van Alstyne- Girls Track & Field
  - ii. Jacqueline Hill – Softball. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
- j. Kenneth Flood moved approval of substitute Teacher(s): Sherri F. Kramerson, Karen M. Maher. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
- k. Kenneth Flood moved approval of substitute non-instructional staff : Melissa A. McHugh (School Nurse). Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
- l. Kenneth Flood moved approval of substitute Teacher Assistant(s): Karen M. Maher. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
- m. Approval of tutor(s): **None**
- n. Kenneth Flood moved approval of an unpaid leave of absence for Matthew LaClair, Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, effective April 26, 2011 through September 28, 2011. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.**
- o. Kenneth Flood moved approval of the temporary appointment of Edward J. Costigan, Interim Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds II, effective March 21, 2011 through September 30, 2011. Discussion. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.**
- p. Kenneth Flood moved acceptance of the resignation of Sandra Hall, Claims Auditor, Pro Tem, effective March 12, 2011. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.**
- q. Kenneth Flood moved appointment of Sandra Hall, Claims Auditor, effective March 18, 2011. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.**

Sue Megna moved to rescind o., p., and q. Bruce Romanchak seconded. All present in favor.  
 Bruce Romanchak moved to accept o., p., and q. Paul Puccio seconded. Discussion. All present in favor.

NOTE: All personnel appointments are subject to fingerprint clearance by the NYS Education Department and verification of Permanent or Pending Certification by NYS.

- 8. Reports / Presentations:
  - a. Senior Independent Study – Dennis Strainge. Robert Horan introduced Dennis to the board. Dennis reported on his pursuit of independent studies. Current study is regarding building schools in Afghanistan for girls. Central Asian Institute. Opportunity to research and learn in depth about a topic I'm very passionate about. Varied research: fiction, non-fiction, archives. Different understanding of culture and how one can change the world and what it takes to start a grassroots movement. Geopolitical

overview of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Roll of education in helping to solve religious and radical problems in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Bottle drive to raise funds for building schools in Afghanistan. Dennis extended thanks to Ms. Fox, Mr. Horan and Mr. Agostinoni for their support and help.

- b. Merger-Feasibility Study Update – Bob Horan reported. Ichabod Crane/Schodack Central. It does not mean the two districts are going to merge, but it will allow district to look in to every possible options to save money. Grant opportunity with Dept. of State to look into sharing services, cost savings, etc. Study will begin as early as end of March after consultant is selected through July 1. Submitted to SED in August. Key communicators committee is required. Recommendations from the study will be given to the board. Any recommendations would have to be adopted and voted on by the individual school boards, then voted on by the community. Updates will be on district website.
  - c. Draft 2 Budget Options - Sherri Fisher reported. Robert Horan reminded those in attendance that everything reviewed in the budget presentation are options for reducing budgets: no permanent decisions have been made. Need to think of ways to teach things differently, rather than simply cutting. Sherri Fisher presented second draft payments to pension systems, health insurance, state and national economic recovery, reform initiatives at the state level. Key budget assumptions for draft 2. Expenses, revenue. Sherri outlined changes from draft 1. Impact of 2% property tax levy increase on program. Tax certiorari account and purpose for it. What level of tax increase can the community support? Difference between tax levy and tax rate. Review of budget options and rationale/impact on program and students. Co-curricular and extracurricular activities. Kindergarten half day v. full day. Athletic offerings at high school level. Teaching assistants. High school electives. Art and music at elementary level. New design for scheduling at the elementary school. Changes in class sizes in middle school.
9. Meeting open for public discussion. Steve: some of the district's problem seems to be self-inflicted. The school aid formula is obtuse. Local effort v. your ability to pay. The greater the local effort, the more state aid you are eligible for. When you look at the district on paper, we have highest wealth rate in the county. Lisa Samarija: 10<sup>th</sup> grade is largest in district. Class sizes of 25 are doable. Band and music reduction: All-county in the future? Jazz band would be eliminated with the reduction in co-curricular reduction. Advocated for sports program. Children will not be as academically focused if they do not have athletic teams or co-curricular activities. Social worker at all three schools, two school psychologists: do we need that level of support in those areas? Donna Watson addressed the responsibilities and roles of social workers and psychologists. JV sports. Admission costs to attend sporting events. Connections, reduction in art and music in the middle school, what will the day look like for the kids? Discussion of possibilities for middle school alternative classes without adding staff. Suzanne Paziienza: doesn't think new scheduling model of half year art is a good idea. Wouldn't presume to teach reading or math or science in half a year. Distributed materials, student art show flyer, discussion questions to board members. Theresa Hovish: also district art teacher. The new schedule proposal will make it so that students in one school building are not in either art or music for an entire year. Mandarin Chinese. Art supports many, many different careers. Community needs to be able to ask questions and have an understanding of what is in the next draft budget. Please let the public know how the budget is playing out. This district has always respected its students and given them what they need, the current juniors are asking you to continue to respect and support them. Are extra-curricular activities going to be put on the same level as academics when

considering what to keep in the budget or eliminate.

10. Board Discussion. Teaching assistants, class size, French, elementary music and art. Would result in approximately 6% tax increase. Need to be more organized in how we get people to help us in a more organized fashion to find alternate forms of revenue. Discussion of eliminating class section at elementary level and impact on younger learners. Alternatives to cutting program by doing other things on the revenue side of the budget. Proposal to have version of budget with elimination of teaching assistants and three sections k-5, without impact to art and music, see what the tax rate increase would be. Other districts are providing excellent educational programs with larger class sizes and without teaching assistants. How could we differently fund modified sports? Board consensus is to instruct administration to craft next draft budget to include reduction to elementary sectioning, reduction of teacher assistants, and others to reduce next draft budget to 4-6%. Next meeting scheduled for March 31, 6pm. Board extended thanks to administration.
  - a. Continuation of discussion on innovative programs. Tabled.
11. Policies: None.
12. Meeting open for public discussion.
13. Action items. 3<sup>rd</sup> draft budget.
14. Executive Session: work history of specific employees and litigation. Bruce Romanchak moved to enter executive session at 12:15am. Sue Megna seconded. All present in favor.
15. Adjournment. Having no other business before the board, meeting adjourned at 12:50 pm

Respectfully Submitted,  
*Elizabeth B. Chipman*  
District Clerk