

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
HALF HOLLOW HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL MEETING OF OCTOBER 24, 2013**

APPROVED AS WRITTEN – NOVEMBER 18, 2013 – OFFICIAL COPY

MEMBERS PRESENT: James Ptucha, President
Frank Grimaldi, Vice President
Diana Acampora
Betty DeSabato
David Kaston
Paul Peller, M.D.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Eric Geringswald

ALSO PRESENT: Kelly Fallon, Superintendent
Patrick Harrigan, Deputy Superintendent
Anne Marie Marrone Caliendo, Assistant Superintendent for
Finance and Facilities
John O'Farrell, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education
Mary Rettaliata, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education
Rosanne Marini, District Clerk

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting, held at the Fran Greenspan Administration Center, was called to order by Mr. Ptucha at 7:45 a.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mr. Ptucha commenced the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Board of Education and Administration introduced themselves to the audience.

Mr. Ptucha thanked everyone for coming to this morning's meeting. It is our effort to include as many people as possible in the process of school closures. We have received many emails from residents and the Board has replied to every one of them.

Mr. Ptucha stated it is the Board's intention not to change the secondary feeding patterns. The Board is also looking to redraw the feeding patterns for elementary schools that have been patched together over the years. Two elementary schools will be closed: Chestnut Hill or Signal Hill and Forest Park or Vanderbilt. The Board is working to achieve balance and fairness at the elementary schools.

The Board discussed the current feeding patterns to the high schools.

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Mr. Ptucha said the Administration has been working tirelessly crunching numbers all the way back to the 1990's. The Board is committed to keeping the course selections at both high schools.

The Board discussed the idea of a total redistricting of the entire District but that would affect a huge group of students and families and incur additional transportation costs when grandfathering high school seniors. Thus, the Board has decided to affect the least amount of people and keep secondary feeding patterns in place.

Mrs. Fallon stated this is a work in progress and the maps we are going to be working with this morning are all *drafts*. Once the Board adopts an option, the map will be refined. There are many factors that need to be taken into account once we know which buildings will remain open.

Mr. Ptucha recapped the declining elementary enrollment and projected ratios in secondary feeding patterns.

The Board discussed the potential of leasing our buildings. The location of Half Hollow Hills could be desirable because of its central location. However, we cannot depend on leasing. If we were able to lease one of our buildings, that would be great. Statistically, there are approximately 17 closed school buildings in Suffolk County. Leasing should not factor into the Board's decision.

The Board discussed summer school facilities. The District has had many buildings serve as a summer school facility in the past. We look at every building each year to see what is going on in the building during the summer. We can utilize any District building for summer school.

The Board discussed the building size/capacity of each school. The schools are all similar in size.

Areas of potential turnover was brought up in terms of people who are here now. The Demographic Report references "survival rates" and are included in the numbers we are looking at. Mrs. Fallon discussed two pieces of property of potential future growth: The Golf Course next to the Fran Greenspan Administration Center (20-25 homes) and Schmitt's Farm (possibly 60 units). Mr. Ptucha commented that any development in the community will not transpire for a number of years.

The Board discussed safety and security of any closed buildings. Ms. Marrone Caliendo said we would still monitor any closed buildings. Our maintenance and grounds crews would be including all buildings on their rounds as they do now; and security would still patrol any closed buildings.

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There is a concern if Signal Hill was closed of having a vacant building near High School West.

Evacuation Plans were discussed of District buildings.

Transportation was discussed, however, we won't know the bussing patterns until we know what buildings will be closed. Mrs. Acampora and Mrs. DeSabato physically drove the bus routes. Mrs. Acampora clarified the term "outliers." Outliers refers to new developments that were built in the middle of a neighborhood where the community school had no room. Children from outlier areas were placed into schools that had room. Many Long Island school districts have children on buses for 25 to 30 minutes.

Dr. Peller left the meeting at 8:40 a.m.

A *draft* map was displayed on a large screen that does not change secondary feeding patterns.

A second *draft* map was displayed on a large screen that balanced the secondary ratio. However, in doing so, the elementary schools would then house over 750 students. It was pointed out that large areas of land does not necessarily mean a large population of students.

Mrs. Fallon asked for an understanding that when the Board makes their decision, that the Administration will have the latitude to make map modifications.

Mr. Grimaldi commented that at the last Board Meeting, we were at Chestnut Hill – the President of the PTA spoke eloquently about Half Hollow Hills and that we are all the same community. Our children will be going to the same middle school and high school.

Mr. Kaston stated that it is important that we are not changing the secondary feeding patterns. Children will be together in 6th Grade until they graduate.

Mrs. Acampora stated that our reputation in Half Hollow Hills precedes us. The Board of Education is charged with maintaining the programs we are known for.

Mrs. DeSabato said that the Board, as well as the PTA, will stay involved to make sure there is a smooth transition and that children will feel welcomed in their new school.

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Mr. Ptucha reminded the community that no school in Half Hollow Hills is better than the other. We are keeping the same opportunities for children regardless of what elementary school they attend. In regard to “college readiness”, the secondary experience is what colleges look at. That is why we are focused on keeping our secondary feeding patterns.

The next Board of Education meeting will be Monday, October 28, 2013 at 8:00 p.m. at Otsego Elementary School.

ADJOURNMENT:

A Motion was made by Mr. Grimaldi, seconded by Mr. Kaston, and carried unanimously (6-0) to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosanne Marini, District Clerk