

TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Tolland High School  
One Eagle Hill  
Tolland, CT 06084

REGULAR MEETING

7:30 – 10:00 P.M.

AGENDA  
February 12, 2014

**VISION STATEMENT**

*To represent education at its best, preparing each student for an ever-changing society, and becoming a full community of learning where excellence is achieved through each individual's success.*

A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 22, 2014 – Regular Meeting  
January 29, 2014 – Special Meeting  
February 6, 2014 – Special Meeting

C. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2 minute limit)

*The members of the Tolland Board of Education welcome members of the public to share their thoughts and ideas at this time. When appropriate to do so, members of the Board and the administration may respond to comments during "Points of Information." However, in consideration of those in attendance and in an effort to proceed in a timely manner, follow-up discussion may need to take place outside of the meeting setting.*

D. POINTS OF INFORMATION

E. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – Aiyla Zahid

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

G. COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

H. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

I. BOARD ACTION

- I.1 Board Policy 9190 – Committees
- I.2 2014/2015 Board of Education Budget (no enclosure)

J. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2 minute limit)

*Comments must be limited to items on this agenda.*

K. POINTS OF INFORMATION

L. CORRESPONDENCE

M. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

N. ADJOURNMENT

I.1

**TO: Members of the Board of Education**  
**FROM: William D. Guzman**  
**DATE: February 12, 2014**  
**SUBJECT: Board Policy 9190 - Committees**

Attached for your review is a copy of Board Policy 9190 – Committees with recommended revisions. The Policy Committee reviewed these changes at its meeting of January 8, 2014. The change to the policy creates a new Communications and Outreach Standing Committee of the Board of Education.

The Policy Committee recommends approval.

WDG:jp

**TOLLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Tolland, Connecticut**

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BOARD POLICY

REGARDING: Committees

Number: 9190  
Bylaws

Approved: 10/9/02  
Revised: 11/14/12

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1. The Board shall act as a committee of the whole on all matters coming before it except that special committees for the consideration or investigation of certain problems may be created by vote of the Board.
  - A. Such special committees shall submit their reports at such regular meetings of the Board as may be determined, and when such reports have been submitted and accepted by the Board, shall be discharged.
  - B. All special committee reports affected Board policy shall be submitted in writing.
2. Meetings of committees shall be posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. A record shall be maintained by the chairperson of each committee of each meeting, which shall include the names of committee members in attendance, listing of topics discussed and committee recommendations.
3. The Superintendent shall notify all Board members of committee meetings.
4. Standing Committees

As deemed necessary, the Board of Education may establish standing committees from among its membership to make recommendations for board action. The following rules will govern the appointment and function of such committees which shall:

- A. Be established through action of the Board of Education;
- B. have their members appointed by the Board Chairperson;
- C. be informed in writing at the time of committee formation of committee purpose, functions, and duties;

D. make recommendations for board action, but it may not act for the board except in those instances where authority to act has been specifically delegated to the committee by the board;

E. The standing committees of the Board of Education are:

1. Contract Negotiations
2. Policy
3. Finance And Facilities
4. **COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH**

5. Contract Negotiations Committee - charged with contract negotiations with the various district bargaining units and recommending contractual amendments to the Board of Education.

1.0 Service on the negotiations committee

1.1 Board members shall not serve on the negotiations committee if a member of their immediate family (spouse, parents, children) is a member of a Connecticut organization with whom the board negotiates or if there is an appearance of a conflict of interest.

1.2 All negotiations committee members are required to disclose to the chair if their status changes in regards to section 1.1.

2.0 Disclosure

2.1 All board members shall disclose immediate (spouse, parents, children) family memberships in any organization with whom the board negotiates. These disclosures shall be recorded in the meeting minutes of the second meeting of the board and updated as necessary when the status changes. Board members are encouraged to withdraw themselves from contract ratification votes if a conflict of interest exists.

6. Policy Committee - charged with reviewing, developing and recommending amendments to existing policies and adopting new policies.

7. Finance and Facilities Committee - charged with reviewing fiscal, operational and facility related matters as may come to the committee from time to time.

The Board Chairperson and the Superintendent of Schools shall be ex-officio members of all standing committees.

**8. COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE – CHARGED WITH INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES FOR TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND OTHER MUNICIPAL BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES AS WELL AS THE GENERAL PUBLIC AT LARGE.**

Legal reference: Connecticut General Statutes  
1-7 through 1-21k Freedom of Information Act.

TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Tolland High School  
One Eagle Hill  
Tolland, CT 06084

REGULAR MEETING – January 22, 2014

Members Present: Mr. Sam Adlerstein, Chair; Mr. Patrick Doyle, Vice Chair; Ms. Kathy Gorsky, Secretary; Ms. Karen Moran, Mr. Tom Frattaroli, Mr. Steve Clark, and Mr. Joe Sce

Administrators Present: Mr. William Guzman, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Kathryn Eidson, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Mrs. Jane Neel, Business Manager, Ms. Dominique Fox, Principal, Tolland High School, Kathleen Raymond, Director, Pupil Services; Mr. Tom Swanson, Principal, Birch Grove; Dr. Walter Willett, Principal, Tolland Middle School; Mr. Jim Dineen, Principal, Tolland Intermediate School

A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 P.M. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mr. Doyle requested a motion to combine items F3 and F4 on the Board of Education Agenda and move them to follow item M, to add a presentation of all-day kindergarten by a resident after item M, and to add an Executive Session to discuss personnel matters to the agenda. Mr. Clark motioned to combine items F3 and F4 and move them to follow item M, to add a presentation of all-day kindergarten by a resident after item M, and to add an Executive Session to discuss personnel matters to the agenda. Ms. Gorsky seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. None abstained. Motion carried.

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 8, 2014 – Regular Meeting

Mr. Clark motioned to accept the minutes of the January 8, 2014 regular meeting. All were in favor. None opposed. None abstained. Motion carried.

January 15, 2014 – Special Meeting

Mr. Clark motioned to accept the minutes of the January 15, 2014 regular meeting. All were in favor. None opposed. None abstained. Motion carried.

C. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2 minute limit) - none

D. POINTS OF INFORMATION - none

E. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT - Aiyla Zahid

Upcoming events include an Open House on February 6<sup>th</sup> which will be sponsored by the Student Council, the Cupcake Wars in March, and the school play will be held in March as well.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

F.1. Board Policy 9190 - Committees

The recommended amendments to Board Policy 9190 were included in the Board package with rationale. The change to the policy creates a new Communications and Outreach

Standing Committee. This item will be included on the agenda at the next regular meeting for Board action.

F.2. Blum Shapiro Audit – FY 2012/2013

Mr. Guzman reviewed the memos sent by Blum Shapiro, the auditor for the town and the Board. The audit report is available on the district website and is listed under the Quick Links.

F.3. Status of the 2013/2014 Budget – January 16, 2014 (no enclosure) – moved under M

F.4. 2014/2015 District Budget – Discussion (no enclosure) – moved under M

G. COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

- Communication and Outreach Committee (ad-hoc)

Ms. Moran noted that the committee's initial meeting took place and some initiatives were identified. These included: a central calendar on the district website, discussion regarding the Community Conversations grant, and the upcoming school newsletter.

- Finance and Facilities

The meeting was canceled due to inclement weather and has been rescheduled to Tuesday, January 28<sup>th</sup>.

- Council Liaison

Ms. Moran invited the Town Council members to reschedule the school tours if interested. An ad-hoc committee to look at shared services was formed (2 members from the Town Council and 2 members from the BOE make up the committee), and Mr. Clark noted that the Town Manager selected the date of February 1<sup>st</sup> as the date he wants the information so it can be reviewed by the Town Council. The Town Council will then have 10 days to submit its recommendations to the Board. The Board will then need to respond.

H. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT - none

I. BOARD ACTION

I.1 Obsolete and Surplus Equipment

Attachment I.1 in the Board package listed the items that are either in disrepair or are obsolete. Mr. Clark motioned that the items listed in attachment I.1 be declared obsolete and be turned over to the Town Council for disposition. Mr. Doyle seconded the motion. Ms. Moran requested that a description of each item be added to the document. Mr. Guzman will add the information to the document. All were in favor. None opposed. None abstained. Motion carried.

J. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Michelle Peterson, 44 Wonderview Drive, commented that she left the last workshop feeling worried that there is an emphasis on going with full-day kindergarten at the expense of the other grades. She would support full-day kindergarten if there was compelling and conclusive data that supported it, which there isn't, beyond minority students. The Common Core demands that there be cohesion, rigor, and focus on the 3 Rs and she does not believe the district has this. She added that this is not to blame anyone, it has just been underfunded. She provided examples of the demands of the Common Core. The district needs to fund multi-level texts of different genres for every grade level. The other grades need to be considered before all of the funds are put into kindergarten.

Elizabeth Chounicki, 10 Old Farms Road, commented that supporting students at all levels is her primary concern as a citizen, a mom, and a teacher. Tolland is a small town with limited financial resources. It is important to look at the system as a whole to analyze where dollars would have the most impact. Research shows that after the primary grades, the benefits of full-day kindergarten

diminish. Thus, she asked if this is really the best way to spend resources. It is not a good argument to say that the town will implement full-day kindergarten because everyone else is doing so. In regard to where the resources would impact the children the most, she expressed concern with the dire physical state of Tolland Middle School. It needs proper, working toilets and bathrooms. Additionally, the district needs to implement best practices in the classroom. She would like to see a curriculum that creates critical thinkers and problem solvers in the classroom. Without this, additional time will not make a difference. She would like superior resources in the hands of the educators and the Common Core used as a guide to get good results for Tolland students. Consider the quality of the education, not the quantity of time spent in the classroom.

In response to the comments, Dr. Eidson provided an overview of the materials used in both language arts and math. They are in the process of trying to identify texts that have the complexity needed in the Common Core and both programs are being reviewed.

Mr. Frattaroli, who is on the commission for mutual opportunities for regional efficiencies, noted the commission discussed teacher evaluations and how the administration will address the evaluations. Dr. Eidson commented that they are working on streamlining the process and noted that it is a burden while the common core is being implemented.

K. POINTS OF INFORMATION - none

L. CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Gorsky noted that the majority of the correspondence has been in regard to all-day kindergarten and half-day kindergarten. They have received an equal number of letters in support of each with good arguments on both sides and she noted some ideas including the possibility of a partial year of all-day kindergarten. Further, the Board has received correspondence from people asking that if there is any extra money that it be used for curriculum materials and items other than all-day kindergarten. Some items requested, that would benefit other grades as well, included technology, security, and professional development.

For the next meeting, Ms. Gorsky is putting a list of pros/cons for all-day vs. half-day kindergarten and invited people to e-mail her with ideas. She can be reached at [kgorsky@tolland.k12.ct.us](mailto:kgorsky@tolland.k12.ct.us)

M. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS - none

The Workshop Component - Identify cost-saving Improvement Opportunities

1. Outline the workshop plan

Mr. Doyle explained that this discussion is regarding quantifying a 3-year school improvement plan that the district can afford and identifying concrete ways to have cost-savings, look at the benefits of the priorities, brainstorm how to communicate the information to the town, and how to pursue funding Board priorities without increasing overall costs. If they do not get where they want to be, it will not be for a lack of effort. They want what is best for Tolland students and that which is sustainable.

Mr. Adlerstein explained that the cost increase of level service this year to next is estimated to be between 3.9% and 5.9% as of January 15, 2014. The top priorities for schools are the following:

- High School- technology, resource officer
- Middle School- literacy and math interventionists, aging facility issues
- Intermediate School – K8 special education supervisor, materials
- Primary School – lack of professional development and curriculum, all-day kindergarten



2. Identify our starting point

F.3. Status of the 2013/2014 Budget – January 16, 2014 (no enclosure)

F.4. 2014/2015 District Budget – Discussion (no enclosure)

Mrs. Neel distributed the Expenditure Report General Fund FY 13-14 High spreadsheet and reviewed the highlighted items. The projected (high) balance is \$339,200.

In order to achieve this projected balance of \$339,200, a budget freeze would have to be instituted. The assumptions and comments are listed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> page of the spreadsheet and were reviewed. Mr. Adlerstein asked if the \$339,200 is the highest amount that could be left over if the above suggestions were done. Mrs. Neel responded that this is the projection given the assumptions and comments listed.

Mrs. Neel distributed the Expenditure Report General Fund FY 13-14 Low spreadsheet and reviewed the highlighted items. The projected (low) balance is \$136,352.

This assumptions and comments are noted on the 2<sup>nd</sup> page of the spreadsheet and were reviewed. It was noted that on this spreadsheet, the departments and principals would have the opportunity to be able to spend the 90 – 100 %, which was in their budget at the outset that has not yet been spent. Further, open purchase orders are being reviewed and action is being taken.

Mr. Adlerstein recommended that everyone have an opportunity to digest the numbers and this topic will be revisited at the next workshop. He noted that this information is important because last year \$340K was carried to the current year's budget. If \$340K cannot be carried over into next year's budget, the cycle will be broken and the \$340K will increase the budget by approximately 1%. He added that there is also a reserve account and if there were additional funds left over, then the account could be funded.

3. Brainstorming cost-saving Improvement Opportunities

The Board invited input from those in attendance regarding finding sources of revenue and solutions to achieve some of the desired goals. The impact, effort, effect on school quality, and low/no-cost suggestions were to be considered as well. The participants broke into groups and reconvened.

Mr. Doyle read and posted all of the ideas generated by the groups. These ideas included: having a ½ day weekly or in an increment to save money on substitute teachers, using student interns to save on substitutes, increasing bus efficiency -perhaps electrical or natural gas-powered vehicles, investigating cost sharing programs with Apple, creating opportunities for teachers to share resources and expertise, instituting a greater partnership with the family resource center extending kindergarten and after school daycare, exploring grants and asking for parent volunteers to write grants, partnering with other districts to obtain volume discounts, relocating the Board office, putting a specialist in each building so staff could be supported at all times, and offering special education to students in-house and offering the program as an outplacement option to other districts.

4. Discriminate & refine a few most promising opportunities

Mr. Adlerstein asked the participants to break into small groups to discuss and discriminate some of the posted ideas that could start to be planned to offset some costs. He would like to see what the idea would look like, why it is important, and obstacles and potential solutions plotted on the distributed goal wheel. The value and timeframe should be included as well. The participants broke into groups and reconvened.

A number of ideas from the previous discussion were analyzed. Those selected for the process included: relocating the Board office either into the high school or into the former Parker School with other town offices; increasing the efficiency of buses and their stops; in regard to technology which is necessary to develop students' 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, professional development should be provided to teachers and a specialist should be at each of the schools as support; offering special education programs in town for cost savings and generate revenue by becoming an option for outplacement for neighboring towns; and seeking experienced volunteers who could do grant writing.

Town Council member, Ms. Rubino, commented that she knows that change is difficult but if one continues to do things the same way; they will get the same results.

Town Council member, Mr. Krasusky, commented that the district has been underfunded for so long that there is no magic answer and people need to be aware of this.

A resident commented that he likes that the Board is soliciting the public's input at the beginning of the budget process, focusing on what is in the budget, and thinking three years out. He noted that if one wants to implement some of the ideas discussed, then the brainstorming process needs to begin in the fall.

A resident commented that she was pleased that none of the ideas discussed would negatively impact student learning.

A resident inquired about the Board's budget number. Mr. Adlerstein commented that the Board has worked hard to stay away from presenting a number for a specific reason. He explained that a journalist was present and Mr. Adlerstein did not want to see a number in the Journal Inquirer in the morning and have everyone focus on the number. It does not change what is going to happen in the room. A resident asked if the Town Council could say if the Board has done an adequate job of cost savings from the work that was done this evening. Mr. Adlerstein asked Mr. Scavone, the Chair of the Town Council, if he could provide some direction on where the Board needs to end up.

Mr. Scavone explained that it is important to recognize that there are two sides – what is affordable and what one wants. Somewhere in the middle is hopefully the right answer. It is important to the Town Council that the Board has done its work. The Town Council does not make the ultimate decision; the voters make the ultimate decision. If a number is put out that is ridiculous, the voters will vote it down and it will go back to referendum and keep dropping. In the past 2 years, it is not what you wanted but it is what was going to pass. The Town Council is charged with giving something to the voters that they will pass. The Council wants to do what is good for the town, good for education, and good for everybody.

A resident commented that nothing that was presented at the workshop was ridiculous and many people asked for a higher budget.

Mr. Scavone referenced a statement made by former Council member Josh Freeman last year at a Town Council meeting regarding the number going to referendum. Mr. Freeman explained that this was in regard to a workshop. He was trying to get the priorities to help him in justifying a higher number. At the time, there was nothing to fight for and at the final stage of the process a list was presented by the Friends of Tolland Schools that he did try to push. Mr. Scavone commented that if the Board truly flushed everything out, came up with priorities and justified them, then the voters could have had a chance to vote on it. He wants that to happen. He explained that a 5% yearly increase with no increases in taxes given the grand list is not sustainable. Mr. Scavone added that he wanted to fund education as much as everyone else but

the town does not have any income coming in. Back 5-6 years ago, when the grand list was growing by 5% a year, they could spend 5% a year.

A resident commented that there is a reason the grand list is not growing. People are not moving here because of the education. The town is 164 out of 169.

Mr. Scavone commented that Tolland students are ranked in the top in CT and this is a testament to the parents, families, and teachers. He asked people to think about a number. Over the last five years, spending on education has increased. For the last 5 years, the number of students decreased by about 100 per year. If one takes the dollars spent and divides it by the number of students, the spending per pupil should be increasing every year. A resident commented that Tolland is rated 164 out of 169. Mr. Sce commented that money does not dictate the quality of an education. Mr. Scavone commented that it is not about the money. It is about the educators, the family, and the passion one has for education. A resident commented that it is about the resources given to students. When something new, such as the common core, is presented, the community needs to take a hard look at it. It is not the status quo. The budgets have been cut over the past 10 years and she is hopeful that an honest discussion can take place.

Mr. Guzman will get the state computation of the per pupil expenditure.

Mr. Sce motioned to continue the meeting past 10 P.M. Mr. Clark seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. None abstained. Motion carried.

Ms. Moran commented that what the Board is doing is very different than what has been done in the past. It is a positive change.

Mr. Adlerstein commented that this is a tough town to pass a budget in and a lot of this discussion does not impact what the Board is going to do. It is doing its best to find cost savings and implement something.

Mr. Sce commented that while Tolland has one of the lowest per student spending, it also has one of the highest mill rates in the state as well. If the taxes and the mill rate keep increasing, then it will do just as much damage as keeping the pupil spending down. A balance has to be found.

#### Presentation of All-Day Kindergarten by Residents

Rebecca Risly presented "A Discussion of Full-Day Kindergarten in Tolland, CT"

Ms. Risly reviewed the history of full-day kindergarten and presented a map of the 169 towns in CT with a breakdown of the position of each in regard to full-day kindergarten. She explained why it is important for Tolland to implement full-day kindergarten in 2014 and presented examples of the Common Core Standards in math, reading, and writing which are based on children attending full-day kindergarten. Ms. Risly presented research in support of full-day kindergarten as well as the mismatch of the common core with half-day kindergarten. She noted that full-day kindergarten gives children more time for a number of activities and the additional time equals less stress and frustration for students and teachers. Additional support was presented along with a sample full-day schedule.

#### Executive Session

Mr. Clark motioned to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters at 10:25 P.M. and invited the Superintendent to attend the session. Ms. Gorsky seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. None abstained. Motion carried.

The Board returned to public session at 11:35 pm

N. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Clark motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Frattaroli seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 11:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Pascuzzi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

Lisa Pascuzzi  
Clerk

Tolland Board of Education  
Special Meeting  
Tolland High School – Library  
1 Eagle Hill

January 29, 2014

7:00PM

Members Present: Mr. Sam Adlerstein, Chair; Mr. Patrick Doyle, Vice Chair; Ms. Karen Moran, Mr. Bob Pagoni, Mr. Steve Clark, Mr. Al Fratoni, and Mr. Tom Frattaroli

Administrators Present: Mr. William Guzman, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Kathryn Eidson, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Mrs. Jane Neel, Business Manager; Ms. Kathleen Raymond, Director, Pupil Services; Mr. Jim Dineen, Principal, Tolland Intermediate School; Mr. Tom Swanson, Principal, Birch Grove; Dr. Walt Willett, Principal, Tolland Middle School; Ms. Dominique Fox, Principal, Tolland High School

1. Welcome/Review/Recap

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM

Mr. Adlerstein briefly reviewed what took place at the previous workshops and the plan for the evening. He highlighted the shared goal: We will maximize the usage of town resources to provide the highest quality of service, which balance top priority needs with financial constraints.

2. Focus Groups

In small groups, a scribe was selected and the following questions were discussed:

- What are the key issues within this topic?
- What improvements are planned?
- What opportunities have yet to be planned?

The participants reconvened into a single group and presented what was discussed.

Topic Groups

- Kindergarten Evaluation

The group evaluated the pros and cons of all-day kindergarten. The pros included: preparation for the common core curriculum, most towns in CT offer it, there will be more time for play and special items, students who go full day have higher academic achievement, and it is less stressful. The cons included: the money needed for all-day kindergarten could be better spent supporting all grades, kids need a transitional year, some benefits do not extend beyond the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade level, it only benefits those in the inner cities, and all-day kindergarten does not allow a child to have as much play time. It was also discussed that the kids will need to be taught well, there should be more paraprofessionals in the school, there should be smaller classes, and if a half-day option would also be available.

A resident inquired if there is a way to achieve these same goals that would impact the other grades as well and recommended additional funding for professional development.

Mr. Pagoni recommended taking a poll via a survey, perhaps one that could be developed on Survey Monkey and posted on the district website, to determine if there is support throughout the town for all-day kindergarten. He noted that only a handful of the town's residents are present and that they do not represent the town, only their own interests as well as perhaps those of family or friends. While it may not be perfect, it would give the Board a better feel for what parents want. Ultimately, it comes down to the nine members of the Board to decide what is best and what the town wants it to do. Mr. Alderstein responded that they will see if they can find a way to do this with an appropriate sample. Mr. Frattaroli commented that while it is important to get the town's input, if it benefits the children then it needs to be put forward. Mr. Pagoni noted that the Board cannot overspend and should do what the greater community would like it to do. In turn, the Board will then have done its job and the Town Council will rally behind the decision and support the Board's ideas. Mr. Alderstein commented that those in attendance represent one aspect of Tolland. The town has little commercial base and it comes down to the residents.

- Curriculum

The group discussed that a soup-to-nuts curriculum has not been purchased for use this year. A cohort of teachers has been pulling items together and continues to do so in preparation for the common core. The improvement for next year is that the work is close to finished and there will be more consistency within the grade levels. There is a desire to spend what is necessary next year to have the right curriculum. Additionally, the group discussed the need for professional development across the board and many walked away sensing that there is a disconnect of what is policy and what is being implemented. There was some disagreement regarding what is being offered and how the time is being managed.

- Facilities

While there was not a group, updates were provided. Mr. Doyle noted that DRA is narrowing its focus and a final workshop is planned for some time in March.

Mr. Pagoni requested an overview of the condition of the facilities.

Mr. Guzman explained that when education budgets are not funded at appropriate levels, one must look at reductions – or increases that are less than what one would want. The maintenance department includes maintenance and the custodial crew. Over time the custodial crew has been reduced. The educational demands to deliver a program to students include teachers, books, materials, computers, and other items. When those budgets are funded at inadequate levels, certain other areas reduced. One of the areas affected has been maintenance. The district entered into a 20 year program with Honeywell to upgrade the mechanics in all four buildings. This is being paid for by the savings in energy over time. This is one of the shared services with the town. Mr. Guzman

defined the capital improvement budget (includes renovations and replacement of capital items) and noted that it has been funded at meager levels over the years.

Mr. Pagoni requested that the principals state what the biggest issues are at the respective schools.

Dr. Willett explained that the middle school is 40-50 years old and functions as such. The toilets have decades of mineral deposits and it shows. The staff is making the best of it but there are challenges to being in a building that has not had updates.

Mr. Dineen explained that it is a similar situation at the intermediate school. They paint regularly but it is a never-ending task. The grounds are abysmal and in turn a lot of mud and dirt is tracked into the building. His custodial staff is tremendous but after the spring thaw it is very difficult to keep up.

Mr. Swanson explained that at the primary school, the cleaning of bathrooms takes priority. The cleaning of rugs is secondary and with the amount of salt tracked into the building, it is a difficult task. Further, the exterior doors are rusting, sidewalks need repair, and additional fencing would be helpful. Work is currently being done on the fire alarm.

Ms. Fox explained that at the high school, a lot of equipment, such as that for PE, is not being maintained at the rate it should be. Further, there have been many heating and ventilation issues with the building as well as water leaks. The high school lost a custodian last year and this has negatively impacted the cleanliness of the building. Ms. Fox added that the gym floor looks terrible due to a lack of maintenance and general sidewalk repair is needed as well.

- Special Ed

The group discussed the improvements being made in the district. They discussed the ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) autism program for young children and that additional room would be needed to allow students from other districts to be tuitioned into the program. The program has saved at least 9 out-of-district placements. It is still a fairly expensive program since each student has a paraprofessional and a board certified behavior analyst but it has been a cost-saving measure and kept students in-district. Also discussed was having more inclusion, encouraging paraprofessionals to be in the regular classroom, and providing more technology to assist in closing the gap experienced by struggling students. Mr. Dineen noted that there has been more co-teaching, a model where the special education teacher works with the general education teacher. The possibility of having a program that could service the needs of one or more populations was discussed as well. Mr. Guzman noted that he will be having a discussion with EASTCONN regarding the possibility of having a regional special education program in town.

### 3. Superintendent's Budget

The FYE 2015 BOE cost of level services comparison document was distributed.

Mr. Guzman reviewed the document. This is a level-funded budget and does not include any new initiatives.

In regard to item 1, the health insurance consultant provided the 11.6% increase number and this is what the Superintendent is recommending for inclusion in the budget. Historically, this increase

becomes lower as the year progresses as the result of more data being available. Item 2 represents a prepayment of health insurance in the amount of \$200K. Item 3 is in regard to the Affordable Care Act which goes into effect January 1, 2015. It is estimated that 25% of the eligible employees would work more than 30 hours per week and will need to be offered health insurance options. The half year cost for this is estimated to be \$55,240. Items 4, 7, 8, 13, and 15 are salary-based and contractual in nature. Although there is a projected enrollment decrease of 111 students next year, these students are spread across several grades. In turn, there are no plans to reduce the number of teachers next year. Hence, class sizes will drop. Mr. Guzman has recommended that item 5, transportation be budgeted at \$2.14M (a level services estimate) and noted that it will be going to bid soon. He expects that one less bus will be needed. In regard to item 12, it is expected that \$140K will be available at the end of the year to prepay this obligation as it has in the past. In terms of line 16, Mr. Guzman is going to propose increasing the number of ½ days from 3 to 7 in next year's school calendar. This will allow for more professional development without a need for substitute teachers. Item 18 is based on the assumption that there will be 5-7 retirees and item 19 is based on the anticipation of 2 additional students. Item 21 is projected to have a 4% increase. In regard to line 25, the legal fees this year were high since contracts were negotiated with the assistance of a law firm and the need for legal assistance would be lower in the upcoming year.

Mr. Guzman is proposing a 3.77% (\$1,360,860) budget increase for level services. He will continue to fine tune this number. The account with greatest potential fluctuation is health insurance. Mr. Guzman will relay any updates to the Board as he receives them.

Mr. Guzman noted that there are some areas with improvements. Class size is expected to be reduced across the board, the district will support teachers and the implementation of the common core, and they will continue to look at more shared services with the town.

At the last workshop, some ideas for cost-savings opportunities were brought up and Mr. Guzman addressed them. In regard to interns, the district has a contract with the University of New Haven. Initially, they had 8 interns from the institution but that number has been dropping. He attributed this to the distance of Tolland from the University campus. Tolland is not on the list of where UConn places its students. The possibility of relocating the Board of Education office was also discussed and may be something that comes out of the DRA meeting. There would be a great cost to relocate and renovate a location for the office. In regard to having volunteers participate in grant writing, this was attempted last year but was very difficult given the criteria required for grants.

Mr. Adlerstein commented that the Board is looking forward to reviewing the numbers presented by Mr. Guzman. Next week, the Board will pull all of the information together. Mr. Alderstein will look into the recommendation of having a survey in regard to all-day kindergarten and will asked the Board members to rank the priorities. Further, there will be a straw poll on the budget. The following week, the budget will be passed to the Town Council and the Board will work with the Town Council going forward. Mr. Doyle explained that he would like to see something that balances sustainability and quality so that students receive a top-rate education long term.

#### Public Participation

Dale Kasai, 32 Marbella Lane, presented ranking data. Tolland is in DRG group C and is 27<sup>th</sup> out of 30 schools in terms of per pupil spending. Statewide, Tolland ranks 154 out of 166. In response to a



comment by a Town Council member last week, Mr. Kasai noted that Tolland has fewer students and is still paying less compared to the rest of the state.

A resident commented that she supports putting more money into curriculum and professional development. Given the common core, teachers need to learn techniques, the gold standard. She provided an analogy and explained that it is a new ballgame. Pulling resources from multiple areas is not going to work.

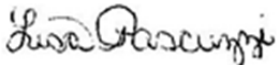
Jackie Kolb, 34 Susan Drive, commented that the 6<sup>th</sup> grade population is a rather large group and would like to know the population for this class going forward. Further, she inquired as to what is a good class size. Lastly, she would like to know if the HSA plan is being discussed when new teachers are brought on board.

Mr. Guzman explained that in terms of the rankings, there are 169 towns and 166 school districts. The net spending per pupil was ranked 166 five years ago and 159 last year. In regard to the HSA option, it is still being promoted and he expects the size of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade will drop by 2 to 21.9. The strategic plan reports a statewide average of 20 students per class.

Mr. Adlerstein thanked the staff, principals, and public for attending the workshop.

The meeting ended at 9:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lisa A. Pascuzzi".

Lisa A. Pascuzzi

Clerk

Tolland Board of Education  
Special Meeting  
Tolland High School – Library  
1 Eagle Hill

February 6, 2014

7:00PM

Members Present: Mr. Sam Adlerstein, Chair; Mr. Patrick Doyle, Vice Chair; Ms. Kathy Gorsky, Secretary; Ms. Karen Moran, Mr. Bob Pagoni, Mr. Steve Clark, Mr. Al Fratoni, and Mr. Joe Sce.

Administrators Present: Mr. William Guzman, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Kathryn Eidson, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Mrs. Jane Neel, Business Manager; Mr. Tom Swanson, Principal, Birch Grove, and Ms. Dominique Fox, Principal, Tolland High School.

Town Council Members Present: Mr. Jack Scavone, Chair; Mr. Rick Field, Mr. George Baker, and Mr. Paul Krasusky, Mr. Ben Stanford

Also Present: Mr. Steve Werbner, Town Manager

4. Call to Order

The meeting started at 7:05 PM.

5. 2013/2014 Budget Workshop – Discussion (public participation included)

- Consensus on completed narrative for vote
  - I. Narrative review up until now
  - II. With Town Council: Exec Summary, Shared Services
  - III. With Town Council: Shared Services
  - IV. Narrative Update
  - V. Putting it all together

Mr. Adlerstein identified the goal: to pursue funding BOE top priorities without increasing overall costs. The cost increase of level service as of the last meeting was 3.77%. He also provided a summary of the e-mails the Board has received and noted the ground rules.

Public Participation

Donna Hryn, 136 Rhodes Road, commented that she would like to see change that will affect the greatest number of students. This has been an enlightening process for her.

Dale Kasai, 32 Marbella Lane, noted that he is a supporter of all-day kindergarten and presented data regarding per pupil spending and on towns with and without all-day kindergarten. He added that the Common Core is built on all-day kindergarten and both the material and professional development to support Common Core are needed. The district can no longer afford to have a level budget.

A resident commented that she advocates all-day kindergarten but does not want it to take away from the other schools.

Suzanne Casey, 33 Wildwood Road, commented that her eyes were broadened in terms of learning what is lacking in schools. She admires all parents for wanting the best for their children and noted that there seems to be a lot of areas that need improvement.

Karen Lindsey, 72 Timber Trail, commented that when considering moving to Tolland, she heard what a great school system the town had. In the last couple of years, its reputation is not what it used to be. It is a bit frustrating, discouraging, and sad. She does not want to see the town lose its reputation for having a great school system.

A resident commented that she is a teacher in Ellington where all-day kindergarten has been approved pending construction. She noted that there is no way to get the Common Core curriculum into a half-day kindergarten program and it is a disservice to children. All-day kindergarten gives students a chance to breathe and relax.

Amy Duff, 127 Robin Circle, noted that when she looks at other towns, she sees a discrepancy which is concerning. She noted that in many towns there is an expectation of daily writing but her children only do writing one day a week and it is dependent on the teacher. There is no consistency from grade to grade or within a grade level. She also noted that Tolland uses the anthology program whereas other towns use level libraries which provide more opportunities. She encouraged the Board to think about where the curriculum is headed and to do the best for the students.

Michele Harrold, 256 Mountain Spring Road, noted that there are many needs. She would like the Board to consider spending money on the buildings people still need to use rather than on all-day kindergarten.

A resident of Bonaire Hill Road commented that the Common Core curriculum is based on a student having all-day kindergarten. All-day kindergarten would have more fun things for students to do. It is disheartening to give kids a curriculum but not the time to do it.

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Mr. Adlerstein explained that the level budget is probably higher than what the Town would pass given the history of past referendums and what he heard from the Town Council. To have any of the Board's priorities included, a lot of work will have to be done. This evening's meeting is a joint meeting between the Board and the Town Council.

Mr. Guzman reviewed what they have done in the past month and a half in regard to the budget. The budget was examined on two levels: high cost increase and low cost increase. Both are based on assumptions. The Board asked him to present the Superintendent's budget with level services and no new initiatives. He explained that the entire budget can be broken down into 25 items which include the following major areas: salaries, health insurance, transportation, substitute teachers, outplacements, and magnet school tuitions. At the last meeting, the low cost increase included the assumption of an 8% increase in the cost of health insurance and the high cost increase included the assumption of an 11.6% increase, the figure provided by the health insurance

consultant. At that time, the total budget increase was 3.77%. After meeting again with the consultant, Mr. Guzman learned that it would be fiscally prudent to reduce the budgetary impact of the health insurance by 2 points. In turn, the Superintendent's recommended budget is now 3.44% and his office is continuing to look at other items.

Mr. Guzman noted that his recommended district improvements for the upcoming fiscal year are not included in this level budget number. He reviewed his recommendations.

The first recommendation is all-day kindergarten. The original cost projection was \$173K. When Mr. Guzman reviewed the projected enrollment of 152 students, he performed a re-calculation based on a staff of 8 FTE with an average class size of 19 students. As a result, there would be a savings of \$57K bringing the cost to \$116K. He added that at a previous meeting, it was discussed that some parents may not want their children in all-day kindergarten and it was recommended that the model in Glastonbury be reviewed. In turn, like Glastonbury, Mr. Guzman is recommending that both all-day and half-day kindergarten programs be offered. Students attending half-day kindergarten would leave at mid-day and the instructional day will be front loaded. Since there may be additional transportation costs, the total would be \$133K to institute all-day kindergarten with the half-day option.

The second recommendation is to have a resident state trooper assigned to the district every day school is in session. The cost for a state trooper is \$137K and the district would share this (70-80%) with the town. In turn, \$96-100K will need to be added to the district budget if the Board would like to consider this.

Mr. Guzman's third recommendation is that the Board fully fund and utilize the reserve education account to the extent that it can be done. This will allow the Board to have funds available for any unanticipated expenses.

Lastly, as a cost-savings measure, Mr. Guzman spoke with EASTCONN regarding establishing a regional special education program. Further, in regard to previous discussions that focused on using interns to reduce the substitute teacher costs, Mr. Guzman contacted a number of institutions. Eastern is interested in establishing a program. Additionally, the district will look at the economics of expanding the ABA program at Birch Grove.

There had been some discussion regarding reducing transportation costs by combining the high school and middle school bus runs. Mr. Guzman explained that that number of buses hired is dependent on the number of elementary school students. Lastly, he noted that although there is a projected enrollment decrease, there are no plans to eliminate instructional positions in the upcoming fiscal year; however, given enrollment projections for the 2015/16 school year, there may be a possibility to reduce 3.5 teacher positions that would not negatively impact class sizes.

Mr. Adlerstein did a recap of Mr. Guzman's recommendations and asked the members of the Town Council for their reaction.

Mr. Scavone applauded the Board for putting the discussion and impact of the expenses on the table and looks forward to the end result. He added that he hopes the Board can get there and that the citizens will approve. This is music to his ears – a dialog before a plan. This is not a spending plan – it is an operational plan.

Mr. Adlerstein noted that the Board recognizes that if it puts forth a 5-6% budget, based on prior years, it will not get to referendum. It wants what it does to be constructive and to work with the Town Council on the next steps.

Mr. Field commended the Board for having changed how the budget is looked at and for bringing in the community. As a Council member, he is waiting to see the Board finish its due diligence and what is brought to the Council. He feels good that there will be a budget everyone can agree on.

Mr. Stanford explained the background of the Shared Services Ad Hoc Committee (made up of members from the Board and the Town Council) and its purpose. The committee looked at a facility action plan. The purpose was to create a single town-wide entity responsible for facility and HVAC management. This will require merging public works/parks department with the school district's facilities department. He explained that the reason for this is to protect the investments made in ESCO, good stewardship of town resources, improved responsiveness and management efficiency, and long term cost savings.

In summary, the action plan will result in 2 new FTE positions: 1 facilities manager/director and 1.0 HVAC supervisor. The financial impact may be reduced if the supervisory employee is filled from within which will result in backfilling a lower salaried position. The action plan, when fully implemented, will result in a unified facilities group that will be responsible for oversight and management of HVAC systems, facilities, and project management. The tracking and management of main issues and items will be done via a work order system which will be established. Recommendations for future shared services include investigating maintenance, technology, a safety/resource officer, the voice program, custodial, financial and business services, and the lines of the chain of command. Additionally, the Committee recommended that areas of possible outsourcing be investigated for cost savings or service improvements.

The joint component of this evening's meeting was concluded.

Mr. Guzman provided a handout of the 14/15 FYE 2015 BOE with Superintendent Cost of Level Services spreadsheet. The only difference between this and sheet from the previous workshop is the reduction of the health insurance line item which brought the level services budget to 3.44%. Next week, the insurance consultant may recommend a different number based on a review of the insurance claims. Item 18 is based on the assumption that there will be 6-7 retirees at the end of the year and will continue to be monitored as well as line 5, transportation. The Board's plan is to vote on the budget next week. If possible, adjustments will be made in the downward direction. If later, the health insurance increase number is reduced even more, it will be reported to the Town Council and it will be absorbed into their number. Ms. Gorsky inquired if the level services budget includes new curriculum materials. Dr. Eidson noted that materials are included. A discussion took place regarding if this number is sufficient.

Mr. Clark inquired if the Board was submitting a single sheet or a budget document to the Town Manager and the Town Council. Mr. Adlerstein responded that the Board could provide whatever is needed for the Council's analysis. Mr. Guzman noted that in order to go from the single sheet which the Board requested back to the historical book in a week's time would be very difficult. Mr. Clark noted that this will also be put on the district website and those people who have not been in

attendance will not understand the spreadsheet. Mr. Adlerstein noted that the Board will include an overview of the details.

A discussion of line items 2 and 12 took place. Mr. Guzman explained the unexpended year-end funding of \$340K. Last year the Board directed that \$200K of unexpended funds be used to offset the following year's health insurance expense. The conversation with the Board this year was to do the same. Further, an additional \$140K from this year's budget was used to offset the obligation noted in line 12.

Mr. Sce asked about the origin of the \$340K. Where was the money not spent in order to have these unexpended funds? Mr. Adlerstein noted that Mr. Guzman has never been over budget. In order to do this, he has to project with low risk when presenting the level budget to be safe. In turn, every year there is money left over. Mr. Sce clarified that last year, he did not say to stop spending money to come up with the funds but recommended where one could apply the extra money at the end of the year. His recommendation was that it be put toward nonrecurring items. Mr. Doyle questioned whether the Board should wean itself off of prepaying and move more to the reserve account.

Mr. Pagoni commented that, since there was all of this extra money, people will ask why students have to pay \$225 for pay-to-play? He explained that that money could have gone to pay-to-play, supplies, or other items. The Board is worried about the future but the house it is in has no heat. Everyone could come up with a list of what the money was not spent on but seeing that \$340K is left over, one needs to look at and fix what is going on now. Mr. Guzman and his staff have to run the school system every day and deal with all these issues for next year. Everyone is focusing on next year but there are still obligations for this year. If pay-to-play was cut it would make a lot of families happy. He noted that the Board is worried about the future but that the ship is sinking right now.

Mr. Stanford noted that on the town side, there is usually money left over. It is either put back in the fund balance or capital items are purchased.

In response to Mr. Sce's question, Mr. Guzman explained that a memo was distributed to the cost centers which delineated what expenses were subject to a freeze. Mrs. Neel explained that the budget freeze was initiated due to the immediate need for the fire panel at Birch Grove. If money is needed for the educating of the children, the expense is approved. Mrs. Neel explained that much of it is from funds in the special education account. Mr. Sce would like a list of categories where the money is being picked up.

Mr. Pagoni commented that the Board has to make a decision in the next 7 days. How can it vote on 1% of the budget (\$340K) if it does not know where the money is coming from next week? This is not a Republican or a Democrat issue. Regardless as to which party is in the majority, there are always some people who vote the budget down because there is always money left over. Specifically, where was the money not spent? Mrs. Neel will prepare an answer to the question.

#### Cost Savings

The Status of Efforts to Reduce Budget Request document was distributed and reviewed. A discussion took place. Ms. Moran recommended that some of these items, particularly facility

utilization, be kept in mind for the DRA study. Mr. Adlerstein noted that all of the items will have obstacles but one must think in terms of potential cost-savings.

#### Priorities

A memo regarding the Recommended District Improvements 2014/2015 was distributed and reviewed. The three items listed were: extended day kindergarten, resident trooper (shared services), and reserve account.

In regard to the Resident Trooper, Mr. Pagoni noted that this is not a safety issue. Perhaps if there was one at each school, it may be. The items listed under this item should be able to be taken care of by the school staff. If one thinks this item is to prevent a situation like at Sandy Hook, it is not. Mr. Guzman noted that the Trooper would provide a presence. At one time, there was a shared resource officer. There was a presence at the schools and it was a deterrent. This is not, in and of itself, an answer to security in the schools. If the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of the state's security grants, the district will be ready to submit an application for additional security measures. The town would have to pay about 52% of the total package. These funds are in a placeholder in the town's capital improvement plan for next year. Additional security items are ongoing. Mr. Guzman's priority list, from high to low, is extended day kindergarten, a resource officer, and funding the reserve account.

Mr. Adlerstein noted that the Republican and Democrat Board members caucused and created a list of priorities. The Republican list was: all-day kindergarten (1<sup>st</sup>), pay-to-play (2<sup>nd</sup>), technology (3<sup>rd</sup>), and then funding the reserve, and resident state trooper. The Democrat priority list was: all-day kindergarten (1<sup>st</sup>), resident state trooper (2<sup>nd</sup>), and technology and funding the reserve account (tied for 3<sup>rd</sup>). Mr. Pagoni noted that reducing pay-to-play would have an instant payback to the community. Ms. Gorsky noted that technology would impact all students.

A discussion took place. Some noted that a school resource officer would help improve the schools' climates while others believed adjusting pay-to-play would do so as well. A poll was going to be taken. Mr. Pagoni noted that it is not proper to only ask the opinions of those in attendance this evening. If the issue of pay-to-play was on this evening's agenda, many more people would have attended the meeting. A decision cannot be made based only on the group currently in attendance given that this topic was not advertised. Mr. Doyle clarified that he was not asking for a standing vote, just an opinion as to whether pay-to-play would have an impact on school climate. Further discussion took place. Some believed spending money on psychologists and social workers would be more helpful if one is thinking of Newtown.

Ms. Moran motioned to continue the meeting past 10 PM. Ms. Gorsky seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. None abstained. Motion carried.

Mr. Guzman will put dollar figures to the priorities of technology and pay-to-play and send this information to the members of the Board so they will have a chance to review them before voting on the budget on Wednesday.

Mr. Sce asked if these priorities were going in the wrong direction in terms of the budget – they all increase the budget. Mr. Adlerstein explained that the point of the list is to encourage cost-savings so that the district can get its priorities.

Mr. Sce noted that some people wish they could vote on a larger budget. He noted that there is nothing that prevents the public from making a charitable contribution to a school to get what it wants. From a tax perspective, one is better off making a charitable contribution than paying property taxes. Further, with a charitable contribution, one can designate where it can be spent (music, science etc.). The Board should promote that charitable contributions can be made. In addition, many companies will match a charitable contribution. Ms. Gorsky noted that in theory this is a great idea but in the process of creating a budget, one cannot count on a donation.

#### Public Participation

A resident commented that while she would like to have full-day kindergarten, if it cannot be done well (given that there will be 19 students per class), then the money should not be wasted.

A resident commented expressed concern about what has not been considered in the cost of offering all-day kindergarten such as increased use of the cafeteria and other items.

A resident inquired about the charitable contribution suggestion and asked what happens if a program is not available. Mr. Sce explained that in such an instance, the donation could not be accepted.

Mr. Swanson noted that the projected cost for all-day kindergarten is just to get the program started. It includes teacher salaries but not paraprofessionals etc.

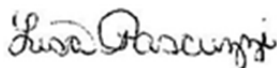
Mr. Pagoni commented that the Board is not working with a real number for all-day kindergarten. The number presented is not accurate and if a decision is to be made next week on what has been defined as a top priority item, a better number will be needed. Mr. Guzman clarified that the supplies and materials are taken into account and that the number is accurate. He noted that some estimates had to be made since there are multiple unknowns such as how many students would need transportation and how many parents would opt for half-day vs. full-day kindergarten as well as a variety of other factors.

A discussion took place regarding all-day kindergarten and doing it well.

#### 6. Adjournment

The meeting ended at 10:27 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa A. Pascuzzi

Clerk



**TOLLAND TOWN COUNCIL  
HICKS MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER  
6<sup>th</sup> FLOOR COUNCIL ROOM  
JANUARY 28, 2014 – 7:30 P.M.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jack Scavone, Chairman; George Baker, Vice-Chair; Richard Field; William Eccles; Paul Krasusky; Jan Rubino and Ben Stanford

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Steven Werbner, Town Manager; Michael Wilkinson, Director of Administrative Services; Lisa Hancock, Director of Finance and Records; Vanessa Rossitto, Blum, Shapiro & Company P.C.; Barry Bernabe, Webster Bank

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Jack Scavone called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Recited.
3. **MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Observed.
4. **PROCLAMATIONS:** None.
5. **PUBLIC PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** *(on any subject within the jurisdiction of the Town Council) (2 minute limit)*

**Dorothy Mickiewicz of 32 Barstow Lane:** She thanked Ms. Rubino and Mr. Werbner for their review and edits to the Rules of Procedures document. She appreciates their work.

6. **PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:** None.

7a. **REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES RESPONSIBLE TO THE COUNCIL:** None.

7b. **REPORTS OF TOWN COUNCIL LIAISONS:** Paul Krasusky updated on the recent BOE workshop, which included the regular meeting. Ms. Rubino, Mr. Baker and Mr. Scavone were also in attendance. The Board continued to brainstorm with the public and the district to identify some cost savings and general ideas. Some ideas included the use of student teachers as substitutes; consolidate bus routes, and possibly closing the BOE building. They have found that all of the ‘low hanging fruit’ cost savings initiatives have already been implemented, so they are trying to find more creative ways. The new estimate for a level services budget is an increase in the range of 3.6 - 4.7%. They are noting that the effects of declining enrollment are being outpaced by expense increases. With regard to all-day kindergarten, a lot of people have been in support of it, but now they are hearing from a lot of people who are against it. There are additional workshops scheduled. Ms. Rubino commented that the Ag Commission wants to work with the Conservation Commission to get some mowing work done. Mr. Field said the PCC meeting was snowed out. Mr. Baker commented on PZC meeting: The zoning regulations have been finalized. The public hearing is scheduled for March 10<sup>th</sup>. There are six areas that have proposed changes. Mr. Krasusky commented that the Shared Services Committee met and continues to meet. They will get the schedule posted.

8. **NEW BUSINESS (ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS):**

8.1 Presentation and discussion of 2012-2013 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

Vanessa Rossitto of Blum, Shapiro & Company P.C. spoke. The members were provided copies of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (“CAFR”), the Federal Single Audit and the State Single Audit. They have issued an unmodified or clean opinion to the Town of Tolland. It is the highest form of an opinion

that you can receive. It means that everything is presented correctly in accordance with government auditing standards. The report contained the management's discussion and analysis written by Lisa Hancock. It is a summary of what is contained in the CAFR. It tells the story behind the numbers, as to why they increased or decreased. Ms. Rossitto spoke about the various funds of the town.

With regard to the Federal and State Single Audits: Because the town receives both Federal and State grants, they are required to perform these. The Federal Single Audit: They test programs based upon rules mandated by the federal government. They tested the Special Education cluster. They issued an unmodified opinion over compliance on this grant and over the internal controls. For the State Single Audit, they tested the Family Resource Centers and the underground storage tank clean-up from the DEP and town-aid road. The State audit also received an unmodified opinion over compliance and over internal controls.

## 8.2 Debt Management Plan Presentation by Barry Bernabe of Webster Bank.

Barry Bernabe of Webster Bank provided a handout, which he reviewed with the Council. An Annual Debt Management Plan was put together with the assistance of the Finance Director. Actual and proposed capital projects for fiscal years ending 2015 through 2020 total \$17.7m. The concept is to look at how the debt comes onto the town's existing debt profile, and to see what the budget impact is, the tax impact, and how it looks. There are two methods for the town to borrow: BANS (a short-term debt) and Bonds (a permanent financing). They are assuming that over six (6) years, the town would do three (3) BAN issues and three (3) Bond issues. There was a chart included that showed the ten year U.S. Treasury Yield. It has bounced around, but since the early 80's has declined. Rates seem to be around the 3% range, which are still low from a historical perspective. He spoke of the rating scale. S&P upgraded the town to a triple A rating, which is the highest rating possible. It ranks right along with Greenwich, Avon, West Hartford, and New Canaan. He commented that Tolland excels in management practices, controls their financial balance, and Tolland's debt management stays in line. A graph showed the town's existing debt service. The way the bonds have been structured in the past is a positive. New debt comes on, as the old debt comes off.

In summary:

- Short term interest rates remain at very low levels (under 0.25%), while long term rates have increased from their all-time lows from 2012, but still are at historically low levels.
- The town has above average bond ratings. S&P recently upgraded the town to AAA. This is a truly remarkable event. This will allow the town to borrow at the lowest possible rate.
- Fitch rates the town AA+, and Moody Aa2.
- The town has detailed policies for Fund Balance, Debt Service and CIP.
- The town's existing debt service amortizes aggressively.
- This aggressive debt amortization will help mitigate the impact of the proposed new debt.
- Structured appropriately, the town's CIP totaling about \$17,755,000 will not have a material impact on the Town's debt service budget.

Mr. Werbner commented that Mr. Bernabe's assumptions for debt is based upon the five (5) year Capital Plan that he submitted, which has yet to be vetted out by the Council. Included in a worst case scenario for

debt services were some of the major projects left (large projects at the schools, fire house repairs and expansions, a new consolidated Public Works facility). We could do all these things by borrowing \$17m, and because of the decline in debt, really have level funded debt service over the next 5 – 6 years. There is really nothing to add in the foreseeable future in terms of large building type projects. The town is in a good position if they wanted to take advantage of the economic times we are in now. We could afford it.

## 8.3 Consideration of a resolution to approve the revised Personnel Policies and Procedures.

Mr. Wilkinson commented that they updated some areas of the Personnel Policies and Procedures. Some changes included the updating of the definition of a temporary employee, they added language regarding the hiring of relatives of Town of Tolland employees, and they increased carryover vacation from one week to two weeks.

George Baker read the following resolution:

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby approves the attached revisions to the “Town of Tolland Personnel Policies and Procedures”.

Seconded by Rick Field. All in favor. None opposed.

8.4 Consideration and action on approving Generic Rules of Procedures for Commission Use.

Ms. Rubino updated that the proposed Rules discussed at the last meeting were reviewed and edited by her and Mr. Werbner. Mr. Baker said the changes looked good.

George Baker read the following resolution:

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby approves the attached Generic Rules of Procedures for Commission Use.

Seconded by Ben Stanford. All in favor. None opposed.

8.5 Consideration and action on approving 2013-2015 Town Council Goals.

Mr. Scavone edited the proposed goals, and e-mailed his suggestions to the Council members.

Mr. Krasusky read the suggested goals:

1. Implement a strategy with the Economic Development Commission, Town Council, Planning & Zoning Commission, the Development Office and the stakeholders that is sufficiently specific to allow for the proper marketing and to ensure development opportunities of the Tolland Village Area, the Tech Zone and other developable properties.
2. Draft a plan that the Town Council and Board of Education can support to uncover and implement the consolidation of Town and BOE functions and services (i.e. accounting software, IT services, building operations and systems monitoring, maintenance and operations etc.).
3. Expand the review of operational policies for increased revenue potentials and/operational cost savings (i.e. the renting of Town facilities, schools, ball fields, parks to private groups, etc.).
4. Implement CCM's Solar PPA program (solar farm) on a Town owned property.
5. Develop a benchmarking system of measurement that will ensure that the above goals are achieved.

George Baker read the following resolution:

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby approves the attached Town Council goals for the term 2013-2015.

Seconded by Ben Stanford. All in favor. None opposed.

8.6 Consideration of a resolution reallocating the remaining balance of \$12,529 from the TMS paving project and \$5,000 from the TMS track resurfacing project to an account for replacement of the baseball and softball field dugouts.

Mr. Werbner said these are remaining funds from capital improvement projects that were done for the BOE. The request from the BOE is to utilize these funds towards the cost of replacing dugouts that were damaged during Storm Sandy. Insurance is going to pay for a portion, but additional dugouts need repair as well. They would like to get this work done in time for the Spring season.

George Baker read the following *amended* resolution:

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby approves a reallocation of the remaining balance of \$12,529 from the TMS paving project and \$5,000 from the TMS track resurfacing project to an account for replacement of the baseball and softball field dugouts. ~~which were damaged during Storm Sandy in October, 2013.~~

Seconded by Jan Rubino.

Mr. Field suggested leaving out the last portion of the resolution, because not all dugouts being repaired were damaged by Storm Sandy. It was decided that the resolution should be amended.

All in favor. None opposed.

8.7 Appointments to vacancies on various municipal boards/commissions.

Jan Rubino motioned to make the following changes to the Historic District Commission:

Rodney Hurtuk – requesting move from Regular Member to Alternate – term 11/12/13-11/12/18  
Jonathan Gould – requesting move from Alternate to Regular Member – term 11/12/13-11/12/18

Seconded by Ben Stanford. All in favor. None opposed.

9. **OLD BUSINESS (ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS):** None.

10. **REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER (A WRITTEN REPORT SHALL BE PROVIDED THE 1<sup>ST</sup> MEETING OF THE MONTH ONLY):** Mr. Werbner had nothing additional to add to his written report.

11. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

11.1 January 14, 2014 Regular Meeting Minutes: Rick Field moved to adopt the minutes; Seconded by Jan Rubino. All in favor. None opposed.

12. **CORRESPONDENCE TO COUNCIL**

- 12.1 E-mail from Suzanne Kasai, 33 Wildwood Road re: in favor of all-day kindergarten;
- 12.2 E-mails from Elizabeth Chojnicki, 10 Old Farm Road re: opposing all-day kindergarten;
- 12.3 E-mails from Ms. Wojnar re: voting on the budget and taxes;
- 12.4 E-mail from Jeremy Chojnicki, 10 Old Farm Road re: opposing all-day kindergarten;
- 12.5 Michelle Harrold, 256 Mountain Spring Road re: all-day Kindergarten; and
- 12.6 Invitation to the Tolland Cub Scout Pack 15 Blue and Gold dinner banquet on Saturday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> @ 6:00 p.m. at TMS. Mr. Krasusky will be attending on behalf of the Council.

13. **COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS FROM COUNCILPERSONS:** Ms. Rubino asked that ‘shared services recommendations’ be an agenda item for the next meeting, if they are ready. Also, Mr. Werbner mentioned that a joint meeting with the BOE will most likely be scheduled before the next Council regular meeting.

14. **PUBLIC LISTED PARTICIPATION** (*on any subject within the jurisdiction of the Town Council*) (*3 minute limit*): None.

15. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Rick Field motioned to go into Executive Session at 8:16 p.m., thus ending the Regular Meeting of the Town Council; Seconded by George Baker. All in favor. None opposed.

15.1 Executive Session to discuss a Personnel Matter.

16. **ADJOURNMENT:** Bill Eccles moved to adjourn the meeting; Seconded by Rick Field at 8:33 p.m.  
All were in favor.

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Jack Scavone, Council Chair

Michelle A. Finnegan  
Town Council Clerk