

***APPROVED MINUTES*** of the Joint Meeting of the City Council of the City of Rye and the Rye City School Board held in City Hall on April 6, 2019 at 9:00 A.M.

PRESENT:

JOSH COHN, Mayor  
SARA GODDARD  
EMILY HURD  
RICHARD MECCA  
JULIE SOUZA  
BENJAMIN STACKS  
DANIELLE TAGGER-EPSTEIN  
Councilmembers

KAREN BELANGER, President  
JENNIFER BOYLE  
CHRIS REPETTO  
KELLY SMITH-POWERS  
School Board Members

MARCUS SERRANO, City Manager  
ERIC BYRNE, Superintendent of Schools  
NOGA RUTTENBERG, Confidential Secretary of the City Manager  
BRIAN DEMPSEY, Chair of Traffic & Transportation Committee

ABSENT: CALLIE ERICKSON  
KATY KEOHANE GLASSBERG  
BLAKE JINES-STOREY  
School Board Members

The City Council and the School Board convened at 9:05 a.m.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Cohn called the meeting to order and invited the Council and Board to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

Mayor Cohn asked the Secretary to the City Manager to call the roll; a quorum of both boards were present to conduct official business.

3. State of the City of Rye Report

Mayor Cohn explained the State of the City Address was given in January at the City Council Meeting. He added a few main points from that address. Mayor Cohn said that the City was facing major infrastructure needs while operating with a lean staff to run the City. From a tax perspective, the City has stayed below the tax cap even though the cost to run the City is rising. The City is looking to borrow in late 2019 or Early 2020 for courthouse renovations, Disbrow Park repairs, and plans to move forward with necessary sewer maintenance.

4. State of the School's Report

Dr. Byrne reported the school budget is well under the tax cap and is maintained through fiscal responsibility and sustainability, building capacity, and instructional improvement through high capacity development. He explained that the major contribution for fiscal responsibility was through collective bargaining; specifically through the teacher's association contract and the restructuring of a tax cap compliant salary scale. Dr. Byrne also explained by hiring a maintenance mechanic, it allowed the school to get ahead of maintenance issues while saving money on outside contractors. The staff and administration have all committed to reviewing the curriculum and teaching practices which has resulted in the adoption of a new mathematics program for September 2019. Additionally, the school focused on Special Education needs which has resulted in additional inclusionary classes for the upcoming school year. Lastly, safety was also discussed as a main point of concern for the school district. Many changes regarding safety were included in the upcoming bond and a new coordinator was hired to analyze security and safety protocols, as well as looking to improve the preparedness and training drills with Rye Police Department.

5. Safe Routes to School

Brian Dempsey, Chairman of the Traffic & Safety Committee, spoke about the successful program that has been embraced over the past few years. Sidewalk safety and inventory is consistently reviewed for improvement. Mayor Cohn added that the recent Fireman's Circle improvements has safety and structural goals and is in line with the Safe Routes to School, as crosswalks and sidewalks have been added.

Councilwoman Souza added that communication is key and should be a key component to bring awareness to the residents. Ms. Powers reported that during the last meeting it was brought up that the community needs to embrace safety as a whole and added different ideas to change the culture of the community. She said she would add this topic at the next Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Committee meeting to make sure the topic of distracted driving and distractive walking has awareness with teenagers and adults and brainstorm on new ideas to get the message across.

6. Crossing Guards

There was nothing to report under this agenda item.

7. Idling at Schools

Mayor Cohn spoke about the importance of re-visiting the “no-idling at school” campaign. There was general discussion on how to stop idling cars at schools. Some ideas discussed to tackle this ongoing problem were spot enforcement from police officers throughout the year, and parent education.

8. Public Safety

Board President Belanger explained that the “Adopt a School” program that partners police with the school district has been cut back. Mayor Cohn clarified that due to retirements, officers are currently in the Academy and should be fully active by the end of this August. Ms. Belanger was very thankful for the program hopes the program will be reinvigorated by the new school year. Mayor Cohn added that once staffing is back to capacity, a single dedicated Youth Officer, rather than the current situation of several officers rotating in that capacity, will be established.

Ms. Belanger also asked for an update on the position of Public Safety Commissioner or re-visiting the role of Fire and Police Commissioner. Mayor Cohn explained that the position is still being reviewed and will be re-visited after the current study of the Fire Department/Fire Command is concluded. Action will most likely be taken after the summer.

9. City Permits

Mayor Cohn explained that at the school bond referendum there were food trucks present. He wanted to remind the group that currently a waiver must be obtained under our current code which does not allow food trucks, until any changes to the Peddler and Solicitor’s law is changed.

10. Intermunicipal Agreement

Board President Belanger explained to the public that an Intermunicipal Agreement is customary between two entities and the former agreement was never renewed, for no specific reason. There is currently a draft agreement being reviewed and should be formalized in the near future.

There being no further business for the two boards to discuss, Mayor Cohn adjourned the joint meeting at 10:21 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Euka Pietrosanti  
Deputy City Clerk