

***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 5, 2014 at 9:00 A.M.

PRESENT:

JOSEPH A. SACK Mayor  
LAURA BRETT  
KIRSTIN BUCCI  
TERRENCE McCARTNEY  
RICHARD MECCA  
RICHARD SLACK  
Councilmembers

LAURA SLACK, President  
KAREN BELANGER  
KATY KEOHANE GLASSBERG  
NANCY PASQUALE  
CHRIS REPETTO  
NICOLE WEBER  
School Board Members

SCOTT PICKUP, City Manager  
GABRIELLA O'CONNOR, Assistant Superintendent for Business  
BETTY ANN WYKS, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum

ABSENT: JULIE KILLIAN, Councilmember  
EDWARD FOX, Board Member

The meeting convened at 9:00 a.m. Councilman Mecca made a motion, seconded by Councilwoman Brett and unanimously carried, to immediately adjourn into executive session to discuss attorney/client matters. Councilwoman Brett made a motion, seconded by Councilman Mecca and unanimously carried, to adjourn the executive session at 9:55 a.m. The joint meeting convened at 10:00 a.m.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Sack called the meeting to order and invited everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

Mayor Sack asked the City Clerk to call the roll; a quorum of both boards was present to conduct business.

3. Progress of 2013 Joint Meeting

Board President Slack said the School Board was grateful to the City for the additional crossing guards and Mayor Sack said there has been a suggestion to have bi-annual meetings of the two boards.

4. State of the City of Rye Report

Mayor Sack said there are many issues that demand the attention of the City but noted several that are currently top priorities:

- Playland – The SPI Plan has been presented to the County Board of Legislators for approval. The City believes that the project should come before the City’s Land Use Boards for approval in order to make sure that all issues of concern to Rye residents are vetted and dealt with.
- Police Commissioner Search – The Council must determine if they want a Police Commissioner or a Public Safety Commissioner prior to going forward with the search.
- Labor Contracts – The Police Arbitration Award only covered through 2010. The Council is formulating a bargaining strategy for the current open contracts and hopes to have positive discussions within the next few weeks.
- Affordable Housing – The City wants to make sure the parcel in question is an environmentally safe place for people to live and they also want to consider the points of view of the neighbors. In order to go forward there must be both a zoning change and site plan approval.
- Whitby Castle - A committee made up of members of the Golf Commission, City Council and other interested citizens has been reviewing RFP submissions and is getting closer to making a decision on what will be done with Whitby Castle. In the interim an agreement has been entered into for operation of the snack bar. A new General Manager has been hired.

5. State of the School’s Report

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Betty Ann Wyks spoke about the strategic priorities the School District is dealing with including:

- Student Achievement – The District is: implementing the Common Core (the current fourth grade class will be the first class held to the Common Core college and career readiness standards at high school graduation); implementing curriculum revisions; implementing their approach to remediation intervention; offering 23 different AP exams to students; and, expanding elective offerings at the high school and middle school. Information was provided regarding standardized test results; students receiving special recognition; and, students taking multiple AP examinations.
- Teacher Training – The District has been focusing on teacher effectiveness and training. Information was provided on various programs that are being offered for teachers.

- Quality of Care – The District has policies and practices in place that support positive behavior among students, and character education programs are in place in the schools.
- Fiscal responsibility – The District: has implemented programs to track staff attendance; is looking for staffing efficiencies in order to obtain the most effective use of staff time; proposed a budget with a 1.64% increase; is trying to maintain technology initiatives; and, has created a Tax Cap Task Force, to help with advocacy efforts.
- Facility needs - The District is: allocating money for building needs; looking to hire additional staff when the construction is completed; and, providing for custodial services. The construction project is on track to be completed by the opening of school in September.
- Community Engagement – The District is concerned with student data privacy; and, is implementing additional technology to improve communication with the community.
- Staffing – Several upcoming retirements have or will be announced.

6. Security Discussion with regard to the Rye City School District

Board President Slack said that the School District has been implementing recommendations suggested by a Security Consultant that was hired last year. Additional security was hired for the high school/middle school and elementary schools and another person will be hired for the high school/middle school after the construction is completed. She said the additional crossing guards hired by the City are making a big difference and reiterated a previous request for an additional police presence to drive by the schools at arrival and dismissal time. A request was also made that when a new Police Commissioner is appointed, a meeting should be set up with representatives of the schools.

7. Discussion of Pedestrian Safety initiatives: Safe Routes to School projects

City Manager Pickup provided the boards with two renditions of the high school/middle school property, one showing the current entrance/exits on Milton Road and the second showing a proposed change. He said there are opportunities with the current construction to address issues at the busy intersections near the high school/middle school that could free up some of the traffic congestion. Meetings have been held with representatives of the City, the School Administration and the Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Committee. There is money in the City budget for these improvements and final plans are being worked on so the project could go out to bid and the improvements be completed in time for the opening of school in September.

8. Discussion of Revaluation and the scheduling of a September meeting between the City Council and the Board of Education

Mayor Sack said that the City Council is ready to reconsider the subject of revaluation and presented pros and cons of the issue. A positive is that a revaluation could bring more equality and might reduce tax certs. The negatives are: the cost of a revaluation would be about

\$1 million; and it would not generate additional revenue but would just redistribute the revenue with 1/3 of properties decreasing, 1/3 remaining flat, and 1/3 increasing in valuation.

The boards will look at finding a date early in October for a second meeting.

9. Discussion of the Civility Initiative

Kristin Jaust and Shari Belaish, representing The Rye Youth Council, provided an overview of what led up to the creation of the Civility Statement, which has now been endorsed by 68 organizations in the City of Rye. They then explained that the Rye Civility Initiative has been created as the next step in the movement to empower people to live by principles of civility and create a public forum for them. The co-leaders of this initiative are the Rye Youth Council, the Rye YMCA and the Rye Arts Center. The website is [www.civilityinitiative.org](http://www.civilityinitiative.org).

10. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss Councilman Mecca made a motion, seconded by Councilwoman Brett and unanimously carried, to adjourn the joint meeting and for the City Council to adjourn into executive session to discuss personnel and not return at 10:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn F. Nodarse  
City Clerk