

APPROVED MINUTES of the Joint Meeting of the City Council of the City of Rye and the Rye City School District held in City Hall on October 8, 2014 at 7:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

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

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

Dr. FRANK ALVAREZ, Superintendent of School District
FRANK CULROSS, City Manager
GABRIELLA O'CONNOR, Assistant Superintendent for Business
Dr. BETTY ANN WYKS, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

ABSENT: BLAKE JINES-STOREY, Board Member

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Sack called the meeting to order and invited the Council and School Board 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 official business.

3. Update on Rye City School District construction project and schedule

Board President Slack thanked the City for allowing the School District to do construction work outside of regularly allowed construction hours and for the use of the “snow fields” for staff parking. Superintendent Alvarez said that the District considered the new addition “opened on time” but there are a number of items on a “punch list” that are being worked on. The District hopes to have an official opening in a couple of weeks. Assistant Superintendent O’Connor said that students have full access to the building but that work will continue after school hours in the evenings and on weekends.

4. Discussion of School Safety: Drills and Coordination with the City

Assistant Superintendent O’Connor reported that some of the recommendations made by the school district’s security consultant, Stonegate, were implemented during the school year and others over the summer months. Some changes implemented include the installation of an emergency alert system for loud areas; new access cards for employees in order to monitor who is in the building and control access to the buildings; and, installation of security films on lower windows in the buildings. City Manager Culross said that meetings have been held with the City and School District and the City will assist in any way requested. Superintendent Alvarez said that the District has tried to shore up the facilities, hired a new security personnel firm; created a new Emergency Management Plan; implemented staff training; and is coordinating with police and first responders and allowing police to have access to the schools on days when school is off in order to conduct practice drills. Board President Slack suggested that the police should conduct an annual drill in all five school buildings.

4A. Update on Safe Routes Grants

City Manager Culross reported that all the projects that were on the Safe Routes list have either been designed or are in design with a goal of completing the projects during the off school months. Two projects on the list have not received State approval and, therefore the grant funds allocated for those projects will be repurposed. The State took issue with the project at the five corners intersection at Midland Avenue and Grace Church Street because one of the roads is a County road. However, the project is in design and City staff believes they have come up with a better solution. The project for “Rapid Beacons” at Forest Avenue and Eve Lane was not approved because there is no formalized and maintained Easement. Beacons for other areas of the City have been approved as well as pedestrian improvements around Theall Road and Grace Church Street and sidewalk improvements around Milton School

4B. Drugs in Schools and the Community

Mayor Sack said there was a desire in the community that the City and School District have plans in place for enforcement and education regarding drugs and asked the City Manager and School Superintendent to make sure that plans are in place.

Superintendent Alvarez provided a brief overview of school activities that address the issue of drug and alcohol abuse including the health curriculum; counselors in schools; security people in place; cosponsoring an event with the Rye Youth Counsel; and, participating in a statewide survey for children in grades 7 through 12. Councilwoman Killian and Board Member

Pasquale spoke about forming coalitions to deal with the issue. City Manager Culross read a statement regarding three drug related arrests that have been made in the City since September 14th, increased police presence in the schools and patrol division enforcement.

5. State of the School's Report on Enrollment

Board President Slack discussed issues the District is dealing with due to the continued increased enrollment in the schools. Enrollment has increased 18% and the district has gone from classes of 100, 18 years ago to classes of 280 now. She stated figures regarding the costs for the District to educate each child (approximately \$22,000 per year) in comparison to the average school tax payment from each home. For instance even with a large home, taxes could be approximately \$45,000 for the school district and if a family has three, four or five children in such a large home the school property does not provide enough tax revenue to compensate for the children living on the property. She said all the classrooms are full and there is no land to expand the facilities. Ms. Slack suggested that the City Council should look into amending zoning laws to help reduce the amount of homes that can be built as of right. Mayor Sack said the City needs to better understand the issue and determine if the increase in students is coming from developments and subdivisions or just normal home sales. He asked if the City could be provided with the addresses for new enrollment in the School District in order to determine if the increased enrollment is coming from new development.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss Councilman Mecca made a motion, seconded by Board Member Pasquale and unanimously carried, to adjourn into executive session to discuss litigation and not return to the joint meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn F. Nodarse
City Clerk