

Highland Central School District

**MINUTES**

Special Board of Education Meeting

Thursday, January 3, 2013

7 pm – 9 pm to be held in High School Cafeteria

**ATTENDEES**

Board Members Present: Alan Barone, Sue Gilmore, Tom Miller, Kim Sweeney, Debbie Pagano, and Mike Reid / Absent: Mike Bakatsias

Administrators / Directors / Principals Present: Deborah Haab, Superintendent of Schools; Roseanne Bayne, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Louise M. Lynch, Business Administrator; Barbara E. Chapman, Director of Student Services; Pete Miller, Director of Buildings and Grounds; Debbie Tompkins, Assistant Director of Transportation; Carol Potash, Director of Technology; Lynda Keech, Administrator Intern; Pete Harris, High School Principal; Sarah Dudley-Lemak, High School Assistant Principal; Daniel Seyler-Wetzel, Middle School Principal; Megan Connors, Middle School Assistant Principal; Joel Freer, Elementary School Principal; Rosann LaManna, Elementary School Assistant Principal

Student Representative Present: Nikhil Tikoo (absent)

**CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (7:02 pm)**

Alan Barone, Board President, called meeting to Order at 7:02 pm and Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Alan Barone opened meeting stating how the tragedy in Newtown has affected not only the community members here in Highland but as well as the entire nation. As of January 3<sup>rd</sup>, three security unarmed trained individuals have been assigned to each of the buildings until an approved plan is in place. The purpose of tonight's meeting is to let the public discuss their concerns/suggestions on improving security and safety at HCSD.

**BOARD PRESIDENT, ALAN BARONE, INTRODUCED THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS:**

- Daniel Waage, Chief of Police
- John Gallagher, Fire Chief
- Joel Freer, Elementary School Principal
- Daniel Seyler-Wetzel, Middle School Principal
- Pete Harris, High School Principal
- Pete Miller, Director of Buildings and Grounds
- Security personnel for the sole purpose of security for district:
  - Sean McCutcheon
  - Pete Watkins
  - Wade Sargent

- Carol Potash, Director of Technology
- Lynda Keech, Administrator Intern
- Assistant Principals:
  - Sarah Dudley-Lemak
  - Megan Connors
  - Rosann LaManna
- Jeff Paladino, Council Member Town of Lloyd
- Kate Jonietz, Secretary to Town Supervisor
- Debbie Tompkins, Assistant Director of Transportation

**MESSAGES FROM:**

- Chief Daniel Waage, Lloyd police, introduced his staff and listed events of security measures that have taken place since December 14<sup>th</sup>. For example: walk through of each building; meetings with administrators; scheduling of training seminars; and organizing safety committees.

The Board had the following questions/concerns/comments:

- Training staff – classroom based
- Frequency of safety drills

**BUILDING PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

Each principal presented their reports regarding building access. This includes additional security measures that have taken place since December 14<sup>th</sup>:

Joel Freer, Elementary School Principal reported the following:

- During instructional day there is one main entrance (locked door) and security personnel at main entrance
- ID required by all visitors during arrival and dismissal time
- Exits during dismissal
- Process for dismissal of students that are “car riders”
- Security cameras
- Recess monitors have access to keys for locked doors in building
- Safety plans reviewed
- Radio's availability during recess time
- Discourage parking in noted areas
- Correspondence between staff and parents that have been received by email and/or letters
- Procedures for Sign-In Sheets
- Faculty and Staff required to wear ID badge

The Board had the following questions/concerns/comments:

- How after-school activities (for example the YMCA program) would be affected with the updated security measures. Discussion took place.

Daniel Seyler-Wetzel, Middle School Principal reported the following:

- Lock down drills
- Typically all exit doors locked and now front door as well locked
- ID required by all staff and faculty
- Checking security of doors
- Additional monitoring cameras
- Regular scheduled walk-through in building to check doors

The Board had the following questions/concerns/comments:

- Should safety drills be occurring more frequently and if there should be a change in format? Response - Future drills will be announced via K-12 alerts however this will eventually be changed to “unannounced”.

Pete Harris, High School Principal reported the following:

- All exit doors currently locked including front door
- Wade Sargent located at main entrance building
- Procedure for “late arrival” entrance for students
- Process for tardy students entering the building
- Restrictions for “alumni” visitors
- Monitoring of the back door by staff members
- Monitoring cameras
- ID and purpose of visit required by all visitors
- Procedure for visitors requesting entrance to Central Administration office
- Layout that occurred for the November Countywide Early Dismissal Drill

The Board had the following questions/concerns/comments:

- Discussion on how are deliveries handled (for example UPS, FedEx, etc)
- Monitoring of traffic outside of building

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Board President, Alan Barone, invited the public to speak about their concerns about safety. Alan Barone reminded audience that a response or answer may not be given right away due to accurate information be given.

The following are topics that community members expressed concern about:

- First Sergeant Perry Soul of the Ulster County Sheriff’s Dept mentioned that the safety issues at schools have been an overwhelming concern with all schools. Safety issues will be addressed countywide.
- Safety Drills
- Visitors that are armed – policy in place?
- Request of a social worker in each building to support student’s well being
- Intercom system for building entrance
- Training and protection of staff
- Hiring of retired police officer

### **DIRECTOR OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS**

Pete Miller, Director of Buildings and Grounds discussed the following:

- Twelve (12) additional security cameras and the location will be implemented by end of January
- Large monitors in offices to cover exterior doors will be installed in each building
- Monitoring cameras – staff
- Providing local law enforcement with remote electronic access to the school's security cameras
- Increase portable radio's
- Buzzer system for deliveries into building

The Board had the following questions/concerns/comments:

- Motion detectors for alarm systems
- Who is responsible in checking windows and doors locked in evening – Custodians.
- Hallway doors being locked when school not in session – Unable to be done.

### **SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

Deborah Haab, Superintendent of Schools discussed the following:

- Safety drills will continually be prepared;
- Notification via K-12 alerts of safety drills will be sent to parents/guardians
- Town of Lloyd Police Department are scheduling a classroom setting training for school administrators
- ID badges required by all faculty and staff
- Enhancing sign-in sheets for visitors
- Facilities improvements (example building entry system) is a high priority

The Board had the following questions/concerns/comments:

- Budget will reflect these enhanced security items during budget time

### **BOARD PRESIDENT**

Alan Barone, Board President, discussed the following:

- As of January 3<sup>rd</sup>, security personnel have been assigned to each building; two of those have a capability to carry firearms. After verification from legal this is acceptable to have. A short term plan is being established after feedback from the public as well as Town of Lloyd departments and Board members.

Board discussion took place regarding the pro's and con's of trained security personnel be allowed to carry their fire arms. After discussion, a consensus took place when asked if they approved a security officer, located in the Highland Central School, be allowed to carry firearm:

Kim Sweeney	Agree
Tom Miller	Agree for short term
Mike Reid	Agree
Debbie Pagano	Agree
Sue Gilmore	Disagree
Alan Barone	Agree until a permanent solution takes place
Mike Bakatsias	(not present)

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following are comments that the public presented regarding safety issues as well as security officials being allowed to carry fire arms:

- Supports an armed officer being placed at main entrance – perhaps more than one individual can be considered;
- Visual police officer offering a safe and secure environment for students
- Armed officers can provide additional protection to students
- Reality of an armed officer in school and how that may negatively affect students
- Security plans for the “before” and “after” school programs (especially at the elementary school)
- Monitoring of camera’s
- K-12 alerts being utilized for security information (ex. planned safety drills)
- Uniform for security officer
- Metal detectors
- Alan Barone gave a brief background of the three individuals that are assigned on a substitute basis until a permanent plan can take place. These individuals are for security purposes only.
  - Pete Watkins – Long-time teacher in Highland; Interim Dean of Students; Former Athletic Director. As a retiree he has extensive knowledge of the District and buildings.
  - Wade Sargent - District’s former School Resource Officer ; Retiree of the Town of Lloyd Police Department
  - Sean McCutcheon – Served with New Paltz Police Department; prior experience as a DARE officer; part-time officer with Town of Lloyd
- Tyler Witherspoon, student, spoke about the lack of a social worker at high school and encourages the support of a security officer located in building for after school activities.

### **CLOSING COMMENT**

The Board thanked everyone for coming out and showing their concerns about safety in school. Please continue to show your support especially during budget cycle. Periodic updates with security plans will be discussed at scheduled Board meetings. Any questions or concerns are to be emailed to Superintendent of Schools. The next Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 8<sup>th</sup> at 8 pm.

### **ADJOURNMENT (9:20 pm)**