



TOWN OF ROCKY HILL
MEETING MINUTES/MOTIONS

In order to comply with Connecticut General Statutes regarding minutes of meetings, the following will be used to record information during all public meetings that take place. An original must be submitted to the Town Clerk of Rocky Hill within 48 hours of the meeting being adjourned. Motions should be complete, showing the maker and second of the motion as well as how each member voted. Unanimous votes may be listed as unanimous.

Table with 2 columns: Field Name and Value. Fields include: NAME OF PUBLIC BOARD OR COMMISSION (Board of Education), DATE MEETING AGENDA POSTED (November 13, 2009), LOCATION (Rocky Hill Town Hall Council Chambers), DATE OF MEETING (November 19, 2009), TIME MEETING STARTED (7:02 p.m.), PERSON PREPARING MEETING MINUTES (Jo-Anne Booth, Recording Secretary), VERBATIM NOTES TAKEN (checkboxes for Yes/No), AUDIO, VIDEO OR LIVE TRANSMISSION OF MEETING (checkboxes for Yes/No).

MEMBERS PRESENT AT MEETING

Table with 2 columns listing members: 1. William MacDonald, Chairman; 2. Rene (Skip) Rivard, Vice Chairman; 3. Marc Beliveau; 4. Raffaella Calciano-Coler; 5. Dilip Desai; 6. Brian Dillon; 7. Maria Mennella; 8. Frank Morse; 9. Edward (Alex) Silva; 10. Also present: Superintendent Dr. Jeffrey Villar; 11. Assistant Superintendent Marian Hourigan; 12. Finance Director Frank Connolly.

NUMBER REQUIRED FOR QUORUM 5 QUORUM PRESENT [X] Yes [ ] No

TEXT MOTIONS AND RESULTS VOTES

1st MOTION [X] Passed [ ] Failed [ ] Tabled

Moved by Edward (Alex) Silva, seconded by Brian Dillon, that the Rocky Hill Board of Education elect as its Officers, the following: William (Bill) MacDonald for Chairmanship; Rene (Skip) Rivard for Vice Chairman and Frank Morse for Secretary. FAVOR: ALL MOTION CARRIED

2nd MOTION  Passed  Failed  Tabled

**Moved by Raffaella Calciano-Coler, seconded by Edward (Alex) Silva, to move Item # 10 (Board Member Recognition) up on this evening's agenda (before "Approval of Minutes").**

**FAVOR: ALL  
MOTION CARRIED**

3rd MOTION  Passed  Failed  Tabled

**Moved by Rene (Skip) Rivard, seconded by Raffaella Calciano-Coler, to approve the Minutes and Working Notes of the October 15, 2009 Board of Education meeting and the Minutes of the November 5, 2009 special Board of Education meeting.**

**FAVOR: MacDonald, Rivard, Calciano-Coler, Mennella, Morse, Silva  
ABSTAINED: Beliveau, Desai, Dillon**

**MOTION CARRIED**

4th MOTION  Passed  Failed  Tabled

**Moved by Rene (Skip) Rivard, seconded by Frank Morse, to accept the Consent Calendar of November 19, 2009 (Field Trip – Grade 8 at Griswold Middle School, Washington, D.C. Trip, June 1-4, 2010; Field Trip – Rocky Hill High School Bands (Symphonic, Jazz, Marching) – Walt Disney World Resort, Orlando, Florida, April 14-21, 2010).**

**FAVOR: ALL  
MOTION CARRIED**

5th MOTION  Passed  Failed  Tabled

**Moved by Raffaella Calciano-Coler, seconded by Rene (Skip) Rivard, to accept the Administrators' Contract.**

**FAVOR: MacDonald, Rivard, Calciano-Coler, Mennella, Morse, Silva  
ABSTAINED: Beliveau, Desai, Dillon**

**MOTION CARRIED**

6th MOTION  Passed  Failed  Tabled

**Moved by Frank Morse, seconded by Raffaella Calciano-Coler, to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m.**

**FAVOR: ALL  
MOTION CARRIED**

LINK TO WORKING NOTES (will be attached if available)

ACTION

CORRECTION(S) (will be attached if available)

TIME MEETING ADJOURNED: 8:31 p.m.

TIME DELIVERED TO TOWN CLERK: \_\_\_\_\_.

**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MEETING OF NOVEMBER 19, 2009**

**Members Present:** William MacDonald (Chairman)  
Rene (Skip) Rivard (Vice Chairman)  
Marc Beliveau  
Raffaella Calciano-Coler  
Dilip Desai  
Brian Dillon  
Maria Mennella  
Frank Morse  
Edward (Alex) Silva

**Also Present:** Dr. Jeffrey Villar (Superintendent)  
Marian Hourigan (Assistant Superintendent)  
Frank Connolly (Finance Director)

A meeting of the Board of Education was held on Thursday, November 19, 2009 in the Council Chambers of the Rocky Hill Town Hall. Chairman William MacDonald called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

**Moved by Edward (Alex) Silva, seconded by Brian Dillon, that the Rocky Hill Board of Education elect as its Officers, the following: William (Bill) MacDonald for Chairmanship; Rene (Skip) Rivard for Vice Chairman and Frank Morse for Secretary.**

**FAVOR: ALL  
MOTION CARRIED**

**Moved by Raffaella Calciano-Coler, seconded by Edward (Alex) Silva, to move Item # 10 (Board Member Recognition) up on this evening's agenda (before "Approval of Minutes").**

**FAVOR: ALL  
MOTION CARRIED**

**10. Board Member Recognition**

Superintendent Dr. Villar told everyone that they were going to take a moment this evening to recognize the long term contributions of several members of the Board of Education who elected not to run for another term.

Superintendent Dr. Villar recognized Mrs. Nadine Bell. Mrs. Bell had been a member of the Board of Education for the past ten years. She served on many Subcommittees of the Board of Education during that time, including the Joint Facilities Committee, P & N Committee, Transportation Committee, Facilities Committee, Policy Committee and Curriculum Committee. She was Chairperson of the Board of Education for two years and she was a secretary for six years. She volunteered regularly to assist and help out at the school events. Superintendent Dr. Villar said Mrs. Bell was most instrumental in helping him get to know Rocky Hill as a new superintendent. Superintendent Dr. Villar thanked Mrs. Bell very much for that and he asked her to come forward to receive a small token that the Board of Education had for her.

Superintendent Dr. Villar recognized Mrs. Catherine Vargas. Mrs. Vargas had been a member of the Board of Education for ten years. She was Chairperson of the Policy Committee, Curriculum Committee and Transportation Committee. She served on all of the Subcommittees. She assisted at many of the school events. Superintendent Dr. Villar thanked Mrs. Vargas very much for all of the energy and time that she devoted to the Board of Education as well as for helping him in his first two years as superintendent. Superintendent Dr. Villar asked Mrs. Vargas to come forward to receive a small token that the Board of Education had for her.

Superintendent Dr. Villar recognized Mr. Charles McMonigle. Mr. McMonigle served on the Board of Education for eight years. He was part of numerous Subcommittees, including the Transportation/Accommodations Committee, Finance Committee and Curriculum Committee. He was Chairman of the P & N Committee for four years. He also served as a Capital Region Council Representative for the Board of Education. Mr. McMonigle's experience and understanding of the process of negotiating contracts was most instrumental to Superintendent Dr. Villar during his first two years when they had to negotiate four contracts. Superintendent Dr. Villar thanked Mr. McMonigle for his help and asked him to come forward to receive a small token that the Board of Education had for him.

Superintendent Dr. Villar recognized Mr. Charles Wisnioski. Mr. Wisnioski served on the Board of Education for a total of eight years at two different times. During his most recent term, he was the Chairman of the Facilities Committee and the Curriculum Committee. He also supported many school activities. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he and Mr. Wisnioski spent a lot of time together during his first two years on the Board of Education. Superintendent Dr. Villar said Mr. Wisnioski was the most helpful individual when it came to all of the advice that he got.

Superintendent Dr. Villar appreciates everything that Mr. Wisnioski did for him during his first two years and he asked Mr. Wisnioski to come forward to receive a small token that the Board of Education had for him.

Chairman MacDonald thanked Mrs. Bell, Mr. McMonigle and Mrs. Vargas. Chairman MacDonald said the last two years were his first two years on the Board of Education. He told Mrs. Bell, Mr. McMonigle and Mrs. Vargas that the experience they had on the Board of Education and their guidance were extremely helpful. They always had the children first. Chairman MacDonald told Mrs. Bell, Mr. McMonigle and Mrs. Vargas that they helped guide the Board of Education through the curriculum side, finance side and facilities side. Chairman MacDonald personally thanked Mrs. Bell, Mr. McMonigle and Mrs. Vargas for all of their help on that.

Chairman MacDonald said Mr. Wisnioski is one the brightest people that he has ever met. Mr. Wisnioski's help to the Board of Education has been tremendous the past two years. Mr. Wisnioski came up with the "bigger, better, bolder, brighter" initiative. Mr. Wisnioski has been an advocate for the children. Chairman MacDonald said Mr. Wisnioski has become a very good friend of his. Mr. Wisnioski helped the children and the schools. Chairman MacDonald thanked Mr. Wisnioski for everything.

Chairman MacDonald asked Deputy Mayor Sylvestro to come forward. Deputy Mayor Sylvestro said he was present this evening in place of Mayor LaRosa who currently was in discussions with the Chairman of CRCOG (Capital Region Council of Governments) regarding the issue that has to be solved in the next two years concerning what Rocky Hill is going to do with its trash. Deputy Mayor Sylvestro had proclamations for Mrs. Bell, Mr. McMonigle, Mrs. Vargas and Mr. Wisnioski and he asked them to come forward. Deputy Mayor Sylvestro said these proclamations all were similar so he just read the one for Mrs. Bell aloud and full into the record. Deputy Mayor Sylvestro congratulated Mrs. Bell, Mr. McMonigle, Mrs. Vargas and Mr. Wisnioski. Deputy Mayor Sylvestro passed out the proclamations to them. Deputy Mayor Sylvestro also congratulated the new Board of Education members on behalf of Mayor LaRosa and extended best wishes to them.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Moved by Rene (Skip) Rivard, seconded by Raffaella Calciano-Coler, to approve the Minutes and Working Notes of the October 15, 2009 Board of Education meeting and the Minutes of the November 5, 2009 special Board of Education meeting.**

**FAVOR: MacDonald, Rivard, Calciano-Coler, Mennella, Morse, Silva**  
**ABSTAINED: Beliveau, Desai, Dillon**

**MOTION CARRIED**

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

Superintendent Dr. Villar summarized a letter that was dated October 9, 2009 from U. S. Senator Christopher Dodd with regards to his congratulating West Hill School for being named one of the President's Challenge State Champion Schools for stellar performances by the students in the President's Challenge for Physical Fitness Test. Superintendent Dr. Villar congratulated West Hill School.

Superintendent Dr. Villar read aloud a letter that was addressed to Principal Rick Watson from Mr. Lou Pear with regards to recognition of Griswold Middle School's work to produce a Unified Sports Program. Superintendent Dr. Villar explained what this program is. Superintendent Dr. Villar thanked Griswold Middle School.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to the thank you note that Board of Education member Mrs. Mennella sent thanking the Board of Education for the beautiful flower arrangement she received after the birth of her third son. Superintendent Dr. Villar congratulated Mrs. Mennella on the birth of her child and thanked her for the wonderful note.

Superintendent Dr. Villar wished Principal Cori-Ann DiMaggio of West Hill School a "Happy Birthday".

## **AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

### **Meeting Open to Public**

Chairman MacDonald asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to speak on any item. There was no one from the public who wished to speak at this time.

### **Report of Student Representatives**

Christine Pergolizzi and Varun Sachdeva were present from Rocky Hill High School to give a report. They were representing the Rocky Hill High School Student Council. They welcomed the new members of the Board of Education.

Rocky Hill High School had its powderpuff game last night. The seniors won this game 18-12 and all of the girls played really well.

The CAS Student Leadership Conference was hosted by Rocky Hill on Election Day and ten students from Rocky Hill participated in this event.

The Career Fair was held in the gymnasium last week. Students had the opportunity to explore different careers.

There was a short meeting this week for the sophomores and the juniors about the Virtual High School. Additional information was given to them as to how they can register for classes for the second half of the school year as well as for next year.

They had their Advisory Advisee Group (extended homeroom). They spoke about public service and its importance to this community. They wrote letters to people in Iraq, etc. expressing their appreciation and thanks to them.

Rocky Hill High School held many events to try and help out a family in town who lost its home to a fire. Donations were collected. They had a fundraiser at Friendly's Restaurant through the Student Council Group on November 17, 2009. Two hundred and twenty-two people from Rocky Hill attended this. Six hundred and ninety dollars was raised at this.

Rocky Hill has been doing really well since it joined the CCC (Central Connecticut Conference). The Boys' Soccer Team, Girls' Soccer Team and Volleyball Team were able to go to the States. The Unified Sports Team participated in a soccer tournament.

They are going to be voting on a design for a new gym floor tomorrow.

Project Graduation will be holding an event called "Shop Til You Drop" this Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Proceeds from this will go to the Class of 2010.

The Mr. Rocky Hill Pageant was being held this evening.

### **Report of Students from West Hill School**

Jenelle Tenerowicz and Nikhil Bhat reported on West Hill School. West Hill School has been very busy implementing PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support). This program was explained a little more.

Spirit Night was a huge success. There was a wide range of activities at this. This was the second year for this event which is quickly becoming a favorite West Hill School tradition.

Kindergarten students have been learning about various forms of transportation.

Grade One students are preparing for a town meeting which will be held on November 24, 2009. The focus for this will be Thanksgiving.

Grade Two students and Grade Three students are working hard on the new *Treasures* Reading Program. This program is allowing students the opportunity to use graphic organizers to assist their learning with settings, characters, plots and details, etc. The goal for these students was explained.

Grade Four students are learning to RACE (restate the question, answer the question, cite evidence from the text, explain the answer). This method allows students to provide detailed responses to open ended questions.

Grade Five students are continuing learning how to write expository pieces. They will be given the opportunity to research and explore something of their choice in order to create individual replicas in art.

### **1. Consent Calendar**

**Moved by Rene (Skip) Rivard, seconded by Frank Morse, to accept the Consent Calendar of November 19, 2009 (Field Trip – Grade 8 at Griswold Middle School, Washington, D.C. Trip, June 1-4, 2010; Field Trip – Rocky Hill High School Bands (Symphonic, Jazz, Marching) – Walt Disney World Resort, Orlando, Florida, April 14-21, 2010).**

**FAVOR: ALL  
MOTION CARRIED**

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **2. Personnel and Negotiations**

No report was given at this time. Information with regards to some negotiations would be covered this evening under Item # 13 (Administrators' Contract).

#### **3. Policy**

No report was given.

#### **4. Finance**

No report was given.

#### **5. Curriculum**

No report was given.

**6. Professional Development**

No report was given.

**7. Facilities**

No report was given.

**8. Technology**

No report was given.

**9. Transportation/Accommodations**

No report was given.

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business to discuss.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**11. CAPSS Student Awards**

Superintendent Dr. Villar asked the principals to come forward. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they are given the opportunity every year from CAPSS (Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents) to recognize students who meet very rigorous criteria of rising to the highest levels of academia in Rocky Hill. These students show leadership service to the community, academic prowess and citizenship in their schools. In working with the principals, students are identified every year who meet this standard. He said each principal would share a little bit about their award winners. The award winners would be presented with a very nice certificate. Superintendent Dr. Villar congratulated these students.

Principal Watson welcomed the new Board of Education members. Principal Watson said they had two outstanding students who they were bringing forward this evening as winners of the CAPSS Student Award from Griswold Middle School. Letters were written by their teams of teachers. Ashley Brescia was elected by the Blue Team of Griswold Middle School for this award. Principal Watson read aloud and in full the letter that was written by her team of teachers. Principal Watson congratulated Ashley Brescia. Ashley Brescia came forth and received her certificate.

Principal Watson read aloud and in full a letter written by the Royal Team of Griswold Middle School who selected Andrew Jenkelunas as the winner of the CAPSS Student Award. Principal Watson asked Andrew Jenkelunas to come forward and he received his certificate.

Principal DiMaggio congratulated the new Board of Education members. She said they were going to recognize two students from West Hill School. She thanked Mrs. Wisnioski for being present at this. Mrs. Wisnioski has both of these students in her room. Principal DiMaggio recognized Jenelle Tenerowicz who is a fifth grader at West Hill School. Principal DiMaggio mentioned some things about Jenelle Tenerowicz. Principal DiMaggio congratulated Jenelle Tenerowicz and she came forward to receive her certificate.

Principal DiMaggio recognized Nikhil Bhat. Principal DiMaggio mentioned some things about Nikhil Bhat. Principal DiMaggio congratulated Nichil Bhat and he came forward to receive his award.

Principal Colonghi congratulated the new members of the Board of Education. Principal Colonghi recognized Shannon Duffy as Stevens School's recipient of the CAPPS Superintendent Award. Principal Colonghi mentioned some things about Shannon Duffy. Shannon Duffy came forward to receive her certificate.

Principal Colonghi recognized Tyler Riedinger, who is also Steven School's recipient of the CAPPS Superintendent Award. Principal Colonghi mentioned some things about Tyler Riedinger. Tyler Riedinger came forward to receive his certificate.

Superintendent Dr. Villar congratulated all of the families. He knew this didn't happen independently on the students but that the families have supported these students and they have helped to guide them to success this far. He suspects that he will see these students at the high school level and they will be receiving similar awards. He congratulated all of them.

## **12. Teacher of the Year**

Superintendent Dr. Villar asked the principals to come forward once again so they could recognize their Teachers of the Year. Superintendent Dr. Villar said the United States has a Teacher of the Year Program. There is an analysis at each school and the staff will elect a Teacher of the Year for each school through criteria. The District Committee will select a Teacher of the Year representing the District of Rocky Hill. There is then a very rigorous process where a Teacher of the Year is selected for the State of Connecticut and then nationally. Last year, the Teacher of the Year for the United States came from Connecticut.

Principal Watson said the Griswold Middle School Teacher of the Year selection is a different one. He read aloud an excerpt from the dedication of the students' yearbook from last year. Mrs. Linda Carneiro was selected as the Teacher of the Year. She passed away last year unfortunately but she had a profound impact on Griswold Middle School.

Principal DiMaggio said Mrs. Patricia Crawford is West Hill School's Teacher of the Year. Principal DiMaggio mentioned some things about her including comments from some of her colleagues as to why she was selected for this. Mrs. Crawford was not able to be present this evening.

Principal Almeida called Mr. Tom Siciliano forward. Mr. Siciliano is Rocky Hill High School's Teacher of the Year. Principal Almeida mentioned some things about Mr. Siciliano as to why he was selected for this. Principal Almeida had some pictures passed around to the Board of Education members along with some projects that Mr. Siciliano's students have done (i.e. gingerbread nametags, etc.).

Superintendent Dr. Villar said he had the great pleasure of attending the Connecticut Teacher of the Year Ceremony at Central Connecticut State University on October 29, 2009. The level of professionalism and excellence in that room for the ceremony were amazing. The individual who was representing Rocky Hill was there with him. Superintendent Dr. Villar was humbled to be in her presence along with all of the other Connecticut Teachers of the Year. Principal Colonghi said the Teacher of the Year for Stevens School as well as the District Teacher of the Year for Rocky Hill is Mrs. Heidi Kokoska. Principal Colonghi asked Mrs. Kokoska to come forward. Principal Colonghi mentioned some things about Mrs. Kokoska as to why she was selected for the Teacher of the Year for Stevens School and the District Teacher of the Year for Rocky Hill.

### **13. Administrators' Contract**

Mrs. Calciano-Coler said the negotiation between the Rocky Hill Administrators' Association and the Rocky Hill Board of Education ended on October 28, 2009. A tentative agreement has been reached. This was ratified by the Rocky Hill Administrators' Association. This will be a three year contract. Wages include a 1.5% increase in the first year, a 1.75% increase in the second year and a 2.25% increase in the third year. The health insurance premium cost sharing and prescription co-pays have been increased. Some of the language has been changed to allow for greater flexibility for carrier, self-insured or to reconfigure coverage, etc.

**Moved by Raffaella Calciano-Coler, seconded by Rene (Skip) Rivard, to accept the Administrators' Contract.**

**FAVOR: MacDonald, Rivard, Calciano-Coler, Mennella, Morse, Silva**  
**ABSTAINED: Beliveau, Desai, Dillon**

**MOTION CARRIED**

Mr. Dillon explained that the members who abstained for this motion weren't part of the Board of Education when the Administrators' Contract was being negotiated.

**14. Strategic School Profile 2008-09**

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan distributed revised SSPs (Strategic School Profiles) for the Rocky Hill District and for Rocky Hill High School to the Board of Education members. Superintendent Dr. Villar had received an e-mail from the state this morning which stated that two small calculation errors had been made by them. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan explained what the errors were. She also distributed a copy of the DRG (District Reference Groups) to the members of the Board of Education. Rocky Hill is in DRG D.

The Connecticut General Assembly had passed Section 10-220C of the Connecticut General Statutes in May 1990. This is an Act concerning the reporting of school and district strategic profile reports. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan explained what the reports require. The primary goal of the SSP is to improve schools through informed decision making. The SSPs have two purposes: (1.) They will stimulate school improvement through shared information; and (2.) They are an accountability system which informs the public about what is happening in Connecticut schools.

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan conducted a comparison of the 2008-2009 SSP to the one from 2009-2010. Rocky Hill is comparing favorably to the state and the DRG in most areas. There aren't many significant changes but she said she was going to highlight what those were. There were increases in the CMT scores in all subject areas and at all grade levels with the exception of Grade Five science and writing. Both of these areas are being addressed through the curriculum work this year. The average CMT scores for students with disabilities increased in all four subject areas. CAPT scores increased slightly in math and reading but they decreased in writing and in science. The state scores decreased in math, science and writing. CAPT performance is being addressed in the high school curriculum work this year.

Participation decreased from 91% to 82% on the SATs and there was also a decrease at the state level. The SAT scores in Rocky Hill went down in reading and math slightly. The scores went up in writing. The state scores stayed flat. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said she spoke to the Rocky Hill High School Guidance Department with regards to the participation rate and it appears that some students are opting to take the ACT instead of the SAT. Also, some colleges are not requiring the SATS and some of Rocky Hill's students are choosing to go to community colleges which don't require them either.

Rocky Hill's graduation rate dropped from 98.8% to 94.2%. The state graduation rate stayed the same. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan spoke to the Rocky Hill High School Guidance Department about this. There has been an increase in the number of new transfer students who have entered Rocky Hill High School and they have come in with a credit deficit. There was an increase in the cumulative four year dropout rate and the state was flat. Dropouts are being tracked differently now and she explained more about this.

Districtwide, the physical fitness assessment issue had come up last year. There was an increase this year. In Grade Four, Grade Six, Grade Eight and Grade Ten, 44.5% of the students reached the standard as compared to 38.5% last year. There will be a new test next year that is called the Third Generation Physical Fitness Assessment and this is said to be an improved version. The Physical Education Program Supervisor feels that the test that has been administered can be somewhat subjective sometime depending upon who is conducting the testing. In Rocky Hill, there are a lot of students who are very academically oriented and athletically oriented but there are others who aren't involved in any kind of formal athletic events. It is a challenge to get these students involved in physical fitness types of activities. This is being worked on with the new health curriculum and Wellness Committee.

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan went over some other possible discrepancies (i.e. instructional hours for elementary language arts and the instructional hours for language arts at Griswold Middle School). She asked the Board of Education members if any of them had any questions about the SSPs. Mr. Beliveau asked if they had expenditures per pupil available by school. Finance Director Connolly said this can be developed. Mr. Dillon concurred with this too and said he would like to take a look at this. Finance Director Connolly said this will be provided to the whole Board of Education.

Mr. Beliveau said the decline in test scores between West Hill School and Stevens School stands out. He said it is good to see that Grade Five science and writing are being addressed but he asked about the disparity between the schools. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said this has been a major focus for them. They are working to make this a situation that is much better. The language arts curriculum has been redone this year and they are implementing it. There is a new language arts core program. The instruction of the language arts will be the same essentially between the schools for K through Grade Five. They should start to see an improvement. The same professional development is being received also. The math scores are much more aligned between West Hill School and Stevens School. The science curriculum is being worked on. The teachers will be receiving the same professional development and support. What will be happening at one school will be happening at the other one.

Mr. Beliveau asked if the math curriculums are the same now. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said a new *Trailblazers* program had been received a number of years ago. Scores have improved throughout the district in the elementary schools.

The same thing is being done in math for K-5 at these schools. Mr. Beliveau said it looks like there is still some discrepancy in the math scores between West Hill School and Stevens School. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said if goal is looked at then there is more of a discrepancy but these scores are much closer if proficiency is looked at. There have been a lot of administrative changes at Stevens School over the last few years and the leadership at West Hill School has been much more stable. There has been a greater turnover of teachers at Stevens School compared to West Hill School. This is an area that they have also been looking at very closely and working hard at to remediate.

Vice Chairman Rivard referred to the seniors who were non-completers. He asked if someone is given the opportunity to become a summer completer, if they will be allowed an opportunity to the Virtual High School as a summer completer. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said Virtual High School is really not for completion of courses but it is for students who are able to be challenged. Virtual High School is very rigorous and it wouldn't be appropriate for these students. Other online programs could be done. Superintendent Dr. Villar said the Virtual High School Program mirrors the school year for the high school. The option of online courses would be like a credit recovery system. CREC (Capital Region Education Council) is working with a consortium on the availability of this. This is an avenue that can be explored as a means of giving students credit in some courses. Rocky Hill students do take advantage of traditional summer school programs. Vice Chairman Rivard said he was also thinking of the students who transfer in and who are lacking credits. Vice Chairman Rivard asked if the Board of Education bears the expense of summer courses. Superintendent Dr. Villar said the family of a student can bear the expense of this if that student is taking a summer course on their own.

Chairman MacDonald referred to Page 4 of the SSP for Rocky Hill High School. He asked if he could be helped to understand the dramatic difference in physical fitness of 30% versus 39.9% for the high school. He also asked if he could be helped to better understand the difference between the high school and the state high schools for the percent of Grade Twelve students who are tested who take the AP class. This is on Page 4 also he said. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said she was told that students in Grade Ten are not interested when they take the physical fitness test. It is a lot easier to motivate elementary students to do their very best when they are tested. There are some students in Grade Ten who don't take the assessment as seriously as they need to. Chairman MacDonald asked why Rocky Hill's children would be any different from any of the other children in the state. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said the state scores are not that much higher than Rocky Hill's. Chairman MacDonald asked Assistant Superintendent Hourigan if she can get back to them with regards to this because he is still concerned about this. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said she would.

Chairman MacDonald referred to his concern about the AP. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan remembered that they had discussed this last year as well. She was told by talking with the teachers who teach the AP courses and the Rocky Hill High School Guidance Department that many times the students will take the AP course when they want to get extra credits because they will get a higher GPA (Grade Point Average). They are not as interested in taking the test and receiving the advanced placement credit. Some students aren't interested in taking the test because they have to pay for it. Chairman MacDonald thinks that Rocky Hill students aren't atypical. If this argument held true, Chairman MacDonald said he would have seen the same decline overall for the high schools in the state. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he arranged a meeting to meet with a consultant to review the Rocky Hill High School Guidance Department after reviewing this data and pieces of other data over the last two years. Superintendent Dr. Villar said Assistant Superintendent Hourigan and Dr. Cathrynn Riggs (Director of Special Education and Pupil Services) joined him at that. This consultant wrote the standards for high school and district guidance. They will be looking from Grade Six where the guidance begins in this district through Grade Twelve. A review will be conducted and recommendations will be brought forward for program improvement where it is necessary, if it is necessary. Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to physical fitness and he said it could be a motivational issue on the part of the adults. Physical fitness goals are included as part of the district goals that have been developed and worked on with principals in the school improvement plans. Superintendent Dr. Villar believes philosophically that the whole child is being educated and they need to be fit for life as well. Some different program improvements will be brought forward that will hopefully motivate students in these areas. Chairman MacDonald said he appreciates this, especially as it relates to the AP classes. He was a little disheartened if the reason they are having these AP classes is in order for a student to get a higher GPA. He explained more and he is looking forward to continuing the conversation on this.

Mr. Dillon referred to Page 5 of the SSP for the Rocky Hill School District with regards to the revenues and expenditures. He asked Finance Director Connolly if the Board of Education members can get this broken out by school. Finance Director Connolly said he can do this.

#### **15. Assistant Superintendent Report**

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan passed out a copy of a summer reading report for Griswold Middle School. This was asked for at a previous Board of Education meeting. At Griswold Middle School, sixth and seventh grade students are required to choose one book in the summer from a list that has eight to ten books on it for each grade level. Eighth grade students are required to read two books from a suggested book list. The students then respond to a writing prompt when they return to school and this is based upon the books they have chosen to read. Ninety-nine percent of the Griswold Middle School students had completed the summer reading requirement for their grade level during the summer of 2009.

Twenty-four percent of Griswold Middle School students read at least one book beyond their requirements. Griswold Middle School students read a total of one thousand, nine hundred and one books (1,901) during the summer of 2009.

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan told the Board of Education members that she was going to give them an update of what is happening at each of the levels with regards to curriculum. The new language arts curriculum is being implemented at the elementary level along with the new language arts textbook series *Treasures* from McMillan, McGraw & Hill. Mrs. Darlene Brown (Language Arts Coordinator) has been meeting monthly with grade level teams in order to ensure a smooth transition to the revised curriculum in the language arts program. The professional development days have also been devoted to assisting the teachers with the implementation of this. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan explained what the focus is this year for the Language Arts Curriculum Committee. She has received many positive comments about the new language arts series from parents, teachers and students.

Mrs. Joyce Waterbury (Math Implementation Specialist) has formed a new committee of teachers to develop pre and post tests for each unit of study at each grade level in the *Trailblazers* math series. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan explained what this committee is developing.

A committee has been formed consisting of elementary, middle school and high school teachers to update the K-12 science curriculum. This work will begin in December and Assistant Superintendent Hourigan explained what their goal is.

The teachers at Griswold Middle School are implementing the newly revised Grade Six to Grade Eight curriculum for math. This was started on last year and has been aligned to adhere to the state's grade level expectations. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan explained what the Curriculum Committee is creating now. Three textbook series for math are now being reviewed and presentations by representatives from these various companies have been scheduled. Math teachers will be trying lessons from all of the series. This year, a recommendation will be brought forward to the Curriculum Committee and to the Board of Education for the acquisition of a new math textbook.

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said she and Superintendent Dr. Villar have met with program supervisors for each department at the high school so that they can look at their current course offerings and plan for curriculum updates. The high school curriculum will be revised this year and they will begin with the core curriculum areas. The high school is working on preparations also for the NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) visit next fall. Some release time is able to be provided through some grant funding so the teachers can be brought together to work on the curriculum.

Mr. Fred Ames (Technology Coordinator) has started to present a series of six voluntary afterschool technology workshops for teachers that focus on topics that they have requested more information on. Mr. Ames has also provided training on the district's new netbooks. Thirty netbooks with a cart have been able to be purchased for Stevens School and for West Hill School through ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) funds and Title I funding. Ninety netbooks have been able to be purchased for Griswold Middle School. These netbooks are replacing the previous laptops at the elementary level. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan explained more about the netbooks and what they are being used for. The Technology Committee is looking at rewriting the technology curriculum this year.

Mr. Dillon asked what grades at the elementary level are using the netbooks. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said K-5 have access to them. Mr. Dillon asked if any of these netbooks are being provided to Moser School. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said they didn't provide netbooks to Moser School because the students have a greater accessibility to that computer lab compared to the other schools. There are also connectivity issues at Moser School.

Mr. Dillon asked what the number of computers is per student and he asked if this is still being maintained at the same number once the netbooks have been added in. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said this number will be the same at the elementary schools because the laptops were taken out. They have added onto the number at Griswold Middle School now. Superintendent Dr. Villar said there is a dramatic increase of new computers across the district this year. Over two hundred desktops have been replaced. A lot of old materials have been switched out and they have new state-of-the-art materials.

Vice Chairman Rivard asked if he heard that they are considering bringing Microsoft Office 7 in. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said they have this now. Vice Chairman Rivard asked how they decide when to update the software. Superintendent Dr. Villar said there is a five year technology plan that is part of the budget. This is a much more sophisticated decision when they look at operating systems based on the age of the current hardware, etc. When Windows Vista came out, an upgrade would have been a downgrade in many ways so they elected not to have this. Mr. Ames is testing the Windows 7 operating system on many of the machines now. They are in a good position with the purchase of all of the new computers over the summer and it wouldn't be a costly series of upgrades if they choose to move to the new operating system. From preliminary reports, the current hardware runs faster with Windows 7. Annual licensing is built into the budget that allows for upgrades over time. Vice Chairman Rivard gave an example and he asked if they have an upgrade license for Microsoft Office 10 that is coming out at the end of the month. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they do have a license and the ability to upgrade but they would want to cautiously investigate whether or not they need to do this.

Mr. Silva asked if the upgrades would be incremental if they decided to go to Windows 7 and move away from Vista. He asked how time consuming it would be to do this. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they currently use XP. On an annual basis, all of the machines are refreshed. The software is erased on the hard drives through the network. He explained more. If they decide to do a full scale swap, this would have to be done during the summer.

Chairman MacDonald referred to the high school curriculum they are in the process of looking at. He asked if they are also looking at the ordinate number of levels they have (i.e. honors, AP, etc.). This is atypical when many other high schools are looked at. Many times they have classes that have a very low number of students in them. They start looking at teacher utilization when they look at the budget and he thinks they really need to make sure they don't forget to look at the levels. He also mentioned the high number of requisites they seem to have at the high school when the core curriculum is looked at. Superintendent Dr. Villar said there are over seventy courses that require prerequisites. Chairman MacDonald said that in itself drives an exorbitant cost. It is almost by design what the low number of children will be in a class because of the high number of prerequisites there are in order to get into a class. He said this will have to go through the Curriculum Committee and there is going to be a lot of discussion on this on the core curriculum as well as on some of the non-core curriculum because there has been a lot of concern about that in the past. He urged everyone to be cognizant of the economic environment. Rocky Hill can't afford to have electives that have three, four or five students in them. He asked for this to be taken into account. He would like to have how they would lay a game plan on the agenda for the next Curriculum Committee meeting. He thinks it is time that they start moving on the curriculum at the high school especially. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said she agrees.

## **16. Director of Finance & Operation's Report**

Finance Director Connolly gave a brief background to the new members on the Board of Education with regards to the monthly financial report that is given to them. He told them to turn to Page 1 of the financial report and he told them that gives them a "snapshot" of where they are at this point. He explained more about this.

This year, everything is complicated because of the ECS (Education Cost Sharing) money. This normally goes directly to the town and the town accounts it as general revenue. The town then makes its annual appropriation, which is a one line item appropriation, to the Board of Education. There is also the federal ARRA money. The federal money had been going to the state and the Governor made the decision that this is going to be coming down to the towns. There are stipulations on this and instead of the ECS money going to the town, it is going to come directly to the Board of Education. This is the first time this has ever happened. They have had to change the way they are handling this money as a result of this.

Finance Director Connolly referred everyone to two memos in the packet. One of these is dated October 9, 2009 and he explained in this memo what is coming down with this federal money. In the other memo which is dated November 9, 2009, he tried to summarize where they are with this ECS money. The budget of the town was reduced by the amount of ECS money that is coming to the Board of Education. He told everyone that the danger they have to be aware of is what is going to happen in the third year when the federal money dries up because they don't want to be left with a \$500,000 hole. He told the Board of Education members that he will be cautioning them about this throughout the year and this has been put many times before in writing. When the Board of Education had adopted the motion for this, this past spring, they were very specific as to the amount of the appropriation and where it was coming from.

Finance Director Connolly said they are now at the start of the fiscal year and there was nothing major for him to report. He asked the Board of Education members if they had any questions. Vice Chairman Rivard referred to the tuition fund. He asked what the difference is between Special Education public and Special Education private. Finance Director Connolly said some of the institutions the Special Education students are sent to are public and some of them are private. A change has been made in the Board of Education budget and this is that more line items have been identified which the veteran Board of Education members already know about. This was done so that the budget is easier to read and so it is more transparent.

#### **17. Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Dr. Villar said he previously had mentioned this evening how he, Assistant Superintendent Hourigan and Dr. Riggs have met with a consultant in order to review their Guidance Department. They will keep the Board of Education and the Curriculum Committee informed about the progress of this.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to the magnet school funding. The implementers' bills that were passed by the State Legislature had provided the Hartford host magnet schools and the Hartford public schools with a sum of \$12,000 for each student who attends their schools from the suburbs. He mentioned that he had shared this information with the Board of Education earlier this school year. This was good news because Rocky Hill had received a preliminary bill of \$161,000 for the tuitions of their students who are electing to attend Hartford host magnet schools. Hartford had sent a letter and threatened to have these students sent back to Rocky Hill if they didn't receive tuition. The state stepped in and funded the students' tuitions. Another letter was received from Hartford public schools very recently and this stated that they were still short for the transportation funds for the students even though they received \$12,000 per each of the students. Hartford public schools indicated that they had a \$3,300,000 deficit and they stated at the end of December 2009 that they wouldn't be transporting the Rocky Hill students to the Hartford public schools unless someone funded this either at the state or local level.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said there had been a meeting with the Commissioner late last week and they were told at that time that there was no solution. They found out at the beginning of this week that CREC will be handling the transportation of the students from the suburbs into the Hartford public schools. Contracts will be reorganized. They will be seeking some negotiations and the financial situation associated with this will ultimately try to be resolved.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said he and the superintendents have a concern about the system that is in place for magnet schools in general. He thinks it is broken and he explained more about this. He will continue to monitor this and be vocal about this. There are some disparities with this and he explained more. The magnet school system doesn't have a coherence about it and he sees this as a way of the state shifting the cost of the Sheff v. O'Neill solution onto local governments that surround Hartford. He will try to keep the Board of Education as informed as possible.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to the H1N1 situation. Rocky Hill is not experiencing high levels of absenteeism as a result of H1N1. The Central Connecticut Health District had sent letters out to forty five hundred parents. This letter stated that if the parents are interested in attending a H1N1 clinic for vaccination then they should return a form and be put on a waiting list. There is a significant shortage of the vaccine and the Central Connecticut Health District is working with priority groups. Superintendent Dr. Villar mentioned who is on the priority group. He said the rest will be waiting quite some time for vaccinations.

Chairman MacDonald said it was very disturbing information about the magnet schools and the tuition. Mr. Silva asked Superintendent Dr. Villar if the number of students that Rocky Hill has to take from Hartford could be increased. Superintendent Dr. Villar told Mr. Silva that was a good question. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is a significant concern of his as well as of other Hartford area superintendents. The Commissioner has been vocal and open in his request that they continue to take more students and he would like to see Rocky Hill taking a minimum number of 3% of the total student enrollment which would mean they would have seventy-five to eighty students from Hartford. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they don't have space in their current schools for a system like this. They had received communication last spring and the State Department of Education had determined that they could take an additional fifty students. He was not sure how this was decided other than they arbitrarily had decided to raise the class size standards in Rocky Hill and the Board of Education in Rocky Hill has the sole right to set these. He has been vocal in resisting this. There is no legislation currently that empowers the Commissioner to make this happen. He explained more.

**18. Board Chair's Report**

Chairman MacDonald welcomed back the returning members of the Board of Education and he welcomed the new members now that the election is over. Over the next two years, they have a lot of work to do and he is looking forward to this Board of Education really moving ahead on a lot of items. He said he would provide a list of the different committees and the makeup of them to the secretary at the end of this evening. One of the prime committees, if not the most important committee, is the Facilities Committee. Vice Chairman Rivard will be the Chairman of that Committee. The members on it will be Mrs. Mennella, Mr. Dillon and Mr. Morse. Mr. Dillon and Mr. Morse both have expertise in the construction and engineering field. Chairman MacDonald thinks it will be an invaluable service to have both of them on that committee to really drive this through. He is committed to addressing the aging schools and he thinks everyone who ran for the Board of Education on both sides also is. He is looking forward to all of them working together on this. He thinks this may be the first time ever where four members are working together on a committee. He asked the Facilities Committee to take on the task of looking at the potential of having facilities brought back to the Board of Education control. The prior Board of Education had talked about this and an Ad Hoc Committee had been set up to start looking at this but then the elections came. He asked the four members who will be on the Facilities Committee to look at this to see how this can be moved along. He is looking forward to the next two years.

**Moved by Frank Morse, seconded by Raffaella Calciano-Coler, to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m.**

**FAVOR: ALL  
MOTION CARRIED**

Respectfully submitted,

Jo-Anne Booth

Accepted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_