

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Ellington, Connecticut**

**Communications Committee Meeting Minutes**

The Communications Committee of the Ellington Board of Education met on Tuesday, January 17, 2012 in the School Administration Building.

**Attendees:**

*Administrative Team Members:* Mr. David Pearson, Mr. Stephen Cullinan

*Board of Education Committee Members:* Ms. Tracey Kiff-Judson, Ms. Kristen Picard-Wambolt

*Guest Participants:* Mr. Gary Blanchette

*Absent Committee Members:* Ms. Allison Wilkins, Dr. Erin McGurk, Mr. Dan Keune, Mr. Stoughton

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 1:06 PM by Ms. Kiff-Judson.

**Agenda Items**

• **Review Communications Activities for Building Project**

- Ms. Kiff-Judson reported that both Republican and Democratic Town Committees endorsed the school building project. Mr. Cullinan suggested that we call *patch.com* to ask for an article on the topic. Ms. Kiff-Judson will ask Mr. Keune to contact Erin Quinlan from *patch.com*. *Ellington Connection* has already run for January. Mr. Pearson suggested *North Central News* as a possibility for publicity. Ms. Kiff-Judson agreed to call Linda Levinson from *North Central News* to discuss overall publicity. Deb Stauffer also writes articles for *North Central News* and could be contacted. Ms. Kiff-Judson will contact *The Reminder* as well to discuss publicity. Mr. Blanchette reported that *The Journal Inquirer* contacted him and he will ask them to report on the Democratic Town Committee endorsement of the school building project.
- Mr. Pearson and Mr. Cullinan suggested channel 3 news might be able to do a story on the building project. There is a parent at Center School who is a news editor for channel 3. Mr. Cullinan will try to locate the contact and provide the name to Ms. Kiff-Judson.
- Mr. Pearson suggested Kevin Hayes from *The Sports Department* might be able to run an article from the perspective of the additional playing field space.
- There will be a PAC meeting for signs and publicity on Thursday at 7:00 PM at the Hall Library upstairs meeting room. Mr. Blanchette mentioned that there are signs from the last vote that could be painted over. Mr. Cullinan suggested that the PTO officers and Board of Education be invited. Ms. Kiff-Judson agreed to inquire with Mr. Willette if those groups are on his distribution list.
- Mr. Cullinan discussed the limitations on PAC donations for purchase of signs. A donation of \$175 would be allowed from the PTO based upon the referendum rules. There is a limit of \$.10 per person citizen of Ellington. Individuals can contribute larger amounts.
- Mr. Cullinan questioned whether the PAC members could be asked attend the town meeting. Ms. Kiff-Judson stated that Mr. Willette had sent out an email requesting volunteers and indicated that she would follow up to find if anyone has offered to speak.
- Ms. Kiff-Judson will follow up with Mr. Dale Roberson and Ms. Laurie Burstein to ask if they would consider writing a letter to the editor regarding his support for both the school building project and the senior center project.

• **Review Communications Activities for Annual Budget**

- The committee discussed whether and how to publicize the issue of Ellington's rank of 166/166 in per pupil spending. Mr. Cullinan is considering an article for the superintendent's blog relating to the topic. The committee felt it would be beneficial to post the data on the website and also include an article in the *Ellington Connection*.
- Mr. Pearson discussed the issue of enrollment growth as another important factor in the budget.
- The committee discussed use of signs in yards to encourage people to vote in favor of the budget. The town committees might be able to help coordinate this. Ms. Kiff-Judson will follow up with town committee leaders to ask for their assistance.

- **Discussion of Ellington Friend of Education Award**

- Mr. Cullinan suggested that a new award be created and presented to a person who does something exceptional to promote/assist education in our district. This would need to be a formal program that would recognize individuals based upon specific criteria. There would need to be a process for nomination and selection of the recipient. We would also need to determine what the award is.
- Mr. Pearson suggested that individual buildings might be able to recognize people as well.
- Mr. Cullinan offered to draft an outline for the program to discuss at a future meeting.

- **Old Business**

- None.

- **New Business**

- Mr. Blanchette mentioned that certain BOE's were recognized for efforts at the CABE/CAPSS Conference, but Ellington was not. Mr. Cullinan reviewed some of the requirements for nomination and said that he would bring them to the next meeting for further discussion.
- Ms. Kiff-Judson suggested modifying the meeting schedule to once per month. The group agreed that meeting the first Tuesday of the month might be sufficient at this point. The group will meet on Tuesday, February 7, and monthly thereafter.

**Next Meeting and Adjournment**

- The next committee meeting will take place at 1:00 PM on Tuesday, February 7. Regular committee meetings are generally scheduled on the first Tuesday of each month at 1:00 PM.
- A motion was made by Ms. Picard-Wambolt to adjourn. Mr. Blanchette seconded the motion. The motion passed, and the meeting adjourned at 2:16 PM.

**Minutes submitted by:** \_\_\_\_\_

Tracey Kiff-Judson, Communications Committee Chairperson