BOARD OF EDUCATION
Ellington, Connecticut
Communications Committee Meeting Minutes
The Communications Committee of the Ellington Board of Education met on Thursday, March 31, 2011 in the School Administration Building.

Attendees:

Administrative Team Members: Stephen Cullinan, David Pearson, Erin McGurk
Board of Education Committee Members: Dan Keune, Tracey Kiff-Judson, Kristen Picard-Wambolt, James Stoughton
Absent Committee Members: Allison Wilkins

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 9:36 AM by Tracey Kiff-Judson.

Agenda Items

- **Update on Communication Tasks for April 12, 2011 Budget Hearing**
  - Steve Cullinan reported on the proposed overall town budget. The proposed increase is 3.5 Mills, which is an increase of 14%, but this does not equate to a 14% tax increase. Steve Cullinan also provided the following *unofficial* calculations regarding the increase:
    .44 Mill increase is due to **revaluation.**
    .86 Mill increase is due to significantly **less money** available from the unexpended fund balance **(surplus).**
    .65 Mill increase due to projected **decreases in revenues**.
    1.55 Mill increase is due to **requested increases** from departments.
    Thus, at present, if all budget increases were zero dollars, there would still be a need for a 2 Mill increase.
  - Tracey Kiff-Judson reported that Jane Roets will help support music in our schools.
  - Tracey Kiff-Judson has also approached a parent regarding class sizes and is waiting for a response.
  - Steve Cullinan investigated support for athletics.
  - Steve Cullinan discussed statistics on town wealth, per pupil spending, and growth population data and agreed to put together a fact sheet that could be a handout to provide at the budget hearing.
  - Erin McGurk suggested that we also demonstrate that ECS funding being flat more negatively impacts Ellington because of its growing population.
  - Dave Pearson suggested including data from the fact sheet in the school newsletters.

- **Discussion of Other Budget Related Communication Tasks**
  - Discussion on this topic included above.

- **Review Proposed Communication Survey**
  - The group liked the revised version, but decided to wait for Allison Wilkins to discuss in more detail.
  - The group discussed whether we should include only education in the survey, rather than trying to combine with town questions. Several committee members felt it would be better to focus on education.

- **Old Business**
  - Branding
    - Erin McGurk discussed the need for revisiting the Board of Education Mission Statement.
    - Dave Pearson suggested that the website development might help direct our thinking about branding.
    - Steve Cullinan indicated that much work has been underway on the website, and this might be a good basis for future activity of this committee. The Board of Education might consider what message it would like to communicate through the website.
  - Ad Hoc Facilities Communications
    - In the near future, the Ad Hoc Facilities Committee will report to the Board of Education. Once timelines and plans are documented, this committee may be able to assist with communication.
- **New Business**
  - None.

Next Meeting and Adjournment

- A motion was made by James Stoughton to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Kris Picard-Wambolt. The motion passed, and the meeting adjourned at 10:46 AM.
- The next meeting is Monday, April 11, 2011 in Administration Building at 9:30 AM.

Minutes submitted by: _____

Tracey Kiff-Judson, Communications Committee Chairperson