

A SPECIAL MEETING of the Board of Education of the West Babylon Union Free School District, of the Town of Babylon, Suffolk County, New York was held on Tuesday, March 2, 2010, in the Performing Arts Center of the Senior High School.

Those present: Trustees Lucy Compasano, Wendy DeGaetano, Patrick M. Farrell, Carmine Galletta, Kathleen Jennings, Diane Klein, Jerry Nocera, Joseph Romano and Diane Thiel

Also present: Mr. Anthony Cacciola, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Dominick Palma, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Student Services; Mr. Mark A. Flower, Assistant Superintendent for Finance; Mrs. Yiendhy Farrelly, Executive Director for Human Resources; Mrs. Amy E. Jones, District Clerk; Mr. William C. Morrell, Attorney; and residents.

The president opened the meeting at 7:36 pm and led those present in the Pledge to the Flag.

Statement of the Board and/or Superintendent

President Patrick Farrell thanked everyone for their cooperation and support throughout the difficult process of relocating South Bay School to its temporary location at Our Lady of Grace's school. He turned the meeting over to Superintendent Anthony Cacciola. Mr. Cacciola said that the purpose of this evening's meeting is to provide an update about South Bay School. Mrs. Farrelly shared her experiences at the new location. She said the amount of work involved in the move has been astronomical. Mrs. Farrelly added that there have been many walks through the building and the students appear to be doing very well. She commended the parents, principal, teachers and support staff for their efforts in making the transition as comfortable as possible for the children. Mrs. Farrelly added that the support during this process has been off the charts.

Mr. Cacciola said that he spoke with the State Education Department and no one there ever recalled a district losing an entire building to a fire. He said that he knows that there are a lot of questions about South Bay and he added that he has been hearing all of the many rumors that have been circulating. He said there are certain "givens" that he can confirm. One is that the intention of the district is to keep the students together. There are no plans to move the students to the Junior High School and no plans to place trailers at the Junior High School. He said he has heard every imaginable rumor. He said that as Superintendent he makes recommendations to the Board of Education and the Board considers those recommendations. The Board of Education can only make decisions in public sessions. In addition, in answer to another rumor, the Board is not, cannot and will not be having secret meetings.

Mr. Cacciola said that the rumor about a contingency plan is true. He said that everything appears to be working nicely at Our Lady of Grace. However, he believes that there needs to be a contingency plan in the event that this does not remain the case. In the meantime, the students are smiling, happy and adapting beautifully. The trustees and administrators applauded the parents for their role in preparing the children. Mr. Cacciola said that it is too soon to decide anything about what will happen in September. He said that the lease with Our Lady of Grace is from now until June with the option of a one year renewal. The twelve hundred and fifty dollar daily fee for the lease is covered by insurance and so far all of the expenditures are covered by insurance. He said that he joined Mr. Farrell, Mr. Flower and Mr. Graziano on a walk through of the building and he does not yet know what will happen with South Bay School. He added that NYSIR (New York State Insurance Reciprocal) is working out a plan. Mr. Cacciola said that as of now, the district needs to have an architect of record in this process. He said that the district has worked with BBS Architects since 1996 on various Capital Projects and that his recommendation to the Board is to appoint them as the architects of record to oversee this project. Mr. Cacciola then read aloud, resolution #BE-1.

#BE-1

RESOLVED: that the West Babylon Board of Education appoints the firm of BBS Architects & Engineers, PC as their architect of record, to serve as the district's representative, relating to the Insurance Claim resulting from the South Bay School fire.

Trustee Compasano seconded by trustee Jennings made a motion to approve resolution #BE-1.

The motion was **CARRIED** by all present

Mr. Farrell asked for everyone's patience through this process. He said the Board wants to keep everyone together. He added that the Board does have the best interest of the student's in mind. Mr. Farrell invited anyone to attend Board meetings in order to assist in stopping the spread of untrue rumors.

Trustee Compasano broached the subject of rebuilding South Bay School. She said that the trustees are very concerned about the well being of the children. She commended administration for going above and beyond during these challenging times. Trustee Compasano said that even though there are many variables to consider she would like the trustees to consider rebuilding South Bay School.

Trustee Klein concurred with trustee Compasano and added that she believes it is important that South Bay is rebuilt in any capacity possible.

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Trustee Galletta asked that everyone stay patient and not believe rumors. He said that it is important for West Babylon to stay together as a community through this process.

Trustee Thiel said that she too believes very strongly that South Bay should be rebuilt. She added that the rumors are making people turn on each other instead of working together. Trustee Thiel said she is very much in favor of a motion to move forward in rebuilding South Bay.

Trustee Galletta seconded by trustee DeGaetano made a motion to commence a reconstruction project for South Bay School.

The motion was **CARRIED** by all present

Mr. Cacciola said that the cooperation he has received from State Ed. has been unbelievable. He said that there is a process that must be followed. He said that certain phases of the project will be fast tracked. Mr. Cacciola said that the Board approved a plan and this can be anything from rebuilding South Bay from the ground up, or salvaging part of South Bay and constructing other parts. Either way, South Bay will be rebuilt.

Mr. Cacciola went on to discuss the district's "wonderful problem". He said the outpouring of donations has been incredible and the district is truly grateful. However, the students now have enough supplies and storage space is limited. He suggested if anyone still wants to make a contribution, they do so in the form of either a Visa or American Express gift card. Or, checks can be made payable to West Babylon Trust & Agency with the words South Bay Fire Relief in the memo.

Mr. Cacciola announced that the date of the District-wide parent workshop entitled *Children & Stress* has been changed from March 4 to March 10, 2010.

Statements of Residents:

Resident Diana Doerbecker read from a petition signed by over 850 residents in support of rebuilding South Bay School. (on file in the District Clerk's office)

Resident Steve Divisconti spoke about the opportunity to "go green" in rebuilding South Bay School.

Student Nicole Polis asked if the children will be able to go on the playground anytime soon.

In response to resident Lillian McMahon's question, Mr. Cacciola said that it will take at least two weeks for the architect to make a recommendation to the Board.

In response to resident Kevin Alles question, Mr. Farrell said any legal issues surrounding the fire would be brought by the insurance company, not the district. In addition, Mr. Farrell said that the district has not received the fire marshal's report.

A volunteer from Our Lady of Grace commended the administrators, staff and volunteers for the amazing effort in the past week or so. Mr. Farrell added that Extreme Home Makeovers has received over 60,000 hits about rebuilding South Bay School. He said everyone deserves thanks and should be proud of their efforts.

In response to resident Dawn Conway's question, Mr. Cacciola said that sprinklers were not mandated in the school because it was built in 1952. Ms. Conway suggested the installation of sprinklers is something to fight for.

Resident Nancy Walsh-Smolenski requested an environmental toxicity study be done at the school.

Mr. Farrell noted that the children will be allowed to use Van Bourgondien's Park when the warmer weather arrives.

In response to resident Peter Scarlatos questions, Mr. Farrell said that the Board has not thought about what will happen regarding the students in September. The district's insurance policy is replacement insurance. The district is not just handed a check to do with it as it wants, the insurance replaces what you had.

In response to resident John Byrne's question, Mr. Cacciola said that the district does not yet have a contingency plan and the hope is that all will be fine at Our Lady of Grace. However, Mr. Cacciola believes a contingency plan is a necessity.

In response to resident Kurt Koepfel's question, Mr. Farrell said that the reconstruction of South Bay School will be decided by the architect and the insurance company.

In response to resident Chris Critchley's question, Mr. Farrell said that although unlikely, he does not know whether or not preschool will be re-instituted in one of the other buildings this year.

Mr. Farrell explained to resident Paul Perez that it may take until June before the Board determines the location of the students for next year.

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Resident Diane Edmunds requested that the students continue to be kept together.

Resident Lynn Bellone praised the environment at the new location and said that her son is so happy. She thanked the Board and administrators.

Resident Dennis Brodmerkel was told that the district will be looking into federal subsidies and/or rebates in the rebuilding process.

Mr. Farrell reminded everyone that there has been no talk about separating the South Bay students.

Budget Presentation: Mr. Flower offered the budget presentation meeting which was moved from the JHS to the PAC to follow the Special Board Meeting. The next budget presentation meeting will be on March 16, 2010 at 7:30 pm at the JHS in Café B.

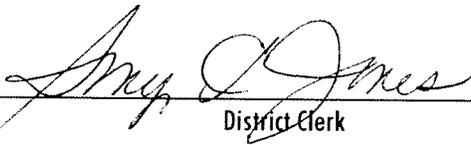
Trustee Campasano seconded by trustee Jennings made a motion to executive session at 9:40 pm

The motion was **CARRIED** by all present

Trustee Klein seconded by Trustee Nocera made a motion to adjourn at 11:45 pm.

The motion was **CARRIED** by all present

Attested to:


District Clerk