



**NORTH BELLMORE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MINUTES – MAY 9, 2024**

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Business Meeting	Martin Avenue School 2616 Martin Avenue, North Bellmore, NY 11710	7:30 PM
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The Business meeting of the North Bellmore Union Free School District Board of Education was held on Thursday evening, May 9, 2024, in the All Purpose Room of the Martin Avenue School at 2616 Martin Avenue, Bellmore, New York.

The following members of the Board of Education were present:

- Christine Malloy, President
- Nina Lanci, Vice President
- Melissa Cmar-Grote
- Rosemarie Corless
- Christopher Nardo

Also present:

- Marie Testa, Superintendent of Schools
- Janet Pollitt, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
- Jacqueline Rehak, Assistant Superintendent for Business
- Steven Goodstadt, District Counsel
- Laurice Gunnels, District Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER**                      The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m. A motion was made by Mrs. Lanci, seconded by Mr. Nardo to move into an executive session. Motion was carried 5-0. The meeting reconvened at 7:37 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**            Mrs. Malloy led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MISSION STATEMENT**              Mrs. Cmar-Grote read the District’s Mission Statement.

**AMENDMENT TO ORDER OF AGENDA ITEMS**            Item No. 5, the presentation by the Saw Mill Road Sixth Grade student BOE representatives, was moved up on the Agenda with no objection.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS:**  
***Saw Mill Road Sixth Grade BOE Representatives***            Mr. Rosof thanked the BOE and Mrs. Testa for the invitation, and Mr. Madden and the sixth-grade teachers for their support in preparation for this evening. Mr. Rosof reminded all of their previous BOE presentation whereby the students illustrated who North Bellmore and Saw Mill Road students are through family cultures and languages, and shared this evening their desire to delve further into this journey. He proudly described the Saw Mill Road students as citizens, friends, mathematicians, writers, poets, etc., and indicated this evening they would use poetry to illustrate their viewpoint. Mr. Rosof welcomed to the stage the *Saw Mill Road poets*.

**Saw Mill Road Sixth Grade  
BOE Representatives  
(continued)**

- *Giovanna DiPreta* recited “*Dreams*” by Langston Hughes. She spoke to an admiration of this poem which encourages you “*to keep dreaming*”, and how it is a reminder of the North Bellmore Mission statement in becoming courageous and passionate learners.
- *Alina Stracuzzi* recited “*Practice Makes Progress*” by Daniel Thompson citing the importance of improvement through practice for progress is achievement.
- *Ryan Claeson* shared the journey and experience of learning to write from Kindergarten through sixth grade, and recited a blackout poem, a form of poetry he wrote.
- *Sophia Ragusano* recited a poem she wrote “*I Am From*”, describing her family, special memories, school, friends, etc. which she explained was part of a writing activity in the beginning of the sixth-grade year utilized to build classroom communities by learning about each other.
- *Sarah Wu* introduced herself as a *sixth-grade* citizen of Saw Mill Road School and spoke of the importance of being a *citizen* of this community, contributing and learning from each other through classroom and school-wide experiences. She shared a poem written by Mrs. Mittler and Mrs. Kelly’s third grade class called “*Our Classroom*”. Sarah spoke to visiting and interviewing Mrs. Mittler, Mrs. Kelly, and the class, and shared their inspiration for the poem derived from their poetry writing unit and working together.

Sarah Wu, on behalf of her *fellow citizens* and sixth-grade teachers, welcomed Ms. McNamara, the Director of Educational Programs, and extended gratitude for sharing with them her inspiration and love of writing and poetry. Ms. McNamara congratulated the sixth graders on their presentation, the poems shared, and to the teachers not only at Saw Mill but districtwide engaging in inspirational writing instruction. Ms. McNamara closed by reciting “*Dream Keeper*” by Langston Hughes proudly citing the educators in North Bellmore as “*dream keepers*”.

Mr. Madden extended another round of applause for the sixth-grade students, offered gratitude to the families, and reiterated the message delivered this evening of inspiration and the North Bellmore mission. In partnership with the Saw Mill team, the students shared their message through artistry and presented handmade bookmarks to the BOE and the administrative staff.

Mrs. Testa congratulated the sixth-grade students on a phenomenal job, thanked them for reminding us of our dreams, and to the teachers and families, extended her gratitude to them for their support of the North Bellmore mission and core values. Mrs. Testa and Mrs. Malloy presented the students with leadership certificates.

**MOTION TO CONVENE TO  
PUBLIC HEARING:  
2024/25 SCHOOL BUDGET**

ON A MOTION made by Mrs. Lanci, seconded by Mrs. Corless, and carried 5-0, the Board of Education convened into a Public Hearing of the 2024-2025 School Budget.

Mrs. Rehak presented a detailed power point slide presentation of the budget and provided an explanatory narration, and informed all the presentation is available on the website for viewing. In summary:

- The three main components of the budget are Administrative, Programs, and Capital. A budgetary breakdown of each component was provided.  
Administrative 10.22%  
Capital 13.49%  
Programs 76.29%
- The tax levy increase is 2.39 percent with a budget-to-budget increase of 6.22 percent for a total proposed budget of \$68,606,668. Major factors noted were increased costs in transportation and health insurance.
- Budgetary capital projects included within the proposed budget are electrical upgrades at John G. Dinkelmeyer, Newbridge Road, and Jacob Gunther schools, and exterior brick pointing at Newbridge Road and Jacob Gunther. It was reminded that electrical upgrades at Martin, Newbridge, and Saw Mill Road schools were included as part of the 2023/24 budget.
- Proposition Two – Expend *existing* Capital Reserve and fund balance for Phase III of the ceilings and pavement reconstruction planned for Newbridge Road and Jacob Gunther Schools to be scheduled to begin in the summer of 2025. It was stressed Capital Reserve projects do not increase the tax levy.

Mrs. Rehak spoke briefly of a contingent budget and the process involved in the event the proposed budget is defeated. She indicated the district could potentially schedule and hold a revote in June, and if defeated the BOE can adopt a contingent budget *OR* the BOE can immediately adopt a contingent budget without a revote. Mrs. Rehak explained a contingent budget would result in a reduction based on state regulations of about \$2 million in expenditures including equipment, i.e. Chromebooks, smart boards, etc., budgetary capital projects, clerical/custodial overtime, and other administrative costs.

As a final note, Mrs. Rehak reviewed the resources available citing the Budget Newsletter and the Six Day Notice mailed to the community as well as the website, and reminded all of the Budget Vote and Annual Trustee Election to be held on May 21 from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the Newbridge Road School.

Mr. Nardo inquired about the timeline regarding the analysis by the architect of the buildings. Mrs. Rehak in explanation indicated Mr. Nardo is referring to the Building Condition Survey which must be done once every five years with the next one starting in 2025 or 2026.

- APPROVAL OF MINUTES** ON A MOTION made by Mrs. Corless, seconded by Mrs. Cmar-Grote, and carried 5-0, the BOE approved the minutes of the Business meeting of April 11, 2024.
- ON A MOTION to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of April 16, 2024, Mrs. Malloy, Mrs. Corless, Mrs. Cmar Grote, and Mr. Nardo voted in favor, and Mrs. Lanci abstained as she was not present for the April 16, 2024, meeting. The Motion passed with four votes in favor and one abstention.
- PUBLIC COMMENTS**  
*(Agenda Items only)* Guidelines for Public Comments was communicated by Mrs. Malloy on behalf of the Board of Education. There were no public comments relating to agenda items only.
- CORRESPONDENCE** Mrs. Malloy acknowledged receipt by the Board of correspondence to be discussed in Executive session.
- TREASURER'S REPORT** ON A MOTION made by Mrs. Lanci, seconded by Mrs. Corless, and carried 5-0, the Board of Education approved the Treasurer's report for the month ending March 31, 2024.
- BOARD COMMITTEE / HIGH SCHOOL REPORTS** Mrs. Lanci reported BMCHSD met last night and was excited to share great news on behalf of the high school district. It was a celebratory night she reported as 19 teachers and 2 central administrators were honored as tenure recipients, some of whom she proudly added were former graduates of the district. Mrs. Lanci spoke of the central high school district yielding a 99 percent graduation rate, naming some of the top colleges students were accepted to, i.e. Harvard, MIT, Georgia Tech, Cornell, Yale, NYU, Geneseo, etc., as well as those who participated in the career-based Cosmetology and Electrical programs offered in-district. Mrs. Lanci reflected on the history contained within the walls of Mephram High School, namely the grandeur of the library and the historical 80-foot mural in the Auditorium. She extended appreciation and gratitude to the Mephram Alumni Association for their continued support and generosity over the years including the restoration of the mural in the Mephram Auditorium, and most recently the gardens. The next meeting will be held in June.
- FINANCE** The Board of Education acknowledged review of the warrants that have been approved by the Claims Auditor for the month of April 2024.
- SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT** Mrs. Testa, in furtherance of the High School report, shared Mephram High School opened in the 1930's and spoke to the inspirational beauty and history contained within. She proudly spoke to the 99 percent graduation rate at Mephram High School comprised of North Bellmore students, and graciously attributed their success to the unification and strong relationship between the BOE, the principals of North Bellmore and Mephram, all the Departments, the teachers and staff, etc., working together to maximize student achievement.
- Mrs. Testa congratulated the Newbridge Road School on the 100 centennial year celebration, and expressed her heartfelt gratitude to Ms. Licci, the faculty, and staff for gathering the community, organizing speeches and music, and compiling and creating the Centennial Hall reflecting years of history. She described a day of

**SUPERINTENDENT'S  
REPORT  
(continued)**

nostalgia demonstrated by the presence of alumni graduates, retirees, and the parade of children and faculty to honor and illustrate the vast years of education at Newbridge Road School.

Moving on, Mrs. Testa shared May is Mental Health Awareness month, and extended appreciation to Mrs. Malone and the dedicated North Bellmore faculty members, i.e. psychologists, social workers, and counselors who work daily with students and/or faculty. She reported that the website has a new section under "Parents/Students" called *Mental Health and Wellness* containing educational resources and programs for family and students relating to coping skills, social and appropriate behaviors, etc.

In the area of Curriculum and Instruction, Mrs. Testa extended gratitude to Mrs. Pollitt and Ms. McNamara, and spoke to the ongoing professional development planning which will continue into the spring/summer in the areas of math and literacy, including Orton and Gillingham. She highlighted upcoming events, i.e. Literacy Game Night on Monday, May 20, and the Kindergarten Showcase on Tuesday, May 21.

In closing, Mrs. Testa provided an update with respect to the Newbridge Road School swatting incident. She advised per her conversation with Homeland Security the investigation is still ongoing as is with other schools who experienced similar type incidents. Mrs. Testa reported she will provide future updates as information becomes available.

Mrs. Corless, on behalf of the BOE, spoke to their appreciation and gratitude for the work in planning the Newbridge Road Centennial. She expressed amazement of the festivities, the fun educational experience of the Centennial Hall, the stories shared, and how truly inspirational and moving it was to see the whole North Bellmore community involvement evidenced by those in attendance, i.e. administrators, principals, alumni, teachers, students, representatives of the fire department, etc.

**CONSENT AGENDA:  
Items Nos. 12.1 to 12.2**

ON A MOTION by Mrs. Lanci, seconded by Mrs. Cmar-Grote, and carried 5-0, the BOE approved Item Nos. 12.1 to 12.2.

**PERSONNEL**

12.1 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the Personnel Report dated May 9, 2024:

- a. Appointments
- b. Leave Requests
- c. Resignations
- d. Retirements
- e. Terminations

**STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

12.2 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the Staff Development Report dated May 9, 2024.

**BUSINESS DEPARTMENT  
REPORT**

Mrs. Rehak happily reported that in April the district's Moody's Rating was upgraded from AA3 to AA2 due to the stable financial position supported by the proactive budget management of the BOE. She described the credit strengths of the district are attributable to the stable and improved position, the strong resident income and modest long-term liabilities. Mrs. Rehak reminded all of the voter approved funding of Capital Reserves improving the overall financial position of the district and reported fluctuation in the rating may occur as those reserves are spent down for their intended usage. She indicated the continuation of funding Capital Reserves for projects may help to maintain this credit rating and yield the district better interest rates.

Mrs. Rehak, moving on, reported an update on Universal Pre-K, a grant funded program whereby the district partners with local pre-schools in the area to obtain placements. She reminded all of the competitive grant applied for by the district, extending gratitude to Mrs. Pollitt, and was happy to report the district was awarded a \$1.1 million grant raising the allocated money per pupil benefiting the local partners and the number of spots available. Mrs. Rehak, as an example, spoke of Wee Friends, one of the largest partnerships who presently rent space in the Gunther building. She was excited to report they increased the number of student placements, all North Bellmore future students, and the size of the rental space utilized. In furtherance, Mrs. Rehak spoke to a recent inquiry regarding the usage of the Gunther building by community and parents, and she reiterated the importance of the facility usage by Wee Friends operating as both a Pre-School and a Day Care Center utilized by local residents as well as providing a rental income source to the district.

In closing, Mrs. Rehak provided a status update on the potential upcoming Capital Reserve project scheduled to begin this summer. Mrs. Rehak indicated, though timely filed by the district, they are still awaiting approval by the State Education Department (SED). She spoke to weekly monitoring of the process, and indicated based on the present rate of review the possibility that the projects may not be done this summer. Mrs. Rehak advised status updates will be provided when available.

Mrs. Corless inquired if approval is not received in time, can Phase II and Phase III be done in one summer. Mrs. Rehak indicated that is a possibility, but reminded again that the district would then have to wait for the SED to approve the other two schools. Mrs. Rehak reiterated the hope that Phase II will be approved for this summer.

**CONSENT AGENDA:  
Item Nos. 14.1 to 15.7**

ON A MOTION by Mrs. Lanci, seconded by Mrs. Cmar-Grote, and carried 5-0, the BOE approved Item Nos. 14.1 to 15.7.

*There was a question raised by the attorney as to whether this MOTION was voted by all. The District Clerk read from the minutes the MOTION, but for the purpose of the record and clarity thereto, the vote was reaffirmed by the District Clerk.*

**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

14.1 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the CPSE and CSE reports dated May 2, 2024.

**NEW BUSINESS CONTRACTS**

15.1 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the following contracts:

- Frontier Behave, LLC (Services 2024/25)
- Frontier Behave, LLC (Academic Tutoring 2024/25)
- Garden City CSD (Services 2023/24)
- The Hagedorn Little Village School (2024/25)
- Kidz Educational Services, SLP, OT, PT, LMSW, Psychology, Audiology, PLLC (2024/25)
- Literacy Nassau, Inc. (2024/25)
- New York Therapy Placement Services, Inc. (Amendment 2023/24)
- New York Therapy Placement Services, Inc. (Services 2024/25)
- New York Therapy Placement Services, Inc. (Academic Tutoring 2024/25)
- North Merrick UFSD (2023/24)
- Plainview-Old Bethpage CSED (Services 2023/24)
- School Construction Consultants, Inc. (202/25)
- Seneca Risk Consulting Group, LLC (Services 2024/25)
- Sensational Development Occupational Therapy (2024/25)
- Uniondale UFSD (2023/24)

**BOE REORGANIZATION / REGULAR MEETING DATE**

15.2 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education set the date for the Board of Education reorganization and regular meeting for Monday, July 8, 2024.

**APPOINTMENT OF ELECTION INSPECTOR**

15.3 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education appoint the additional following election inspector for the 2024 Annual Budget Vote and School Board Election: District Employee: Eileen Giovino at her hourly rate.

**DONATIONS**

15.4 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept a donation from Girl Scout Brownie Troop 904 of an 8-inch white cedar seedling and an irrigation bag. (Approx. value: \$25-\$30)

15.5 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept the following donations for Newbridge Road School’s sixth grade graduation awards:

NAME OF DONOR	GIFT DESCRIPTION	APPROX. VALUE/GIFT	PURPOSE OF GIFT
American Legion	Gift Cards	\$50.00	Citizenship Recognition
Chamber of Commerce	Engraved Plaque	\$25.00	Citizenship Recognition
Jerry Clare	Gift Cards	2 per class \$50.00	Scholastic Excellence
Cernuto Awards	Gift Cards	2-\$200.00 Checks	Scholastic Excellence
Smithville Hook & Ladder	Plaque	\$25.00	Scholastic Excellence
NB PTA Coordinating Council	Gift Card	TBD	Citizenship Recognition
Lions Club	Gift Cards	4 @\$25.00	Citizenship Recognition
NBTA	Gift Card	\$25.00	Scholastic Excellence
PTA Newbridge	Plaques # of sections for both Citizenship and Scholastic Excellence	\$50.00	Citizenship and Scholastic

**DONATIONS**  
*(continued)*

Republican Club	Book	\$10.00	Scholastic Excellence
NBRTA	Medal, Certificate, and Gift Card	\$40.00	Citizenship Recognition
SEPTA	Plaque	\$25.00	Scholastic Excellence
VFW	Medal	\$5.00	Scholastic Excellence
Meghan Alice Roach... Young Artists Award	Gift Card and Artwork	\$150.00	Achievement in Art
Knights of Columbus	Gift Card	\$25.00	Scholastic Excellence

**NEW BUSINESS CONTRACTS**

15.6 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the following contracts:

- Brookville Center for Children’s Services, Inc. (Tuition 23/24)
- Educational Data Services Inc. (Services 24/25)

**DONATION**

15.7 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept a donation from Box Tops for Education of a check in the amount of \$16.40 to be used for the Saw Mill Road Principal Book of the Month.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Mrs. Cmar-Grote, reflecting on past discussions regarding the installation of door buzzers, inquired of Mrs. Testa information relating to this system. Mrs. Testa reminded all of the safety and security surrounding the installation of the door buzzers, particularly as an alert if a door is opened without authorization. She happily reported the system is fully functional in all buildings and reiterated her gratitude to the BOE for approving this purchase.

Mrs. Lanci asked Mrs. Rehak to describe the auditing process utilized by North Bellmore in addition to those performed by New York State, and the timeframe surrounding them. Mrs. Testa thanked Mrs. Lanci for the inquiry, shared questions were received this week with respect to this, and proudly spoke to the *check and balance* system here in North Bellmore. Mrs. Rehak described the district’s utilization and function of external, internal, and claims auditors. With respect to New York, she indicated the state audits school districts, and the Comptroller does the audit and provides the schedule. Mrs. Rehak stressed none of the auditors are employees of the district and are all third parties.

Mrs. Cmar-Grote on behalf of the BOE extended sincere gratitude to the teachers and nurses in recognition of Teacher and Nurse appreciation week. In furtherance, Mrs. Malloy informed all that Mrs. Corless earned a Level 2- Lifetime Achievement Award under the NYSSBA Board of Excellence Recognition Program and presented Mrs. Corless a certificate awarded by NYS School Board Association in recognition of this honor.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Guidelines for Public Comments was communicated by Mrs. Malloy on behalf of the Board of Education. There were no public comments.

**POTENTIAL EXECUTIVE SESSION**

ON A MOTION by Mrs. Lanci, seconded by Mrs. Corless, and carried 5-0, the BOE entered Executive Session at 8:58 p.m.



**ADJOURNMENT**

ON A MOTION made by Mrs. Cmar-Grote, seconded by Mrs. Lanci, and carried 5-0, the Board of Education meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m. The next Business Meeting will be held on June 13, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurice Gunnels  
District Clerk