MIDDLETOWN BOARD OF EDUCATION
POLICY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, January 21, 2009
Dr. Alfred B. Tychsen Administration Building
9:15 P.M.

Board of Education Members Present
Sally Boske, Chair, Sheila Daniels and Renee Johnson-Thornton

Also Present
Barbara Senges, Assistant Superintendent, Nanci Schinas, Community Member, and Kathleen F. Bengtson, Administrative Assistant.

Sally Boske addressed the Committee with the following remarks:

As Chair of the Policy Committee, the future Committee meetings will be one hour long. If at the end of the hour, the matter currently being discussed can be completed shortly it will be finished. If not, the matter will be tabled to the next meeting.

Sally Boske hoped to set up a real firm schedule for future meetings. After a short discussion, the Committee members agreed to set future Policy Committee Meetings for the first Wednesday of each month at 9:15 a.m. in the Board Room of the Dr. Alfred B. Tychsen Administration Building

Sometimes the Board of Education will send back policies and/or bylaws to the Committee. We will follow up with that person asking to give the Committee what he/she wants it to review; if they do not respond, the Committee will not look at it again. The policy/bylaw will go forward to the Board.

Just because one person wants changes does not mean the whole Board wants changes. Issues that person wants to discuss will be brought before the Board. We will discuss the request at the Board. If the Board agrees, it will be sent back to the Policy Committee for further review.

Renee Johnston-Thornton stated she liked the process that was used at last night’s Board meeting whereupon the person proposing changes to the policy/bylaw had to say what the changes were and his/her reasons for requesting the changes. This way the request is on record. Sally Boske commended Sheila Daniels for requesting this procedure.

Sally Boske stated, you might not agree with the changes that the Policy Committee is recommending. The majority rules. You have every right to say that you don’t support this change and tell the Board the reasons why. This is not the Policy Committee’s ultimate decision, it is the Board’s.

Sally Boske stated on January 20, 2009, the following policy and bylaws were sent back to the Policy Committee by the Board:   #6146.1 – #9230 – #9321 – #9325 - #9400
Sally stated the first order of business would be to discuss the policies and bylaws sent back to Committee by the Board:

#6146.1  **Grading/Assessment Systems/Weighted Grades** – This bylaw was sent back to the Policy Committee by Corinne Gill, who asked for a copy of the Grading System. John Hennelly will be asked to forward a copy to the Board for review. *It recommended this revised policy be brought forward to the Board at its next meeting for its first reading.*

#9121  **Board of Education Officers** – This bylaw was previously taken off the Board agenda when Ms. Gill had questions on its wording. Revisions were made to incorporate certain requested changes, including item #3, “Confer with the Superintendent on crucial matters which may occur between Board meetings and inform board members when appropriate.” and Item #6, “Consult with the Superintendent in the planning of the board’s agendas as provided by the Board bylaws.” It was decided to keep Item #7 as is. At this time, after working on Bylaw #9230, the Committee decided to add a new number “4. The Chairperson shall attend a joint meeting with the Superintendent, other administrative personnel and the new Board Member(s) for the purpose of orientation.” The follow items would be renumbered. This bylaw was scheduled for review at this meeting and will receive further review at the next Committee meeting.

#9230  **Orientation of Board Members** – This bylaw was also revisited by the Committee as Corinne Gill asked that named information should be added on paragraph 1 of the bylaw. It was discussed how the Chairperson should be involved in the orientation of the new board member(s) to talk about the Board, its goals, procedures, etc. Barbara Senges spoke to this bylaw and stated her experience with orientation of new board members in the former districts she worked. The Committee discussed the types of information that should be given to the incoming member(s) and decided it was best to create a secure section of the BOE’s website to post certain nonpublic information. Therefore, the Committee reworked Item #1 as follows: “1. The incoming member(s) shall be given information on the function of the Board of Education and the school district, along with instruction on how to use and access the Board of Education’s secure website. The Board of Education’s secure and non-secure section of the Middletown Public Schools website shall include but not be limited to: Board Policies and Bylaws, contracts for superintendent, teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, and transportation; lists(s) of Board and Committee(s) meetings, list of committees and members, and list of Board members with contact information.” Sally Boske wanted to review this bylaw further and discuss Item 4. “The incoming member(s) may request a Board mentor.” This bylaw will be reviewed further at the next Committee meeting.
#9321 Time, Place and Notification of Meetings  – This bylaw was revisited by the Committee as Corinne Gill requested the addition of “and the regular meetings of Board of Education Committees” to the first sentence of the bylaw. After further discussion, it was also decided to insert the following sentence which was previously on bylaw #9325, “The Board of Education may adjourn any regular or special meeting to a specified time and place. A copy of the notice of adjournment shall be conspicuously displayed near the meeting room door within twenty-four (24) hours of adjournment.” The Policy Committee agreed on the changes and requested said bylaw be brought forward to the Board at its next meeting for its first reading.

#9325 Meeting Conduct  – This bylaw was revisited by the Committee as Corinne Gill requested a change in the third paragraph and the fourth item. It was decided to add a “s” to decision and leave the third paragraph first sentence as follows: “The conduct of the meetings shall enable members of the Board to make the best decisions possible.” It was agreed to delete the letter A) in Item 4.

The Committee had a question on #2, which states: “2. No oral presentation shall include charges or complaints against any employee of the Board of Education, regardless of whether or not the employee is identified in the presentation by name or by another reference which tends to identify an individual. All charges or complaints against employees shall be submitted to the Board of Education under provision of Board of Education policy.” Sally Boske requested Kathy to contact CABE and ask if their attorney could review this matter and let us know whether this paragraph is legal and enforceable.

This bylaw will be reviewed further at the next Committee meeting.

The Policy Committee Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

The next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for February 4, 2009 at 9:15 a.m. in the Board Room of the Dr. Alfred B. Tychsen Administration Building

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