

Minutes

Policy Committee Meeting
Waterford Board of Education
15 Rope Ferry Road
August 20, 2013

Present: Mr. Kenney, Mrs. McCarty, Mrs. Nazarchyk
Absent: Ms. Cote, Mr. Egan
Staff: Mr. Belair, Superintendent; Mr. Powers, Assistant Superintendent
Guests: Ms. Jayne Keedle, Waterford Patch; Ms. Johanna Somers, The Day

Mrs. McCarty established a quorum, called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m. and led the pledge of allegiance.

Mrs. McCarty pointed out that she was absent for the May 9, 2013 policy committee meeting and the recording secretary should be edited to reflect Mrs. Nazarchyk as recording secretary.

Motion: That the Policy Committee approve the minutes of May 9, 2013 as amended.
Nazarchyk, Kenney: 2-0 Abstain: McCarty

Mrs. McCarty invited the audience members for public comment.

Mr. Dan Steward, First Selectman, spoke about the need to reconsider the current policy for naming facilities. Waterford has never been able to name a facility, whereas many of our surrounding communities do (i.e., Groton, East Lyme, Montville and New London). There is a large outcry to recognize Francis X. Sweeney, with over 400 members on a Facebook page and over 800 signatures on a petition calling for the new Waterford High School field house to be named after Mr. Sweeney. Mr. Sweeney was a teacher, athletic director, coach, BOE member, lifeguard and member of Rec & Parks. Mr. Steward thanked the policy committee for reconsidering the policy to allow for Waterford to recognize their outstanding "shining stars."

Mr. Thomas Passaro, former BOE member and Chairperson, spoke in favor of changing the policy. He stated he always wanted the policy changed while he was a member of the BOE. Mr. Passaro has three children go through the Waterford Public Schools and knew Mr. Sweeney personally for over 40 years. A change in the policy would at least provide an opportunity for recognition of outstanding Waterford citizens, especially Mr. Sweeney.

Mr. James Cavalieri commented that he previously provided the BOE with a CABE model policy of naming of facilities that allowed for citizens to be recognized. He supports moving forward with a policy which allows this, with strict criteria in place to ensure there are guidelines for recognition.

Mr. Ronald Bugbee, former Director of Recreation & Parks, also spoke in favor of changing the policy. Mr. Bugbee feels that the current policy restrains the BOE in what they can do and he feels any Boards or Commissions in Town should have flexibility.

Mr. George Ballassi thought it would be helpful for the BOE to look at other communities who have allowed for naming of facilities after individuals and see what is working and what is not in relation to their established guidelines.

Mr. Bill Simons thanked the committee for allowing participation and urged the BOE to keep in mind the timeliness of this policy. If the BOE would like to move forward with naming after individuals, thereby allowing the field house to be named after Mr. Sweeney, it would be advantageous to do this as soon as possible to coincide with the beginning of the new school year.

Mrs. McCarty thanked the audience members for their comments and commented that she appreciated their respect for the process that the policy committee and BOE need to follow. The BOE has been mindful of the community wanting a change to this policy and it is very meaningful to see so many signatures on a petition. Mrs. McCarty then passed out a draft policy she had crafted by looking at examples from many surrounding towns. The intent of this draft policy would be to continue with the Waterford tradition of naming new buildings for geographic locations. However, it will allow for the BOE, with the adoption of guidelines, to name or rename components of facilities (i.e., field houses, gymnasiums, cafeterias, media centers/libraries) after an individual.

Mrs. Nazarchyk expressed her delight in revising this policy and agreed with Mr. Simons that the timeliness was important to the community for the recognition of Mr. Sweeney to coincide with the winter sports season, which will mainly utilize the field house. Mr. Kenney agreed that it is important to craft the regulations with clear guidelines for the BOE to follow.

Mr. Belair stressed that it is helpful to set aside the individual and just identify criteria for an individual to meet in order to be considered. Mr. Powers gave examples of number of years of service, number of signatures on a community petition, and someone of "exemplary character" as criteria that could be established. Mrs. McCarty stated she would like the policy to be very general, but establish a committee of BOE members, school personnel and community members to develop the regulations that will contain the criteria.

Discussion followed on the timeline of the policy. It was agreed that the draft policy will go to the BOE for first reading at the next regular meeting, scheduled for August 22, 2013. That will enable potential approval at the second reading in September.

Respectfully submitted,
Mrs. Kathleen McCarty
Recording Secretary