



Stratford C.A.R.E Committee

Minutes September 7, 2016

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In attendance: Yan Searcy, Donald Goodson, Olga Pena, John Fahan, Frank Parady, Lt. Curtis Eller of the Stratford Police Dept., Superintendent of Schools Dr. Janet Robinson, Chairman of the Board of Education James Feehan, Tania Livingston, Ann Stockman, Sybil Friedman, Councilwoman Tina Manus, Donna Geathers, Meyssa Geathers Immacula Cann, Karen Edwards, George Mintz of the NAACP.

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Meeting called to order at 7:07 PM

Welcome and Introductions:

Chairman Searcy asked each member to tell everyone their favorite flavor and brand of ice cream.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion to approve minutes – Frank Parady. Second – Olga Pena. All in favor.

Treasurer's Report:

Olga Pena stated the balance remains the same at \$3,014.45. There will be a \$200 check deposited soon. The account had been updated to authorize the Chairman to sign checks. Motion to approve Tania Livingston. Second – Ann Stockman. All in favor.

Old Business:

Police/Community Relations: Lieutenant Curtis Eller.

Detective Eller stated the baseball camp and crossfit are continuing. There is no update yet for the Citizen Advisory Board. Anyone can go on the PoliceApp.com website which makes it simple to find and apply for police jobs. Once in the system you are eligible for positions across the country. You get 5 point added to your police exam if you are a Stratford resident applying

for a Stratford Police position. The Chairman stated the proposed Advisory Committee is in no way intended as a citizen review board of police actions. Its purpose would be to increase sensitivity and dialogue. Frank Parady thanked the Police Dept. and the BOE for attending the CARE meetings and for being available and accessible.

Education Committee Report:

A discussion took place about the ALPS Program at Stratford Academy. BOE Chairman Feehan and Dr. Robinson stated the program severely under represents the 52% minority student population in Stratford. Mr. Feehan said ALPS will be either be completely scrapped or revamped with a new program by next year. Immacula Cann asked for the statistics. Mr. Feehan and Dr. Robinson stated there are 30 children in the program per grade level from grade 4 through 6th grade and rarely are seen children of color in the program. Mr. Feehan said he and the BOE would be remiss if they did not immediately address this concern. Dr. Robinson said that many children excel sometimes in one or two classes only and we should not ignore those students' achievements. She would like to see for example an accelerated arts and music class for those who excel exclusively in those subjects.

Diversity of teaching staff was discussed. Dr. Robinson stated the lack of minority teachers is a Stratford problem as well as a statewide problem. Hiring has increased but we continue to lose minority and non-minority teachers alike to other school districts primarily because of lack of pay. Dr. Robinson stated she has even gone as far as to meet with the National Alliance of Black School Educators in Washington D.C. to get help and ideas for diversifying Stratford's teacher population. In addition, she has met with the Dean of Education at Fairfield University with the goal of obtaining scholarships/grants for those who decide to come back to Stratford to teach. Olga Pena stated teachers have to demonstrate to students that they want to teach and are exciting about teaching so that one day our children will decide to grow up to be teachers themselves. Councilwoman Manus that the teacher pay in Stratford is not competitive and that is very frustrating.

Dr. Robinson stated that despite the school districts challenges there have been many successes. There is an upsurge in test scores. The enthusiasm about the new school year is palpable among our teachers. She wants to create an environment and culture of wanting to be a good student.

Tania Livingston asked Dr. Robinson to have teachers and staff review the code of professional responsibility for schools of which Dr. Robinson was agreeable to.

Mr. Feehan stated a revised residency letter that is less offensive and more informative will be going out. He said criminal and civil prosecutions would be the absolute last resort of the BOE. Several CARE committee members thanked Mr. Feehan for the change in tone and approach.

Public Relations/Communications:

John Fahan had no report.

Community Recognition Dinner:

Chairman Searcy reported the dinner will be on November 18th 7:30pm at the Oronoque Country Club. Police, Fire, EMS, Teachers, and Youth who contribute in special way to our community and exemplify the values of CARE will be eligible to be nominated for the recognition ceremony. The goal is to release details to the public within the next week.

New Business:**Partnership with the Greater Bridgeport NAACP:**

Yan Searcy welcomed the President of the Greater Bridgeport NAACP, George Mintz. The branch covers Bridgeport, Fairfield, Stratford, and Trumbull. Earlier in the meeting Mr. Searcy stated he recently attended a community meeting in Fairfield with the Police Chiefs of Bridgeport, Trumbull, and Fairfield along with Mr. Mintz which had very positive results.

Mr. Mintz stated he was pleased with what CARE is doing for Stratford and does not want to duplicate efforts, however, he wants the NAACP to engage Stratford once again. He said anyone can join the organization. He wants the NAACP to reconnect to its roots. Though the four communities are different in many ways they have many similar problems. The communities are tied together by a common geography and history. People of like minds can come together and take incremental steps to solve problems. There are several committees that new members can serve on.

Each year the NAACP hosts the Great Debate usually between a historic black college and another college. This year it may be held at the Arena in Bridgeport. Arrangements will be made to be able to have area high school students attend.

On October 14th, 2016 7pm at the Holiday Inn, 1070 Main Street, Bridgeport will be the Freedom Fund Awards. The theme will be "Race and Economic Development." The guest speaker is Dr. Claud Anderson.

Courageous Community Conversation (Tina Manus):

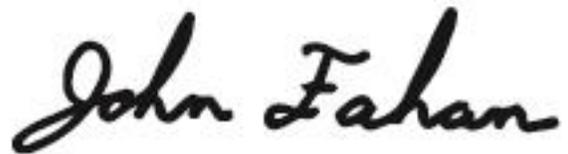
Councilwoman Tina Manus will host a community conversation about class, stereotypes, and social justice on October 27th 6-8pm in the Lovell Room of the Stratford Library. A few of the themes will be about micro aggressions, stages of social justice, individual advocacy, and the level of vulnerability as it pertains to personal loss.

Meeting adjourned by Yan Searcy at 8:58pm.

Respectfully Submitted by

John Fahan

C.A.R.E. Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Fahan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'J' and 'F'.