

BOARD NOTES
January 24, 2007

The regular meeting of the School Board was held on Monday, January 22, 2007 with all board members present.

LET'S TALK

- Wes Starkey addressed the school board to try and field Soccer as a sport at New Prairie High School. Mr. Starkey indicated there are currently over 200 students participating in the Youth League K-12. There is also a JHS travel league and Greg Levendoski handles the 9-12 Soccer Club. Mr. Starkey said they average about 50 students in the high school club - about 32 students stayed consistent throughout the year. They do lose some students during the fall and spring sports programs.

Mr. Starkey said he knows there is some concern that soccer would take away from other sports, but he feels students will play the sport they want. He said parents want to know why New Prairie does not have soccer as a sport like the other schools. He feels we need school sponsorship for soccer.

Rich Shail asked if Mr. Starkey has made the first step to talk with Brian Williamson. He said they contacted him three years ago and was told we could have it in the future. Rich Shail asked what they are asking the board to do now. Mr. Starkey said to put it in.

Rich Shail said from a board's perspective, over the past 3-4 years, the hardest decisions they have had to make is what programs do we cut to stay within the budget. We cut Alternative Education, band - which parents want back - we cannot do summer school because of the budget. We are just trying to put in perspective - how can this school corporation add a program like soccer when we cannot fund educational programs. How can the corporation incur those costs? Rich said you help me decide how to support this program. This is what I want to hear. Not that we are missing the boat because other schools have that. We are fiscally responsible for this corporation. We have to justify how we can do this.

Joe Slevin said it is a dollars and cents issue then. What other items are issues? Rich said facilities that we do not have, transportation costs, and coaches. Those are contractual issues. Mr. Slevin said he wants to know what questions the board will be looking at. Mr. Slevin said we have to prove to the board that we can run a program that is fiscally sound. Rich said those are the primary concerns. Mr. Slevin asked if they have the board's support if

they can meet some of those items. He does not want the group to come with 50 - 75% of those issues addressed and then find out it is a "no". Bernie said it should come from the Athletic Department. It goes from the recommendation of the Athletic Department to the building principal to the board. It should follow a chain of command. Rich said you have to schedule meetings with these individuals - there are no formal forms to complete. Mr. Wrightson said we would have the information at that time. Mr. Slevin wants to be sure that they followed the process. Mr. Wrightson said when those questions have been answered through the A.D. and the principal, it is presented to the administrative team, then to the superintendent who recommends to the board. Rich said we would have to possibly look at what sport we may not need in order to have soccer. Mr. Starkey said they do not want any sport to get cut because of this.

Mr. Slevin asked what does the board see as being the biggest hurdle. Rich said in his mind, it is the financial commitment from the corporation. Mr. Slevin asked what it takes to run a varsity sport. Al Williamson said it depends on the sport. Bernie said all the school corporation can legally pay for is salaries. Al said because of the cutting of elementary track, educational programs, etc. he would personally struggle with implementing soccer before bringing back band or some educational programs.

Rich said what people do not understand is what the state has done to us over the past several years. We had to go downtown to borrow money because the state did not give us our money. Then we had to incur the cost of the interest for those loans. He does not want to play hard guy here and say that you are not going to have it. It comes at a very high price. There are large numbers here in support of soccer. He said he praises the group because they believe in what they are doing. Rich said it is very difficult to see overcoming those hurdles now until the Governor and legislation helps us out by giving us more money that they took away from us. Until we see the light at the end of the tunnel, that is when we can come back to you and say we can support that for you. It is not there for us now.

Mr. Slevin asked how much are these people here able to help us financially. How about charging students. LuAnn said you cannot do that. Bernie said legislation is working on a bill not to charge for textbook fees. They would give us \$95 per student and we would have to fund the additional.

Duane said this is a great opportunity for the education of everyone. We had this place full with 60 parents when we cut 5th grade band. We had to cut a half-million dollars from the budget. It comes down to prioritizing the budget. Every year we add things and cut things. This is a problem nationwide with the funding. The board will have to prioritize if there is any excess. Meet with the Athletic Director and Clara Clark and see what you can do as a group to support it. That is what we are asking. We have no facilities. Mr. Starkey

said they are concerned about that now for all levels. They are growing in numbers. Duane said the number one sport is soccer. We will make some decisions after we prioritize. Mr. Slevin asked if past budgets are available. Duane said the budget is difficult to understand, but it is public knowledge. He is very open to having a meeting to discuss the budget.

Duane said he would like to sit here and say we will have soccer in the next two years. But, we need to prioritize. We have nothing much for Gifted and Talented in the corporation. That is a big push in the legislation now.

Mr. Slevin said from a transportation perspective, what are your liability concerns. Is it any different than riding in a car or bus? Duane said if we sponsor the sport, students have to be transported by bus. It is a liability to the corporation.

Greg Levendoski asked if we have a set of procedures that we have to do, because the last time it was never discussed because the board did not second a motion. This is just like three years ago. Mr. Wrightson said you had everything down what you were going to do. You will have to meet with Brian Williamson and Clara Clark first and then we will go from there.

The Let's Talk session ended and the regular meeting began at 6:30 p.m.

Rich Shail reviewed the guidelines for speaking on agenda items.

Mr. Shail advised that we had two action items to add to the agenda:

- (B) Salary adjustment for Non-Certified employees
- (C) Salary adjustment for Administrators and Directors

The board adopted the agenda with the additions to the agenda.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRESENTATION

- Mark Norton teamed with Greg Dudeck to present the HVAC system software that was installed. The new software will help troubleshoot the individual buildings with the HVAC system. The new system is easier to track and understand.

Lead custodians are able to get into the system and track what is happening in their buildings. Rich asked how often they review this. Greg said the leads access the information every morning, about 45 minutes prior to the start of school.

Mr. Wrightson asked about the cost efficiency between Olive and Prairie View which Greg was to pursue. Greg said both schools are programmed differently. Prairie View was put back to the system it was designed for, but we knew it would cost more to run that efficiently. The difference is the programming. Even though Olive and Prairie View are the same building configurations, there is a difference in the buildings.

Rich asked what our employees are doing versus calling for outside sources. Greg said the AV boxes and pneumatic controls is primarily what our leads are responsible for.

REASONS WE'RE PROUD

- Mr. Wrightson reviewed the Reasons We're Proud as submitted by the buildings.
- Mr. Wrightson congratulated the Wrestling Team for winning conference for the first time in over 26 years.

CONSENT AGENDA

- The Board approved the Consent Agenda as follows:
 - Minutes - December 19, 2006 and January 8, 2007
 - Financial Reports
 - Claims
 - Payroll
 - Personnel as follows:

CERTIFIED

- Contract Addendum for Superintendent
 1. Amend the contract addendum for Duane Wrightson extending to and including June 30, 2008.
- Leaves/Resignations
 1. Rachel Chelminiak - Kindergarten/Title I Teacher - Olive Elementary School - Leave of absence beginning approximately March 19, 2007 through May 25, 2007.
 2. Tara Bush - Grade 3 - Prairie View Elementary - Leave of absence beginning May 6, 2007 through May 25, 2007.

- Employment
 1. Sandy Wykoff - Temporary Grade 3 Teacher - Olive Elementary School, beginning January 10, 2007 for approximately 4-6 weeks.

NON-CERTIFIED

- Employment
 1. Ray Bukovi - Bus Driver - Route #7 - HS/Prairie View - Effective immediately.
 2. Pat Massey - Bus Assistant - Pre-school route - Effective immediately
 3. Mike Morris - Night Custodian - NPHS - Effective immediately
- Employment - Extra-Curricular
 1. Sheila Grimm - JV Softball Coach
 2. Teresa Hostetler - Assistant Girls Tennis Coach
 3. Larry Szczechowski - Assistant Wrestling Coach - NPJHS
 4. Kara Mamozzen - 5th Grade Girls Basketball - Rolling Prairie
 5. Bobby Whiteneck - Wrestling Coach - Prairie View
 6. Bobby Whiteneck - Assistant Wrestling Coach - NPHS

REPORTS

- Mr. Wrightson reviewed the School Performance Report that will be published in the newspaper. There were a few errors received from the state. Mr. Wrightson said it is frustrating when you send them the correct information and that is not what appeared on the report. Sherry Bailey had a copy of what was sent down and it came back different.
- The board reviewed the latest legislative report.
- The board reviewed the DOE report they received.

- Keith Dennis gave an update on the middle school building project.

Mr. Dennis said we are still currently on schedule with the contractors. We will be working on the replacement of the existing wastewater treatment plant. Bernie said there is some strong discussion about bringing the sewer lines out from LaPorte to New Prairie. It would be a selling point if they could hook up with us. The county received \$24 million to be used on roads, sewers, etc. Keith said he and Greg have scheduled a meeting with the Town of New Carlisle to discuss this. Greg talked with Tom Wheatbrook in Rolling Prairie. There is some discussion to have this happen, but we are not sure it will be in a timely manner for us. They will talk to them again.

Mr. Dennis said they will begin looking at some loose equipment schematics in the near future. Hope to have information together so they can possibly order by next year.

ACTION ITEMS

- The board approved the affidavit for payment from the 2005 construction fund.
- The board approved a 3% salary adjustment for the 2006-2007 school year for non-certified employees which does not include directors or bus drivers. Mr. Wrightson said non-certified employees pay 25% of their insurance premiums.
- The board approved a 1.5% salary adjustment for administrators and a 2% salary adjustment for directors for the 2006-2007 school year.
- The board approved a 2% salary adjustment for bus drivers.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- The board will continue to remain as building committee liaisons as established previously. They are as follows:

High School	-	Colleen Lincke
Junior High	-	Bernie Baltus
Olive	-	Rich Shail
Prairie View	-	Al Williamson
Rolling Prairie	-	LuAnn Schwingendorf

The board would also continue to remain on the corporation committees as follows:

Meet & Discuss	-	Rich Shail
Collective Bargaining	-	Bernie Baltes/Colleen Lincke
Curriculum	-	LuAnn Schwingendorf
Transportation	-	Colleen Lincke
Building/Grounds	-	Bernie Baltes

The board asked if schools could advise the board members of their meetings in sufficient time prior to the meeting dates. Rich Shail said Sherry Bailey always e-mails the agendas to him. Mr. Wrightson feels the Building/Grounds Department should have quarterly or monthly meetings. Bernie would also like to know about the construction meetings to attend occasionally.

- Al's Supermarket Cards

Clara was advised that Al's Supermarket in both LaPorte and Michigan City is offering a school fundraising opportunity. Al's will donate 2% of any purchase to the group when the purchaser has used the Al's card requesting this donation. There is no cost to anyone. Clara was told that some groups raise as much as \$3,000 per month. Duane wanted the board to be advised because he did not know if this would affect some local grocery stores and taking away their business. Board members indicated they are welcome to offer the same opportunities. Rich Shail said he does not feel we should turn down anything when we have an opportunity to obtain extra monies.

BOARD COMMENTS

- Bernie was very impressed with the presentation from Mark Norton. He said here is an example of an individual who did not go to college for the field he is in, and he is very impressed with what he does. He said learning knowledge comes in so many ways. Not everyone is college material. Some people lose site of what can be accomplished.
- Colleen said she reviewed the new GPS system that is being installed at the bus garage. She said it is very impressive.
- Mr. Wrightson said he would like the board to consider a Retreat where he can bring an individual from the Cambridge Group to discuss strategic planning. The board will look at February for the Retreat.